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**Constantin Stanislavski’s Event Analysis: A Brief Overview**

**ABSTRACT**

Over the final stretch of his career as Artistic Director of the Moscow Art Theatre Constantin Stanislavski developed an analysis technique for dramatic literature called “Event Analysis”. Very little is known about this aspect of his actor training system, as he never formally published on the subject. Every serious student of Stanislavski is aware that he dedicated the tail end of his career to developing an aspect of his system called the “Method of Physical Actions”, often colloquially referred to as “Active Analysis”. This aspect of his work incorporates the psychophysical approaches of many of his former students and colleagues at the Moscow Art Theatre, primarily Michael Chekhov, Yevgeny Vakhtangov and Vsevolod Meyerhold among others. Yet almost nothing is known in actor training circles about his “Event Analysis” which is the means by which an actor reads the “blueprint” of behavior, which is the script, in order to discover the roadmap of action laid out by the author. There is only one tome in English that deals with this analysis, *Working on the Play and the Role: The Stanislavsky Method for Analyzing the Characters in a Drama* which uses an analysis of *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov as a means to introduce the method. However, despite the authors’ best intentions to explain and demonstrate the use of the methodology, this work is convoluted and complicated. The core components of the technique itself get lost in the density of the writing. Consequently, this powerful aspect of the seminal Russian acting theorist remains largely in the dark. The formidable 20<sup>th</sup> century American actor and acting teacher, Sanford Meisner, honed Stanislavski’s concept of action and developed a series of precise and efficacious exercises for American actors via the work done by the seminal American theatre company The Group Theatre. From his forays into action Meisner wrote: *“the foundation of acting is the reality of doing”*. This “doing” of which Meisner speaks is a direct derivative of Stanislavski’s “action”; the “doing” an actor must “do” is “play action”. But to what end? The answer to this question is where “Stanislavski’s “Event Analysis” enter the equation. Stanislavski’s work informs us that the actor’s job, first and foremost, is to make the “event” of the scene happen in service of the play. In other words,

they must play an action in pursuit of an objective, and by doing so the “event” of the dramatic scene comes to life. If actors don’t do this, make the event happen, there is no life brought to the dramatic structure in the script. If there is no event, then there is no forward movement of the story. Simply said, without an action moving toward a specific objective, the story can’t be told in performance. For example, one can’t “feel” a story. Feelings come as a result of the story happening both to the actor, therefore the character, and the audience. Stories need action to bring them to life. Feelings come along in the doing. There are many schools, methodologies and techniques that approach teaching actors how to play action. However, an actor can’t get to the action if they don’t know first how to read the play for the dramatic action, and, more specifically the different events embedded in the text. This essential facet of the work is rarely dealt with, and when it is it is done so usually only on a cursory level via a sub-standard script analysis class, such as one might find in a liberal arts university’s literature department, rather than one that meets the needs of actors in a professional actor-training conservatory. Stanislavski clearly observed this oversight and decided to address it. Out of this observed need, he developed an indispensable tool for actors, to mine the script for action and to fully realize their professional and artistic responsibilities. He realized that this was the only way actors could fully tell the story, according to the precise parameters set out by the playwright. This paper provides a high-level overview of this technique, by introducing and explaining the key components, tools and vocabulary of this vital, yet under appreciated, almost unknown, aspect of the great Stanislavski’s work, “Event Analysis.”

## **Preface**

First and foremost, as an actor and teacher myself, I must humbly acknowledge my unique source for this invaluable material. That is Mr. Viacheslav Dolgachev, the current Artistic Director of the New Theatre of Moscow, former producing director of the Chekhov Moscow Art Theatre, and Honored Artist of Russia. I am entirely indebted to this master teacher and formidable theatre artist for his generous and comprehensive teachings on this subject. My sincerest appreciation goes to “Slava” for sharing this valuable material with American theater artists during his workshops in New York City at the Actors Center.

