

INCREASING FLOW IN THE ACTOR'S WORK

ERIC BLAIS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN THEATRE

YORK UNIVERSITY

TORONTO, ONTARIO

FEBRUARY 2013

# INCREASING FLOW IN THE ACTORS WORK

by **Eric Blais**

a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of York  
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of

**MASTER OF FINE ARTS**

© 2013

Permission has been granted to:

- a) YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES to lend or sell copies of this dissertation in paper, microform or electronic formats, and
- b) LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA to reproduce, lend, distribute, or sell copies of this dissertation anywhere in the world in microform, paper or electronic formats *and* to authorize or *and* to authorize or *and* procure the reproduction, loan, distribution or sale of copies of this dissertation anywhere in the world in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the dissertation nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

### **Abstract**

This paper is an account of preparation I undertook to play the roles of Eric, Venturewell, and Barberosa, in Tim Askew's adaptation of Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Primary to approaching this track I have addressed my artistic challenge of increasing *flow* in my work as an actor. Starting with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi concept of *flow* I began to investigate blocks during class work, rehearsals, performance and show development. I have applied theory and techniques as described in the writings of Declan Donnellan, Robert Triplett, Stephen Nachmanovitch, Eugen Herrigel and Shunryu Suzuki. Practical studio work revolved around mask work and improvisation as a framework through which explore block and flow. Other research included historical and critical surveys of Francis Beaumont and *The Knight of The Burning Pestle*. The paper also includes journal entries from the rehearsal process of the York production and a conclusion of my findings.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Introduction .....	1
Investigations and Limitations.....	2
A Collection of Fear.....	3
Masked vs. Unmasked Playing.....	9
My Characters.....	15
Introduction to Francis Beaumont.....	16
The Time in which he lived and the Knight of the Burning Pestle...	16
Eric the Company Manager.....	20
The Merchant Venturewell.....	23
Barberoso.....	24
Application of Artistic Challenge.....	26
Four Fears Revisited.....	29
Summary.....	30
Conclusion.....	31

Journal Entries.....37

Prompt Book Scene.....44

Works Cited.....52

## Introduction

This paper is an account of the fear that has haunted my practice of acting, the research I undertook into that fear and the application of that research in order to work with this challenge. During my undergraduate degree my teachers would often repeat that acting is the easiest and the most difficult thing I would ever do. As the truth of this paradox became apparent, I found the ease I experienced as a kind of *flow* and the difficulty as a kind of *block*. I experience *flow* as an all-encompassing flood that seems to happen to me more than I do it. The term's originator, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, describes *flow* "as the process of total involvement with life" (i). There are six factors that when present facilitate and describe the phenomena:

1. Intense and focused concentration on the present moment.
2. Merging of action and awareness.
3. A loss of reflective self-consciousness.
4. A sense of personal control or agency over the situation or activity.
5. A distortion of temporal experience, one's subjective experience of time is altered.
6. Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding.

Further to the description of flow, Csikszentmihalyi writes that "the essential steps in this process are: (a) to set an overall goal, and as many sub goals as are realistically feasible; (b) to find ways of measuring success in terms of the goals chosen; (c) to keep concentrating on what one is doing, and to keep making finer and finer distinctions in the challenges involved in the activity; (d) to develop the skills necessary to interact with the opportunities available; and (e) to keep raising the stakes if the activity becomes boring." (97)

The *blockage* to flow can come in many forms such as apathy, boredom or anxiety to name a few. Personally it is fear that hinders my thought and action, making it impossible at times to place all of my attention on the task at hand. The different anxieties I experience I will detail later in this document. The purpose of this exploration is to increase the *flow* and minimize the fear in my work.

### 1. Investigations and Limitations

I begin with a brief overview of the areas where my investigation began: I trained in a performance research and development group led by theatre practitioner and movement teacher Tom Stroud at the University of Winnipeg; I took contact improvisation classes and workshops; I entered therapy with a clinical Psychologist; created a piece of theatre that thematically addressed the fear I experience; and researched fears positive and negative aspects from the point of view of Theatre makers, Zen theorists, teachers and improvisers.

Before I move into an explanation of the fear I would like to briefly explore the difficulties inherent to writing about the craft of acting. It is difficult to talk about Acting because it is a present time event, a moving meditation that borders on the mystical if it does not wholly belong to that esoteric world. In talking about acting we are denied the direct experience of it and must settle with description. It is with some trepidation that I use the terms 'flow' and 'block' to describe my experience of success and failure in acting, while they are accurately evocative of the states they are hardly specific terms. It may be dangerous to describe these experiences through metaphor and image "yet anyone who...deals with these matters on a practical day to day basis knows that to consider this phenomenon nothing but a metaphor is to make an equally great error." (Nachmanovitch, p. 33) Declan Donnellan puts the problem succinctly: "Acting is an art and art reveals the uniqueness of things... 'talking about' tends to makes us generalise and

generalisation conceals the uniqueness of things.” (4) Eugen Herrigel touched on this dilemma in his book *Zen in the Art of Archery* where he apologises for his “tentative and on that account possibly misleading language” (22) to describe the mystic experience. However, there is value in attempting to articulate the practice of the art, if we do not brave what may be lost in translation we risk losing the wealth of knowledge we have about performance, as the very act of articulation helps bring our practice into focus; it deepens and broadens the conversation about the elusive world of acting.

## **2. A Collection of Fears**

My blockages as an actor are fear based. I will list them according to four of the basic fears that Buddhists claim to stand between ourselves and freedom as stated in Nachmanovitch’s *Free Play*.

**2.1 Fear of Loss of Life:** I have a suspicion that if I give my *all* it will deplete my store of energy and I may not get it back. Although this past summer during contact improvisation classes I found that this fear is no match against simply moving. I found that I only experience the fear of depletion before I begin. Once I am engaged in the practice the spectre dissolves, and in fact I find the opposite of the fear to be true, I am lost in the action I feel energized by the activity, even when the practice is extremely physically taxing. It seems I can only do one thing at a time, I can worry, or I can act; the cure seems to be placing my attention on the present moment, to lose myself in the task at hand.

**2.2 Fear of loss of reputation:** I worry that when I perform I will expose something of myself that will damage the way I am seen; my persona. Here we stumble upon the greatest of my concerns. As an example I will use a sounding exercise from voice classes, the goal of which is to release a “huh” sound from the body with as little unnecessary muscular tension as possible.



Within the first few months of this practice I had the distinct impression that if I released sound without controlling it, that is sculpting it or describing it, I would be unpleasantly surprised by what came out. I thought if I didn't brace myself for the potential embarrassment that could ensue from such a release some irreparable damage could be done to my sense of self. The image I had was this: that some monster would leap from my mouth and land on the floor of the studio. I would be exposed for harboring this, until now, hidden creature, and would be shunned for it. This exposure of another darker self, something anathema to its/my surroundings, is equivalent to coming face to face with an aspect of myself that I feared existed and lived in denial of, until I was forced to face its existence, in public, wholly unprepared. It is the fear of being secretly corrupt, morally, aesthetically and intellectually ugly. I felt sure it was there, waiting for me to drop my guard, so it could escape. The way I would protect myself from this was to hold muscles throughout my body to brace myself, I would then make the sound in a habitual way so that there would be no surprises. The resulting sound fell dead from my body. However, as Herrigel found in archery, "the shot will only go smoothly when it takes the archer himself by surprise" (48) This principle is similar to acting technique that prizes a spontaneous revealing of character. Kristin Linklater writes in *Freeing the Natural Voice* that "Blocked emotions are a fundamental obstacle to a free voice" (25).

I used both physical muscular tension, that deadens resonance, and a mentally pre-packaged sound rather than letting it come in response to the moment I was actually in. It would be accurate to say that I had prepared and approved a sound beforehand so I could use it under any circumstances. This stands in direct opposition to the art of acting as described by Ivana Chubbuck "You want to duplicate the part of your life that is unconscious, unintentional and unplanned, because this will produce unpredictable, spontaneous results" (92) As my training progressed, I learned to release some of the habitual holding patterns in my joints, rib case, along

the spine, throughout the jaw, tongue, and soft palate. In doing this I felt as though I was ready to leap out of my mouth but my fear would step in, and pull me out of the moment whenever the exercise felt dangerous. Due to the fear of being revealed I mentioned earlier, spontaneity regularly feels dangerous.

**2.3 Fear of unusual states of mind:** I worry that if I give myself over emotionally to the fictional circumstances of the scene or the play that I may alter my sense of reality and never regain firm footing as myself in this world. In opposition to my concern is the Zen ideal that “All right doing is accomplished in a state of true selflessness... a kind of awareness which shows no trace of ego hood and for that reason ranges without limit through all the distances and depths, with eyes that hear and ears that see.” Herrigel (p.67). I feared that while this may be what is necessary to act, I could not do it, and if I did would I make it back? What underlies this fear is the assumption that I must generate an emotional state to act, as famously prescribed in the effective memory technique of Stanislavski and Strasberg. My concern was that my *self* would be lost in a fantasy if I committed fully over to an imagined emotional state. When researching actor blocks, I came across Donnellan’s theory of acting and his firm conviction that it is not the actor’s job to create anything, but through our senses and imagination respond to a target that is outside the self. The mere suggestion that I didn’t have to be responsible for the creation of the reality of the piece I was working on was exciting and liberating.

**2.4 Fear of speaking before an assembly:** The fear of speaking up and looking foolish. Stephen Nachmanovitch notes in his book *Free Play* that “underlying the fear of looking foolish is the fear of being foolish” (135). I fear that I will embarrass myself because what I have to offer is laughable.

