



THE COLLAPSE OF PSYCHOTECHNICAL ACTING METHODS IN REPRESENTATIONAL ARTS AND THE SEARCH FOR A NEW PARADIGM

TEMSİL SANATLARINDA PSİKOTEKNİK OYUNCULUK YÖNTEMLERİNİN
İFLASI VE YENİ BİR PARADİGMA ARAYIŞI ÜZERİNE

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Abstract: This study examines the actor's performance as a meaning-creating element within the realms of cinema and theatre from a historical perspective. Through this analysis, the fundamental differences between theatre and film acting and the reasons behind common misconceptions are explored. The study aims to demonstrate that variations in an actor's performance do not actually stem from acting methods but rather from challenges introduced by changes in medium. Moreover, the pressures exerted by the dominance of certain media create challenges for actors, often causing them to abandon the essential techniques they have learned, ultimately leading to the obsolescence of core acting methods. Cinema, because of the Industrial Revolution and digital mass media, has acquired a commercial character. This evolution requires the performances of actors to increasingly align with commercial demands, which in turn reshapes acting methods to accommodate these demands. Based on these premises, the transformation of acting methods and their current crisis are addressed through qualitative analyses under relevant themes. The findings of this study underscore the need to construct a new acting paradigm by critically re-evaluating traditional acting techniques.

Key Words: Cinema, Theatre, Stanislavski, Method Acting

Öz: Bu çalışmada sinema ve tiyatro mecraları içerisinde anlam yaratan bir öge olan oyuncunun edimi tarihsel bir perspektif içerisinde incelenecektir. Bu incelemeler neticesinde tiyatro oyunculuğu ve sinema oyunculuğu arasındaki farkların temelinde neler olduğu ve yapılan yanlış genellemelerin nedenleri incelenecektir. Çalışmada hedeflenen oyuncunun oynama edimindeki farklılıkların aslında oyunculuk metotlarından kaynaklanmadığını tam tersine mecra değişiminin getirdiği bir problem olduğunu göstermektir. Ayrıca bu mecra tahakkümünün oyuncu üzerinde yarattığı baskı, oyuncunun oynama edimini gerçekleştirebilmek adına öğrenmiş olduğu oyunculuk sanatının esaslarını oluşturan yöntemlerin iskartaya çıkarak iflasına yol açmaktadır. Sinema sanatı, endüstri devrimi ve sanayileşmenin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmış kitle iletişim araçlarının dijitalleşmesiyle birlikte ticari bir nitelik kazanmıştır. Bu süreç, oyuncunun oynama ediminin ticari taleplere daha çok bağlı ve uyumlu olmasını gerekli kılmaktadır. Bu durum doğal olarak oyunculuk metotlarının da ticari taleplere göre şekillenmesi anlamına gelmektedir. Bu önermeler ekseninde oyunculuk metotlarının dönüşümü ve günümüzdeki krizi ilgili başlıklar altında yapılan kalitatif çözümlemelerle açıklanmaya çalışılacaktır. İncelemeler çerçevesinde ulaşılan sonuç oyunculuk yöntemlerinin eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla irdelenerek yeni bir oyunculuk paradigmasının inşa edilmesi gerekliliğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sinema, Tiyatro, Stanislavski, Metot Oyunculuğu

INTRODUCTION

From a historical perspective, the actor fundamentally assumes the role of a transmitter or mediator. The main question to ask here is what the actor conveys, why they do so, or what gives rise to the need for such transmission. In the art of cinema, the actor performs actions in front of the camera, which acts as an intermediary between the audience and the event or situation. The camera often transforms into a tool that shapes, or at times manipulates, the message the actor intends to convey. This situation causes the collapse of acting methods that form the foundation of an actor's performance, as these methods are typically developed within the context of theatrical performance. The reason these methods do not always provide the desired resolution lies not only in the paradoxes within

their principles but also in the fact that cinema and theatre are fundamentally different mediums. This divergence stems from the failure to consider the structural requirements imposed by the nature of the medium the actor performs within.

The principles underlying acting methods inherently involve the contradictions posed by the paradox of acting. When these contradictions are compounded by the narrative challenges embedded in the structure of cinema, the functionality of the methods employed by actors during their performances becomes increasingly intricate. A critical question thus emerges: is the meaning generated through the act of performing in cinema tied to the principles of acting methods, or is it primarily dictated by the role assigned to the actor through the camera's perspective? Moreover, many actors struggle to perceive cinema as an economic industry due to the emotional connection they have to their art. This perspective often leads to a lack of acknowledgment of the commercial concerns shaping cinematic narratives, which, when combined with the challenges posed by the camera's mediation, makes this an essential issue for further discussion. The answers to these debates can challenge the relevance of traditional acting methods within contemporary cinema and contribute to the construction of a more encompassing paradigm of acting that reflects the realities of the modern age.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to reveal the issues and challenges arising from the medium shift in acting methods, taking the fundamentals of the art of acting as its basis. The adaptation of the actor -a meaning-creating element within the historically prior art of theatre- to the art of cinema amid changing eras and circumstances are examined. The reasons behind the conceptual confusion caused by the medium shift in the art of acting and the transformations in the methods of performance as actors transition from theatre to cinema are analysed from a historical materialist perspective.

As a methodological approach, the study employs qualitative research methods from the field of social sciences. Beginning with the fundamentals of the art of acting and the foundations of the paradox of acting, the study examines the historical transformation of Stanislavski's System Acting -regarded as the cornerstone of psychological realism in acting- into Method Acting that emerged with the contributions of Lee Strasberg. Subsequently, the reasons for this transformation, along with the essential principles and paradoxes inherent in the art of acting, are analysed through a qualitative comparison. While discussing the differences between theatre and cinema acting, the causes of generalisations and misconceptions are identified.

