

CHAPTER 10

NAVIGATING DISSONANCE: BODYMIND AND CHARACTER CONGRUENCY IN ACTING

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1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to create an embodied approach for responsibly navigating actor-character dissonance in performance. Actors attempt to en flesh characters in performance. Enfleshment is the subjective, deliberate and in-the-moment embodiment of the performance intent in context. Characters are constructed through clues in the playtext, the craft of acting, the conventions and aesthetic vision of the production, as well as the multi-modal, bodyminded sense of self shaped by and through the lived experiences of actors. To deliver and maintain congruent, nuanced, and consistent performances, actors need to make embodied shifts. These shifts can be explained by Zarrilli's concept of the four bodies in/of performance, namely, (i) the surface body; (ii) the recessive body; (iii) the aesthetic inner body; and (iv) the aesthetic outer or performance body.¹ These bodies necessarily intersect and are simultaneously present in, and navigated, during performance. This embodied navigation requires heightened awareness. The first three bodies relate to the actor's bodyminded self. The fourth body enfleshes the character in performance. Optimally navigating the shift between the third and fourth bodies creates congruence between actor and character. This navigation results in the perceived believability of the character. Non-congruence results in actor-character dissonance. This dissonance impacts on effective character representation and can impact actors' well-being if not managed responsibly.

1 Zarrilli's work, in this regard, is based on and expands D Leder *The absent body* (1990); PB Zarrilli 'Towards a phenomenological model of the actor's embodied modes of experience' (2004) 56 *Theatre Journal* 664.

The human species is shaped to seek pleasure and avoid harm, forming a pattern of human congruency across cultures.² How this pattern manifests in the idiosyncratic being is deeply influenced by cultural contexts, socialisation, lived experiences and habituation that informs humans' presentations of 'Self'. South Africa's multiplicitous cultural landscape sees varied manifestations of presences of Self and responses to harm avoidance and pleasure seeking. While we acknowledge the importance of this awareness in dealing with performers in this chapter, we focus on human congruency in avoiding harm and in seeking actor-character congruency.

Actors (irrelevant of their process or acting style) require strategies to navigate the shift between their bodymind and the enfleshment of characters without compromising personal well-being. Performance strategies anchored in a multi-layered, embodied approach can do so. We use theories of embodiment to position the bodymind as the locus of the actor's craft and well-being, as tending towards avoiding harm. We use a social constructionist approach to embodiment to emphasise the construction of meaning in varied socio-cultural contexts and a phenomenological approach to explain how the subjectivity of lived experiences creates embodied meaning.³ Our discussion on how the bodymind functions to create actor-character congruence is influenced by neurocognitive principles. We draw on multi-level experiential and bodymind-focused processes to theorise how heightened bodymind awareness can circumvent dissonance. We propose that deliberate and embodied performance strategies that activate motor-intentionality may assist in navigating the shift between Zarrilli's third and fourth bodies, thereby creating congruent characters while safeguarding actors' well-being.

2 Bodymind and embodiment

In conceptualising embodiment, within the bodymind, we understand the body as simultaneously corporeal (acknowledging the problematics

2 KL Davis & C Montag *Selected principles of Pankseppian affective neuroscience* (2019); T Carr *Motivating by the pain pleasure principle* (2016).

3 Zarrilli (n 1) 665.

around the assumption of the supposedly fixed corporeality of the body) and as a performative, conceptual and discursive construct (thus subject). Body encapsulates subjectivity, time, history and culture which, in turn, encapsulates body (as culturally elaborated).⁴ Following prior research, mind results from and affects brain. Phenomena related to mind arise from brain as part of, and from, body. Experiences associated with the mind and sensory responses related to such experiences, can alter the physiological and anatomical structure of the brain.⁵ Brain (never in direct contact with the environment) relates to the environment via the nervous system throughout the body. Mind results from a body-brain intersect. Mind thus is 'embrained' and embodied,⁶ resulting in the intersect of bodymind.

