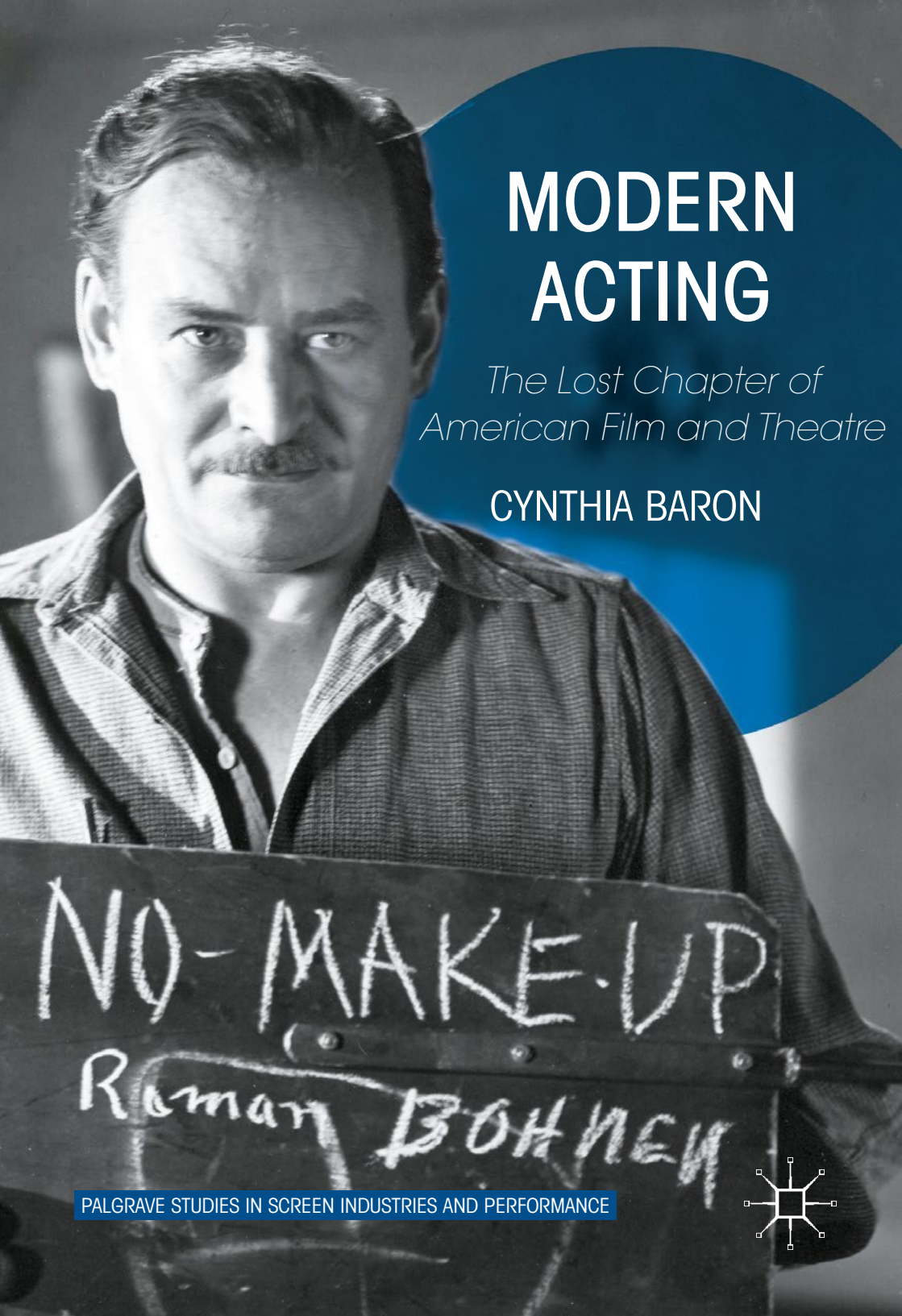

MODERN ACTING

The Lost Chapter of American Film and Theatre

CYNTHIA BARON

PALGRAVE STUDIES IN SCREEN INDUSTRIES AND PERFORMANCE

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Cynthia Baron

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Introduction

In twenty-first-century America, the various components of the performing arts industry (theatre, film, television, new media) depend on actors' creative labor.[1] Big-budget productions, from Hollywood blockbusters to Broadway shows with film stars, feature skilled actors whose cogent expressivity contributes to audiences' emotional engagement. Cable and online offerings, from the nuanced characterizations in series television to the expanding archive of performing arts documents (backstage interviews, cult TV shows, Vines), make actors' performances part of daily conversations and ways of imagining the world. To create computer-generated characters, animators study acting and often work closely with the actors whose vocal and motion-capture performances provide a foundation for conveying characters' thoughts and temperaments.[2]

As is to be expected, the exercises and techniques that performers use to hone their skills and create characterizations tend to concern actors rather than audiences. The views of different acting teachers remain professional rather than public knowledge. For example, most contemporary actors are probably aware of approaches associated with Michael Chekhov, Jerzy Grotowski, and Tadashi Suzuki, just a sampling of the practitioners discussed in Alison Hodge's anthology *Actor Training* (2010). By comparison, American audience members would probably have little familiarity with the work and ideas of these individuals. But if asked to identify an acting technique and acting teacher, people will invariably mention Method acting and Lee Strasberg.