When I practice I come up against these fears regularly. The question is how to deal with them effectively, so starting with Donellan's suggestions I went into the studio.

I began to work with improvisation to strengthen my ability to respond in the present moment without preparation, to test the boundaries that my fear dictated by participating in a research and development group of theatre artists under the direction of Tom Stroud, the former Artistic Director of Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers and currently a movement teacher at the University of Winnipeg. The main focus in our work was to follow the actor's impulse wherever it may lead. Using only movement and the architecture of bodies in the space, we would establish a relationship, then add what Stroud calls *essential language*, which are short directives based on the need the players feel in the moment. For example, we would use the words and phrases "no", "yes", "come here", "hold me", "go away" or "don't speak". This directly challenged my fear of what may leap unbidden from my lips. Simply being in the room during this exercise increased my anxiety level to the point where my heart would race, I would blush and sweat; I started looking for escape. The fear would mount as I stepped forward into action, but once I was *in it* the improvisation flowed and it was intrinsically satisfying. At other times I was paralyzed; I dared not even move. Sometimes the fear was exhilarating and at other times too great to overcome. So I decided through force of will I would step into the heart of the fear when it arose.

I took this practice into my own studio time as I began to develop a solo piece for the fall. I began with the same process Stroud used in his research and development group; improvising movement, looking to follow the impulse wherever it may lead and then adding essential language. At first there was an exhilarating sense of freedom and my play was full and strong. As I had hoped there were themes emerging from my improvisations that I noted and experimented with. Then on the third and fourth day the fear of reputation and unusual states of mind began to

demand my attention. In moments of intensity, of physical and emotional excitement, I would cease to follow the impulse to listen and look for passersby. Could they hear me? If so would they come and look through the window? Thoughts that I would look foolish, stupid, ugly, and insane would bring me out of my work. I would stop my improvisation, listen and look, then reluctantly try to take up where I left off. In Herrigel's words "I seemed like centipede which was unable to stir from the spot after trying to puzzle out in what order it's feet ought to go" (48) To be fair some of the improvisations were just that: foolish, stupid and ugly. But I was only playing; what did I feel I was risking in this play that I didn't feel was dangerous in the other improvisations? I was attempting to become comfortable with not knowing and extremity. At times I was successful, yet there still seemed to be this stumbling block in my work that would creep in. I chose to spend some time in these states that I found to be the most difficult and potentially mortifying in hope that it would de-sensitize me. I sketched out a structured improvisation where I worked in the areas that made my adrenaline pulse, that I felt were dangerous.

At this time I entered psychotherapy with a view to gaining some proficiency in seeing myself and perhaps some objectivity on my fear. I also planned to use some of the themes that came up in therapy as material for my solo show. Steven Nachmanovitch writes in *Free Play* "What we have to express is already with us, is us, so the work of creativity is not a matter of making the material come, but of unblocking the obstacles to its natural flow" (p.10). I began to search for the monster that I feared might leap from my mouth. Was it something I had done in the past and still felt guilt over? Was it a latent potential monstrosity whose existence I glimpsed and caused anxiety? I hoped that my experience would mirror Herrigel's experience with Zen Archery. "I had no alternative but to recollect in detail all the resistances I had overcome, all the inhibitions I had to fight down, before I succeeded in penetrating into the spirit of the great doctrine." (27)

As I wrote, trained, improvised and researched, I found I was arriving at the same places I had begun. The anecdotes and folktales found in research material, the themes from my therapy sessions and my improvisations all began to speak to each other. Nachmanovitch sees this as the natural outcome of making art. “Each piece of music we play, each dance, each drawing, each episode of life, reflects our own mind back at us, complete with all its imperfections, exactly as it is.” (26). I was looking at my own mind, trying to put it on page and stage. It seems likely then that the work I do will necessarily have my blocks woven in their fabric. So how does one move around or beyond the blocks and allow flow?

As I mentioned earlier, Declan Donnellan believes flow comes from the senses and imagination. He suggests that the actor put all of his or her attention on what he calls “the target” which is always external to the actor. The target is a kind of battery for the actor and fear cuts us off from the target. Fear splits the present into the past and future; guilt and anxiety respectively. All problems of blockage are cured in the *now* and can be solved by paying attention to the breath as a guide to the present moment. “In reality we are present and can do nothing to alter it. But we can fantasise that we are somewhere else” (34). If we accept the mastery of time, accept that we are “pinned in the present” (216) we will not become blocked. This seemed evident in my studio work, when I worried about what I have done and how it will affect me I race between the mistakes of the past and the judgement in the future, ignoring the present, ignoring the target and what it is doing to me. Donnellan claims the target is ever evolving and active, so that all the actor’s apparent actions are actually reactions to what the target is doing to the actor. The actor’s job then is to see a target and try to change it. This effectively moves the actor’s concentration from the self and places their attention on the other, side-stepping whatever fear the actor has.

### **3. Masked vs. Un-masked playing**

I have found that improvisations in extended styles like Commedia del' arte and clown often put me in the flow quickly and easily. To this end I made some full and half masks based on themes from my therapy sessions to play with as show development tools, and to see what the difference was between my performance with and without mask. My experience with the half mask was quite revealing. In half mask I begin by working in the mirror; all of my attention is placed on the object that I must animate. In Donnellan's language, I placed my attention on the target and tried to change it. I had to employ all of my body, voice and imagination to do so, once I was completely engaged in this pursuit the things that I said and did were quite surprising and liberating; the joy I received from being in the flow of this was intoxicating. I then would remove the mask and perform "as myself". It was immediately less dynamic, it was as though there was a governor on the flow. My fears were present; I was thinking about myself and how to fit into an idea I have about what naturalism as a style looks like. To manage this intellectualizing, I relaxed the idea I had about the form and experienced more flow of energy. More accurately, I didn't stop thinking – I changed what I was thinking about, by placing my attention less on myself and how I looked and more onto changing the target. Doing this, I experienced even more flow. I imagined the target evolving and chased it, studied it, discovered it; now my unmasked play was nearing the vitality of the masked play. Much to my surprise, the style of my acting was much more naturalistic as it now contained a spark of life.

Nachmanovitch puts it another way: "the easiest way to do art is to dispense with success and failure altogether and just get on with it" (1990, p.135). This is easier said than done, but I had found a clue in reflecting upon the qualities of flow that added another tool to dealing with fear.

When the flow is free it is not as though I fight or subdue the fear, it is as though the fear does not exist. It is as though the *I* that experiences the fear ceases to exist. During a contact improvisation workshop I took to augment the work I did with the research group, I realized that when I would engage with my partner by paying attention to the dance we created, there were times that it didn't feel like I was doing anything and instead was swept away by the experience. I believe this is partially due to removing myself from the equation by placing my attention on the targets, the dance and my partner. That is, I shift my attention from my personal cares to what I see before me, to what is being done to me in the moment, and then respond. I have had similar experiences in sport, moments when I didn't calculate my next move but instead experienced a sense of oneness with the game and acted before I thought. I would take myself by surprise. "Buddhists call this state of absorbed selfless absolute concentration Samadhi ... when the self-clinging personality somehow drops away, we are both entranced and alert at the same time." (Nachmanovitch. P.52) It makes perfect sense then, in regard to my dilemma, that when I am in the flow, I feel as one with my environment, and when I am blocked, I never feel more exposed and isolated. In that isolation my fears about my shortcomings tend to take over.

Nachmanovitch writes "My limited and self-limiting I is, of its nature, tied up in knots ... Unless I surrender my identity ... and the illusion of control, I can never become one with my own process and the blocks will remain. Without surrender and trust – nothing" (144). Herrigel reports a similar experience when he was mastering the art of breathing in archery. He writes: "I sometimes had the feeling that I myself was not breathing but – strange as this may sound – being breathed" (40). The loss of self as described is remarkable in that identity seems to shift, to the point where knowing who is doing what to whom becomes impossible to discern. During my

contact improvisation classes the sense of cause and effect disappeared completely and, alone in the studio, the interplay of cause with the imaginary forces I had structured around me was impossible to dissect. Herrigel reports a story his master used for instruction in this matter: “the child plays with things and it is equally true that the things play with the child” (49) Donnellan, Nachmanovitch, Herrigel and Suzuki concur on this point. In order to act, I must disappear, surrender to the target, because blocks are the price of avoiding surrender. Still, my work does not always go smoothly, rare are the times of free flow. How do I get the whole of myself into the simplest acts on the stage so that no room is left for me to worry about what I may reveal? I found that if I place my attention on breath to start, then see the other, whatever the image or person may be, and pursue my need in the relationship, that is, actively discover what the target is and react to it in real time, I tend to have greater success. “When we improvise with the whole heart, riding this flow the choices and images open into each other so rapidly that we have no time to get scared and retreat from what intuition is telling us.” (Nachmanovitch 41) I find it is sometimes possible to become what I am doing when I have prepared myself.