Humans are bodyminded beings, multimodal and embodied in and through action, shaped by experiences and continuously presenting and performing in constructed realities, while continually navigating the internal, and the interface between internal and external environments. Bodymind is an understanding and performance of self, established through the coalescence of multimodal, interrelated systems simultaneously present and operative.⁷ Bodymind is the primary connection to, and agent of, being-in-the-world.⁸ The bodymind accumulates lived experiences through a continuous process of becoming⁹ – being-in-the-world.¹⁰ This process fosters subject formation in developing selfhood and identity in/through participation in multi-modal bodymind-world connections. It is culturally elaborated in that all 'experience takes place within a vast background of cultural presuppositions',¹¹ subjecting it to hegemony and post-memory. Socio-cultural paradigms determine individuals' ways of being-in-the-world and influence meaning-making, as derived from their

4 N Piran *Journeys of embodiment at the intersection of body and culture: The developmental theory of embodiment* (2017) 2.

5 L Thurman & G Welch *Bodymind and voice: Foundation of voice education* (1997) 15.

6 A Damasio *Descartes' error: Emotion, reason and the human brain* (1994) 118.

7 B Allegranti *Embodied performance: Sexuality, gender, bodies* (2015) 2.

8 MR Dawson *Mind, body, world: Foundations of cognitive science* (2013) 220.

9 N Piran *Journeys of embodiment at the intersection of body and culture: The developmental theory of embodiment* (2017) xiii.

10 Being-in-the-world may be defined as an intertwining and active engagement, existence and experience with the animate sensual world and its multiple entities. See M Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of perception* (1962) xii.

11 G Lakoff & M Johnsen *Metaphors we live by* (1980) 57.

experiences with, and in, these paradigms. Bodymind is the ‘sole mediator of human experience’,¹² defining what is meaningful and determining ways of making and understanding meaning.¹³ This mediation happens through embodiment.

Although embodiment has been studied in varied contexts and disciplines, and has been positioned as a paradigm,¹⁴ it has no unified lens. Embodiment, broadly speaking, is ‘the physical and mental experience of our existence’ that is also the ‘the condition of possibility for our relating’ to others and the environment.¹⁵ Three key tiers exist: embodiment as enfleshment, manifesting or giving form to abstractions – foregrounding human agency and imagination; embodiment as becoming ‘part of a body’ – the ‘incorporation’ that draws attention to ideological and socio-cultural dimensions of subject formation;¹⁶ and embodiment as ontological presence.¹⁷ Embodiment is dynamic and continuous, framing past, present and future, informing contexts, relationships, behaviours, perspectives, mental models, and so forth, through the lens of the embodied processes of becoming and cultural elaboration. These experiences become a constitutive part of the experiencer, constructing subjectivity.¹⁸ Subjectivity, in this context, is the multiple, emergent bodyminded self, influenced by self-world relations, impacting on identity. Identity and selfhood, however shifting, is experienced as stable. Ruptures in this experience create dissonance and impacts embodiment on an ontological level.

Procedural memory, or our implicit memory system, maintains embodiment. This system is a long-term memory system that leads the encoding, storing, controlling, and retrieving procedures underlying

- 12 L Marshall *The body speaks: Performance and physical expression* (2008) vii.
- 13 ZA Maalej & N Yu (eds) *Embodiment via body parts: Studies from various languages and cultures* (2011) 6.
- 14 TJ Csordas *Embodiment and experience: The existential ground of culture and self* (1994).
- 15 K Cregan *The sociology of the body: Mapping the abstraction of embodiment* (2006) 3 4.
- 16 A Sen & L Silverman (eds) *Making place: Space and embodiment in the city* (2014) 4.
- 17 B Spatz Performance Philosophy ‘Embodiment as first affordance: Tinkering, tuning, tracking’, <https://www.performancephilosophy.org/journal/article/view/61/135> (accessed 7 July 2021).
- 18 RJ Velásquez ‘Materialism and the subjectivity of experience’ (2011) 39 *Philosophia* 45-46.

habituated motor, verbal and cognitive skills.¹⁹ This process generally is subconscious and plays a part in embodiment towards enfleshment and preservation of Self during stressful experiences. Repeated reinforcement of actions leads to embodied and patterned habit formation through procedural memories. The reinforcement of procedural memories and the subjectivities created by lived experiences form habitual bodymind patterns.²⁰ This pattern making allows the relatively automatic activation of behaviour organisation and a pre-reflective grasp of meaning and principles within the parameters of both foreign and familiar circumstances through these patterns. This sustains bodyminded homeostasis and self-preservation impulses. Bodyminded homeostasis is an internal balance towards well-being, restoration, and equilibrium within the autonomic nervous system (ANS), based on embodied subjectivities.²¹ Habitual patterning assists in coping with the inner and outer environments.²²