I am also indebted to, and needs must acknowledge, J. Michael Miller, the founder of the Actors Center in New York City and its indispensable and inspiring Teacher Development Program (TDP), where, over five very happy and inspiring summers I had the honor of studying this methodology with Mr. Dolgachev. This life-changing program is the reason the Slava came to the States to teach. For this I, and all who studied in the TDP, am deeply grateful.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge one of my colleagues in the TDP, the Artistic Director of Theatre Squared, and Head of Acting at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, the indefatigable Distinguished Professor Amy Herzberg, without whose shared struggles in Slava’s classes analyzing Anton Chekhov’s short stories and full dramatic texts, my understanding of this methodology wouldn’t be nearly as sure footed.

## **Constantin Stanislavski’s Event Analysis**

Of the many contributions Constantin Stanislavski made to the actor’s process perhaps the most well know, and fundamental to the work of an actor, are the concepts of “action” and “objective”. Arguably none are greater as at the core of what an actor does is quite simply that, act. There is universal agreement that actors ignite an author’s imaginary world; they turn text into fully realized human behavior; they do so by the means of action. In the United States much of the Stanislavski system is, frankly, misunderstood and misrepresented, as it is unfortunately associated with his early period of work, which focused on sense memory and affective memory, based mostly on the theories of the French psychologist Theodule-Armand Ribot and his discovery of the repeatability of emotion. This was due to the early dissemination of Stanislavski’s work in the United States through the teachings of the Russian ex-patriots Maria Ouspenskya and Richard Boleslavski at the American Laboratory Theatre, and the School of Dramatic Art in New York City during the 1920s and 1930s. However, throughout his research, and particularly toward the end of his career, Stanislavski understood that more than anything else actors are after all called *act-ors* for a reason, that their fundamental obligation is to play an action in the pursuit of an objective, to make the event of the scene happen, in service of the play. They are not, for example, called

“feelers” or “tactic-ers” or anything else. One doesn’t hear a film director say: “*Lights, camera...feel!*” One does, however, hear, even to this day a director say: “*Lights, camera....action!*” One hears this specific word, action, for a reason; for how we talk about our work is how our work happens as actors. Over the course of dramatic history actors have also been referred to as “players”; even this nomenclature includes an essential process whose fundamental core values involve action. There is no way around it; to play, actors must put “the game” into action. Therefore, all roads for the actor either originate with, or return to, action. This was true during Stanislavski’s time and before: “*Suit the action to the word, the word to the action*” – Hamlet Act 3, Sc 2. It still remains true today.

Actors perform actions under imaginary circumstances; this is fundamental not only to Stanislavski’s system, but also, I would argue, to all inspired acting. Everything an actor (or character) does on the stage has to be for a reason, what Stanislavski called an “objective”. Otherwise, if this is not the case, why are they there? The character’s behavior is not random; it is carefully curated by the author, and awaits the addition of the actors’ impulses and imagination to lift it into the dimension of a fully realized human being. It is the character’s purpose, if you will, for being in the play. There is no action without an objective or purpose. *Vice versa* an actor with a purpose and no action never achieves her character’s objective and no events happen. Again, action is indispensable to acting. On this, nearly every actor and acting teacher is agreed.

Yet, there are at the very least two major components to action:

- the first is the action that the actor actually plays in the moment on stage in performance;
- the second is the action that is strategically and thoughtfully woven into the dramatic text by the playwright when they wrote the play.

This paper addresses the second component of action, as the first must be dealt with in the studio, while the actors are on their feet, literally in action. For all questions about acting are answered in the “doing”.

Stanislavski realized that most actors only focus on the first type of action, the “stage action”, and that many, even extremely talented and experienced actors, don’t really know how to read a script for their character’s action, and corresponding objectives and events. Therefore, he developed this precise, practical and practicable method for actors to divine the flow of action from the author’s given circumstances. This technique empowers actors to become “action detectives”.