Method acting's visibility in American society makes it a good starting point for considering other acting teachers and acting strategies important

in the 1930s and 1940s, for even general impressions about the Method are a way to begin exploring the strategies that Strasberg's initial contemporaries saw as key to creating "truthful" performances. My project involves belated recognition of acting teachers such as Lillian Albertson, Josephine Dillon, Sophie Rosenstein, Charles Jehlinger (at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts), Gilmor Brown (at the Pasadena Playhouse), and the theatre expatriates, many from the Group Theatre, who formed the Actors' Laboratory in Hollywood (1941–1950). My study examines well-known material pertaining to Method acting, as well as unfamiliar evidence provided by acting manuals, oral histories, and other archival records concerning American acting in the 1930s and 1940s.[3] It explores Strasberg's Method approach to actor training and the ideas of various acting teachers whose shared vision of the actor, acting challenges, and strategies for creating characterizations constitutes what they considered Modern acting. In the course of disentangling Modern acting from Strasberg's Method, my discussions inevitably touch on acting techniques discussed by Russian actor-director Konstantin Stanislavsky and the two people best known for circulating his ideas in America, Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskaya.

Modern acting could, at first sight, appear to be a highly ambiguous term. It might seem to suggest the acting styles that evolved in western theatrical productions from the 1500s forward, or perhaps the minimalist characterizations in modernist film and theatre productions, or even the performance of social norms in various iterations of modern life. Yet it can have quite a specific meaning. The acting teachers at the center of my study refer to Modern acting and modern actors when discussing their ideas about creating performances suited to modern drama (associated with playwrights such as Henrik Ibsen and Anton Chekhov) and the new stagecraft movement, which in the USA featured work by designers such as Robert Edmond Jones, Norman Bel Geddes, Boris Aronson, and Mordecai Gorelik.

For instance, *Modern Acting: A Manual* (1936) is the title of the comprehensive volume co-authored by Sophie Rosenstein, a University of Washington drama teacher who later became a drama coach in studio-era Hollywood.[4] *Modern Acting: A Guide for Stage, Screen, and Radio* (1940) is the title of the book by Josephine Dillon, best known as Clark Gable's mentor and first wife, and whose work as a non-commercial Little Theatre director and acting teacher in Portland, Oregon, led to a career as a Hollywood drama coach starting in the 1920s.[5] Stella Adler, who is

generally identified as formulating one version of Method acting, but who, I believe, is best understood as a teacher of Modern acting from 1934 forward, explains that the ability to "communicate complex and subtle ideas, like those that appear in Strindberg, Ibsen, Shaw, and Arthur Miller," is essential for a "modern actor," whose work is grounded in the ideas of Stanislavsky rather than those associated with "'the Method.'"[6]

Modern acting techniques represent one set of strategies American acting teachers formulated to facilitate performances keyed to the aesthetic priorities of modern drama and stagecraft, which emerged in the late nineteenth century, gained influence in the early twentieth century, and influenced American film and theatre in the 1930s and 1940s. Strasberg's Method involves another set of techniques meant to address performing arts' changing principles. In brief, Modern acting and Strasberg's Method reflect contrasting ideas about the best way for actors to negotiate the challenges presented by modern playwrights' interest in the nuances of everyday life, and modern designers' drive to create productions with a unified aesthetic, often presented in increasingly intimate performance spaces, including motion picture scenes where little more than "the change of expression in the eyes of the actor" could convey a character's "slightest change of mood or thought."[7]

As subsequent chapters will illustrate, different ideas about ways to address challenges posed by modern drama and new stagecraft led Modern acting teachers and Strasberg to adopt opposing views on what constituted "real" emotion and how to create it during performance. For instance, Modern acting teachers recognized that personal associations could be useful for building characterizations. Sophie Rosenstein notes that "in the first rehearsals even the trained actor finds that recollection of specific experience clarifies action and feeling in the portrayal of his new role."[8] However, as rehearsals progress, the actor "will find that the proper emotions in the right degree of intensity now appear in response to the particular circumstances of the present play."[9] Moreover, from a Modern acting perspective, "truthful" emotion during performance occurs only when an actor is "concentrated entirely upon the life he is portraying."[10] By comparison, Strasberg makes personal experiences crucial to performance. His Method leads actors to use substitutions (formulated by themselves or their director) during performance that are "different from that set forth by the play."[11] Setting aside the Modern acting view that an actor should live *the part* and think "what the character is thinking," Strasberg's