Lived experiences inform symbolic cognitive representations, or mental models. Mental models are subjective knowledge that steers and shapes bodymindedness via an embodied interweaving of habitual patterns and procedural memories, resulting in internal conceptual representations, assumptions and schemas of meaning and external systems. Mental models aid in learning, recall and transference that not only allow for meaningful representations and communication of subjective experiences, thoughts and feelings, but also activate interpretation networks through activating schema and pattern making, creating expectations, predicting outcomes and modelling possible actions mentally.²³ This allows individuals to respond increasingly competently to harm-avoidance and

19 N Bier et al 'Relying on procedural memory to enhance independence in daily living activities: Smartphone use in a case of semantic dementia' (2015) 25 *Neuropsychological Rehabilitation* 915.

20 D Abbott & G Wilson *The lived experience of climate change knowledge, science and public action* (2015) 58; D Henriksen, W Cain & P Mishra 'Making sense of what you see: Patterning as a trans-disciplinary habit of mind' (2014) 58 *TechTrends* 4.

21 D Dana *The polyvagal theory in therapy: Engaging the rhythm of regulation* (2018) 60; SW Porges *The pocket guide to the polyvagal theory: The transformative power of feeling safe* (2017) 20.

22 R O'Gorman 'The ontogenetic body: An exploration based on body-mind centering' in S Reeve (ed) *Body and performance: Ways of being a body* (2013) 18 20.

23 R Bhalwankar & J Treur 'Modeling the development of internal mental models by an adaptive network model' (2021) 190 *Procedia Computer Science* 91.

pleasure-seeking responses. These form the foundation of bodyminded subjectivity and identity.²⁴

The actor as bodyminded being may adversely respond to the character's imagined bodymindedness, stemming from its imagined identity and mental models that may clash with that of the actor resulting in actor-character dissonance. Navigating actor-character dissonance demands heightened bodyminded awareness as representing a character is an act grounded in the actor's bodymind and the means through which the enfleshment of character takes place.

3 Acting as an embodied craft

Acting is a process of 'embodying the several bodies one encounters in everyday experience' through 'specialized modes of non-everyday ... bodies of practices'.²⁵ This is expressed through Zarrilli's four bodies. Zarrilli relied on Leder in proposing the surface (first) and the recessive (second) bodies. The surface body is corporeal and interacts with the external environment via exteroception and proprioception.²⁶ The recessive body relates to the internal viscera accessed through interoception. The experience of this body is recessive (not constantly surfacing in awareness) except when survival sensations bring it into awareness.²⁷

Zarrilli applies Leder's bodies to actor training and adds the aesthetic inner (third) body and the aesthetic outer (fourth) body. The third body involves heightened perception and experience moulded and shaped by means of long-term, extra-daily practice (such as the craft of acting). It involves attunement to, and navigating, exteroception, proprioception and interoception. The third body is termed 'aesthetic', because experience is progressively refined to more nuanced levels of awareness. The fourth

24 T Hinterecker, M Knauff & PN Johnson-Laird 'Modality, probability, and mental models' (2016) 42 *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 1608; C Richert et al 'Testing the consistency between goals and policies for sustainable development: mental models of how the world works today are inconsistent with mental models of how the world will work in the future' (2017) 12 *Sustainability Science* 4.

25 Zarrilli (n 1) 655.

26 Zarrilli (n 1) 657.

27 Leder (n 1) 11 66.

body is established through the imagined actions of a character, generating an en fleshed representation and imagined lived experience thereof during performance.²⁸

Navigating the above modes of awareness enables renegotiation of ‘the terms and quality of engagement of the lived bodymind in its encounter with itself in the world’.²⁹ The actor’s awareness is simultaneously engaged with reality (first three bodies) and the imaginary (fourth body). Heightened awareness of the shifts between these bodies necessitates a dual consciousness in the constant interplay between function in action (as character) and self-reflection (actor bodymindedness). The simultaneous, embodied presence in both reality and fantasy create the illusion of the actor *disappearing* into the en fleshed character: ‘the body conceals itself precisely in the act of revealing what is Other’.³⁰ Here, the idea of embodiment as incorporation is foregrounded. The aim of character representation is the illusion of disappearance of the first three bodies (thus the actor’s bodymind). When the actors’ bodymindedness clashes with the character’s, disappearance is compromised.