Human behavior is at its core made manifest through action. As far as back as Aristotle dramatic theorists have understood that feelings come along in the doing; a person’s character is in fact borne out of the actions that they take. This brings to mind the old saying: “*Tell me what someone does and I’ll tell you who they are*”. Human beings simply don’t sit around trying to feel. Yet actors in training and/or rehearsal are often guilty of exactly this! These actors would be better served by observing their own personal lives, and noticing that

their feelings arise as a direct result of what they are *doing*; and/or often they arise from what is being *done to* them. Either way, this brings us back ground zero of acting, which is action.

Arguably, perhaps both practically and poetically, actors are professional human beings. They are behavioral alchemists who in the crucible of their own imagination mix the potion of the playwright's fictional creation with their own very real human existence. The art of acting, as well as the objective of the theatre overall, is to recreate the "human condition". It is the actor's charge then to create this "human condition", no matter the fictional behavioral boundaries.

Accordingly, the map that the actor must use to navigate the world of any dramatic story, no matter the genre of the writing, is found in the given circumstances of the play. In this regard it is helpful to think of the playwright as the architect of the world and the actor as the builder. Accordingly actors need to learn to read the architect's blueprint for how to construct a performance. One cannot imagine a general contractor beginning to assemble a building without first committing to a deep and informed study of the architect's detailed intentions. Nor would it do the contractor any good to just start building, if they didn't know how to read a blueprint. She needs to know how to read the plan; for there is an actual plan. Construction is not random. Yet, this is what happens time and time again in performance; actors begin making choices, building a performance, if you will, without a thorough and well-informed reading of the given circumstance of the play – they fail to read the blueprint, the plan, at the same level that the playwright wrote it. However, it is from these very given circumstances that the actor must spin his imaginary web and figure out what to actually do, what to actually play, to bring to life, as it were, in order to construct the building what was carefully designed by the playwright.

Stanislavski understood it necessarily followed that actors must become accomplished readers of the blueprint in order to build their performances, and here's the important part - according to the designs of the author. Playwrights are exactingly specific in laying out the particulars of their fictional world. Actors need to learn how to read these particulars as "professional human beings", for human behavior, for human action. It is only via a highly conscientious and careful reading of this blueprint that the actor can fully take in the details needed to create the behavior for the specific world in which they must professionally and artistically inhabit.

It necessarily follows that if theatre is a reproduction of behavior, then actors have to know what influences them from life, what in life makes them do what they do. As life is composed of an infinite number of circumstances this attempt can be a paralyzing proposition; in life circumstances are constantly changing and overlapping in a truly unending wave. In order to not drown in this ongoing onslaught of information one needs to organize and classify all behavioral indicators into a manageable container. The good news for the actor is that in any given dramatic text the given circumstances are *not infinite*; they are in fact *decidedly finite* and can be readily put into a helpful

format. Therefore, given a quantifiable amount of facts it is easier for the actor to organize the circumstances in a play as opposed to life, where the task proves a Sisyphean assignment on a good day. Accordingly, Stanislavski developed a process of organizing these behavioral indicators in what he called the “3 Circles of Circumstances”.

### **The 3 Circles of Circumstances: *The Major Shapers of Behavior***

Stanislavski determined that any character’s given circumstances could be placed in one of three circles. By organizing behavior, or action, this way the actor comes to a clear realization of what the event of the scene is, where it is, and, perhaps most importantly, what to do in order to make the event happen. The resulting composite picture drawn from these circumstances ultimately comprises the shapers of a character’s behavior, and lays out a specific map for the actor to follow in performance.