Method trains actors to *relive* personal experiences to make their "real feelings expressive on stage."[12]

Design and Delimitations

Why would my study of acting techniques center on the 1930s and 1940s, especially when two of the acting teachers, Lee Strasberg (1901–1982) and Stella Adler (1901–1992), gained visibility after this period, and when actors in twenty-first-century America still use Modern acting techniques and Strasberg's Method? Because several histories of American acting focus on the 1920s, in particular the Moscow Art Theatre tours (1923, 1924), and then skip to Method acting in the 1950s, with the Group Theatre (1931–1941) presented as essentially a link between the Moscow Art Theatre and the Actors Studio in New York, where Strasberg served as artistic director from 1951.[13] Perhaps influenced by Strasberg's statement that the Method is "the summation of the work that has been done on the actor's problem for the last eighty years," the teleological dimension of many accounts portrays the 1930s and 1940s as a time of inactivity, a waiting period until vital developments come to light at the Actors Studio.[14]

At the same time, a number of feminist scholars have called attention to the contrasting positions of Strasberg and Adler, which took memorable form in 1934, when Adler presented fellow Group Theatre members with ideas on acting to which she had been introduced during a concentrated period of study with Stanislavsky.[15] We will revisit this event, but to describe it now in the briefest terms, Strasberg chose not to attend Adler's (August 7) lecture, instead delivering his own the following day, in which he announced, "I teach the Strasberg Method, not the Stanislavsky System."[16] To expand on existing insights about the Strasberg–Adler confrontation, I believe it important to note that the ideas Adler shared with her Group Theatre colleagues were articulated by other Modern acting teachers in the 1930s and 1940s, who also recognized that actors of the period were searching for ways to "feel the part."[17]

For example, in her 1940s manual, Josephine Dillon shares the following exchange. A player asks: "how can we make the part real to the audience [unless we] feel the emotions of the role ourselves"; she responds by saying: "You will find that a deep, sympathetic understanding of the part is better than the reproduction of the emotional state of the character you are portraying."[18] Similarly, writing in 1936, Sophie Rosenstein explains: "A question which is often brought up in the classroom in regard

to relaxation is 'If my character is tense and nervous, shouldn't I be tense and nervous?'"[19] Illuminating the Modern acting perspective, Rosenstein notes: "The answer is that there is a difference between the tenseness of the character and the tenseness of the actor portraying that character."[20] Making a comparable point about the limitations of using personal experiences as the basis for emotion in performance, in her 1947 volume *Motion Picture Acting*, Lillian Albertson (actor, theatre director, and Hollywood drama coach) observes: "Many times I have seen young actors in motion pictures try to lash themselves into a pathetic mood … to think of something *real* that will harrow their souls … In and out they go in an agonizing attempt to *feel* something."[21] Her acting manual outlines techniques for creating "real" emotion through script analysis and ongoing life study and actor training.

The observations by Dillon, Rosenstein, and Albertson are a sign that the aesthetic values woven into modern drama and new stagecraft made portrayals featuring "real" feeling a priority for actors of the period. With this in mind, the 1934 confrontation between Strasberg and Adler need not be seen as Strasberg framed it—as a demand for "truthfulness of experience and of expression" versus an emphasis on "the rhetorical and external nature of acting."[22] We can also set aside the idea that it aligns Strasberg with emotion and Adler with action. Rather, the confrontation connects Adler to Modern acting; Strasberg's emphasis on personal substitutions had dominated his teaching and directing with the Group Theatre members from 1931 to 1934, but the position Adler outlined coincided with that held by other Modern acting teachers in the 1930s and 1940s.