4 Actor-character dissonance and heightened awareness

Character creation often necessitates exploring the unknown or ‘otherness’. Yet, the bodymind finds stability, comfort and homeostasis in the familiar (selfhood and identity). Engaging with the unknown or discomfiting aspects might illicit internal conflicts, causing a sense of instability that activates self-preservation and performance-restricting systems (anxiety, confusion, tension, stress, frustration). This instability can destabilise selfhood to varying extents and stimulates protective self-preservation responses. Fuelled by a sense of ‘other-ness’, it limits access to internal resources that could facilitate homeostasis and embrace the unknown.³¹ Actors’ mental models determine habitual patterning and approach or avoidance impulses, hindering embodied responses toward

28 Zarrilli (n 1) 661 665.

29 Zarrilli (n 1) 661.

30 Leder (n 1) 22.

31 MK Anderson *The wisdom of lived experience: Views from psychoanalysis, neuroscience, philosophy, and metaphysics* (2016) 3; D Molden & P Hutchinson *Brilliant NLP: What the most successful people know, do and say* (2010) 39.

character enfleshment.

Actor-character dissonance activates protection responses related to actors' selfhood, undermines dual consciousness, compromises shifts between bodies (following Zarrilli) and inhibits the congruent and sustained enfleshment of characters. Actor-character dissonance is complex in its interweaving with the actor's perception of possible loss of self; social potential; cultural acceptance and recognition; and meanings related to the familiar. Protection impulses result from sympathetic nervous system (SNS) activation, which anchors actors in the present and safeguards them from perceived harm.

Such perceptions heighten the need for control, emotion regulation and conflict avoidance. Creative shifts within character creation and non-habitual behavioural patterning may then feel difficult and uncomfortable,³² as if selfhood is compromised or identity ruptured. A need for concealment, suppression and restriction might arise, activating the SNS. SNS activation also controls harm avoidance responses (such as fight-flight-or-freeze), mobilising and preparing the bodymind to handle perceived threats.³³ SNS activation manifests, among others, heart-rate elevation; respiratory increase; sweat secretion; and pupil dilation.³⁴ SNS activation is counteracted by parasympathetic nervous system (PSNS) responses.

The PSNS maintains and conserves the bodymind through energy preservation and controls the rest-and-digest processes in homeostasis. The SNS and PSNS generally pendulates to ensure bodymind homeostasis, except for freeze or fear states, in which both systems are low.³⁵ The PSNS is key in the orchestration of regulation, inhibition, retraction, shutdown, collapse and dissociation during aversion and threat management.³⁶ The inherent fight-flight-or-freeze system (FFFS) is behavioural and mediates

32 C Noland *Agency and embodiment: Performing gestures/producing culture* (2009) 214.

33 Dana (n 21) 35.

34 FM Corrigan, D Grand & R Raju 'Brainspotting: Sustained attention, spinothalamic tracts, thalamocortical processing, and the healing of adaptive orientation truncated by traumatic experience' (2015) 84 *Medical Hypotheses* 386.

35 H Lövheim 'A new perspective on the autonomic nervous system' (2013) 81 *Medical Hypotheses* 356.

36 Dana (n 21) 33; Porges (n 21) 92; SW Porges *The polyvagal theory: Neurophysiological foundations of emotions, attachment, communication, and self-regulation* (2011) 16.

responses to aversive stimuli and subjective, cognitive dissonances.³⁷

Cognitive dissonance is enhanced by habitual patterns and familiar mental models³⁸ that clash with the imagined ones of the character. It is an 'aversive psychological drive state' affected by cultural mores, opinions and lived experiences.³⁹ It actualises through inconsistencies or discrepancies between two or more simultaneous cognitions (knowledge, opinion, mental model, belief) and manifests as internal discomfort, distress, or tension. Cognitive dissonance may further SNS activation; aversive emotions; internal conflict and attentional motor control. Cognitive dissonance motivates actions towards reducing cognitive or behavioural inconsistencies.⁴⁰ Cognitive dissonance peaks when the discrepancies relate to selfhood, for example when a character threatens the actor's perception of self. Cognitive dissonance motivates individuals to actively reduce dissonance and to avoid similar situations in the future,⁴¹ resulting in approach or avoidance impulses.