The first circle is called the “Large Circle of Circumstances”. This circle is comprised of the facts about the character that cannot change. These facts include: when the character was born; where they were born; in what country they were born; who were their biological parents; what gender they were born; what race they were born, their genetic makeup, where they grew up, and, of course, their entire past. For the past can never be changed. These circumstances are always “with” the character. They cannot get rid of them, although they might try to change them in one way or another. Throughout their lives the facts from the Large Circle “work” on the character, affecting their behavior at every moment, but do so in the “background” as it were. They are not the primary shapers of behavior; yet they are constantly affecting behavior behind the scenes. The facts of the Large Circle are always present, affecting everything the character does. If we think about these facts in terms of our own lives, we recognize this to be true. We always bring who we are and where we’ve been to what we do in every life event. If who we are is what we do, and what we do is shaped and comprised of the things we cannot change about ourselves, as well as all that has come before in life, these circumstances affect every choice we make, even though they might not be the main engines of our actions in any given moment.

### **The Middle Circle of Circumstances**

“The Middle Circle of Circumstances” is any discernible amount of time. Time is constantly working on us, shaping how we live life. And our relationship to time drives our behavior more actively than the circumstances found in the Large Circle. Examples of time might be as short as a “moment”, or as long as “adolescence”. They might be much more readily discernible amounts such as an hour, a dinner party, a day, a weekend, a funeral, a wedding, a battle, or a character’s “university years”. Playwrights intentionally

craft time in their narrative, usually as a sort of pressure cooker, for the characters to interact. The length and quality of this temporal element shapes how they act with one another. The amount of time might be the actual two hours of the play on stage which correspond to two hours in the lives of the characters in that story, as in Arthur Miller's play "*The Price*"; or it might cover four years in the lives of the characters, as in Anton Chekhov's "*The Seagull*"; or it might be as long as the War of the Roses in Shakespeare. Needless to say, time is always working on us, shaping what we do in a myriad of minute, and often major, ways. Our behavior as human beings is inextricably caught in the tension and release of time's eternal grasp. How much of it do we have? What is the quality of it? What is the character's relationship to it? Time, even more than the Large Circle, is one of the major shapers of how we do what we do, how we behave, which is why it is the Middle Circle of Circumstances. Actors must, accordingly, factor this temporal effect into their behavioral choices.

### **"The Small Circle of Circumstances"**

The last of Stanislavski's organizational circles is called the "Small Circle of Circumstances"; it is the "now", what is actually happening in the moment. It is in this circle where we find the primary driver of our behavior, our *action*. Action, of course, according to the laws of physics, can only happen in the "moment". It follows then that this is the domain of the actor, where the actor does her or his work. The actor's primary work is done moment to moment. Upon further examination Stanislavski determined that the Small Circle of Circumstances is further dividable into two parts.

i. The Leading Circumstance:

The first part of the Small Circle is called the "Leading Circumstance". This is the circumstance the playwright gives the actor that defines their action at any given moment. Hence it is the "leading" determinant of our behavior. In other words, it is the primary shaper of what we do in any event. This leading circumstance is the action the actor must first divine from the script, and then bring to life in performance. This Leading Circumstance is always a verb, for it is what the actor will actually *do*. As an actor can only play one action at a time, there is only one Leading Circumstance per event. Stanislavski correctly stated that to act on stage the actor must, at a very minimum, recreate the Leading Circumstance. The Leading Circumstance is always present in the text, as it is given to the actor by the playwright. It is the actor's job to find it, and then make it happen.

ii. Accompanying Circumstances:

The second component of the Small Circle of Circumstances is what Stanislavski called the "Accompanying Circumstances". These are the circumstances given to the actors by the playwright that *color* or *affect* the



action itself. For the actor they are the shapers of “how” the action is played. In this case there may be only one “accompanying circumstance”, but there also may be as many. Of course part of “how” the actor plays the action also comes from the actor’s own imagination, intuition and impulses. Is the character tired, hungry, hot, sick, mentally unstable, or anxious? Did they just come from a fight? Or did they just make love before the scene? In other words, what accompanying facts about the characters life are working on them as they walk into the scene in pursuit of their objective? These are the facts that accompany the action and color, affect, shape it accordingly as they pursue the need. The actor mines the text to discover the entire swath of given circumstances as a launching pad for his or her work in the scene. The more gifted the actor, the more accompanying circumstances they bring on stage with them.