As I said before, when I am in the flow, fears do not exist, they vanish. It is before I start to work or if my attention wavers during my practice that I find fear creeps in: I tell myself “Don’t really let go or they will find out how awful you are”, “you have made a fool of yourself and won’t recover”. Experience should have taught me otherwise. I have experienced reviews both good and bad; I have been the celebrated lead and the despised, mortified performer time and again. Even after a decade of performance and critical review in the press, by peers and audiences I hear these voices. Experience has taught me that in release I do the best work, when I am free, I am most moving. When I read Brancusi’s quote in Anne Bogart’s and then, you act, I felt the truth of it in my body as a physical sensation: “Things are not difficult to do, rather what is difficult is to put yourself into a state to do them” (93). Now my frustration and despair with the



acting process had started to come into focus. How do I prepare? I have always done the prescribed warm – ups taught by my teachers, so what was I missing? It became apparent to me over the course of the past year of study that I have approached warm-up as technical exercise – while I worked with breath and movement, I stayed inward in the practice. To solve this I now warm – up in relation to the space around me, populating it with targets so that I remain in relationship to my surroundings. I have begun to think of preparing to work as the work itself. I still go through a check list to make sure my body does not have any undue tension, but after that I work with breath and targets to place my attention outside of myself and begin the process of discovery and reaction before I hit the stage. Once I am on the stage, I use my curiosity as a guide to keep my attention on the other, in hope of being too occupied to entertain fears. If my attention shifts to myself and fear begins to whisper in my ear, I gently place my attention on the target and react to what it is doing. “We do not get there by an effort of will. We got there by seeing. We can never make life. We let life pass through us by not blinding ourselves to the target; but when life comes, it comes when it wants-it comes by grace ... We can only see the life that is waiting to flow. We cannot even try to pass life on, but we can aim not to stop life passing” (Donnellan 79). Using this perspective I have shifted my view of the whole process of making theatre. Each time I set to work, I view it as an improvisation with the materials at hand in the present moment, whether writing, rehearsing or performing.

Adding another shade to the management of fear, Nachmanovitch, writes that blockages and breakthroughs are part of the process. He believes the constituent pieces of play are innocence (discovery), experience (the fall) and breakthrough (rejuvenation or mastery) or birth, blockage and breakthrough. He puts a positive light on the artists frustrations by saying despair may be a sign that we are throwing our whole self into the problem. In *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*, Shunryu Suzuki calls these problems “mind weeds”, and suggests that you “should rather be

grateful of the weeds you have in your mind, because eventually they will enrich your practice ... pulling out the weeds we give nourishment to the plant. We pull the weeds and bury them near the plant to give it nourishment. To experience this, one must patiently practice and the nourishment will come. We should just try to keep our mind on our breathing. That is our actual practice” (36).

Suzuki suggests Nachmanovitch’s disappearing and Donnellan’s abandonment of the self for the target when he speaks of breath and the self. “What we call the ‘I’ is just a swinging door which moves when we inhale and when we exhale” (29). Impenetrable as that metaphor may seem at first, when I place my attention on the breath, I find myself wholly in the present and from here I can place attention on a target and with some luck find myself in the flow of life where the self is a swinging door, if you will, that changes with the moment, breath and evolving target.

One thing that struck me about the three stages of Nachmanovitch’s cycle of creativity and Donnellan’s target being the sole source of energy for the actor is how closely they parallel Joseph Campbell’s description of the hero’s journey: “The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation – initiation – return ... the effect of the successful adventure of the hero is the unlocking and release again of the flow of life into the body of the world.” (30-40)

It has become apparent that my artistic challenge could well be framed as an uneasy alliance between block and flow that constitutes the working relationship I have with myself. My fears can serve as a muse, asking how do I go deeper? How do I do better? How can I be more connected? What is behind my fear and what is behind that? ”How do I work today with what I have before me?” is the question I ask on the first day or the last of a project. Whether I have a polished text, structured improv or free play at hand, the challenge is always the same.

Alongside the application of breathing meditation and the theory espoused by the authors cited, I will continue to research and detail the practice of going into the fear in the hope of coming out the other side with more skill than the current raw courage that I employ. To this end I am studying the “War of Art” by Pressfield and “Stagefright” by Triplett. The more time I spend in the flow, the more life there will be in my art, and that after all is what we come to the theatre.

#### 4. My Characters

In Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, adapted by Timothy Askew, I will be playing the role of Eric, as the manager/actor in a small theatre troupe producing *The London Merchant*. In this play within the play, I will perform the roles of the merchant Venturewell and Barberosa the barber. The role of Eric is a modern day character based on myself. I imagine Venturewell and Barberosa are more extended in form; masks that are less realistic in style because they are stock types informed by hundreds of years of use. During the rehearsal process and in collaboration with the director we will discover to what degree these different styles will become manifest. This will give me a unique opportunity to continue my investigation of the differences in flow between masked and unmasked playing. Further to my work this past summer it is my understanding that passages, yet to be determined by the director, will be improvised. I hope to use this opportunity to integrate the research I did on actor blocks into the rehearsal and performance of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

## 5. An introduction to Francis Beaumont

Beaumont was born in 1584 or 1585 at Grace-Dieu, Leicestershire, third son of Francis Beaumont a justice of the Common Pleas. Little is known of Beaumont's early life but on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1596, Francis was admitted, along with his two brothers, as gentleman-commoner to Broadgates Hall, Oxford. He left the university without taking a degree and went to study Law at the Inner Temple in 1600. Appleton notes that "He had felt no more enthusiasm for that institution than dramatists before and after" (9). His first publication was the erotic poem, *Slamacis and Hermaphroditus* in 1602. His famous collaboration with John Fletcher had begun by 1607. In this same year, they both published verses for Jonson's *Volpone*, which is indicative of the esteem they had received from their literary peers, for Jonson was one of the most celebrated of English playwrights. This is also the year in which Beaumont published his first play, *The Woman Hater*. His next solo effort was *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* after which he embarked on a successful career, partnering with Fletcher. He married the Kentish heiress Ursula Isley of Sundridge Hall around 1613 and then retired. He died a young man, just three years later in 1616, at the age of thirty-two.

## 6. The Time in which he lived and the Knight of the Burning Pestle

Profound changes occurred in society during Beaumont's lifetime, and "the death of Elizabeth and the enthronement of James epitomized these changes" (Appleton 10). Appleton observes that after James took the throne he moved the cultural center of England from the manor houses in the country to London, and that this contributed greatly to the success of the indoor theatre and its favored genre, Jacobean City Comedy. What Danby says of Beaumont and Fletchers' serious plays is equally true of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, their work depicts "a world of radical self-division and clashing absolutes: a world ready to split in every way." (161)

Stock and Zwierlein note how “Jacobean London Drama prepared audiences for the tragedies and Melodramas about middle-class life” that continued to be popular in “eighteenth century theatres and lending-libraries.” (19)

Beaumont and Fletcher adopted aspects of this tradition with “the intention to make popular drama literary” (156) Danby calls Beaumont and Fletcher “curious hybrids” (17) of the Elizabethan elite and exploiters of the theatre “now no longer open to the sky” (17), for the more fashionable theatre houses were just that, houses, while the less refined populace attended the outdoor theatres. It was a heady time:

Beaumont and Fletcher shared with some other dramatists of the time in a growing consciousness of the requirements and possibilities of their art and certainly had no intention of returning to the practices of earlier days. They were young men, the avowed disciples of Jonson, and apparently on friendly terms with Chapman, Webster, and Shakespeare... They began to write, moreover, just at the culminating time of the Elizabethan Drama. The period 1601-1611 is the period of Dekker, Heywood, Middleton, Chapman, Webster, of Jonson’s best work, and of the full maturity of Shakespeare’s Genius (Thorndike, 97)

Beaumont and Fletcher have been treated as a single unit by publishers and critics throughout history. Their work was thought to be equal to Shakespeare’s and Jonson’s and their popularity was greater through the early part of the Restoration.

It is only in recent years when critical opinion has decreed that *The Knight* is solely Beaumont’s creation due to “the play’s unity of conception and from the style of its verse” (Hattaway, ix). The first edition of the play was published in 1613. Though the date of its staging

is debated, critics have come to a consensus that the play was either presented 1607 or 1608 at Blackfriars.

Thus it is assumed that *The Knight* was written for the company of boy actors *The Children of the Queen's Revels* who occupied the building at the time. "The boy companies, who during the declining days of Elizabeth had enjoyed fashionable patronage, reaped a still greater success with the advent of James" (Appleton, 10). The price of admission to these theatres was higher than the outdoor theatres and therefore thought to be more genteel, where "a man shall not be chocked by the stench of Garlick, nor be pasted to the barmie jacket of a beer-brewer." (10)

While "the curious nature of tragi-comedy in more ways than one reflects the fragmentation of the old Tudor society and the emergence of a new social order to which tragi-comedy catered" (Appleton, 25) The 'City Comedy' included satire of the new social order in London, often commenting on the rising bourgeois class, and making merchants and city life central to the stories. As popular entertainment it stood in contrast to the Chivalric Romances that it replaced: adventure gave way to satire.

