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## IMPROVISATION IN PERFORMANCE

*Yusupova Marina Rimovna*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> State Institute of Arts and Culture of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the Article:** Analysis of the emergence of productive improvisational self-esteem through the experience of Maskharabaz-Kizikchi in Uzbekistan in training traditional theater actors, focusing on stage transformation issues.

**Research Methods:** The research employs observation, comparison, experimentation, and the historical periodization method.

**Research Results:** The study has identified the primary stages in the development of a creative personality within the performing arts, including the requirements for an improvisational actor and techniques for fostering creative self-esteem.

**Practical Application:** The article emphasizes that the spontaneity of stage presence results from the integration of psychophysical actions that guide actors toward transformation. It highlights the importance of consciously mastering imaginary realities during practical classes to foster the interaction between conscious and subconscious creativity.

**Keywords:** *improvisation, identification of circumstances, role, character, personality scale*

### Introduction

The discussion of creating an artistic image on stage naturally commences with defining the author's "proposed circumstances." Only after grasping the tone of the material's presentation, the author's main idea, and the logic of the character's life does the actor begin selecting expressive means for the role. These means dictate the manner of existence within the fictional setting. The issue of complete reincarnation is highly complex and multifaceted, with many actors never reaching this pinnacle of artistic creativity. By solely defining "proposed circumstances" without delving into their origins, the actor is left with only one option: adapting all material to

adjust all the material to your own "I". While this approach may work for performers with distinctive personalities, it poses a challenge when that isn't the case. Such a situation not only leads to poor performance but also risks the degradation of the art form itself.

American teacher Sanford Meissner (1905–1997), who founded the Acting School in Hollywood, emphasized the importance of various elements in preparing for a role, including the "identification of circumstances and relationships, emotional preparation, specification, paraphrasing, determination of actions and goals, and, finally, ensuring that the role and character are developed in a cohesive manner without

one aspect replacing another” (Bartou A., 2015).

It’s worth noting the significant influence on Sanford Meissner’s work from the Stanislavsky System and the Moscow Art Theater, which toured in New York in 1923. It is Konstantin Sergeevich Stanislavsky who “teaches not how to play this or that role, but how to create organically” (Melik-Zaharov S.V., Bogatyrev SH.SH., 1963. p. 122).

In this process, improvisation stands out as a key phenomenon of artistic creativity. In Uzbekistan, improvisation plays a vital role in training actors for the traditional Maskharaboz-Kizikchi theater. It enriches the artistic form with a plethora of sounds, words, intonations, movements, gestures, poses, and facial transformations.

According to (Tolshin A.V., 2011. p. 10), improvisation originated as one of the original forms of artistic creativity, contributing to the development of various arts such as plastic, musical, dramatic, poetic (lyric and epic), and folk arts.

Moreover, improvisation necessitates that an actor in traditional theater be a creator who can perceive and interpret the world around them. The training of such actors involves a lengthy process of learning perception, analysis, developing special sensitivity, and paying close attention to the events on stage. Saadi Makhsum’s “acting skills” school, which spanned from 5 to 10 years, comprised two stages. The first focused on imitation and parody, while the second emphasized the art of language, joke (*askia*), crafting stage narratives, and delivering monologues. (Yusupova M.R., 2022. p. 35) notes that an actor-improviser needed in-depth knowledge of society and nature, the themes and plots’ sources, classical poetry, professional and folk music, dance, folklore, and the ability to incorporate these cultural riches into their creativity.

Drawing from the traditional Maskharaboz-Kizikchi theater, Mannon Uygur, a renowned master of Uzbek performing arts, employed trial and error to develop his unique approach to training new actors.

The term “improvisation” originates from the Latin word *Improvisus*, which means unexpected. According to Patrice Pavié’s “Dictionary of the Theatre,” improvisation refers to “a technique of dramatic acting where an

actor performs something spontaneous, unplanned, and created in the moment during the performance” (Pavi P., 1991. p. 122).

In contemporary performing arts, improvisation encompasses various approaches, particularly focusing on the “expressionist theory of the body in art.” However, many directors and educators have demonstrated through their works that improvisation should not be an uncontrolled expression of acting, as noted by M. Lobanov (1900–1959), director of the Semperante theater. Peter Brook also explored improvisation to move away from static theatre, aiming to integrate sound, gesture, and movement into his directorial language to transcend the limitations of verbal-centric theatre.