### **An Event is always a Noun**

If the Leading Circumstance, otherwise known as the *action* is always a *verb*, then an *Event* is, correspondingly, always a *noun*. For example it is easy to recognize that a “class” is an event. All events have an entry point, and an exit point. They are in fact, things. Correspondingly, all classes have a definite beginning, middle and end; in other words the experience of the event called a “class” has temporal boundaries that work on all the characters. The participants of a class are universally clear when they enter the class, and when they exit the class, and what roles they play during that event. They may be fast, slow or of any varying rates, but in all cases they are identifiable as an event, which is a noun: Class. Other examples of events as a noun are: meal, funeral; wedding; rock concert; fight; reconciliation; vacation; divorce; trial; seduction; a murder; a doctor’s appointment, *etc.* Actors must ask themselves, “*What is the event my character is involved in making happen in this, and every, scene?*”

Events are active environments; they are not static. Anywhere in the world it holds true that the Leading Circumstance of an event called a “class” is the struggle to advance knowledge. There are specific actions baked into the actual archetype of the event itself. This meta-action is of course played out in highly specific environments unique to the individual story. To elucidate this concept, simply ask yourself: “*Do I behave the same way at a meal as I do at a funeral, a wedding, a rock concert, a vacation, a date, or doctor’s appointment?*” The answer to this question is “*No, I do not behave the same way.*” Why? Because the defining nature of the event itself has a leading circumstance, which makes it unique, different from all the others; this archetypal leading circumstance universally determines the behavior of that specific event. People behave at a funeral one way, at a rock concert another, and at church service a third. How each singular person activates the leading circumstance within those different events will subsequently determine their own individuality; it will set them apart from one another, which is their own idiosyncratic character.

In any event called a “class”, anywhere, at any time, present is the act of struggling to push the knowledge of mankind forward; this intrinsic and collective movement implies *doing* something, an action, which for the intent of the actor is described as a verb. Depending on the role that one plays in the event called “class” one knows immediately what to do. The Leading Circumstance of a class is to learn. To do so teachers “teach”, or “give”, or “talk” or “lecture” or “demonstrate” or “lead” or “facilitate”, *etc.* All are actions that teachers universally perform. Likewise, students “learn”, or “receive”, or “listen”, *etc.* No matter the individual teacher, the student, or the classroom all are true. However, during classes often teachers learn and students teach, as learning, the struggle to move knowledge forward, is a symbiotic relationship.

All these roles are made manifest through verbs; how they execute them determines their individual character, and makes them all unique human beings. This brings us to the definition of an “event”.

### **“Event Defined”**

An event is *the change of one Leading Circumstance to a new Leading Circumstance*. One could also correctly state that an Event is *the change of one action to a new action*. It follows then that, as the Leading Circumstance defines the action, if a Leading Circumstance changes, there must be a corresponding change of action. A new event brings a new action, and with a new action comes a new objective. This makes clear why in great dramatic literature authors deliver only one event per scene. Everything in that scene leads up to that event. The characters either achieve their objective or not and move on to a new objective with a new action, toward the next, new event. Yet, this change isn’t necessarily an immediate one. It is a *process* that can either be long and fast, or in between.

In this context, action is understood not only as what the character is doing physically, but more humanly, what is their “Inner Line of Action”? In other words, what is the entire being of the character involved in doing psychophysically? Not simply their physical being. What is the current purpose of their life’s energy? How are they moving their life forward in the specific moment? As humans we often think one thing but say another; or, we say one thing and do something else; and, we often do things that we don’t want to do. And we do this all the time. Life is full of behavioral contradictions and paradoxes. Yet that is what in part makes us human, complex, complicated and, ultimately, interesting. Even so, deep down inside our being, we also recognize our “inner truth”, and what we are doing to move our lives forward. For example, a character may be ironing their clothes on stage as they chat with their child about school today, but what they are “really doing” is processing and preparing psychologically the way they will tell their spouse at dinner that night that they are leaving them for their best friend. And that event, the “confession” (a noun), will have a specific beginning, middle and end, with a

clear leading circumstance; confess. And when it is over, both characters will have new objectives with corresponding new actions and move their lives forward toward the next event, which may be a fight, silence, a separation, divorce or, even, reconciliation in the form of sex.