In the new theatre houses like Blackfriars, the customers were known to pay for more expensive seats on the stage so they might show off their clothes and the plays were regularly interrupted by patrons who voiced their opinions on the show in progress. Indeed, this is what happens in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* when the wealthy but uneducated nouveaux riche patrons stop the show being presented and demand a chivalric romance be staged in its place with their daughter in the lead role. Bliss reminds us that such an interruption is not without precedent. "The most famous description the theater's defeat by its own customers comes from a near contemporary of Beaumont's, Edmund Gayton, in his *Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixot* (1654)." (35):

If it be on Holy Dayes, when Saylers, Water-men, Shoemakers, Butchers and Apprentices are at leisure, then it is good policy to amaze those violent spirits, with some tearing tragedy full of fights and skirmishes...the spectators frequently mounting the stage, and making a more bloody Catastrophe amongst themselves, than the Players did. I have known upon one of these Festivals, but especially at Shrove-tide, where the players have been appointed, notwithstanding their bills to the contrary, to act what the major part of the company had a mind to; sometimes Tamerlane, sometimes Jurgurth, sometimes the Jew of Malta,...and at last, none of the three taking, they were forced to undress and put off their Tragick habits, and conclude the day with their merry milk-maids. (35-36)

Their intrusion is dismissed until the manager, Eric, learns that they are the benefactors of the evening's performance and so agrees to improvise their scenes between acts of *The London Merchant*. Beaumont deftly uses this scenario to "expose dramatic illusion and roleplaying" (Bauer, 49) and was in fact was "no mere parody, but shows an acute awareness of a society that was rapidly changing, and is a record of a world well lost." (Hattaway, xix)

*The Knight of the Burning Pestle* "has undergone the most radical rehabilitation of any play in the remarkably voluminous Beaumont and Fletcher canon. Since its failed debut, though popular with university and community groups, it has had, according to Zitner, only eleven professional productions in Europe and America. It is only in the late 20th and early 21st century that critics and theatre professionals have found great value in the work. "To modern eyes, Beaumont wrote one minor masterpiece, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Sophisticated and accomplished, strikingly modern in its exploration of metadramatic issues" (Bliss, 137).

Beaumont creates an exciting world in which players and citizens collide and discover the "Theater as a place where the imagination seeks its own ends, satisfies its hunger to transform



everyday reality and explore its own metaphoric powers”; “this is its primary metatheatrical locus.” (Bliss, 47) Along with accolades such as this has come wide-ranging speculation for its failure. Alfred Harbage claims it didn’t go far enough in its criticism of the citizen; Shepard and Womack believed that it went too far and alienated its audience. But the critics are split as to whether *The Knight* is hostile to the citizenry of whom it is most obviously critical: Angela Stock calls it a “strangely citizen-friendly pot-pourri” (128); Zacharias adds that it may have been more “frightening than funny” (104) in its portrayal of class uprising and riot; and Zitner adds that we must entertain the possibility that the first production “was a poor one” (38). However, there is no factual evidence to draw on so we are left to conjecture. This lack of consensus inspired Andrew Gurr’s remark: “The fact that it is impossible to say for sure why its reception was hostile is shown by the range of the critic’s explanations” (111).

Still, it is surprisingly modern in its metatheatrical approach. Its examination of the relationship between commerce and art, and the festive, even destructive, spirit with which it explores form and content is as poignant today as when it was written.

## 7. Eric the Company Manager

The role of Eric the company manager in Askew’s version unites the previously distinct roles of the speaker of the Prologue, Venturewell, A Boy and a Barber in a track which explores the actor/manager’s struggle with the onerous demands of the evening’s sponsor, Beaune Foods incorporated. The Beaune’s wildness structurally serves as a counterpoint to Eric’s conservatism. They demand that the play be changed to suit their taste and including their daughter, Janelle, as an errant knight. Whereas in Beaumont’s version they stop *The London Merchant*, a “City Comedy”, because they correctly assume their class will be the target of the satire, in Askew’s adaptation they are bored by the play and want something with action in it; Askew shifts the focus

to their inability to appreciate any story that doesn't assault their blunt wit with spectacle.

Through their misapprehension of art and drama they prove themselves "Ignorant of the etiquette of theatre going, capable themselves only of ill-constructed, ridiculously self-glorifying fantasies" but "their enthusiasm and engagement are nevertheless contagious." (Bliss, 47) To appease them proves no easy task. They care little for plot or art, only immediate satisfaction will suffice, and seem unable at times to differentiate between fact and fiction. They are "inveterate personalizers of experience", "What they would censure in life, they reject in art" (Bliss, 45). They want the play to satisfy their inclinations and prejudices alike. Aspinall describes the function of the satire:

The play more recently receives attention for its myriad jabs at the "egregious bad taste of the rising burgher class," the "foul-mouthed . . . men who swaggered around Jacobean London with their newly gained titles of 'knight' purchased for forty pounds," or the ignorant and unruly citizens who rebuked glorification as an exclusive right of the feudal nobility.(169)

Askew's adaptation puts a finer point on the accommodations made by the company. He questions the integrity of a manager who seeks to please a sponsor's desire for spectacle by improvising *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. As we will see in discussion of the Barber's character, Askew goes so far as to evoke the image of prostitution in the manager's attempt to satisfy.

Askew sets his production of the *London Merchant* in present day, so I will draw on my personal experience of being an actor/manager as I have worked in this capacity for three different companies over the course of my career. But let us also take a cursory view of modern theatre practices in relation to the demands that *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* explores: that of programming and funding.

In his book *How to Run a Theatre* Jim Volz writes that the current trend that merchants/corporations and theatres engage in is called “marketing based fundraising” and states that “A great deal of funding that’s available” for theatres is found “in corporate marketing departments.” (110) This shift began in the 1990’s where many corporations abandoned altruistic and philanthropic ideals in a move toward partnerships where funding bodies could gain from the transaction through “advertising space, mailing list access, media acknowledgement, prime box seats, endorsements, merchandising rights and a whole range of other marketing assets”.(110). Sponsors may exercise their influence on the plays produced to make sure their brand name is not associated with potentially damaging material or because they have invested money, feel a certain amount of propriety over the theatre and therefore want to see their ideals reflected in its productions. Volz writes of one such instance:

When I was the managing director of a Shakespeare festival, I was at one of the three-a-week black-tie fundraising dinners when one of our long-time corporate sponsors and board members informed me that she just loved Shakespeare, but that I had to understand that there were two plays that we simply couldn’t do – ever. Want to guess what they were? *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*! (36)

Theatre going etiquette has changed dramatically since Beaumont’s time: it is highly unlikely that an interruption similar to that of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* would take place today, but the influence of commerce on art is still present and an appropriate subject of inquiry. Askew’s adaptation highlights the uncomfortable position the manager occupies when he tries to appease a sponsor. When the company objects to Janelle’s inclusion in the new play, Eric argues that it is worth the money and suggests they relax their standards because “It’s not like it’s the first time in Toronto that someone’s bought their way into a theatre career right?” (Askew, 10)

For instance, major donors frequently are appearing in the Nutcracker, alongside local media and political celebrities each year. So while Eric derides them for their ignorance on one hand, he takes their money, and tries to please them with the other. When their demands become too much for him to bear, he is literally brought to his knees, gives up and lets them have their way entirely. The company members are resilient though, and through improvised machinations they win back the stage just long enough to finish *The London Merchant*.

#### 8. The Merchant Venturewell

This polarized relationship between Eric, as the voice of conservative prudence and tradition in art and finance; and Richard and Tiana as representatives of anarchy and immediate gratification, is mirrored in the play within the play through the relationship of Venturewell to Master Merrythought. Venturewell is the stereotypical insensitive parent, who extolls thrift and prudence at the expense of his daughter's love and happiness. He has refused the marriage of his daughter Luce, Merrythought's son Jasper— a man of title but not means—and wants to marry his daughter to Humphrey, a preposterous but rich man of his choosing. Venturewell is incensed by Merrythought's constant song and neglect of fiscal responsibilities.

While Mihoko Suzuki argues that “We may discern a shift in the ascendancy of the middle class over the gentry, represented in the play itself by the chiasmic relationship of the upwardly mobile merchant Venturewell and the declining gentleman Merrythought”(60) it is also true that there is also another important theme, “that of liberating creative potential. The London Merchant works to release — or better, create— the generosity, forgiveness and unity of feeling necessary to realize that ideal”, (Bliss, 51). So while themes of finance and the class-divide run throughout the play, it is perhaps the subjection of these social elements to a spirit of festivity that

is most telling of the playwright's intention. It is the joyous influence of Merrythought that helps the parsimonious Venturewell escape the "weights" that "will sink me to my grave." (Askew, 90) As Jensen puts it, "*Knight* wants to have it both ways: to mock traditional festivity as inferior to the formal theatre of the boy companies but also to appropriate the energies of festivity to enhance the dramatic and cultural effectiveness of scripted plays." (164) Beaumont has his fun at all of the characters expense and celebrates them at the same time. He asks Richard and Tiana to try and stretch their meagre understanding of plot and narrative while Venturewell is brought to enjoy the anarchy of Merrythought's song. In the end, Merrythought wins a victory for the flow of life over the mercenary values of business society.

## 9. Barberoso

Janelle, the apprentice player, under the insistence of her parents, has embarked on a fictional adventure in the tradition of the errant knight. The fact that Richard and Tiana want to see such a tale played is an indication of their class and education, "Though they continued to be read ... the vogue for chivalric romance had waned. The citizens preference is not aberrant, just out of date." (Bliss, 37-38) The company manager condescends and agrees to have Janelle improvise the scenes Richard and Tiana want to see between the scenes of *The London Merchant*. As an errant knight must have a worthy foe to vanquish, the host of an inn that Janelle has stumbled into introduces a character to help fulfill the action so desired, but also to make fun of their "infantile, aggressive, and narcissistic urges" (Bliss, 42) by making a mockery of the adventure. The scene is based on what we can only assume was to be a part of *The London Merchant*, because when they ask Eric to play the Barber he jumps to it, costume and set at the ready. In the mayhem of the improvisation the Barber character, who usually pulls teeth and treats

syphilis, is transformed into a giant that keeps captives and kills knights. Janelle recognizes only the Chivalric scenario and likens herself to “brave Rosicleer/ That damned brood of ugly giants slew” (Askew, 60), so swearing to destroy the giant. It closely follows Beaumont’s original version and is a “parody not only of romances but of the apprentice plays of Heywood” (228 Parker) and Dekker’s *The Shoemakers Holiday*. Both were Beaumont’s contemporaries, who wrote plays in a popular genre of city plays that glorified urban tradesmen, like our grocers, Richard and Tiana. According to Patricia Parker’s essay *Barbers and Barbary*, Beaumont’s scene with ‘Nick the Barber’ is a conflation of contemporary stories including, allusions to Don Quixote, Barbary Pirates, and syphilitic cures. The convoluted images that were paraded for the audience, in Beaumont’s time, represented the shaving that was a synonym for piracy as well part of the syphilitic cure and the “nicking” or circumcising of a phallic “pestle” and associated the Barber with the Berber pirates who took Christian captives. The company’s joke on Janelle is that she is unwittingly slaying the barber who tries to ease his “captive” knight’s symptoms, and casts the barber’s patients out into the street. Many critics including Parker, have argued that this is an echo of Cervantes *The Captive’s Tale*, where Don Quixote mistakenly frees justly convicted prisoners on a chain gang. Most of these satirical associations will be lost on a modern audience. What Askew’s adaptation displays in no uncertain terms is the company manager, turned whore by his unflagging desire to appease those who hold the purse strings. This scene comprises Eric’s public humiliation as his play is hijacked, set ruined, actors abused and then made to kiss the burning pestle (syphilitic phallus) of the bourgeois patrons. Because it fulfills no other function in the plot I view the character of the Barber an episode in Eric’s journey rather than as a character that stands on its own.