Adler's interest in circulating Stanislavsky's ideas illuminates a period on the timeline of American acting history, one distinguished by the articulation of Modern acting principles. Her involvement in the study and teaching of acting strategies is noteworthy not for its singularity, but because it is indicative of the era. To note just a few publications or formal articulations of acting technique, Rosamond Gilder, a key *Theater Arts* staff member from 1924 to 1948, published *Enter the Actress: The First Women in Theatre* in 1931. Two years later, Richard Boleslavsky, known for his lectures that introduced Americans to Stanislavsky's ideas, published *Acting: The First Six Lessons*. In addition, Madame Eva Alberti, head of the New York College of Expression (also known as Alberti's School of Expression), brought out *A Handbook of Acting Based on the New Pantomime* in 1933.[22] An abridged translation of Stanislavsky's *An Actor Prepares* appeared in 1936—which is the same year that Sophie

Rosenstein's acting manual and Pasadena Playhouse founder Gilmor Brown's *General Principles of Play Direction* were published. *Players at Work: Acting According to the Actors*, with interviews conducted by Eustis Morton, appeared in 1937, and *The Actor Creates* by Aristide D'Angelo, an instructor at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, was published in 1939.[23] Josephine Dillon's manual came out in 1940, followed by Lillian Albertson's in 1947. The Actors' Laboratory in Hollywood held workshops between 1945 and 1947 to coordinate teaching in its various acting classes; the transcripts are at UCLA. The English-language publication of Stanislavsky's *Building a Character* appeared in 1949 following his death in 1938. Transcriptions of Charles Jehlinger's lectures at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts circulated among his students as early as 1918; they were compiled for limited publication in 1958 after his death in 1951. While the varied ideas in all this material cannot be boiled down to a single thought, they consistently point to the view that actors should expend labor on script analysis and craft ensemble performances to create the "perfect expression" of their own roles, which are seamlessly integrated into "the total theatrical illusion" of productions ranging from realist to romantic to classic dramas and comedies.[24]

In addition to recognizing the era's engaged activity, my discussion also examines the 1930s and 1940s, in that the these two decades represent an identifiable period in America's performing arts industry. During this time, theatre lost its leading position, and film reigned supreme—that is, until television became the nation's primary performing arts provider, as TV ownership rose from "one-half of 1 per cent … to 84 per cent" of all households between 1948 and 1962.[25] Commercial television transmission, available before World War II but withdrawn when the USA entered the conflict, quickly increased once it became legal again in 1946. By 1950, there were ninety-eight commercial TV stations; by 1953, there were 233 stations generating product over and above programming supplied by the three national networks, NBC, CBS, and ABC.[26]

In the 1930s and 1940s, material conditions in the performing arts industry led Modern acting principles to be circulated throughout the theatre and film sectors. Theatre could no longer use a substantial percentage of its highly trained workforce of actors. Concurrently, when combined with Hollywood's assembly-line production system, the new pressures of sound cinema made actors with the expertise to create modern, living characters, and "real" emotion essential to the film industry. In sum, economic shifts in America's performing arts business, changing

industrial production conditions, and the era's aesthetic priorities led to the articulation and wide dissemination of Modern acting principles during the studio era (the 1930s and 1940s).

Although one might view theatre "as an isolated institution," by considering theatre, film, and electronic media as components of America's performing arts industry, it is possible to see that forces affecting US theatre in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries "went on to create the even more centralized motion-picture industry (and later the television industry)."[27] Scholars have identified two significant moments of change leading up to the twenty-year period when commercial cinema dominated America's performing arts industry.

The first began in the 1870s, when local theatre companies started to find that they were unable to compete with new touring productions led by a handful of stars performing roles for which they were famous. The system of traveling companies led to increased centralization: New York became the hub of America's theatre business, and booking agents, who arranged contracts between producers and theatre managers, rose to power. By controlling performance bookings in theatres across the country, and by promoting productions led by its own member Charles Frohman, the Theatrical Syndicate (established in 1896) monopolized the US theatre business until the 1910s, when the Shubert Corporation, another organization with enough capital to achieve vertical integration of production, distribution, and exhibition, gained ascendency. The transition that began in the 1870s—from a nationwide array of isolated stock companies, which offered a varied repertoire, to a centralized system of touring productions that delivered star performances and selected hit productions to audiences in the cities and the hinterlands—has been described as American theatre's "industrial revolution," because it so clearly reflected changes in other newly industrialized production sectors.[28]

The second development that shaped the period at the heart of my study culminated in the 1920s, when theatre could no longer compete with the less expensive entertainment offered by the new network of movie theatres, which provided ostensibly the same high-quality performing arts products supplied by the centralized touring productions that had led audiences throughout America to see themselves as consumers "entitled to 'the very best.'"[29] In this instance, the revolution transforming America's performing arts industry rested on "a gradual change in the habits of theatregoers" nationwide; with "more opportunities for satisfactory entertainment from movies at a lower price," people went to the

theatre less often, and once the "movies had taken over the job of providing everyday entertainment … a play had to have extraordinary appeal if it was to make any money."[30]

The drive to create productions with enough star power, prestige, and/or spectacle increased both costs and risks, and theatre productions "began to fall into categories of 'hits' and 'flops.'"[31] Shows that did not immediately attract large audiences were closed quickly to reduce loss on investment; this caused a "reduction in the number of theater weeks per season, beginning in 1926–1927."[32] The escalating financial risks led to fewer productions by the 1928–1929 season. Ronald Wainscott notes that while "the general theatrical decline—fewer Broadway openings and more theater closings—was gradual," the figures are striking; there were "264 productions in 76 theatres" during the 1927–1928 season, but after 1938 "Broadway never reached 100 productions, and by 1940 the numbers were reduced to 69 productions in 32 theaters."[33] Developments affecting this segment of the country's performing arts industry led to the diaspora of acting talent and Modern acting principles.