The conclusions derived from this analysis are expected to open a discussion in the "Conclusion" section on the feasibility of acting methods in today's commercial market conditions. The scope of the study is limited to Stanislavski's psychological realism acting system and the Method Acting paradigm derived from it. This

limitation is due to these approaches being among the earliest successive variations in the transition of acting methods from theatre to cinema. Furthermore, the foundational psychological realism of these methods and their widespread use in contemporary commercial market conditions necessitated focusing the study within this framework.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESULTS

The Essentials of Acting and the Paradox of Acting

Throughout the history of acting, actors have consistently confronted two fundamental questions during the representation of their roles:

1. Should the actor fully identify with their role, or should they maintain a critical distance and play it from a detached perspective?
2. During the act of performance, should the actor genuinely live or experience the role, or should they represent it by resembling someone or something through their rational intellect?

The answers to these fundamental questions not only establish the principles governing the actor's art but also determine which method an actor should follow when designing the role that they embody on stage throughout the history of theatre. Considering these two questions in light of contemporary conditions, it is evident that the evolution of technology and the shifting mediums in which actors perform do not resolve these main issues. They rather exacerbate the contradictions and render them even more complex. For instance, the transition from theatre to cinema, and that from cinema to digital platforms, can be observed to reshape the act of performance based on the specific ways each medium communicates with society. This dynamic may lead to a deviation from traditional acting methods, which have historically served as the foundation of an actor's art, toward a performance style shaped by the communicative demands of the medium.

First, it is important to address the paradoxes that are inherent within acting. Arguments pertaining to these paradoxes will help define the main principles of contemporary acting. In the book *Methods and Paradoxes in Acting (Oyunculuk Sanatında Yöntem ve Paradoks)*, Karaboğa (2005, p. 6) explains the fundamental elements of the paradox of acting. To summarise Karaboğa's discourse on these paradoxes: The first paradox concerns the actor's relationship to the *play space*. It arises from the tension between the actor's freely defined actions within the play space and the structured, disciplined execution of these actions. The central challenge lies in how the actor shapes their subconscious and conscious faculties around a specific discipline to systematically represent the character they are portraying on stage. The second paradox involves the boundary between the performative reality of the play -its repeatable structure, related to its own goals and truths- and the reality of daily life. This is because the actor is both a subject within the play space and a real subject of daily life. Balancing these two modes

of subjectivity is another problem that acting disciplines aim to address in the actor's representational process. The third paradox, referred to as Diderot's paradox of acting, addresses the challenge actors face when portraying a character distinct from themselves. Should the actor completely abandon their own identity, fully identifying with the character to the point of embodying the character entirely? Alternatively, should they approach the role by maintaining a degree of distance between their own character and the role, with the awareness that their presence on stage is a representation? This third paradox is tied to the total performance, which emerges from the interplay between the performative signifier (representation) that the actor constructs through their actions and the signified (the living performance created through action). In other words, it concerns what the performance ultimately signifies or represents.

Acting methods attempt to provide various resolutions to these paradoxes. Each method's response is unique to its nature and is designed to convey the sign represented by the actor to the audience within the context of the medium it operates in. Stanislavski and his successors, who derive from the tradition in question, aim to make the process they refer to as the actor's *creative activity* on stage repeatable through psychotechnical methods. At the same time, they seek to bring the emotions arising from this process under the control of the mind. Although psychotechnical acting methods aim at regulating what they call the actor's creative state of mind through artificial stimuli, this goal is consistently undermined due to the irrational nature of emotions as a phenomenon. Furthermore, the nature of this "*inner creative state*" is not clearly defined within these methods (Stanislavski, 2003, p. 283). Instead of offering a concrete explanation, it is often reduced to a state of mystification, shifting the actor's performance into an ambiguous and abstract realm referred to as the *subconscious creative activity* (Stanislavski, 2008, p. 337).

It is useful to divide Stanislavski's system into two phases. This distinction is important because the paradigm shifts in the actor's approach to achieving an inner creative state/mood become evident during the system's evolution from psychotechnical methods to methods of physical actions. In the early phase of his system, Stanislavski explains the process of living the role as follows:

One cannot always create subconsciously and with inspiration. No such genius exists in the world. Therefore, our art teaches us first of all to create consciously and rightly, because that will best prepare the way for the blossoming of the subconscious, which is inspiration. The more you have of conscious creative moments in your role the more chance you will have of a flow of inspiration (Stanislavski, 2003, p. 15).

The contradictory aspect of this proposition lies in Stanislavski's aim to achieve an abstract and mystified state of inspiration through consciousness and the mind, while disregarding the fact that emotions, by their nature, cannot be brought under the control of the mind. He continues immediately as follows:

If you take all these internal processes and adapt them to the spiritual and physical life of the person you are representing, we call that living the part. This is of supreme

significance in creative work. Aside from the fact that it opens up avenues for inspiration, living the part helps the artist to carry out one of his main objectives. His job is not to present merely the external life of his character. He must fit his own human qualities to the life of this other person and pour into it all of his own soul. The fundamental aim of our art is the creation of this inner life of a human spirit, and its expression in an artistic form (Stanislavski, 2003, p. 15).

The contradictory aspect of this proposition emerges as follows: While asserting that the actor's task is not merely to present the external life of the character, Stanislavski temporarily overlooks the representational nature of theatre as a medium. Instead, he emphasises that the actor must adapt their human qualities to align with the life of this other person, pouring their whole self into that person. In other words, he suggests that the actor must merge with the character -a process formally known as "experiencing a role". However, when this state of merging occurs, it inevitably results in a temporary suspension of consciousness. This is because the rational, creative effort required in the actor's approach to the role is set aside once the actor fully immerses themselves in the character's existence -finding inspiration through conscious effort and transitioning into the character's life. This suspension arises because by their nature, emotions are irrational phenomena. Therefore, any attempt to exert absolute control over them through the mind or reason is nearly impossible. On the contrary, the actor's desire for complete mastery over their emotions could even be described as a schizophrenic tendency.