Does Beaumont mean this as an indictment against an artist who sacrifices their integrity for money and the crude bourgeois audience who demand it? Clearly, but it is also more than that.

“There is too much freshness and exuberance and madcap energy in it for the self-consciousness of literary sampling,” writes Dromgoole, in a review of the 2005 production at the Barbican in London; “It’s a play written on a drunken spree, not in a library. Pestle is in a long line of playfully surreal, discursively wild writing, in a dramatic form that stretches back to Aristophanes.” (n. pag.) What appears at first to be primarily satirical, is in fact a play woven of festive celebration, born from the imagination of the Beaunes’ and the actors, with threads of satire running through it.

#### 10. Artistic Challenge Application

Playing myself in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* presents an excellent opportunity to apply my exploration of flow and blockage. If the citizens facilitate flow, Eric and Venturewell act as resistance to it. As painful as it is for both characters to embrace the flow that their fictional worlds take them, they ultimately relent. Venturewell concedes to a greater degree because he not only allows the wedding of his daughter to Jasper but even joins Merrythought in song. Eric, on the other hand, protests until he has no fight left in him: “Ok. Whatever you say. –Ladies and Gentlemen, I’m really sorry about this.” (Askew, 74) Contrary to Eric’s expectation, the play is not a failure. Lee Bliss reminds us that the London Merchant is made better by the company’s necessity to improvise. As troublesome as the citizens are they provide a great source of energy that improves the *London Merchant*, energy which is the creative force behind *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Ironically I must play the “block,” but do so with as much “flow” as possible. The barber scene is symbolic of the complete co-opting of the theatre as a playground for the Beaunes’ imagination. All form is done away with; there is freedom in the annihilation, in surrender to the

forces of life. The work I have done this past summer is well suited to embracing such a journey. I will apply the principles of improvisation to both the scripted and unscripted portions of the play.

The “bricolage” theory put forth by Nachmanovitch is a practical matter front and center for the company. He argues that block can come in the form of waiting for perfect circumstances in which to work, and encourages artists to dive into the work with whatever elements are at hand. With this in mind the frustrations and fear Eric experiences (both as the character in the play and myself as an actor) can be drawn on and put to use. The fear of failure is acute for Eric who must balance risk with income. If the show fails, so does his livelihood and that of the entire company. The only chance at success is to meet the challenge head on. As Triplett, suggests one must go into the heart of the fear and there find great reserves of energy. As I argued earlier, the flow that is released through improvisation is the heart of the play.

I can further my exploration of the difference in flow between masked and unmasked characters while swinging between Venturewell and Eric. Venturewell is a mask in the sense that he is a stock character, with the potential to be played in a more extended style. Eric, who I will largely model on my own persona, can be played in a more realistic style. This is a direct continuation of my studio research this past summer where I would use the same text for both masked and unmasked characters to note differences in flow. I will be able to compare and contrast the differences in flow through rehearsal and performance. The technique I used while playing more realistic characters was to relax my preconceived ideas about what the style required and allow more of myself into the performance. Since returning to movement class I have been doing Alexander Technique with Gwen Dobie, the core of which is inhibiting the fight or flight response that is triggered by fear of performance. The primary place this manifests in the body is the neck. My studio research has revealed a direct correlation between holding my neck and



blockage. When I release my neck, more breath can be present and there is a remarkable increase of flow and when fear returns, my neck begins to tighten, pulling down and back. My awareness of this response to fear is growing and I have had some success in recognizing and releasing this tension during performance this fall. The result is similar to my experiments with relaxing ideas about the form.

I have discovered one key to release is giving myself permission to be reckless and perhaps fail. Due to my detail-oriented and fastidious nature I have found that when I do away with ideas of success and allow potential failure in my work it appears as ease, not the chaos that I feared would be released. To phrase it another way, when I play my characters in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* I plan to go directly into the fears of exposure, success and failure and just get on with it; for better or worse.

The therapy my sessions I underwent in the summer of 2012 had advanced to a point where some of the fear around “the monster” was lessened and I continue to work at lessening its strength. Therefore the threat of exposure is less because the stakes are lower and that gives me freedom to move physically, mentally and emotionally.

My characters try to hold the world together against the winds of change and the chaotic influence of the audience, but fail. As Venturewell and the company manager I look forward to resisting that change with all my might and when control is wrested away from me I will let go with as much abandon and overflowing life as the moment can support. The dynamic forces that work on my characters are exactly that of my personal struggles.

## **11. Four Fears revisited**

**11.1 Fear of loss of life:** I have gained through study and practice a repeatable practice in this regard. Using a mixture of Triplett's advice to go into the heart of the fear and Donnellan's technique of using targets as the actor's place of attention, I will make the fear or resistance my target. Here I hope to find vast reserves of energy. I will no longer leave it to chance whether I will be frozen by fear.

**11.2 Fear of loss of reputation:** While work shopping the script we engaged in improvisation. I allowed myself freedom that exposed some less than savoury aspects of my character; a small portion of "the monster" was exposed. I was alternately criticised and celebrated for it. It is dangerous to reveal my aggressive and pathetic self, as people may not like what they see and I may become ridiculed for it, but that is the kind of raw honesty that I am currently experimenting with. I will continue along this path as the characters of Eric and Venturewell supply me with ample opportunity to explore these traits. I am encouraged by this experience because I took a risk, revealed an aspect of myself, experienced mild public commendation and criticism for it and survived. The experience has shown me the danger in revelation is perhaps not so great.

**11.3 Fear of unusual states of mind:** The reason this became apparent to me was due to exercises I did during the first year's training where I was directed to improvise in extreme emotional states without the safety of a container (script or scenario). What I learned from this is that I need parameters in which to experiment. Without them, infinite choice exacerbated my fear of exposure. In this show I have the parameters of character and scenario to focus my attention and create a safe place in which I can reveal my imagination.

**11.4 Fear of speaking before an assembly:** I can offer the skills of a performer to this show and feel confident in that. I also know that I, as an individual, can be foolish—even laughable at

times. Playing myself in a comedy will give me the opportunity to face this fear by revealing myself for the precise goal of being laughed at.

## **12. Summary**

To surrender my identity, to become selfless, as I explored in my Artistic Challenge research will be particularly complicated in this piece because I play a character based on myself. As a tactic to deal with this conundrum of needing to alternately manifest and lose myself, I will attempt to surrender control of my persona to the moment. I will let it be in service to my character's objectives, my scene partner's demands, the director's intention and the play as a whole. My goal will be to leap fully into the moment and follow it without reservation wherever it may lead. The technique I will use to accomplish this is release. Release of unnecessary physical tension and expectations of success or failure, through the Alexander Technique that I am currently studying. I believe that this will create the most favourable conditions for the experience of flow.

### **13. Conclusion**

To conclude I will review my experience throughout rehearsal and performance in regard to my artistic challenge of increasing flow in the actor's work. Paying particular attention to what worked, what did not and how I plan to work on this challenge in the future.

We began the first day of rehearsals improvising objectives, actions and blocking with a draft of the script that, we, the cast had not read in an exercise called "feeding in", where the actor (without script in hand) is "fed" their lines by a prompter and the actor's duty is to say the line with no other responsibility than to follow impulse wherever it may lead. It was an auspicious start. I was liberated from having to demonstrate that I had done my homework, as a serious actor should, and was given the opportunity for free play. I recall feeling little resistance and launched into the play with reckless abandon. Comparing this experience with the group improvisation that I engaged in last summer, I found that the anxiety I often felt in that group was not present in these first days of rehearsal. I think there are two reasons for this difference in experience. Firstly, I gained confidence through working in this manner over the summer, employing release and the will to play when inhibited by fear. Secondly I was buoyed by the ease of familiarity with my class mates, as opposed to the summer improv groups which were largely made up of strangers. I believe this removed some of the potential fear of exposure. Encouraged by this start I looked with confidence on the project as a whole. The bricolage theory of improvising with the elements at hand seemed to suit the project well. We were playing under far from perfect circumstances: we attempted to stage an ever-evolving first draft of a complicated play that had a history of failure with a cast that came and went from rehearsals with no seeming rhyme or reason due to the cast and crew's availability. Knowing that even a modicum of success would be a triumph I felt little pressure and free to do what I liked without feeling pressure to deliver a perfectly polished play. By releasing myself from this expectation I found I was able to allow flow with regularity.