The greatest philosophers, scientists, poets and dramatics have made clear that life itself is nothing more than a series of events. Yet, simultaneously, this series of events, at times seemingly innocuous and inconsequential, is everything for us. Samuel Beckett recognized this perhaps better than any playwright in the western world. Events, especially seemingly non-consequential ones, make up our lives. If we think of an average day as a series of quotidian events, then we can see how our behavior is intrinsically shaped by the leading circumstance of each of those daily events: Sleep; breakfast; meditation; commute; work; lunch; class; interview; workout; dinner; concert; study hall; rest. The actor's fundamental job then is to identify, in each scene their character appears, the event in which they are participating, and work to make that event materialize.

If an event is the change of one action (or Leading Circumstance) to a new action (a new Leading Circumstance), in order to identify the event, the actor needs to have a process by which she or he can determine whether or not there actually is a change of action. The questions now become: "*Was there a change in action?*" and if so, "*Where did the action actually change?*" Stanislavski named this means of identification the "Process of Evaluation". This is how an actor will be able to find and identify the event the playwright has written into the blueprint.

### **"The Process of Evaluation"**

Throughout every moment of our lives at least two things are simultaneously happening to us, we are involved in doing what we are doing, whatever that may be, *and* we are evaluating how it is going. This ongoing evaluation is to determine if we will continue to do what we are doing, stop doing it, or change it altogether. In other words we are always simultaneously in action *and* evaluating that action as we do it.

Stanislavski broke this process of evaluation down into four (4) simple steps:

1. Change of Target of Attention
2. Collection of Information, Signs, Signals or Attributes
3. Assignment of Highest Value
4. Change of Action

If we go back to the example of the event called a "class", this process of evaluation will become very clear.

### **The Case of the Late Student**

We have established that the leading circumstance of a class is to learn. The participants are also doing many different things in the class. Yet they are all there to learn, which again is the Leading Circumstance; it is their main action (verb) for being in an event called a class (noun). But, someone may come into to the classroom late. This changes the flow of the event.

#### *Step 1: Change in Target of Attention*

They hear the door open and turn their attention toward the door to evaluate what is going on. Accordingly, the first thing all participants in the class will do is activate Step 1 of the Process of evaluation. Everybody in the classroom shifts his or her target of attention. Why? To accumulate, or gather, information. This takes us to Step 2 of the Process of Evaluation.

#### *Step 2: Accumulation of Information, Signs, Signals, Attributes*

Once the target of their attention has been shifted over to the opening door, they then activate Step 2. of the Process of Evaluation. All parties in the event actually evaluate what is going on. They accumulate enough information that tells them the person arriving is someone they know, a student enrolled in the class, who today is simply arriving late. They perceive her name as Sally based on what she looks like and their prior knowledge of her. They come to the natural conclusion that: *“It’s Sally; she is late to class”*. As this composite picture of new information gathered after the shift in object of attention is *not* more important than the current leading circumstance of class, everyone continues to do what they are doing - learning. In this case the class continues on, as it is not out of the norm in an event called class that students arrive late. In other words there is no Step 3 nor Step 4 in the Process of Evaluation yet, because what the class is currently involved in doing is more important than the new information that entered the room. It follows then that the event of class continues and ends normally, as classes do, at the assigned time. When the bell rings signaling the end of class all the participants go immediately through all 4 Steps of Evaluation, experience a collective shift in their Inner Line of Action, and the event of class ends. Simple enough. However, let’s look at another case.