Sayfa | 63

The term "*schizophrene*" originates from German and refers to a person suffering from schizophrenia, a condition characterised by a breakdown in the relationships between thought, emotion, and behaviour. Etymologically, the word "schizophrenia" was coined in 1908 by Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler (1857–1939). It is derived from the German Schizophrenie, which itself originates from the Latinised form of the Greek words *skhizein* (to split) and *phrēn* (genitive: *phrenos*, meaning "heart" or "mind") (Douglas, 2022). This reflects the literal meaning of the term as "a splitting of the mind," not in the sense of possessing two personalities but rather in the division of the mind, resulting in a state where the individual simultaneously believes in two separate realities (Kuhn & Cahn, 2004). The existing reality, namely, the real world, corresponds to what an ordinary, healthy person perceives. In contrast, the so-called secondary reality is a systematised construct created by the schizophrenic individual, often based on their perception of reality, which a healthy person cannot understand. Therefore, the reality imposed by Stanislavski on the actor as a subject corresponds to the reality of a schizophrenic subject who simultaneously believes in two separate realities. In the Stanislavski system, this state of secondary reality, which is sought to be created in the actor through conscious effort, ultimately pushes the actor toward living the role. If evaluated within the context of the explanations above, this system acting method is revealed to be uncanny, unreliable, and despite appearing scientific, occasionally straying from scientific methodologies. Karaboğa touches upon this schizophrenic state of the actor in his book as follows: "In short,

the actor's life is socially schizophrenic. A potential conflict exists between their 'actor identity' and 'everyday identity,' and this schizophrenia is an irresistible characteristic of acting" (2005, p. 21). This definition validates the actor's schizophrenic personality yet merely describes the conflict between the actor's everyday identity and their acting identity rather than offering a solution for eliminating this conflict. The actor can resolve this conflict between these two identities by acknowledging the representational nature of the medium they are part of. Acting is not the art of experiencing or living the role. It is rather the art of expressing, narrating, and conveying the signifier to be represented to the audience. The actor achieves this act of expression, narration, and conveyance through the physical actions they perform within the medium. The sacred and mystical duty Stanislavski assigns to the actor -*the fundamental aim of our art is the creation of this inner life of a human spirit, and its expression in an artistic form* (Stanislavski, 2003, p. 15)- causes the actor to forget the representational nature of the system in which they perform. For the actor, what truly matters is performing the necessary concrete actions related to the role they enact and creating the signifier they represent. Even though Stanislavski incorporates this act of physical performance into his method under the concept of physical actions during the second phase of his system, his approach, which is rooted in the idea of the actor experiencing emotions, cannot escape the trap of mystification due to its inherently schizophrenic nature.

In the second phase of the Stanislavski system (*physical actions*), he summarises the actor's process of creating their role as follows: "The creative process of living and experiencing a part is an organic one, founded on the physical and spiritual laws governing the nature of man, on the truthfulness of his emotions, and on natural beauty" (Stanislavski, 1968, p. 44). From this suggestion, it can be concluded that the actor, who has control over the necessary physical and spiritual conditions, will begin to experience the role. Here, Stanislavski's only addition to his system is the inclusion of the actor's physical actions during the process of experiencing the role. Besides, he elaborates on physical actions later in the book as follows:

Let each actor give an honest reply to the question of what physical action he would undertake, how he would act (not feel, there should for heaven's sake be no question of feelings at this point) in the given circumstances created by the playwright, the director of the play, the scene designer, the actor himself by means of his own imagination, the lighting technician, and so forth. When these physical actions have been clearly defined, all that remains for the actor to do is to execute them. Note that I say execute physical actions, not feel them, because if they are properly carried out the feelings will be generated spontaneously. If you work the other way around and begin by thinking about your feelings and trying to squeeze them out of yourself, the result will be distortion and force, your sense of experiencing your part will turn into theatrical, mechanical acting, and your movements will be distorted (Stanislavski, 1968, p. 201).

Although Stanislavski himself acknowledges this in his own words, the fact that he refers to the process as “living or experiencing the role” suggests that, while he appears to accept the representational nature of theatre, he ultimately relegates it to a secondary position. In his system, he expects the actor to transition into the process of living the role by using physical actions. The flaw in the system does not lie in its method but in the way it is expressed. A role is not “lived”; it is represented on stage. Representation, as Stanislavski himself states, is created when the actor clearly defines the physical actions for the role and executes them on stage, thus establishing their existence through performance. The phrase “living/experiencing the role” mystifies the actor’s consciously performed actions on stage, distancing the act of playing a role from its tangible essence. The actor does not “live or experience” the role; they “act” (or do) the role -through their physical actions, they bring a sense of reality to the role. This reality, however, is a reality tied to the concept of representation in theatre. If the actor attempts to fully “live/experience” the role, they continuously stray from the reality of representation. If an actor were to truly live the role in a literal sense, it would no longer be a role, but it would become real. By the nature of their work, the actor exists on the fine line between role and reality. This fine line is defined by the necessities of representation.

From the points discussed, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a) The actor does not “live or experience the role”, but they *act* it, meaning that they perform or do it. Through their actions, the actor creates a representational style on stage. The nature of this representational style depends on the medium in which the actor performs and varies based on its characteristics. Therefore, the actor performs this act differently in theatre, cinema, or digital media, adapting to the specific conditions, requirements, and circumstances of each medium.
- b) Acting methods are not scientifically proven or consistent techniques. Psychotechnical acting methods, such as those described in Stanislavski’s system and their derivatives (e.g., Method Acting and others), are methods¹

Sayfa | 65

¹ The most well-known examples of psychotechnical acting methods in Turkey are the techniques developed by Michael Chekhov, Stella Adler, and Eric Morris. These methods originated from Stanislavski’s system and have evolved into their own unique approaches and styles. Those who wish to learn more about these methods can refer to the book “*Oyunculuğun Yolculuğu: Stanislavski'den Morris'e*” (The Journey of Acting: From Stanislavski to Morris) (Ergün, 2015). Methods created by figures such as Richard Boleslavsky, Maria Ouspenskaya, Sonia Moore, Lee Strasberg, and Sanford Meisner are essentially based on the Stanislavski school and are variations derived from this tradition. Additionally, Kerem Karaboğa’s book “*Oyunculuk Sanatında Yöntem ve Paradoks*” (Methods and Paradoxes in Acting) is also worth consulting. This work provides significant insights into the perspectives and techniques of notable figures such as Denis Diderot, Jerzy Grotowski, Vsevolod Meyerhold, and Bertolt Brecht, alongside Stanislavski. Beyond these, many other methods and techniques derived from European acting systems are fundamentally based on variations of psychotechnical acting schools or other acting approaches. For instance, the Chubbuck Technique, developed by American acting coach Ivana Chubbuck, stands out as a variation rooted in Stanislavski’s system. Conversely, Jacques Lecoq’s approach, which emphasises physical theatre, movement, and mime, serves as a distinctive movement-based method that diverges from these traditional systems.

