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Paper: Equity

‘My body taught me how to act’: Towards an epistemology of actor learning and apprenticeship

The background to this paper is the researcher’s own apprenticeship training as an actor in Sri Lanka. “Embodied knowing” in dance and movement studies effectively explain how the performer’s body pursues its own primordial ways of being-to-the world and perception (Sheets-Johnston 1966, Parviainen 1998, 2003, Barbour 2006, Klemola 1991, Zarrilli 2004, 2008, Barbour 2006, Hui Niu 2009, Riley 2004, Fraleigh 1986). Health scientists and cognitive phenomenologists also agree with the power of embodied knowing and its implication on the body as a knower and expresser (Kissel and Block 2001, Noë 2004).

This paper brings an actor’s account on apprenticeship training as an on-the-job learning. This experiential embodiment is juxtaposed with some prevailing ideas on “embodied knowing” to explain how on-the-job apprenticeship actor’s learning process evolves embedded bodily knowing. Finally, this paper demonstrates how the apprenticeship actor transforms her corporeality into a skilled acting body.

Keywords: On-the-job actor training, Embodiment, Body subject, Perception, Transformation