In the next step of the process we began to block the scenes. We had to make full, bold choices about objectives, character and relationships without the benefit of table work to discuss these elements of the show. We were acting blind as it were, not knowing what the director or other actors thought about the play overall or the details of the scenes at hand. My spirits fell; the freedom I had felt in the “feeding in” exercise was replaced with tension, anxiety and fear. There was no flow in my work, only a trickle. The fear of speaking before an assembly was strong; I worried that my choices would not be what the director wanted and that I would embarrass myself in front of the cast and crew because of my lack of talent and intelligence. I had the sense that playtime was over and now we had to stage a “good” play. During my first attempts at playing Venturewell, I felt fear welling up inside, I attempted to release my neck and breath and, without judgement, to allow whatever came out to simply be. After my first stab at the opening Venturewell/Lucy/Jasper scene I was immediately redirected and saw that all of the character work I had done in preparation for the role was not what the director had in mind. My anxiety level jumped, so I set aside the work I had done and using Triplett’s advice I went into the heart of fear, I played the first scene again. Venturewell was now a stern and angry version of my own persona, a fully charged, wide-eyed disciplinarian of a father barking about the stage. Going into the fear in this instance opened up huge reserves of energy and inspiration. I poured myself into the work; my improvised choices fueled by my own personal frustrations and fears. While it allowed a great deal of flow I am certain there was physical holding in this phase of rehearsal. It was as though I was racing down a steep hill with the brakes on. Once the initial adrenalin rush wore off I began to notice the places I was holding tension in my body. I continued to work at removing the rigidity from this characters physicality right through to closing night

I experienced more fear when I first worked the prologue. Standing backstage before I entered I could feel that my anxiety level was high. I felt pressure to start the show off well and

suspected I might not be able to do that because of the myriad fears swimming through me. In an attempt to desensitize myself to this fear I visualized the audience waiting on opening night, faculty and thesis committee members in attendance. Then I put the text and my characters need on a cushion of joy and entered with relatively released neck and breath, but when it came to speak I turned my head from the small crowd down front to address the “audience” stage right, where no one sat. While it is true I must take them in during performance I did this now as a way of not being direct, of standing front and center and evading at the same time because I felt unsure of what I was doing. I did not go into the fear: I tried to dodge it. In hindsight I should have eased my way into such visualizations rather than adding anxiety inducing stimuli on the first take. I will take that note with me into the next process.

As rehearsals went on I was able at times to co-opt the energy of fear into the play, using it to sharpen my actions, however I found there were times when employing this technique there was still some fear, still some part of myself that is invested in the fear and not wholly lost in the moment. Physically it manifested as the holding of my neck, throat and muscles throughout my lower back and buttocks. I was literally held myself back. The weeks of diligent work I put in to remove my physical tension patterns from my performance was tedious. I would release my neck to find I was holding around my sacrum, I would release my sacrum to find I was holding in my throat, and on it would go, chasing the tension around my body. There was, however, always some degree of success, but then when I became fatigued or new stimuli was introduced fear and holding would return.

The difference in the degree of flow between the Company Manager and Venturewell was obvious to me at first and as I expected. Venturewell being more extended stylistically afforded me greater liberty. The character being so different from me allowed the freedom to

reveal myself through the character with little fear. The Manager, closer to my own persona, excited my personal fear that my daily persona may be damaged by the monster that may reveal itself. As rehearsals continued, the “unmasked” manager/director Eric became enough of a mask that I felt as free playing Eric as I did when playing Venturewell. Ironically when the character is different enough from myself, I feel free to reveal myself through it. Reflecting on the anxiety of exposing myself put me in mind of what Pressfield calls the ego’s fear of annihilation. I began to entertain his assertion that the ego wants to protect itself by maintaining the status quo and therefore attempts to limit an individual’s advances. I agree with Pressfield that to disappear into the work requires a kind of death of the ego. Necessarily there is fear around this experience. Pressfield writes in *The War of Art* that the “Master Fear, the Mother of all Fears” is the “Fear That We Will Succeed” (143) He goes on to describe what I believe is fear of loss of life that I have experienced and the fullness of life that can be experienced if the risk is taken:

“We fear that we truly can steer our ship, plant our flag, reach our promised land. We fear this because, if it’s true, then we become estranged from all we know. We pass through a membrane, we become monsters and monstrous... We will lose our friends and family, who will no longer recognize us. We will wind up alone, in the cold void of starry space with nothing and no one to hold onto. Of course this is exactly what happens. But here’s the trick. We wind up in space but not alone. Instead we are trapped into an unquenchable, undepletable, inexhaustible source of wisdom, consciousness, companionship...(144)

It is intriguing to think that the monster that I feared might leap from my mouth may be an image that I create to inhibit me from taking the next step in personal evolution. Moving into

the flow, into the maximum fullness of life does require nothing less than an annihilation of the self, a sacrifice of the ego to the void, and it is a kind of death and birth.

In my experience it doesn't work that way, at least not completely or irrevocably. The theme of the hero's journey, of liberating creative potential is a wonderful and hopeful ideal espoused in Campbell and Beaumont's writing, but upon reflection of my experience rehearsing and performing *The Knight of The Burning Pestle* rehearsal I found that wrestling with block and flow is a Sisyphean task. I would adventure into the unknown and unblock the flow, I would return invigorated, but, without fail, the block would return. My first reaction to this is despair: would it be impossible for me to overcome my fear and move freely or will I always be holding myself back and working to unblock the flow? In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus submits that it is during Sisyphus's long walk back down the plain that he is most interesting and that in the consciousness of his fate he becomes stronger than the boulder.

“One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.” (91)

The argument is that toil at an eternal and insurmountable task binds us to this world and gives us our strength and meaning; by working through the task with awareness of our fate we rise above it. Though I agree with the spirit of Camus's interpretation, the allegory is not entirely appropriate to my experience. Looking back over my career as a performer, I see that, though I have not surmounted fear, I have experienced incremental change for the better. It is not just



consciousness of and scorn for the struggle, as Camus suggests, that makes our toil both tragic and joyful. I have actually gained freedom: I have passed through many membranes. By staying present in the dance of breath, body, and fear-inducing stimuli I can release myself through the awareness of holding, the will to release and the courage to follow the flow. From this vantage point I can think of fear and its gift. Without fear I could not exercise courage, I could not better myself. Indeed, what would be a life without the boulder to push against?

I was an abject failure at allowing myself permission to fail. On opening night as I waited backstage to begin the show, I peeked through the set to see the audience. When I saw the faculty members, my adjudicators, my anxiety rose. To combat this I released my neck and breath as well as I could and to some extent found joy in sharing the work, but still I felt a strong fear of being seen through, as though I were without substance. As a last resort I tried to allow myself failure, and found I would not entertain the possibility, it was not an option. I have put too much into my education; too much has been sacrificed to have such a cavalier attitude about my work. Perhaps it was not a good idea in the first place. It may have been too extreme of a demand. Rather I will look into a healthy irreverence or a measure of abandon in the future.

As the run went on I gained more and more ease, setbacks would occur, but over all I made strides to allow flow. I think that to try and overcome fear is a misguided idea. The task is to manage it when it inevitably comes. To this end I will continue to release physically and psychologically to allow whatever the moment may hold for me. I believe I can be happy with this as the struggle is more than enough to fill my heart.

**Journal Entries from *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* Rehearsal and Performance**

Nov. 12/12

Did the feeding in exercise with an unknown version of the script. I gave myself a break and without pressure to be “good” I just went with the flow. I played and it was fun. I swung all over the place. Was present and aware, physically and emotionally available. The lack of expectations or end-gains was liberating. I felt very little block and when I did I recklessly threw myself into the work. The abandon felt great.

Nov.13/12

So very tired tonight. Worked the first couple of Venturewell scenes. There was no flow, only a trickle, and a general sense of frustration coming off Tim. It seems he expected us to have the all of the information of table work at hand without having given us the benefit of one.

The scenes are being blocked by Tim with little chance to play and discover or improvise. I figure that my job at this juncture is to make sense of the text, fill the moments and be inventive (within limitations of the style). Venturewell is shaping up as a stern version of myself, though a bit older.

Nov.15/12

Working the audience interruption and negotiation scenes. Everyone has questions; the blocking sessions are now turning into table work/workshop sessions. We are re-writing, altering characters’ wants and relationships as we try and push through to then block it. Have felt some block, some resistance. Worked the prologue, entered felt fear, plowed ahead. Put the text/need on a cushion of joy and when it came time to speak I lost my confidence, and spoke to the non-

existent audience SR and SL instead of the management team down front. Rallied, was able to finish strong, but on the Second I rushed through. Just wanted to GET OUT OF THERE before I fucked up. Wanted the anxiety to end.

I was working with an imaginary audience on opening night, full of faculty. I had trouble feeling worthy in front of people whose job it is to watch with their best critical eye. I am sure my flaws will be noted and then I will be publicly criticised for them, sheesh.

In scene work I was more comfortable. I felt more at ease being in relationship with actors. I was able to play, experiment with different tactics, deepening actions. Worked with simplicity and took my time, letting each moment have its due. Didn't rush because of fear. Put my attention on letting the actions land. I did have a low grade fear of exposure, of not being good enough, but I was able to work with it, using the energy of fear, routing it into the actions played, sharpening the moments, it felt exquisite.