rooted in mystification. They propose that the actor should control their emotions -as inherently irrational phenomena- through rational effort. Nevertheless, they often fail to clearly and definitively explain the tangible actions required to achieve this control. These methods frequently mystify the actor's ability to perform, presenting it as an almost unattainable technical skill. While these methods appear internally consistent and self-contained, they display inconsistencies and contradictions when evaluated through the nature of representation on stage. Additionally, these methods lead to different orientations and interpretations in each individual. The paradoxical structure of these acting methods further exacerbates the connatural contradictions between the principles of acting and the medium in which the actor performs, often obscuring the essence of the matter through generalisations and reductions.

From these conclusions, the following answers can be given to the fundamental questions of the art of acting:

1. The actor does not identify with the role; they represent or signify it. Identification implies 'living' or 'experiencing' the role and becoming one with it.
2. The actor is never the essence of truth/reality on stage. Instead, they are an indirect *signifier* of truth/reality. The character performed by the actor is part of a system of paradigms meant to be represented on stage. This system of paradigms is determined by the director, playwright, or instructor who constructs the performance. The actor performs in a way that conveys this system of paradigms to the audience. Even if the character being portrayed is based on a real event or person, it is a representation during the act of performance-a fictional construct, not reality itself. For this reason, the actor is not the reality itself but its representative. The fundamental misconception that the actor faces during their performance is forgetting the system of signifiers/representations in which they are situated and perceiving these representations as if they were the truth itself. Alternatively, the actor may perpetually succumb to this illusion. Consequently, the actor does not 'live' or 'experience' the role but instead represents or signifies the character they have performed through emulation. During the act of representation, the actor conveys this character within the framework of the medium's structure and limitations -be it in theatre, cinema, or digital media- while remaining aligned with the nature of representation.

Karaboğa's fundamental elements of the paradox of acting can be examined in relation to the nature of the mediums in which the actor operates. *First*, the actor's play space is determined by the characteristics of the medium in which they perform. Therefore, the actor's mode of execution differs between theatre and

cinema. The character the actor represents or performs within a given medium is shaped by the opportunities and constraints that the medium offers. The actions performed by the actor are not solely dictated by the character or situation they represent but are also subject to the direct influence and dominance of the medium itself. *Second*, the actor is not only a subject within the play space or daily life but also a subject of the medium they inhabit. This state of subjectivity raises questions about what the actor represents, narrates, or expresses within the medium they are part of. The answers to these questions, in turn, shape the actor's representational form within that medium. In other words, the subject reconstructs itself in response to these questions. For this reason, when positioning oneself as a subject within the medium, the actor must address questions such as what they are doing (what they are performing, why they are performing it, and how they will perform it). These questions should not be directed toward acting methods but instead toward the actor oneself. Thus, seeking concrete and objective answers to these questions, rather than abstract and subjective ones, prevents the actor from falling into the trap of mystification and provides them with a consistent mode of performance. *Third*, the actor does not 'live' or 'experience' the role to become the character; instead, they turn toward expressive methods that signify or represent² the character. What the actor represents within a given medium is not merely a question concerning their total performance (actor's score) but also a broader philosophical and societal inquiry about what the representation aims to communicate to the audience, masses, or society. This question inherently carries both societal and artistic critique within it.

The Actor as a Meaning-Creating Element in Cinema and Theatre

Theatre and cinema are both forms of representation. In the art of theatre, actors are viewed live on stage, whereas in the art of cinema, actors are watched through the images created and fixed on screen (Oruç, 2015, p. 25). The most evident distinction lies in this live-recorded dichotomy. Cinema, as an art form, records and preserves images, transforming them into immutable signifiers. Theatre, on the other hand, is an art form that aims to stabilise the actor's performance on stage during each representation. Consequently, an actor performing in theatre is responsible for their actor's score, which they are required to execute in every performance. The methods provided by the art of theatre are primarily aimed at achieving this concept of the actor's score, making them specific to the theatrical medium. One of the prominent methods in this regard, the Stanislavski system, gained worldwide recognition through the tours of the Moscow Art Theatre in the United States and Europe between 1922 and 1924 (Özüaydın, 2013, p. 24). Some of these actors chose not to return to Russia after completing their 18-month American tour in the spring of 1924 but instead stayed in the United States and began teaching in American acting schools (Tucker, 2010, pp. 12–13). Among these actors were Richard Boleslavski, Maria Ouspenskaya, Maria

² In other words, by creating a form of representation in accordance with the requirements of the medium they are in.

Germanova, Vera Soloviova, Andrius Jilinsky, Leo Bulgakov, Barbara Bulgakov, and Tamara Daykarhanova, who contributed to the widespread adoption and establishment of the Stanislavski system in the United States. Two of Stanislavski's students, Richard Boleslavski and Maria Ouspenskaya, began teaching theatre at the American Laboratory Theatre between 1923 and 1926. Later, Boleslavski and Ouspenskaya's students Harold Clurman and Lee Strasberg, along with Cheryl Crawford, came together at the Theatre Guild in 1925. They went on to establish the Group Theatre (1931–1940), which became the most influential theatre group in the United States in the 1930s (Özüaydın, 2013, p. 24). One of the members of this group, Lee Strasberg, born in 1901, is recognised as the founder of the globally renowned film acting method known as Method Acting. Lee Strasberg was invited in 1949 to join the world-famous Actors Studio, which had been founded in 1947 by Elia Kazan and Robert Lewis. At the Actors Studio, Strasberg became known as the mentor who trained many of the world's most famous film actors, including Al Pacino, Robert De Niro, Marilyn Monroe, Jane Fonda, James Dean, Dustin Hoffman, and Jack Nicholson (Güngör, 2015, p. 235; Tucker, 2010, p. 13). All these explanations suggest that the concept known today as on-camera acting, rooted in Method Acting, is fundamentally an adaptation of Stanislavski's acting method, originally developed for the theatre, into the cinematic medium under the name Method Acting. Therefore, the argument that exaggerated acting is typical of theatre while naturalistic acting is more common in cinema loses its validity.³ This is because the Stanislavski System, which forms the foundation of Method Acting and was adapted from theatre to cinema, is itself grounded in realistic acting. A method designed to depict the concrete reality of life on stage, shaped by the principles of realistic theatre, cannot inherently advocate for exaggeration or overly dramatic acting. Similarly, it cannot support exaggerated or over-the-top acting on the theatrical stage. The primary reason this misconception persists in the literature, even among filmmakers and many theatre practitioners, is the repeated disregard for the distinct characteristics of each medium. This has led to the erroneous assumption that theatre acting inherently involves exaggerated or over-the-top performances. Theatre and cinema are distinct arts in terms of their characteristics. Actors must adapt and optimise their acting style according to the medium they are performing within. This can only be achieved through the actor's dedicated efforts to refine their methods of narration and expression.

