## I am a partially qualified philosopher

## Know your power – actually know ***my*** power

## The Hero’s Journey

So, this is what the hero’s journey is. There you are, sitting comfortably in you village. It’s always a village. And somebody comes along and tells you that you have to leave the village?  
  
Why? Because you’re the chosen one. This bad thing is happening and you need to stop it, or this bad thing is going to happen and you’re the only one who can stop it.   
  
And you, you’re the only one who can do anything about it.

But our lives are full of abandoned quests.

## Wanton Go For It

This is an exercise from a very disreputable source. But I think it works – and we’ve left this bit until last because I want this to be the last thing that you’re thinking about before you leave the theatre.

### Hesitation

There’s something that you want to do. It’s something that you really want to do. But you keep hesitating. Maybe you’re putting it off, it’s a some day maybe kind of thing. Maybe you get right up to the point of doing it. You’re looking at the sign up screen. You’re thinking about downloading the app. You walk past the place every day, and you’re thinking about going in. You bought the book on how to do it. Maybe you’ve even bought the gear. But then. At the last minute, you don’t. You hesitate. You pull up short.

### Frustration

And this is very frustrating. This way that you’re behaving. It’s very frustrating. You’re annoyed with yourself. Maybe you’re annoyed with other people that you think are holding you back. Maybe you’re annoyed because

### Impatience

You’ve had it now. [Could I do this to Zadok the priest?]

### Wanton Go For It – sooner or later someone has to say fuck it

Some sociopathic tricks to help you say “Fuck it.”

## Heckling

This is shit

You are shit

Why should we list to you, you’re a fat old man?

I thought this was supposed to be comedy – tell us a joke.

## What are we gonna do now?

Nobody expects success. The great train robbers – they planned the robbery meticulously.

We’re terrible at imagining how we’ll feel.

## All stories are about a man (a person) in a hole

One way to get a story is to put yourself in a hole. Jump and justify.

### Monkey Mind and Should-ering to a halt

Now you’ve made one biscuit, why not make a thousand biscuits?

You should be in business making biscuits. The most popular biscuit in the uk is the digestive biscuit. Maybe you could outsell that. And maybe you could do it ethically. Maybe you could make it a Vegan biscuit. Maybe it could use fair trade sugar.

A minute ago you were just making a biscuit.

This is what Buddhists call “Monkey Mind.”

And it’s what I call “shuddering” to a halt.

It’s your mind just making stuff up that you \*should\* be doing.

And notice what world this lives in.

It lives in the world of ideas.

You see monkey mind all the time in project management.

There’s this measure of how fast a project is going called velocity. And the only thing that anybody says when you tell them about velocity is “why isn’t it double that?”

When you show people working software, they mostly talk about what it doesn’t do.

And people talk software into existence. Do they do that in other parts of life?

I’m sure they do.

## Agreed activity

I got this idea from improv theatre Guru Keith Johnstone. It’s this idea of agreed activity.

The example I give – I think it’s the one that he gives in the book – is of a group of improvisers pretending to be on a ship and ignoring the pirate ship that’s on the horizon.

There was a response to this that I was kind of expecting that nobody ever mentioned.

Isn’t Agile agreed activity?

Stand ups, planning, show and tell.

Another concept from improv is “stakes” the audience are interested in stories where something is at risk.

If nothing is at risk – if there’s no danger for the crew because they’ve got an instant Pirate-destroying ray gun that works! Then that’s boring. If they have a ray gun that doesn’t work – or works in an unexpected way – they think it will shrink the pirates but it makes them bigger.

And it’s the same with agreed activity – there needs to be the right amount of jeopardy.

Too little – it’s just mopping the decks. Too much it’s just sparkling panic.

What you really want is calm, grimly determined preparation. With a constant eye on the pirate ship, where it’s going and what it’s doing.

## All creativity is a status transaction

Another thing that I learned from improvisation. All creativity is a status transaction.

When you do something. Especially when you do something creative, you will get criticism.

Most people have had one of these things happen to them. They’ve been singing and someone has suggested that they shouldn’t. They’ve been dancing, and someone has pointed and laughed. The brutal truth is that part of the reason for this is that when you do something. Especially something that is slightly more uninhibited, you’re shifting your status.

There are in fact whole television shows about this. The dark unpleasant side of talent shows is making fun of people whose talent isn’t as impressive as they think it is. This is essentially the same gag in Dragon’s Den and The Apprentice.

What’s the message? Stay in your lane. Don’t stick your head above the parapet.

But here’s a confession that I have to make. One thing that you can imagine that you can do, is that, by creating something, you’ll elevate your status. Isn’t that the point of being famous?

But, for example, inside an organisation, there are power structures. And most of the people in those power structures, don’t spend their time creating, they spend their time reasserting those power structures.

Naively, you might think they’re going to be happy when you do something innovative and creative. The reality is that they’re only going to be happy with you doing something innovative and creative if they can use it to elevate themselves in the power structure.

And don’t play the innocent. That’s part of why you’ve done this thing.

## Paintable Turds

OK, I could probably come up with a better name for it than that.

But I suppose baked into the idea that you can’t paint a turd is the idea of inherent talent.

This is something that people can deal with. They can deal with the idea that someone can be naturally talented.

Get a something. No matter how little and then paint it, decorate it, add to it.

But of course, here’s the problem with a turd. It’s a turd. Initial attempts at things are going, very obviously, to have serious problems.

I had this idea for the “turding point.”

It’s getting something to the point where there is a something. Something that you could call a short story. Something that you could call a performance. Something that you could call a joke.