Improvisational theatre such as *Del Arte* has revived ancient mask techniques in actor training. Aristotle in his “Poetics” acknowledged that both tragedy and comedy evolved from improvisational roots (Aristotel’ “Poetika”. 1957. p. 55).

The Polish director Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999) pursued a path toward acting freedom through plasticity. His theory focused on a heightened readiness to perceive sounds and space not as actions but as reactions to external influences (Bartou A., 2015. p. 277). Grotowski emphasized that the essence of improvisation lies not just in the potential for spontaneous action but in its ability to unveil a deeper truth on stage and inspire active engagement with existence. As Grotowski articulated, “When we talk about the score of a physical action, we are not discussing gestures or external attributes like staging. Physical action merges impulses with intention” (Bartou A., 2015. p. 278).

Emphasizing the points above, we refer to Stanislavsky’s insights from “The Actor’s Work on Oneself,” where he discusses the technique of achieving the main artistic goal: “the more complex the task and conveyed feeling, the more vibrant and nuanced the methods should be, with a diverse range of functions and types” (Stanislavskij K.S. 1985. p. 323).

Conscious mastery of imaginary reality fosters the interplay between conscious and subconscious creativity. In this context, “meaning” becomes a crucial element of an

actor's consciousness. The selection, development, and transformation of significant experiences into emotional structures that resonate with the audience reflect the actor's attitude towards a given phenomenon. This meaning is inherently tied to the performer's values, raising questions about the scale of the actor's personality and their responsibility to culture, its preservation, and further development.

Improvisation doesn't emerge spontaneously; it arises from a unique state of creative readiness, facilitated by the Stanislavsky System. This system delineates the initial steps on the intricate and lengthy journey of shaping an actor's persona. It's not a rigid doctrine but rather the fundamental and paramount task for any aspiring actor. Stella Adler's aphorism "Your choice is your talent" underscores this notion, aligning with her esteemed career in theater, film, and television.

Teacher Korogodsky Z. Ya. (1926–2004) distinguishes between improvisation and implementation. He posits that improvisation involves intelligence, while implementation pertains to execution (Tolshin A.V., 2011. p. 37). During rehearsals, improvisation serves as a means of exploration and experimentation to refine the artistic portrayal, evolving as a result of ongoing work on the performance itself.

The spontaneity of stage presence embodies the fusion of psychophysical actions that guide actors toward transformation. Bringing a character to life physically demands specific psychological preparation. Therefore, numerous scientific works and monographs by esteemed teachers and researchers in theatrical art focus on cultivating a distinct sense of improvisation in students. Noteworthy figures in this domain include K.S. Stanislavsky, Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, V.L.E. Meyerhold, E.B. Vakhtangov, M.A. Chek-

hov, G.V. Christie, M.O. Knebel, B.E. Zahava, I.V. Radun, K. Khodzhaev, T.T. Azizov, D. Makhmudov, R. Usmanov, M.A. Khamidova, M.T. Tulyakhodzhaeva, and others.

Consulting these sources reveals the practical essence of these studies and an insider's comprehension of these challenges. For instance, Mikhail Chekhov, renowned for his improvisational prowess, argued that developing compositional thinking and grasping the law of polarity and contrast of opposites were essential. He emphasized, "An actor must sharpen his imagination and nurture his inspiration" (Bartou A., 2015. p. 181).

Chekhov's method paid special attention to the performer's physicality, aiming to activate gestures as a means of preparing the body for the stage. He believed in uncovering latent potential within each individual, with improvisation in actor training serving as a potent tool for this purpose. Chekhov described the spontaneity of actors as the ability to elicit an unconscious impulsive response to an imaginary situation and object, resulting in the creation of a productive action image that corresponds to this reaction (Tolshin A.V., 2011).

The theatrical space serves as the fundamental "proposed circumstance" where the body's interactions and sensations unfold. It is within this space that the performer's consciousness comes into play, facilitated by the connections established. Hence, it is imperative for improvising students to actively engage with these "proposed circumstances" and substantiate their presence within them through a vibrant imagination. The role of the teacher-artist is not to rush, prompt, or transfer tasks hastily to other performers but rather to patiently cultivate a sense of individual freedom, awakening emotions and creativity in the process.

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Contact: marinayusupova1103@gmail.com