Such protective impulses aim to sustain bodyminded homeostasis, engaging higher cognitive processes to minimise destruction.⁴² It comprises of multiple processes, including arousal and valence, which originate from primitive reflexes to cortical processes.⁴³ Approach or avoidance impulses, formed through habituated signals and conditioning, are linked to limbic system activation.⁴⁴ The limbic system includes several

- 37 J Studer et al 'Factor structure and psychometric properties of a French and German shortened version of the Behavioural Inhibition System/Behavioural Activation System scales' (2016) 25 *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* 54.
- 38 L Festinger *A theory of cognitive dissonance* (1957).
- 39 BM McKimmie 'Cognitive dissonance in groups' (2015) 9 *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 202.
- 40 J de Vries, M Byrne & E Kehoe 'Cognitive dissonance induction in everyday life: An fMRI study' (2015) 10 *Social Neuroscience* 269.
- 41 Festinger (n 38) 2.
- 42 T Poppa & A Bechara 'The somatic marker hypothesis: Revisiting the role of the "body-loop" in decision-making' (2018) 19 *Current Opinion in Behavioural Sciences* 64.
- 43 MW Schlund et al 'The tipping point: Value differences and parallel dorsal-ventral frontal circuits gating human approach-avoidance behaviour' (2016) 136 *NeuroImage* 94-95.
- 44 N McNaughton, CG DeYoung & PJ Corr 'Approach/avoidance' in JR Absher & J Cloutier (eds) *Neuroimaging personality, social cognition, and character* (2016) 33.

brain control networks and relates to emotion and reward processing.⁴⁵ These are embodied through somatic markers – an anticipatory habitual bodymind activation providing an embodied summary of lived experiences when responding to a stimulus.⁴⁶ Through subconsciously applying the parameters established by mental models, cognitive dissonance and somatic markers, the workload of the working memory is alleviated, unless an inconsistency overrules it.⁴⁷ Optimal functioning is thus achieved through the organisation, compartmentalisation and structuring of information in a manner that requires balanced output⁴⁸ and reliance on habitual patterning.

Habitual patterning, and protective reactions to stimuli, can enhance actor-character dissonance. This may result in incongruent, forced or unfocused performances but, most importantly, might lead to the actor experiencing tension or distress. Therefore, deliberate strategies toward navigating actor-character dissonance are required.

5 Navigating actor-character dissonance

We now discuss bodymind concepts that might enable such strategies, namely, heightened bodymind awareness, reappraisal, choice, and facilitating motor intentionality.⁴⁹ These foreground the actor's choice to regain bodyminded homeostasis by re-establishing a sense of control and re-activating consciousness, navigating discomforts while enhancing well-being. Such strategies are multimodal, drawing from the adaptive capacity of the bodymind to engage with the unknown. Adaptability enables the actor to (re)negotiate bodymind responses in relation to a sense of 'other-

45 A Bari, TS Kellermann & B Studer 'Impulsiveness and inhibitory mechanisms' in JR Absher & J Cloutier (eds) *Neuroimaging personality, social cognition, and character* (2016) 125.

46 Poppa & Bechara (n 42) 61.

47 PN Johnson-Laird 'Mental models, sentential reasoning, and illusory inferences' in C Held, M Knauff & G Vosgerau (eds) *Mental models and the mind: Current developments in cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy of mind* (2006) 28 34.

48 PH Werhane et al *Obstacles to ethical decision-making mental models, milgram and the problem of obedience* (2013) 4.

49 See Lee's concept of 'pause ... listen ... choose'. T Lee 'Alexander Technique and the integrated actor: Applying the principles of the Alexander Technique to actor preparation' in N Potter (ed) *Movement for actors* (2002) 71.

ness'. The strategies invite actors to give themselves permission to shift through multimodal approaches that employ both top-down and bottom-up processing,⁵⁰ acknowledging the actor's bodyminded subjectivity, selfhood, lived experiences, procedural memories, and habitual patterning, yet, honouring the self-preservation functions. Such shifts are dependent on the actor's choice and consent.

5.1 Choice and reappraisal

Choice is a higher-order function centred on resistance or acceptance of many variables within a variety of contexts.⁵¹ It is a critical component of the efficacy of higher-order cognitive skills (planning, creative problem solving, spontaneous thought).⁵² The pre-frontal cortex (PFC) is key to the selection and exclusion of choice as it facilitates critical cognitive engagement, higher-end learning and decision making.⁵³ This occurs through the bodymind's conscious considerations of choice in relation to the actor's inner and outer environments,⁵⁴ lived experiences and embodied mental models.⁵⁵ Through processes such as reappraisal, the actor can reflect upon their mental models and reinterpret anticipated consequences of choice.