The difference in expression and narration between mediums also manifests in the distinction between the Stanislavski system and Method Acting. The Moscow Art Theatre, which applied the Stanislavski system, utilised it in their theatrical performances during their tours from 1922 to 1924. Following these tours, Moscow Art Theatre actors who remained in the United States introduced the system to American theatre and provided training in its methods. Later, Lee Strasberg adapted this system into a method for film acting, leading to the development of

³ For further discussion on this argument, see: Kart, 2019, p. 430; Onan, 2008; Solmaz & Yüksel, 2016, p. 582; Uluyağcı, 2001, p. 43.

an acting approach that spread from the United States to the world through Hollywood films and became a global standard for film acting. Based on this argument, it would not be incorrect to view Method Acting as an adaptation of the Stanislavski system -a method designed for the theatrical medium- into the cinematic medium. Lee Strasberg's Method Acting requires the actor to produce emotional states that align with the emotional atmosphere of the scenes, even if these emotional states are not explicitly written in the script. Furthermore, the Stanislavski system confines the actor within the given circumstances set by the playwright, whereas Strasberg's Method Acting rejects such restrictions. The actor, therefore, has the freedom to seek and create stimuli that evoke emotions, even if these stimuli go beyond the given circumstances of the script/text (Özüaydın, 2013, p. 30). This distinction serves as a significant boundary that clearly demonstrates the difference between cinema and theatre. The Stanislavski system, evaluated from the actor's perspective, is a method designed to perform a theatrical text, which is considered a literary work. In contrast, Method Acting, as proposed and developed by Lee Strasberg, is a method tailored for performing scenarios or film scripts, which do not carry the same literary value as theatrical texts. Therefore, the demand of Method Acting for the actor to step outside the written script and its given circumstances to create their own personal conditions and successfully execute them aligns specifically with the requirements of cinematic performance. In the art of cinema, scenes are often filmed in fragments over different periods, and even a single scene can be divided into smaller shots that are filmed multiple times. These fragments are then edited together during post-production to create a cohesive cinematic narrative, selecting the actor's best performances from each take. As a result, the audience does not fully perceive how the actor achieves or conveys the emotions they represent. Instead, the images the audience sees in a film are composed to align with the overall representation (the signifier) that the filmmakers aim to create. The medium of the camera serves as an intermediary, positioned to show the audience only what the producer and director intend to communicate. In the art of theatre, however, this situation is somewhat different. A knowledgeable audience member who is familiar with the text can discern whether the actor's emotions align with the paradigms the playwright has intended to create. A good theatre audience does not watch a play out of curiosity for its ending. Unlike the typical mass audience that cinema often targets, this type of audience is often well-acquainted with the text of the play and may have even seen different variations of the same work staged by other directors. As such, this audience is generally capable of noticing nuances in the actor's performance. Method Acting and the Stanislavski system are both based on the principles of psychotechnical acting. However, the methodological differences between them can be attributed to the emergence of cinema in the 1930s as a new medium that positioned itself as an alternative to theatre. This new medium demanded unique, natural, and realistic acting techniques tailored to its specific characteristics. Throughout the history of acting, actors have adapted and updated their styles according to the conditions of their

time. Naturally, during the rise of cinema, it was inevitable for the Stanislavski system -representing the naturalistic and realistic acting approach of theatre- to be adapted into Method Acting to meet the requirements of this new medium.

Uluyağcı states that during the developmental years of cinema, its prolonged struggle to free itself from the influence of theatre stemmed from the fact that cinematic acting lacked its own unique method, and cinema had not yet created a language of its own (Uluyağcı, 2001, p. 42). While this assertion seems accurate, it contains certain unexplained shortcomings. Cinema, in fact, has been creating its own language since its inception. This process began from the very first moment it captured images with a camera and projected them onto the screen. Therefore, the issue does not lie in the inability of cinema to create a unique language but rather in the effects caused by the shift in mediums. This perspective provides a more accurate understanding. The actors, directors, and filmmakers of the developmental period of cinema were still exploring the possibilities and limitations of this new medium. Consequently, the lack of naturalism in the acting and films of the era was an expected outcome. The other assertion that "cinematic acting lacked its own unique method" is also a generalisation stemming from unfamiliarity with this new medium and the contextual shift it represented. Recognising the artistic value of cinema and understanding it as a distinct domain serves as a crucial starting point for a deeper understanding of the issue. Discussing the new language that this unfamiliar medium may create is challenging until the medium fully establishes itself and becomes accessible to its audience. Other disciplines within the medium, such as acting, maintain their essence while adapting to meet the demands of the new medium. Acting paradigms often preserve their inherent qualities and principles, making adjustments primarily in form. This process is not one of total transformation but rather one of incorporation and evolution, building upon existing principles. Notwithstanding, the prevailing discourse often implies that the art of acting has undergone a complete transformation, presenting cinematic acting as fundamentally and oppositely different in essence. Yet, regardless of the medium, actors consistently encounter the same main principles defined by the paradox of acting and the fundamental challenges it generates. The flawed approach is to focus solely on the actor's performance style within a specific medium and make broad generalisations without addressing these main principles. While the fundamentals of the paradox of acting remain unchanged, the methods and approaches adapt to align with the specific characteristics of each medium. Therefore, it is essential to separately analyse the principles and fundamentals of the acting paradox, which constitute the essence of acting, as well as the methods and approaches shaped by the nature of the medium. At the same time, the problems arising from the opportunities and limitations that the medium imposes on the actor should also be evaluated independently.