My emphasis on the 1930s and 1940s as a particular era in the American performing arts industry, and as a time when the acting profession developed techniques well suited to modern drama, reflects my interest in exploring this lost chapter in the history of American acting from the standpoint of actors' creative labor. So, rather than examine actors' performances from the outside, aiming to identify salient features of acting styles or embedded cultural values, I try to address questions such as: how did actors of the period discuss their work; what types of aesthetic and material factors affected their working methods and working lives; what do the careers of actors and acting teachers reveal about the period?

For me, exploring these questions has illuminated the fact that during the 1930s and 1940s, a number of individuals made tangible contributions to acting theory, formulating Modern acting strategies designed to facilitate actors' efforts to address the challenges of modern drama, new stagecraft, and the diverse working conditions of the multifaceted performing arts industry. Examining actors' experiences has also provided a window into larger developments, for over the course of these two decades, American actors were also American workers during the Great Depression, American citizens called to participate in World War II, and then members of an American industry targeted by Cold War anticommunists.

Part I suggests ways to reimagine the performing arts industry in the 1930s and 1940s, and to see Modern acting as a coherent set of principles.

Chapter 1, "A Twenty-First-Century Perspective," outlines parallels between actors' careers in the 1930s and 1940s, and today's multidimensional performing arts industry, where actors find work in theatre, film, and television, sometimes adding voice work and motion-capture acting to their portfolios. Offering a glimpse of actors' work in the 1930s, it notes the contrast between the silent era, when directors talked performers through a scene, and the sound era, when actors came to the set prepared to work without directorial input even between takes; taking the career of Ronald Colman as an example, the chapter also reveals the growing sense of professionalism in the acting community, a development suggested by actors following suit when writers and directors left the producer-dominated Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to form their own guilds in 1933.

Chapter 2, "Acting Strategies, Modern Drama, and New Stagecraft," sets the stage for examining Modern acting techniques by considering them alongside the perhaps more familiar strategies specific to Strasberg's Method. (Note that Method style is analyzed in Chap. 4.) The chapter assesses Strasberg's Method in relation to Stanislavsky's ideas in order to clarify Strasberg's position that the Method is distinctive because it departs from Stanislavsky. To shed light on Strasberg's unique contribution, the chapter illustrates why the Method is not a derivative of Stanislavsky's System, but instead rests on a different view of acting, actors, the relationship between actors and scripts, and the role of actors and directors.

Chapter 3, "Modern Acting: A Conscious Approach," considers the ideas of acting teachers who did not see a need to revise Stanislavsky's work; it provides an introduction to techniques described by: Josephine Dillon, author of *Modern Acting: A Guide to Stage, Screen, and Radio*; Sophie Rosenstein, co-author of *Modern Acting: A Manual*; the 1945–1947 workshops at the Actors' Laboratory in Hollywood; and Stella Adler, member of the legendary Adler family of actors, who began her career as a child in Yiddish theatre, studied at and performed in productions by the American Laboratory Theatre, became an active member of the Group Theatre, appeared in Hollywood films, and in the 1930s began to combine work as an acting teacher with her career as an actor. As we will see, Modern acting techniques, which are designed to address the varied *acting problems* of building characterizations and developing the requisite concentration and physical ability to embody those characterizations, contrast with the Method's more singular emphasis on addressing "the actor's problem" to experience real feeling during performance.[34] Thus,

Modern acting teachers discuss an array of concerns, including: voice and body work; observation and life study; strategies for script analysis; and pantomime sense-memory improvisations to develop actors' attention to details in their environment, a goal that differs from Strasberg's emphasis on using sense memories to access personal experiences.

Chapter 4, "Modern Acting: Obscured by the Method's 'American' Style," considers cultural developments that led Method acting to be seen as the only emotion-based, internal approach to contemporary performance. It explores tensions surrounding the influence British traditions have had on American film and theatre, and the attack on British and Anglo-American actors mounted by members of the Actors Studio starting in the late 1940s. The chapter reconsiders the careers of Montgomery Clift and Marlon Brando, whose performances in the late 1940s and early 1950s seemed to embody a new "American" style, but who trained with Modern rather than Method acting teachers. It also explores ways in which Marilyn Monroe's association with the Actors Studio contributed to Method acting's visibility in American popular culture.

