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ACTING IN THE WEIGHTLESS ENVIRONMENT: PREPARATION AND PERFORMANCE

Abstract

Many performances depicting life in space depend on artificial gravity to avoid dealing with the complexities of the weightless environment. Others rely on harnesses or visual effects to convey weightlessness. This paper focuses on those performances actually conducted in the weightless environment - through parabolic flight or performance on orbit - and explores how the truth of being weightless affects actors both in preparation and in performance. We examine the theory of acting and how that should be affected by the absence of the effects of gravity, and compare this with the accounts of those who have performed as characters in a weightless environment from the perspective of technical and artistic constraints placed on them. We sketch the foundations for a theory of acting in weightlessness for a future space theatre.