Another reason for the emergence of this semantic confusion is the actor's inability to gauge their response during the performance process in this unfamiliar new medium. To overcome this problem, it is necessary to evaluate the reaction

of actors who, in the art of cinema -a medium considered new at the time, encounter the continuity of their own image. Accomplishing this, however, seems unlikely given the elapsed period. Yet, by comparing fixed performances preserved through film, it is somewhat possible to discern the transformation and development of the art of acting. It should still not be overlooked that the acting style in the early films of cinema likely created its own aesthetic values within society, appealing to the societal demands of the time, therefore enabling these films to attract a certain level of audience. Nonetheless, these questions remain: did audiences watch these films because they lacked alternatives and because cinema, as a new medium, was a novel attraction during that period? ... or did they feel compelled to watch due to the promotion of cinema as a leisure activity, effectively marketed to the masses? These questions remain relevant to this day.

When viewed through the lens of historical materialism, it becomes apparent that both of the aforementioned art forms reflect the ideologies and preferences of the dominant classes in society. This viewpoint significantly shifts our analytical approach to the subject. Boal, referencing Hauser's "The Social History of Art", describes the financing and public presentation of productions in Ancient Greek theatre as follows: "The State and the wealthy financed the production of tragedies, and therefore, would not permit the performance of plays whose content would run counter to State policy or to the interests of the governing classes" (Boal, 2008, pp. 44-45; Hauser, 1957, p. 83). It could be argued that a similar situation applies to modern cinema. Cinema possesses the power to alter the attitudes, behaviours, and thoughts of the masses in society. It serves as an instrument for conveying the ideas of the dominant classes, shaping public opinion, and pioneering new trends (Yilmaz, 1997, p. 11). Today, the manipulation of public thought through media ownership -controlled by the dominant segments of society- continues to be a significant issue. Therefore, we can draw the conclusion that both mediums inherently serve as forms of representational art and possess a certain persuasive power over communities, making them instruments for influence and control by the ruling classes. While these two mediums might seem like platforms where dissenting voices can be heard, the property and production relations that consistently benefit the ruling class mean that these dissenting voices can make themselves only minimally visible. Therefore, it can be stated that the meaning and expressive power of an actor within a given medium are manifested independently of all acting methods, primarily shaped by these economic relations. Consequently, acting methods adapt and transform according to the aesthetic values developed within the ideology of the society they are part of. Looking at the history of acting, it can be observed that acting methods generally create their sphere of activity and validate themselves within these prevailing economic frameworks. Hence, the methods that emerge are shaped and validated by the ideological system they work within.

The transformation of the socialist realist acting philosophy of Moscow Art Theatre (specific to theatre) into Method Acting, which, upon its introduction to

the United States, embraced a realism aligned with the petit bourgeois values of Hollywood (specific to cinema), clearly demonstrates how acting methods are shaped by the ideology of the systems they operate within. Moreover, the global marketing of Method Acting through Hollywood films, which themselves function as cultural commodities, highlights the influence of production relations on acting methods. Evaluating acting methods in isolation from these relations remains deterministic, as it explains the unique laws inherent to these methods while neglecting their connections to society and the masses.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to highlight the critical juncture in the transition of acting from the theatrical medium to the cinematic medium, by examining the transformation of the Stanislavski system into Method Acting and the origins of psychotechnical acting, which is extensively used in cinema. The reason for not addressing the acting methods of Jerzy Grotowski, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Bertolt Brecht, and others was due to the predominance of psychotechnical methods in contemporary acting, particularly in cinema and new digital mediums, often driven by commercial and exhibitionist motives. The starting point of the twentieth-century avant-garde movements, apart from psychotechnical acting methods, lies in their refusal to perceive daily occurrences as a state of consensus. Instead, these occurrences are viewed through the stage as domains requiring confrontation and opposition, thus containing a social critique. Therefore, the psychotechnical understanding, developed primarily within the context of bourgeois theatre, subjects these methods to significant criticism, positioning them within their own ideological discourse. The issue that these methods are confined within their own discourse and ideologies warrants separate critique.

The art of cinema emerged as a form of representational art following the Industrial Revolution and industrialisation. The current state of mass communication technologies has turned film production into a commodified segment of the digitalised entertainment industry. The transformation in question does not occur in a long-term and phased manner. Instead, it is short-term and instantaneous. This is due to the rapid advancements and changes in the technologies used by mass communication tools. Nowadays, in general, the transformations affecting cultural life and the field of acting are shaped under the influence of the camera medium and digital platforms. Although the camera in cinema appears as a mediator of the absolute message that directors and producers wish to present to the masses, it has the dynamics of shaping and adapting everything it captures and touches according to the message it intends to convey. The film industry, driven by the marketing of consumer culture, assesses a film's market value based on its popularity and the preferences of its audience. Considering this, it can be argued that the convergence of market demands and the influence of the camera medium inevitably gives rise to acting methods shaped and dictated by these market forces. This dynamic provides a compelling argument for the failure or collapse of any acting method that has not

been subjected to rigorous historical materialist criticism throughout the history of acting. This is because, while the medium adapts acting methods to its nature, it possesses the capability to suppress all forms of criticism and opposition, alongside the critical resistance stance of twentieth-century avant-garde art. Therefore, rather than discussing the avant-garde resistance or critical capabilities of contemporary masses against this situation, it may be more realistic to assert that these conformist masses are experiencing a form of societal decadence.