Part II provides a context for the Modern acting techniques articulated in the 1930s and 1940s, by looking at the rise of actor training in America in the late nineteenth century, and how increased mass production in the performing arts industry led Hollywood to become the home base for Modern acting teachers, from Moscow Art Theatre expatriate Maria Ouspenskaya to Group Theatre members Roman Bohnen, Phoebe Brand, J. Edward Bromberg, and Morris Carnovsky. Chapter 5, "Developments in Modern Theatre and Modern Acting, 1875–1930," outlines ideas about acting that proliferated in the USA during this earlier period when theatre practitioners developed increasingly formalized approaches to performance. Drawing on work such as James McTeague's *Before Stanislavsky: American Professional Acting Schools and Acting Theory 1875–1925* (1993), the chapter outlines work in some of the actor training programs that were established as the centralized touring companies diminished opportunities for young actors to learn their craft in America's local theatre companies. It considers the contributions of the repertory companies led by Minnie Maddern Fiske and Eva Le Gallienne. The chapter also summarizes the ideas about acting circulated by Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskaya, who lectured and taught courses at the American Laboratory Theatre in New York.

Chapter 6, "Shifting Fortunes in the Performing Arts Business," briefly traces the careers of Henry Fonda and several other Hollywood studio-era

stars to illustrate links between theatre and film as summer stock, resident theatres, and Broadway became training grounds and audition sites for actors who would eventually find secure employment in Hollywood. The chapter also analyzes developments in the Group Theatre to shed light on economic factors, contrasting ideas about the responsibilities of actors and directors, and the many connections between Broadway and Hollywood. The chapter's material historiography considers ways that the careers of actors in the 1930s and 1940s were "influenced, even determined, by economic, industrial and technological factors" shaping the Broadway-Hollywood entertainment complex.[35]

Part III provides a window into the professional world that circulated Modern acting techniques in the 1930s and 1940s. As theatre provided fewer opportunities for actors to learn their craft, the major Hollywood studios established their own drama schools, institutions such as the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York and the Pasadena Playhouse in Southern California became sources for credentialed actors, and the Actors' Laboratory in Hollywood became a refuge for theatre expatriates, an adjunct to the studio drama schools, and a venue for the articulation of Modern acting principles. Chapter 7, "The American Academy of Dramatic Arts," examines the aesthetic priorities and acting techniques circulated in the training program at one of America's notable acting schools, which, between 1875 and 1925, contributed to the articulation of Modern acting principles *and* served as the training ground for a number of actors with prominent careers in theatre and film during the 1930s and 1940s. Chapter 8, "The Pasadena Playhouse," provides a brief history of this resident theatre and identifies ways in which it figured into the careers of many actors in the 1930s and 1940s. The chapter also discusses the various components of its actor training program and the Modern acting principles articulated and circulated by founder Gilmor Brown and the other teachers at the Playhouse.

Chapter 9, "Training in Modern Acting on the Studio Lots," sheds new light on some of the industrial practices that emerged due to Hollywood's transition to sound, with archival records revealing how the pressing need for actors who could build complex characterizations before coming to the set prompted Hollywood to hire a collection of acting experts in the 1930s. The chapter discusses the studios' actor training programs and the careers of drama coaches, who trained young actors, and of dialogue directors, who met privately with actors to build characterizations.

Chapter 10, "The Actors' Laboratory in Hollywood," offers a history of the organization (in existence from 1941 to 1950), which included Group Theatre members and actors from New Deal theatre companies, local drama schools, and the studios. Roman "Bud" Bohnen, who was especially active in the Group Theatre after it reorganized in 1937, led the Actors' Lab until his death in 1949. This chapter elaborates on ideas discussed in Chap. 3 to provide a better picture of the Lab's vision of Modern acting. It outlines the Lab's actor training program, and traces the effect that Cold War politics had on the organization, including its erasure from American acting history.

Part IV revisits Modern acting principles, developing points raised in the opening chapters to examine the underlying assumptions and legacies of Modern and Method acting. Chapter 11, "Modern Acting: Stage and Screen," draws on interviews with various actors of the period to show how they used Modern acting strategies to build characterizations for both stage and screen productions. The chapter looks at material in Josephine Dillon's *Modern Acting* manual and Lillian Albertson's *Motion Picture Acting* to illustrate the stage–screen connections as well as the adjustments actors learned to make when working in film.