Nov.16/12

Worked one short scene today. I realized that first few times I run something I am unsure and fear is present, therefor I rush through, not playing actions but playing ideas I have about the scene. Then, when I realize I am playing ideas rather than action my anxiety increases even more because I am not affecting my partner, as Donellan would say, I am cut off from the target. Keep focused on the target, play actions, let the target affect me. Make sure to play actions from the FIRST and every run. That is the only way to keep myself from thinking about the scene, rather than being in it. I was afraid that I would be called out for playing a state. If I risk being present and doing something that won't happen. The moment has an acute and specific immediacy. The demands of that clarity, the single-mindedness of it leaves nowhere to hide. This is the simplicity that Martha Graham said costs nothing more than everything. This complete absorption, the total

commitment I fear will consume me, that I will dissolve in that selfless moment and be left a papery shell, a weak ghost.

Release the breath, release the neck and place my attention on the other, the target.

Nov. 17/12

I have had the opportunity to catch-up on sleep this week and feel a lot less stress. That alone has made a world of difference in regard to my approach. I went into rehearsal today well prepared. There was very little block. I was working scenes with a very game partner and we whipped up some wonderful business in minutes. Fear was hardly present. There were moments when my experiments failed and some anxiety began to creep in, but release and pursuing objectives cured it. As we played many of the happy accidents were worked into the blocking. One of the most successful days of rehearsal so far in regard to my Artistic Challenge and staging the play.

Nov. 24/12

Most of the scenes are blocked. One fight is choreographed, still two to go. Have had some interesting investigations exploring an action done by both Venturewell and company Eric. Having trouble being able to tell if there is a difference in the flow because of inhibition or if it just a stylistic difference.

Received two new scenes today that alter characters and relationships. I thought I was alright with the “workshop” nature of the production until today. The stress is mounting, Tim wants us off book by Tuesday and we are still getting re-writes and entirely new scenes. People are crying, I guess this is a good time to breathe and release my neck.

I find that, under stressful circumstances of school/life and illness, if I open up and use all of myself, anger may spew out. I guess the maximum amount of life flowing will necessarily include all the colours.

I really like playing the scenes as Eric but it is very frustrating to endure at times. There are many obstacles to getting in the flow both in the world of the play and in the rehearsal hall. When I use all of this and allow the frustrations to fuel the scene it feels like the right choice, I don't get in the way, I allow. But after I feel ashamed of how petty I feel as the character. And I fear my behaviour is not entirely professional. I am allowing personal frustrations with other actors to influence my character's behaviour, I am venting personal frustrations through the work.

Nov. 28/12

Ran the first 20 pages today. Lots of switching between Venturewell and Eric, quite fun. Starting to understand my relationship with Richard. Why don't I take him into the lobby? Why do I have this conversation on the stage? To publicly humiliate him?

May have a moment where E&V blend: "I won't have a great store of company at the wedding..." One of the few moments where I get to win.

Block was not a problem today. When the fear comes I release, place my attention on my partner and with some courage throw myself into the work.

Interesting note: I haven't experienced the usual days of leaving rehearsal feeling like the world's worst actor

Nov. 30/12

Hooray! I had some resistance today. Tim used a metaphor to describe what he wants in a moment. "A volcano that blows and only burns you." I had been attacking others in the scene and he said it was too aggressive, to pull it back, to stew, melt and implode. I have to change my target, or where it lives. My actions still have to be toward Richard and Tiana as that is who I am speaking with, but let all the angst flow internally, or back upon me. I am using Gene Wilder in the producers as inspiration for this. But then I feel tension in my neck and throat. I felt a bit of fear of exposure, of being foolish, of committing and not being any good. I threw myself in but held back physically by tensing my neck and throat. I will try and release next time.

Jan.8/13

First day back after break. I think a low-grade fear was in my way this morning as we got back to work. I was unsure as we jumped into it. I was concerned that I was out of acting shape, as it had been a month since we last hit the boards. I wondered if I could do it again. I found my feet wandering, looking for the "right" spot, or trying to escape. I made them stop by force of will. I found my butt clenched around my sacrum and released it. I don't know if I warmed into the work and therefore released or if I released and then found flow, but I did experience some flow, being dropped in and present, went along for the ride before lunch. My voice felt tired, must remember to release there as well.

Been thinking it is not a lack of will that hinders me, I want success terribly. A thought popped into my head the other day, "what if I stop pretending?" It feels potent. What am I lying about? What will happen if I stop? I like to imagine a wild freedom. How do I stop pretending? I must continue with this idea because I think I am close to peeling off another layer, breaking through another membrane. Exciting.

Nov.9/13

I am now aware that both characters are masks. Both realized enough for me to find flow through. Toying with the idea that Eric and Venturewell are the same character at different points on a continuum. Both are masters of their universe who fall from their imagined place of control. It makes that they are essentially the same character from this viewpoint. If the actor reveals themselves through the mask, then I reveal myself through Eric and he reveals himself through Venturewell. All the characters are me reflected in differently shaped mirrors.

Been thinking of fear, resistance, anxiety. Outside of the work I can do yoga and go to counselling sessions, but in the work there is only the awareness to release, and the will to allow. Holding locks me in, release allows space and therefore possibility, the intrepid spirit can play in that space.

Jan.13/13

First clean run through and first notes session. Tim gave me some direction that confused me and made me think I had been going about it all wrong. But I don't understand what he wants. To hear this at the end of rehearsal is troubling. Now there is lots of fear to try and manage!

Good chat with Tim on the phone, got it sorted. It was about how the chaos works on Eric. I can do what he wants.

Jan23/13

We opened last night. I have been sick for days, headache, fever, congested sinuses, and a raw sore throat. I have been taking every med I can get my hands on and pitching my voice up through my head to mitigate the cold's effect on my voice. I can't get around the fatigue and general malaise. Add to that the downer of sinus meds with the pseudoephedrine and I have been quite high. A surreal experience. Bit disappointed that I'm not at peak performance. Strangely it has not

increased any fear, just a little sad and frustrated. When I am sick I clench my jaw and hold my neck, and found myself doing this on stage. Release, release, release.

Jan.29/13

Closing was a good show overall. I felt free, kept released with my eye on the target. Was able to get through some shows with very little excess tension. I kept removing tension only to find it crop up somewhere else. There was less fear and holding toward the end than there was in the beginning of the run but still it is such a battle. I am starting to build a habit of noticing the fear and holding right away though, and I dream of a day when release is the habitual response to fear as opposed to holding.



KnBP 68

Caity/LUCY

It cannot be,  
For I am locked up here and watched at all hours,  
That 'tis impossible for me to 'scape.

Adam/JASPER

Nothing more possible. Within this coffin  
Do you convey yourself. Let me alone;  
I only crave the shelter of your closet  
A little, and then fear me not. Creep in  
That they may presently convey you hence.  
Fear nothing, dearest love; I'll be your second.  
(LUCY lies down in the coffin and JASPER covers her  
with the cloth)  
Lie close. So. All goes well yet. -- Boy!

Enter COFFIN-CARRIERS and BOY.

BOY

At hand, Sir.

Adam/JASPER

Convey away the coffin and be wary.

Adam/JASPER

Now must I go conjure.  
(Exit)

**ACT FIVE**  
**SCENE ONE**

*Enter U.L.  
Fig.*

A room in Venturewell's house. Enter VENTUREWELL,  
solus.

Eric/VENTUREWELL

*Re-arrange  
table + oil on it.*

I will have no great store of company at the wedding, a  
couple of neighbors and their wives--

*Unit 1*

Richard

Eric! It's time for Nell to have another adventure!

Eric/Venturewell

Now what?

Richard

It's time for Nell to do another scene.

Eric/Venturewell

You promised not to interrupt anymore! Can't you just let us  
finish the fucking play?!

*Unit 2*

*pull self  
up on table*

Act Five  
Scene One

p. 68

Blocking - enter U.L. leg as Venturewell, see table needs to be moved, move it as Eric and then assume Venturewell again at the table.

Units 1+2

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Obstacles</u>	<u>Actions</u>
① V. to plan menu	- Interrupted by Richard	- As V. to <sup>Relish</sup> savour the morsels of the food
E. to begin act 5 and finish the play	- his complete indifference	- As E. to Accuse R. and then to beg.
② Get R. to let us continue	- R. bullying	

Status of Being

V. Dad is in Heaven and all is well.

E. I am betrayed, which becomes I am important

KnBP.69

Tiana  
Language, Eric!

Eric  
We just finished act 4.

Richard  
I don't care about your shit play.

Tiana  
Language, Richard!

Richard  
Shit is hardly a swear...Send out Janelle or I'll go backstage and find her! I'm footing the bill, aren't I?!

Eric/Venturewell  
Yes, yes, you are. Absolutely. You're paying for it. Alright. So? Here she is. (He sweeps aside a curtain catching Nell in the middle of a quick change or...with Ken)

Richard  
Oh! There's...Nell.

Janelle  
Will you guys stop interrupting! Stop interrupting!... I'm in the middle of a... a costume change...Ken! What the fuck!

Tiana  
Language, Janelle.

Richard  
She was doing a...costume change?

Tiana  
Yes, Dickie, that's what it looked like to me.

Richard  
But...didn't I see Ken?

Tiana  
Apparently he had a quick change too.

Richard  
They do quick changes together?

Tiana  
Just drop it, Richard.

Eric/Venturewell  
So. All good then? Are we good to continue into Act 5 now?  
Alright.

*lay on table*

*get up from table + pull curtains aside*

*back to table*

*beat 2 cont.*

*beat 3*

*straighten curtains throughout*

*beat 4*

*make sweet love to the table*

Unit 3Objective

- to Embarrass Nell  
and punish the  
Beaums

Obstacles

- What this may  
do to my funding,  
fear of losing  
cash.