In the conclusion of his book, while addressing the question of whether we are witnessing the end of acting methods, Karaboğa notes that in contemporary acting -both admired and encouraged- narcissistic concerns take precedence. He argues that given circumstances are viewed as mirrors of the self and are excessively personalised, thereby serving not to deepen emotional or intellectual expression but rather to weaken and trivialise it (2005, p. 249). The fundamental drive behind this narcissism should be sought in the self-exposure culture fostered by today's mass communication tools. A culture rooted in self-exposure and self-promotion inevitably produces individuals who are self-absorbed and regard themselves as superior to others. Naturally, the acting styles cultivated within such a culture will also emerge as narcissistic and oriented toward self-promotion to the masses. This issue can only be addressed by subjecting acting methods to materialistic critique and reevaluating them. Only through such an analysis does it seem possible to construct a contemporary and independent perception of acting methods, or in other words, a new paradigm.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT: This study focuses on the transformation of the Stanislavski system, a pivotal turning point in the historical evolution of acting, into a method known as Method Acting, adapted to the cinema. It seeks to explain this transformation, which occurred in the 20th century, using an interdisciplinary approach based on the differences and similarities between cinema and theatre. The study aims to discuss the universal principles of the paradox of acting in the art of performance, examining how these principles influence the meaning-creating processes in cinema and theatre beyond the acting methods employed. Specifically, it explores the development of acting techniques tailored to the structure of the cinematic medium and how commercial demands shape the performances of actors. The differences between theatre and cinema are key factors in defining the modes of meaning creation within representational arts. These differences often lead to misinterpretations through generalisations and reductions. Theatre is a form of art where actors interact directly with the audience on stage, whereas cinema involves actors interacting indirectly with the audience through the mediation of the camera. This distinction has played a significant role in shaping the commercial nature of cinema in the context of mass communication and digitalisation. The evolving nature of cinema requires actors to create performances that are both more natural and guided by commercial demands. The relationship between the actor and the audience, mediated by the camera, has led actors to reassess their performances and adapt them to the paradigms imposed by the cinematic medium. The camera, by shaping or manipulating the messages actors seek to convey, shifts traditional psychotechnical methods into a domain entirely dictated by the medium. This transition results in the erosion and eventual collapse of traditional acting methods, particularly psychotechnical methods, as they are reshaped to meet the demands of contemporary cinema. Acting methods rooted in psychological realism, such as those in the Stanislavski system and its derivatives, initially found their place within the conventional framework of theatre. However, when these methods were adopted in cinema, they underwent significant transformations. For instance, Lee Strasberg's Method Acting, designed to suit the cinematic medium, allowed actors to create emotional states beyond the given circumstances of the script during their performances. This naturally led to the emergence of an acting style compatible with the unique requirements of cinema. Nonetheless, this transformation should not be regarded solely as a technical change. As an industry, cinema establishes a mechanism of domination over the actor's performance, defined by commercial pressures. These pressures compel actors to express emotional states dictated not by their artistic essence or the intrinsic nature of their methods, but by market-driven relationships and commercial interests. Through such practices, the culture industry uses representation to shape behavioural and consumer patterns that align with the demands of contemporary consumer culture. As a cultural industry, cinema moulds

acting methods based on the production relationships it operates within. In evaluating contemporary acting methods, it is essential not to rely solely on deterministic interpretations derived from the medium but also to adopt a critical approach based on historical materialism, considering the production relationships they are embedded within. The study aims to identify the challenges and problems arising from the medium shift in acting methods while taking the principles of acting as its foundation. The adaptation of the actor -a meaning-creating element within the historically prior art of theatre- to the art of cinema under changing circumstances is examined. The causes of conceptual confusion resulting from this medium shift and the transformations in acting techniques as actors transition from theatre to cinema are analysed from a historical materialistic perspective. This study employs a qualitative research method, a social sciences approach, to analyse the fundamental principles of acting and the paradox of acting. Beginning with the foundations laid by Stanislavski, considered the pioneer of psychological realism in acting, the study explores the historical transformation of the Stanislavski system into Method Acting shaped by the contributions of Lee Strasberg. The reasons behind this transformation, along with the essential principles and paradoxes inherent in the art of acting, are comparatively examined. Differences between cinematic and theatrical acting are discussed, and the causes of generalisations and erroneous propositions are identified. The conclusions derived from the analysis aim to open a discussion in the "Conclusion" section on the applicability of acting methods within today's commercial market conditions. The scope of the study is limited to Stanislavski's psychological realist acting system and the Method Acting system derived from it. This limitation stems from the fact that these two methods represent the initial consecutive variations in the transition of acting techniques from theatre to cinema. Additionally, the dominance of psychological realist approaches in today's commercial market conditions necessitates the evaluation of these methods within the chosen scope.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET: Bu çalışma, oyunculuk sanatının tarihsel evriminde bir kırılma noktası niteliğine sahip Stanislavski sisteminin, Metot Oyunculuğu olarak adlandırılan oyunculuk yöntemine dönüşerek sinema sanatına adaptasyonu sürecine odaklanmaktadır. Oyunculuk sanatının 20. yüzyılda yaşadığı bu dönüşümü, sinema ve tiyatro mecraları arasındaki fark ve benzerliklerden yola çıkarak interdisipliner bir yaklaşımla açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Çalışma, oyunculuk sanatının rol yapma paradoksuna dair evrensel ilkelerini, yalnızca kullanılan oyunculuk yöntemleriyle sınırlı kalmadan, sinema ve tiyatro mecralarındaki anlam yaratma süreçlerine nasıl etki ettiğini tartışmaktadır. Özellikle, sinema mecrasının yapısına yönelik oyunculuk tekniklerinin gelişmesi ve ticari taleplerin, oyuncuların performanslarını nasıl şekillendirdiği bu çalışmanın açıklamak istediği konulardan başlıcalarıdır. Tiyatro ve sinema sanatları arasındaki farklar, oyunculuğun temsil sanatları içerisindeki anlam üretme biçimini belirleyen ve aynı zamanda oyunculuk kavramını zaman zaman yapılan genelleme ve indirgemeler üzerinden yanlış değerlendirmelere sebep olan temel faktörlerdir. Tiyatro, oyuncuların sahnede izleyiciyle doğrudan etkileşime geçtiği bir sanat formuyken, sinema, oyuncu performanslarının kamera *medium'u* aracılığıyla dolaylı olarak etkileşime geçtiği bir sanat formudur. Bu fark, sinema sanatının kitle iletişimi ve dijitalleşme olgularıyla birlikte günümüzde ticari bir nitelik kazanmasında belirleyici bir rol oynamaktadır. Sinemanın bu yeni doğası, oyuncuların hem daha doğal hem de ticari taleplere güdümlü performanslar yaratmalarını talep etmektedir. Sinema sanatında oyuncuların kamera aracılığıyla izleyiciyle kurduğu ilişki, oyuncunun performansını yeniden değerlendirerek, mecranın yarattığı yeni paradigmalara göre şekillendirmesine yol açmıştır. Kameranın oyuncunun iletmek istediği mesajı şekillendirmesi ya da manipüle etmesi, oyunculuk tekniklerinin geleneksel psikoteknik metotlardan uzaklaşarak, tamamen mecranın tahakkümü altına girmesine yol açar. Bu durum, oyunculuk sanatının geleneksel tekniklerinin, özellikle psikoteknik oyunculuk yöntemlerinin, günümüz sinemasının gereksinimlerine göre şekillenmesine yol açarken, bu metotların sahip oldukları sanatsal özün aşınarak iflasına sebep olur. Stanislavski sistemi ve onun ardılı olan psikolojik gerçekçilik üzerine inşa edilen oyunculuk metotları, tiyatro sanatının konvansiyonel yapısında etkili bir şekilde kendilerine yer bulurken, aynı metotlar sinemada kendilerine yer bulmaya başladıklarında önemli bir