Chapter 12, "The Legacy of Modern Acting," analyzes changes in the performing arts industry that affected actor training programs and Americans' perceptions about actors and acting. To consider once more why Modern acting, as a coherent set of practices, has been overlooked while Method acting became a part of American popular culture, the chapter examines the consequences of equating Modern acting with Stanislavsky's ideas. To illustrate the differing legacies of Modern and Method acting, it looks at some of the Cold War perspectives that contributed to Method acting's association with a certain form of "American" vitality. It also highlights a few examples that reveal the contrasting ways in which Modern and Method acting principles figure into the work of contemporary performance.

Despite my efforts to establish a lucid context for Modern acting in the 1930s and 1940s, I often simply touch on subjects that have entire fields of inquiry devoted to them. For instance, many of the debates animating Stanislavsky studies are beyond the scope of this project. My comments highlight the significance of new stagecraft, but they skim the surface of research on Richard Wagner, the Meiningen Players, André Antoine, Harley Granville-Barker, Jacques Copeau, and others. Similarly, I point to the connection between modern drama and Modern acting, but cannot

begin to incorporate insights from the scholarship on retrospective action in modern drama or on playwrights working in various countries between the 1870s and 1920s, especially when studies on authors like Henrik Ibsen or Eugene O'Neill constitute fields unto themselves. My focus on the 1930s and 1940s leads me to look only briefly at the preceding years; while my interest in illuminating actors' working methods and economic realities means that I necessarily give short shrift to questions of acting style, scholars such as Martin Shingler, Ronald Wainscott, and Brenda Murphy are conducting research in these areas.[36]

My project offers a glimpse of the Little Theatre movement by discussing the Pasadena Playhouse, and gives substance to accounts of early American actor training programs by analyzing acting principles circulating at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. It traces the transition from local theatre companies to centralized performing arts production and explores the careers of actors and acting teachers whose professional lives illustrate connections between Broadway and Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s. Readers who are familiar with the material history of American cinema will see striking parallels between the American film and theatre industries in the first decades of the twentieth century, with moguls and monopolies featuring prominently in both segments of the performing arts; despite my interest in these matters, I can only touch on such developments covered in the respective studies of American theatre and American cinema.

Given my focus on Modern acting, an account of the many individuals associated with Method acting—as teachers, actors, or cultural icons—is beyond the scope of the book. As with the field of Stanislavsky studies, I cannot address the debates that fuel writing about the Method as an approach to and/or style of performance. Yet my look at Modern acting should interest supporters and critics of the Method alike, especially since it considers the degree to which techniques outlined by Stella Adler dovetail with the principles articulated by Modern acting teachers such as Sophie Rosenstein, Lillian Albertson, and Josephine Dillon.

The chapters that follow describe the acting theories and institutional alliances that created a bridge between Broadway and Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s. By analyzing working strategies outlined by acting teachers, and connections among the various segments of the performing arts business, the book aims to augment studies of film and theatre. Throughout, it suggests that the ideas and people important to Modern acting in the 1930s and 1940s belong to a lost chapter that warrants

consideration, and that drawing attention to them can illuminate aesthetic priorities and material factors shaping actors' work during the period and the threads of influence informing acting practices in today's performing arts industry.

Notes

1. To be consistent with gender neutral terms such as "director," I use "actor" to refer to all actors. To minimize intrusion when quoting other authors, I have not changed their (dated) references to the actor as "he."
2. See Derek Hayes and Chris Webster, *Acting and Performance for Animation* (New York: Focal Press, 2013); Ed Hooks, *Acting for Animators* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2011); Angie Jones and Jamie Oliff, *Thinking Animation: Bridging the Gap between 2D and CG* (Boston: Thomson, 2007); and John Kundert-Gibbs and Kristin Kundert-Gibbs, *Action! Acting Lessons for CG Animators* (Indianapolis: Wiley, 2009).
3. I consulted records at: the American Academy for Dramatic Arts, the American Film Institute, the Huntington Library in Pasadena, the Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Margaret Herrick Library, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Pasadena Playhouse, the Pasadena Public Library, the image library at Photofest in New York, Southern Methodist University, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California.
4. *Modern Acting: A Manual* was co-authored by: Sophie Rosenstein, a faculty member at the University of Washington in Seattle and director of two of its public theatres, the Penthouse Theatre and the Studio Theatre; Wilbur Sparrow, a faculty member and assistant dramatic director of these theatres; and Larrae Albert Haydon, one of the drama program's graduate students, who had been an instructor at the University of Oklahoma and was the executive director of the Civic Theatre School in Portland, Oregon, when the manual was published. Haydon later joined the faculty at Montana State University (now the University of Montana, Missoula), where he led its theatre company, the Montana Masquers. During World War II, he organized recreational events for American service members; following the war, he worked for twenty-five years in public health (alcoholism treatment). Glenn Hughes, a faculty member in the English Department at the University of Washington, was named head of the Division of Drama when it was established in 1930. The Penthouse Theatre was one of the first theatre-in-the-round venues, and student shows were part of Seattle social life during Hughes' tenure.