### **The Case of the Fireman**

#### *Step 1: Change in Target of Attention*

Again, as in the previous case, our event is a class. The event is in progress when there is a loud noise at the door and it opens abruptly. Accordingly, the first thing all participants in the class will do again is activate Step 1 of the Process of evaluation. They hear and see the door open and turn their attention toward that door to evaluate what is happening. Everybody in the classroom

shifts the target of his or her attention to “evaluate” what is going on at the door.

*Step 2: Accumulation of Information, Signs, Signals, Attributes*

Once again their attention has been shifted over to the opening door and they activate Step 2. of the Process of Evaluation. All parties in the class evaluate what is going on by accumulating information, signs and signals. This time what they see is not Sally, a student they know arriving late, but a stranger: a highly intense man, dressed in a long, tough, reflective coat with thick metal buckles, wearing knee-high rubber boots and a reflective hat strapped to his head with a gold badge on it. His face is tense and focused; his demeanor is serious and radiates authority. They now hear this man yell in a strong voice: “*Fire! Evacuate the building immediately. That is an order!*”

*Step 3: Assignment of Highest Value*

From the accumulated composite picture of information each participant will come to the conclusion that this is a fireman; there is an actual fire in the building. And because this has *higher value* than the class the characters they will go immediately to Step 4 of the Process of Evaluation. In other words there is the assignment of a *higher value given to the new information (the fireman) than to the prior event (the class)*.

*Step 4 Change of Action – New Event*

Due to Step 3 in the Process of Evaluation, a signal has been received that the reality of a fire is more important than continue class; hence all characters involved have an immediate shift in their Inner Line of Action. They have a new Leading Circumstance/action: to escape (a verb); and a new objective (Get out alive); and therefore a corresponding new event (a noun) called: Fire. Simply put, the new information about the fire changes the Inner Line of Action of all the characters and the event of class is over and the event of the fire begins. It’s literally that simple.

At the end of the day we are in this constant process of evaluation as we move through our lives from one event to the next, seeking the highest attribute, looking to discover what’s the most important piece of information. Is what draws our attention more important than what is currently happening? And it is this new information, the fireman in this case, which provides us with the highest attributed value; it is this to which we will we react. Arguably, as human beings, and as actors, the most important information we get about a person is their reactions. It is why we go to the theatre, to watch characters react to dramatic conflict and obstacles, which are baked into a string of fictional events.

Hopefully, it is clear from this last example that the introduction of the new information – the entrance of the fireman – holds higher behavioral value for the characters than the continuation of class. They’d rather live than die in the fire trying to continue to learn. Therefore, after they have shifted the target of attention to the door, and accumulated as much information as possible, they

assigned a higher value to the composite picture from the new information, the fire, than to the value of the class; consequently all the characters moved into a new event, with a new inner line of action, and corresponding objective. The event of class is interrupted by a new event called fire.

It is finding this moment, the moment that floats between Steps 2 and 3 in the Process of Evaluation, which the actor must perfect when reading a script. For it is in that moment, the assignation (or lack of assignation) of higher value, that the trigger for a new action lives. Identifying this moment is the ultimate key in performance. For it is in that moment, precisely, where we learn the most about the character, how they react to the given stimulus, and what they choose to do about it; not *feel* about, but *do* about it. For what they do about it then forwards the conflict of the rising dramatic action. Watching characters do that, is active, satisfying and ultimately, why we go to the theatre. “What are they going to do *now*...?” Stay tuned.

As this paper is a mere introduction to “Event Analysis”, there is, of course, much, much more to this method than the confines of this paper permit me to address, such as the multiple and different types of Processes of Evaluation, as well as the different and requisite categories of Events themselves, necessary to tell a story. As with the introduction of any new technique, the first step involves an intellectual process of understanding. Like everything in an actor’s craft, this technique can only truly be understood and eventually embodied through repeated practical application and practice. We learn it to forget it. Yet ultimately, it is an artistic *process* which, when articulated regularly and diligently, becomes, like riding a bike, second nature, and empowers the actor to build their performances to new heights, by reading the architectural blueprint at a deeper level.