dönüşüm geçirmişlerdir. Lee Strasberg'in Metot Oyunculuğu olarak bilinen yaklaşımı, sinema mecrasına uygun şekilde, oyuncuların icra sırasındaki duygusal durumları, metnin verili durumlarının dışında yaratmalarına imkân tanımıştır. Bu durum doğal olarak sinemanın kendine özgü gereksinimleriyle uyumlu bir oyunculuk anlayışının ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Fakat bu dönüşümü sadece teknik bir değişim olarak düşünmemek gerekir. Sinema, bir endüstri olarak, oyuncunun sahnedeki temsil pratiği üzerinde, ticari baskılar tarafından sınırları belirlenen bir tahakküm mekanizması kurmaya başlar. Bu tahakküm ve baskı, oyuncuları metotlardan ziyade mecranın talepleri doğrultusundan belirlenen duygu durumlarını ilgili temsil pratiği içerisinde göstermek veya diğer bir tabirle ifade etmek zorunda bırakır. Belirlenen duygu durumları, -genel itibarıyla- oyuncunun kendi özü ve metotların doğasından hareketle yarattığı sanatsal icradan uzak, genellikle piyasa tarafından belirlenen, ticari çıkar ilişkileri tarafından şekillenir. Bu temsil pratikleri üzerinden kültür endüstrisi, kitleler tarafından benimsenecek davranış ve tüketim kalıplarını yaratmaya çalışır. Böylece bu davranış kalıpları üzerinden, günümüz tüketim kültürünün ihtiyaç fazlası mal ve hizmetlerini aynı kitlelere pazarlayabilmektedir. Dolayısıyla bir kültür endüstrisi mecrası olarak hareket eden sinema sanatı, oyunculuk metotlarını içinde yer aldığı bu üretim ilişkileri ekseninde şekillendirdiği söylenebilir. Bu noktada, günümüzde oyunculuk metotlarını değerlendirirken sadece mecralar üzerinden yapılan determinist yorum ve bakış açıları üzerinden değil, tarihsel materyalist bir bakış açısıyla içinde yer aldığı üretim ilişkileri minvalinde eleştirel bir anlayışla da değerlendirmek önem arz etmektedir. Çalışmanın amacı, oyunculuk sanatının esaslarını mesnet alarak oyunculuk yöntemlerinin mecra değişiminden kaynaklanan sorun ve problemlerini ortaya koymaktır. Tarihsel sıralamada önceliğe sahip olan Tiyatro sanatının içerisinde anlam yaratıcı bir öge olan oyuncunun, değişen çağ ve koşullarla beraber sinema sanatıyla olan adaptasyonu incelenecektir. Mecra değişiminin oyunculuk sanatta yarattığı kavram karmaşasının nedenleri ve tiyatrodan sinemaya oyuncuların rol yapma biçimindeki dönüşümler tarihsel materyalist bakış açısı üzerinden yapılan değerlendirmelerle ele alınacaktır. Çalışmada yöntem olarak sosyal bilimler araştırma inceleme metotlarından kalitatif araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Oyunculuk sanatının esasları ve rol yapma paradoksunun temellerinden hareketle başlayan çalışma, Oyunculuk sanatının psikolojik gerçekçi baş kuramcısı kabul edilen Stanislavski'nin öncülük ettiği Sistem Oyunculuğu'nun, Lee Strasberg'in katkısıyla Metot Oyunculuğu'na dönüşümünü tarihsel koşullar içerisinde ele alacaktır. Ardından bu dönüşümün nedenleri ile oyunculuk sanatının özünde bulunan esaslar ve paradokslar, kalitatif bir karşılaştırmayla incelenerek sinema ile tiyatro oyunculuğu arasındaki farklar tartışılacak, yapılan genelleme ve yanlış önermelerin nedenleri tespit edilecektir. Çalışma sonucunda ulaşılan çözümleme "Sonuç" bölümünde oyunculuk metotlarının günümüz ticari piyasa koşulları içerisindeki işlevliliğini tartışmaya açmayı hedeflemektedir. Çalışma kapsam olarak Stanislavski'nin psikolojik gerçekçi oyunculuk sistemi ile onun üzerine temellenen Metot Oyunculuğu ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Bunun nedeni, tiyatrodan sinemaya oyunculuk yöntemlerinin dönüşümündeki birbiri ardı sıra gelen ilk varyasyonlardan biri olmalarından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu iki yöntemin temelinde psikolojik gerçekçi oyunculuk anlayışının bulunması ve günümüz ticari piyasa koşullarında yaygın olarak bu psikolojik gerçekçi yöntemlerin kullanılması, çalışmanın bu kapsam içerisinde değerlendirilmesini gerekli kılmıştır.