Reappraisal is a top-down strategy implying a cognitive decision to change perspective through reframing mental models, meaning-identifiers and subjective thought processes in stressful situations, reducing tension.⁵⁶

50 Top-down processing refers to how cognitive structures impact and inquire on emotional and instinctive systems; bottom-up processing refers to the impact on cognitions due to regulations in the nervous system, sensations and body experience information processing. See Porges (n 21) 35.

51 Marshall (n 12) 5.

52 O Vartanian & DR Mandel 'Introduction' in O Vartanian & DR Mandel (eds) *Neuroscience of decision making* (2011) 3.

53 M Graziano *Epistemology of decision rational choice, neuroscience and biological approaches* (2013) 36.

54 JM Fuster *The prefrontal cortex* (2008) xii; S Otani 'Preface' in S Otani (ed) *Prefrontal cortex: From synaptic plasticity to cognition* (2004) xi xii.

55 Graziano (n 53) 4.

56 JP Forsyth, V Barrios & DT Acheson 'Exposure therapy and cognitive interventions for the anxiety disorders: Overview and newer third-generation perspectives' in DC Richard & D Lauterbach (eds) *Handbook of exposure therapies* (2007) 83.

Tension reduction can also be achieved through suppression, a situation-focused reinterpretation, or self-focused distancing. Distancing and suppression are short-term solutions to threatening circumstances. In cases where experiential and physiological modulation are not effective, these can result in long-term harm.

Reappraisal facilitates thinking about, interrogating, disassembling and reassembling responses to experiences or stimuli. The root of discomfort, inconsistencies in mental models and habituated action strategies can so be identified, reframed and altered. Reappraisal reduces amygdala and anterior insula activation,⁵⁷ modifies and diffuses the internal context of the experience of dissonance and subdues the intensity of external displays of negative affects. Reappraisal enhances behavioural control and stress management, potentially shifting the actor from harm avoidance to seeking pleasure.⁵⁸ Strategies such as interrogation (identifying), experimentation and expansion (reasoning) and imaginative transformation (shifting) can assist in navigating habits of the bodymind⁵⁹ and alleviate tension or discomfort, for example, reappraising dissonance from a self-preservation force that fundamentally facilitates avoidance, to a source of energy that becomes a driving force in the shifting process.⁶⁰ Alternative perspectives or conclusions may surface through self-reflection, self-inquiry, and self-dialogue between conflicting mental models,⁶¹ increasing available choices.

Lived experiences are pre-reflective and temporal, preceding cognitive engagement. Yet, processes of reflection, reasoning and interpretation can illuminate their constructed meanings and encourage reappraisal. Heightened bodymind awareness enables reappraisal and choice which, in turn, offers a wider range of possible action.

57 E Johnston & L Olson *The feeling brain: The biology and psychology of emotions* (2015) 290.

58 Y Suchy *Clinical neuropsychology of emotion* (2011) 150.

59 R Ross 'Mental models' (2004) 35 *Association for Computing Machinery Special Interest Group on Algorithms and Computation Theory* 80.

60 TA Sisemore *The clinician's guide to exposure therapies for anxiety spectrum disorders: Integrating techniques and applications from CBT, DBT, and ACT* (2012) 13.

61 Werhane et al (n 48) 4, 22, 41.

5.2 Actively applying heightened bodymind awareness

Heightened bodymind awareness contributes to a sense of self and identity. The awareness of embodied internal responses allows meaning to be perceived through (often) unconscious gestural, affective, and related expressions (due to SNS activation). Awareness of pre-reflective connections allows the actor to become reflexively conscious of bodymind expressions that enliven cognitive dissonance. This allows the actor the option to actively negotiate, renegotiate and influence their habitual tensions and embodied interactions during the enlivenment of the character – enhancing dual consciousness that in turn enhances shifts between bodies (following Zarrilli).

Heightened bodymind awareness allows the acknowledgment of habitual patterns, a state of mobility, plasticity and relaxation. This leads to the ability to respond to modalities within bodymind that may operate subconsciously and contribute to well-being.⁶² The emphasis is on navigating of bodyminded self-preservation tendencies, protective and habitual patterns, and the choice to manage SNS activation within the bodymind.