5. The Little Theatre Movement emerged in the 1910s and gained momentum in the 1920s, with leading companies established in Chicago, Boston, and Pasadena. The movement included the Washington Square Players, which formed the basis for the Theatre Guild, and the Provincetown Players, which became a professional company after its move to New York. The movement was a response to the perceived commercialism of Broadway and touring companies; its productions featured progressive themes and artistic experimentation.
6. Stella Adler, *The Technique of Acting* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 3, 6.
7. Josephine Dillon, *Modern Acting: A Guide for Stage, Screen and Radio* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1940), 265.
8. Sophie Rosenstein, Larrae A. Haydon, and Wilbur Sparrow, *Modern Acting: A Manual* (New York: Samuel French, 1936), 15.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 10.
11. Lee Strasberg, *A Dream of Passion: The Development of the Method*, ed. Evangeline Morphos (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), 86.
12. Ibid., 86, 6.
13. See David Garfield, *The Actors Studio: A Player's Place* (New York: Macmillan, 1984); Steve Vineberg, *Method Actors: Three Generations of an American Acting Tradition* (New York: Schirmer, 1991); Foster Hirsh, *A Method to Their Madness: The History of the Actors Studio* (New York: Da Capo, 2001).
14. Strasberg, *Dream of Passion*, 85.
15. See Helen Krich Chinoy, *The Group Theatre: Passion, Politics, and Performance in the Depression Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Rosemary Malague, *An Actress Prepares: Women and "the Method"* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Wendy Smith, *Real Life Drama: The Group Theatre and America, 1931–1940* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990).
16. Qtd. in Robert Lewis, *Slings and Arrows: Theater in My Life* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), 71.
17. Dillon, *Modern Acting: A Guide*, 259.
18. Ibid.
19. Rosenstein, et al., *Modern Acting*: *A Manual*, 83.
20. Ibid.
21. Lillian Albertson, *Motion Picture Acting* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1947), 61. Several authors I quote make a liberal use of italics. To minimize notation, I identify only instances when I have added italics.
22. Alberti taught elocution at Dr. H. R. Palmer's Summer School of Music in 1886, and at Columbia University in New York in 1915. The 1933 book is co-authored by R. Hyndman.

23. *Players at Work* has interviews with: Helen Hayes, Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, Alla Nazimova, Katharine Cornell, Burgess Meredith, Fred Astaire, and a chapter on the singing actor by Lotte Lehman. There were many other books from the 1930s and 1940s on the subject of acting, including: Alexander Magnus Drummond, *A Manual of Play Production* (New York: New York State College of Agriculture, 1937); Herschel Leonard Bricker, ed., *Our Theatre Today: A Composite Handbook on the Art, Craft, and Management of the Contemporary Theatre* (New York: Samuel French, 1936); Samuel Selden, *First Steps in Acting* (New York: F. S. Crofts, 1947).
24. Brenda Murphy, *American Realism and American Drama, 1880–1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 34.
25. Jack Poggi, *Theater in America: The Impact of Economic Forces, 1870–1967* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968), 86.
26. Yannis Tzioumakis, *American Independent Cinema: An Introduction* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 110.
27. Poggi, *Theater in America*, xvii.
28. Ibid., 27.
29. Ibid., 86.
30. Ibid., 84.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ronald H. Wainscott, *The Emergence of the Modern American Theater, 1914–1929* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 163.
34. Strasberg, *Dream of Passion*, 85.
35. James Chapman, et al., "Introduction," in *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches*, ed. James Chapman, et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5.
36. See Murphy, *American Realism and American Drama*; Martin Shingler, *When Warners Brought Broadway to Hollywood* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Arthur Gerwirtz and James L. Kolb, eds., *Art, Glitter, and Glitz: Mainstream Playwrights and Popular Theatre in 1920s America* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004); Ronald H. Wainscott, *The Emergence of the Modern American Theater 1914–1929* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997). For early studies of modern drama, see: Archibald Henderson, *The Changing Drama: Contributions and Tendencies* (Cincinnati: Stewart and Kidd, 1919); Storm Jameson, *Modern Drama in Europe* (London: W. Collins Sons & Co., 1920). For pertinent feminist studies, see: Patricia R. Schroeder, *The Presence of the Past in Modern Drama* (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989); Gay Gibson Cima, *Performing Women: Female Characters, Male Playwrights, and the Modern Stage* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

PART I

Making Modern Acting Visible