Such awareness may encourage willingness to explore unfamiliar experiences and a sense of release and pleasure in actions,⁶³ reframing uncertainty and unfamiliarity and the associated temporary loss of bodyminded homeostasis, as assets rather than threats.⁶⁴ Such reframing through the actor's choice to activate heightened bodyminded awareness focuses on growth, adaptability and recovery.⁶⁵ By actively heightening bodymind awareness, actors may navigate dissonance in a manner that allows for shifting, choosing and taking action towards responsibly enlivening characters without compromising well-being. The following strategies may facilitate heightened bodymind awareness navigating embodied performance-restrictors.

62 E Batdorf 'Mind-body juggling for the camera' in N Potter (ed) *Movement for actors* (2002) 230.

63 K Bloom & R Shreeves *Moves: A sourcebook of ideas for body awareness and creative movement* (2004) 34.

64 Marshall (n 12) 11.

65 C Edinborough 'The resilient body: Developing resilience and presence using the Feldenkrais method' in S Reeve (ed) *Body and performance: Ways of being a body* (2013) 119.

5.2.1 Equanimity

Equanimity – ‘evenness of [body]mind especially under stress’ – relates to relaxation, a motor intentional act to be harnessed when encountering dissonance inducing stimuli.⁶⁶ Equanimity soothes anxiety, enhances decision making and choice. Relaxation improves wilful bodymind flexibility; activates motor control; enhances conscious motor intentionality; and acts as a gateway toward heightened bodymind awareness.⁶⁷

Equanimity in this context refers to applying relaxer-energisers,⁶⁸ which are idiosyncratic, pleasure-seeking familiar activities that in combination contribute to well-being, facilitating equilibrium and action-readiness to shift between bodies three and four. Action-readiness indicates the intent to shift – to move toward change.⁶⁹ This is achieved through acknowledging, and subsequently diffusing and reducing the effects of SNS activation;⁷⁰ inhibiting tensions; hampering movements; affected breathing; forced voice production; and the startle-reflex through relaxation.⁷¹ Active relaxation heightens bodymind adaptability and supports the choice to shift, while engaging the imagination towards actor-character congruency.

Tension is energy seeking an outlet (twitches, eyebrow wiggles or hand wringing).⁷² Suppressing this energy does not mean that it disappears, rather it is dispersed in the totality of the bodymind. Bodymind awareness enables the reappraisal of tension-energy, possibly transforming it into anticipation, curiosity or empathy. The actor’s ability to choose, adapt and shift diminishes when the bodymind is in survival mode, therefore,

66 DC Richard, D Lauterbach & AT Gloster ‘Description, mechanisms of action, and assessment’ in DC Richard & D Lauterbach (eds) *Handbook of exposure therapies* (2007) 14.

67 Johnston & Olson (n 57) 298-300.

68 A Lessac & D Kinghorn *Essential Lessac: Honouring the familiar in body, mind, spirit* (2014) 22; D Kinghorn et al ‘Vocal traditions: Lessac kinesensics’ (2017) 11 *Voice and Speech Review* 93.

69 J Kiverstein & M Miller ‘The embodied brain: Towards a radical embodied cognitive neuroscience’ (2015) 9 *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 8.

70 Porges (n 21) 34.

71 M Davis, ER Eshelman & M McKay *The relaxation and stress reduction workbook* (2008) 41.

72 Marshall (n 12) 16-17.

equanimity assists in understanding why change might be necessary and enhances receptivity towards change and shifts. This may be achieved through breath.

5.2.2 Breath

Breath enhances equanimity. Respiration is the most accessible visceral process of the recessive body. Breath influences the entire bodymind and attunes the inner-outer balance. Engagement with effective breath may facilitate neuromuscular repatterning of habits. Effective breath alters emotional states, decreases tension through increasing PSNS and decreasing SNS activation steering towards an ANS balance and thus homeostasis.⁷³ Effective breath positively enhances embodied selfhood.⁷⁴ The actor can thus choose to affect SNS activation, muscle tension, oxygen consumption and heart rate variability that generate shifts in the nervous system, through active engagement with breath.⁷⁵ This mediates self-preservation responses and emotional survival strategies, allowing reappraisal, decision making and clear motor intentionality.

The effective use of breath can enhance expressivity due to its equanimity, can increase energy and motor intentionality,⁷⁶ as well as facilitate the congruence between the third and fourth bodies that requires a dual consciousness. Breath fosters relaxation and centring.

5.2.3 Centring

Centring is the perceived experience of bodymind homeostasis, balance, grounding and control necessary for shifting between the third and fourth bodies and to navigate dissonance. The purpose of centring not only is to achieve bodymind homeostasis, but it also prepares the actor to receive and process the influx of information from both the internal and external environments through cultivating a sense of stability. This

73 E Franklin *Breathing for peak performance: Functional exercises for dance, yoga, and pilates* (2019) 44.

74 PB Zarrilli *Psychophysical acting: An intercultural approach after Stanislavski* (2009) 25.

75 S Blakeslee & M Blakeslee *The body has a mind of its own: How body maps in your brain help you do (almost) everything better* (2007) 162.

76 J Free & N Ramsay *Holistic bodywork for performers: A practical guide* (2004) 134.

sense of stability heightens bodymind awareness that allows for choice and shifts. When not attuned to bodymind responses, impulses, and the origin of these impulses in the internal environment, the actor cannot make considered choices regarding strategic action⁷⁷ to navigate character incongruency. The strategic action of centring can and should be applied at any moment of character creation and performance. Strategic actions are achieved through motor intentionality.

5.2.4 Motor intentionality

All intentional movement does not lead to change. The ability to discern between relevant and irrelevant bodymind activity optimises adaptability. The actor can choose to inhibit (not suppress) unwanted or subconscious contradictions inhibiting bodymind responses and purposeful action, through motor intentionality.⁷⁸ Motor intentionality is the intentional mobilisation of motor-skills in relation to the actor's inner-outer interweave, initiated by bodymind awareness.⁷⁹ Motor intentionality influences the amygdala response (in the brain), resulting in the activation of prefrontal control systems, potentially diminishing activity in areas responsible for emotional responses.⁸⁰ Motor intentionality assists with the diffusion of harm avoidance through consciously interrogating and changing embodied perceptions and sensations, and so self-regulates protective responses when engaging with Zarrilli's third and fourth bodies.

This intentionality, then, has the capability to facilitate the necessary shifts between the third and fourth bodies to en flesh characters congruently. Through motor intentionality, actors can respond to their internal environments, modify habitual patterns and impulses, or have the freedom to follow an impulse, or the ability to re-establish bodymind homeostasis. Motor intentionality can gently and playfully redirect the tension-energy in a manner that leads to its constructive use and expression through physical actions towards en fleshing a character.

77 Marshall (n 12) 35.

78 M Feldenkrais *The potent self: A guide to spontaneity* (2002) 85.

79 HL Dreyfus 'Merleau-Ponty and recent cognitive science' in T Carman & MB Hansen (eds) *The Cambridge companion to Merleau-Ponty* (2005) 138.

80 Johnston & Olson (n 57) 297.

Through purposefully activating the PSNS, subsequently diminishing or suspending SNS activation by means of motor intentionality, relaxer-energisers, breath and centring, habitual responses are mediated. This relieves tension and anxiety. Awareness, choice and action thus are interdependent concepts, allowing the actor not only to acknowledge their embodied objections, but consciously to move beyond their subjective restrictions and perspective of debilitating 'other-ness'.

6 Conclusion

Actors, multimodally present in their bodyminded being-in-the world, draw on their bodyminds to en flesh the imagined bodymind of the character. Congruency in performance is achieved when the actors' enfleshment of characters integrates the actor's bodymind (Zarrilli's first three bodies) with the aesthetic outer body (Zarrilli's fourth body). Actor-character dissonance is rooted in mental models and suppressed dissonance that inhibit bodymind homeostasis, activating self-preservation strategies. This activation negates dual consciousness in performance and foregrounds the first three bodies, limiting the actors' *disappearance* into the enfleshed character. This impacts the believability, nuance, and congruency of character representation. Heightened dissonance can compromise the actor's well-being.

Multimodal bodyminded performance strategies support actors to responsibly navigate the embodiment of characters without compromising their ontological presence encapsulated by experiences of selfhood. These strategies are rooted in heightened bodymind awareness to engage mental models and comprise of choice and reappraisal, equanimity, breath, centring and motor intentionality. They encourage actors to draw on their bodymindedness to responsibly choose how to engage with perceived threats and become receptive to the embodied shifts necessary to en flesh the fourth body with congruency. Identifying subjective performance-restricting responses, activated by actor-character dissonance, and applying the proposed embodied performance strategies allow for intentional, and strategic, management of SNS activation.

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