Actions p. 67

- to avenge the wrongs  
done me  
- to torture  
- to demote Nell.

State of Being - I am ascending, I am powerful

Unit 4Objective

I want the Beaums to  
know I have the upper  
hand and enjoy it,  
Rub it in.

Obstacles

- the Beaums are  
in Spock, I must  
penetrate their  
addled minds.

Actions

- Antagonize them  
- tease them  
- Unnerve them  
- Disgust them  
- violate them

State of Being - God is in heaven and all is  
well

- I am growing

- I am powerful.

- I am transcending

KnBP 70

sit at table  
 again  
 -walk to door  
 check for  
 squeak  
 -jump on door  
 see that Jasper  
 has left, cross  
 to table  
 -hide behind  
 post  
 -hide behind  
 stand  
 -hide under  
 table  
 -hide behind  
 curtain  
 -X D.L. of Jasper  
 on back  
 -grip stand  
 span around  
 -circle around  
 U.S. of H. +  
 kick  
 chase him  
 out

Eric/VENTUREWELL

I will have no great store of company at the wedding, a couple of neighbors and their wives, and we will have a capon in stewed broth, with marrow, and a good piece of beef, stuck with rosemary.

Enter JASPER, his face mealed.

Adam/JASPER

Forbear thy pains, fond man; it is too late.

Eric/VENTUREWELL

Heaven bless me! Jasper?

Adam/JASPER

Ay, I am his ghost,

Whom thou hast injured for his constant love. Fond worldly wretch, who dost not understand in death that true hearts cannot parted be. First, know thy daughter is quite borne away on wings of angels, through the liquid air, too far out of thy reach, and nevermore shalt thou behold her face.

And never shalt thou sit or be alone in any place, but I will visit thee with ghastly looks, and put into thy mind the great offences which thou didst to me.

Eric/VENTUREWELL

Forgive me, Jasper. O, what might I do, tell me, to satisfy thy troubled ghost?

Adam/JASPER

Repent thy deed, and satisfy my father, and beat fond Humphrey out of thy doors.

Exit JASPER. Enter HUMPHREY.

HUMPHREY

Father, my bride is gone, fair Mistress Lucy.

Eric/VENTUREWELL

Hence, fool, out of my sight with thy fond passion! Thou hast undone me.  
(Beats him)

HUMPHREY

Hold, my father dear, for Lucy thy daughter's sake, that had no peer.

Unit 5

Unit 6

Unit 7

Unit 8

Unit 5

p.70

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Action</u>
-to plan the wedding Menu	-the door opens and breaks my train of thought	- I investigate the door - I analyze

- I am powerful / God is in heaven and all is well.
- I can't understand what happened to the door.

Unit 6

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Obstacles</u>	<u>Action</u>
-to escape Jasper's ghost	-there is no where to run or hide.	-to out run Jasper

State of being - I am in terror / I see, I loathe

Unit 7

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Action</u>
-have Jasper spare my life	-his need for revenge	-to appease him

State of Being - I am in terror.

KnBP 71

Eric/VENTUREWELL

Thy father, fool? There's some blows more. Begone.

(Humphrey is beaten off the stage.)

Jasper, I hope thy ghost be well appeased,  
To see thy will performed. Now will I go  
To satisfy thy father for thy wrongs.

(Exit)

**ACT FIVE**  
**SCENE TWO**

A room in Merrythought's house. Enter OLD MERRYTHOUGHT.

Tom/MERRYTHOUGHT

Yet, I thank God, I break not a wrinkle more than I had.  
Care, live with cats; I defy thee

Enter a BOY (and COFFIN-CARRIERS) with a coffin.

Tom/MERRYTHOUGHT

Ah, boy! Canst thou sing?

BOY

Yes, sir, I can sing, but 'tis not so necessary at this  
time. For sir, sir, if you knew what I have brought you,  
you would have little list to sing.  
A coffin, Sir, and your dead son Jasper in it.

Tom/MERRYTHOUGHT

Dead?

(Sings)

Why, farewell he.  
Thou wast a bonny boy,  
And I did love thee.

Enter JASPER.

JASPER

Then, I pray you, sir, do so still.

Tom/MERRYTHOUGHT

Jasper's ghost?

(Sings)

And where is your true love?  
O, where is yours?

Adam/JASPER

Marry, look you, sir.  
(Heaves up the coffin)

- come back  
to Center

- Exit U.C.  
(Run into Tom)  
& exit U.C.

Unit 8

Unit 8

p 70-71

Objective

- literally - beating H.  
until he runs away.  
Essentially - appeasing  
Jasper / executing my  
promise.

Obstacle

- H's love for Jacey  
and confusion at my  
change of heart.

Action

- literally + figura-  
tively I kick H.  
out.

- to pacify Jasper's ghost

- have to travel  
to Merrythought's  
to execute second  
part of promise

- to satisfy  
Jasper in  
deed + word.

State of Being - I am betrayed  
- I am falling



### Works Cited

Appleton, William W. *Beaumont and Fletcher, a Critical Study*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd: 1956. Print.

Aspinall D. 1997 "The role in folk humor in 17th century receptions Of Beaumont's Knight of the Burning Pestle." *Philological Quarterly* 76, 2: 169-91. Print.

Bauer, Matthais. "Doolittle's Father(s): Master Merrythought in the Knight of the Burning Pestle." *Plotting Early Modern London, New Essays on Jacobean City Comedy*. Ed. Dieter Mehl, Angela Stock and Anne-Julia Zwierlein. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company. 2004. 41-52. Print.

Beaumont, Francis. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Adaptation Timothy Askew. Toronto: self-published, 2012. Print.

Beaumont, Francis. Hattaway, Michael. Ed. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. London: Ernest Benn Limited. 1969. Print.

Beaumont, Francis. Sheldon P Zitner. Ed. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Manchester, U.K. ; Dover, N.H., U.S.A.: Manchester University Press, 1984. Print.

Bliss, Lee. *Francis Beaumont*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987. Print.

Bogart, Anne. *and then, you act*. New York: Routledge, 2007. Book.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949. Book.

Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Trans. O' Brien, Justin. New York: Alfred. A Knopf Inc. 1955. Book.

Cubuck, Ivana. *The Power of the Actor*. University of Michigan: Gotham Books, 2004. Book

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2008. Book.

Danby, John F. *Poets on Fortune's Hill*. London: Faber and Faber, 1952. Print.

Donnellan, Declan. *The Actor and The Target*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2002. Book

Dromgoole, Dominic. "1607 and All That". *The Guardian*, (2005) n. pag. Guardian.co.uk. October 6th 2012. Web.

Harbage, Alfred. *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*. New York: MacMillan. 1952. Print.

Herrigel, Eugen. *Zen in the Art of Archery*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1953. Book.

Jensen, Phebe. "Teaching drama as Festivity: Dekker's The Shoemakers' Holiday and Knight of the Burning Pestle" *Approaches to Teaching English Renaissance Drama*. Ed. Karen Bamford and Alexander Leggatt. New York: The Modern Language Association of America. 2002. 158-164. Print.

Nachmanovitch, Stephen. *Free Play*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher Inc., 1990. Book.

Parker, Patricia. "Barbers and Barbary: Early modern cultural Semantics." Masten, Jeffrey, and Wendy Wall. Ed. *Renaissance Drama*. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 2004. 201-244. Print.

Shepard, Simon. Womack, Peter. *English Drama: A Cultural History*. Oxford: Oxford Press. 1996. Print.

Suzuki, Mihoko. *Subordinate Subjects: Gender, the Political Nation, and Literary Form in England, 1588-1688*. Aldershot u.a.: Ashgate, 2003. Print

Suzuki, Shunryu. *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. Tokyo: John Weatherhill Inc., 1970. Book.

Thorndike, Ashley H. *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1965. Print.

Volz, Jim. *How to Run a Theater: A Witty, Practical and Fun Guide to Running a Theater*. New York: Back Stage Books, 2004. Print.

Zacharias, Robert. "Rafe's Rebellion: Reconsidering The Knight of the Burning Pestle". *Renaissance and Reformation* 31.3 (Summer 2008): 103-126. [mediatropes.library.utoronto.ca](http://mediatropes.library.utoronto.ca).  
Web.

### Works Consulted

Barker, Simon. Hinds, Hillary. *Routledge Anthology of Renaissance Drama*. London: Routledge. 2003. Print.

Bly, Robert. *Iron John: a book about men*. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1990. Book.

Glover, Arnold M.A. Ed. *The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher*. Cambridge: University Press, 1905. Print.

Hill, Philip G. Ed. *Our Dramatic Heritage Vol. 2: The Golden Age*. Cranbury: Associated University Press. 1985. 279-323. Print.

Leinwand, Theodore B. *The City Staged, Jacobean Comedy, 1603-1613*. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1986. Print.

McKeithan, Daniel Morely. *The Debt to Shakespeare in the Beaumont and Fletcher Plays*. New York: AMS Press Inc., 1938. Print.

Nerlich, Michael. *Ideology of adventure, Studies in Modern Consciousness 1100-1750 Vol. 1*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1987. Print.

Pressfield, Steven. *The War of Art*. New York: Black Irish Entertainment LLC. 2012. Book.

Thomson, Leslie. "Who's In, Who's Out?: The knight of the Burning Pestle on the Blackfriars Stage." *Inside Shakespeare*. Ed. Paul Menzer. Cranbury: Associated University Press. 2006. 61-71. Print.

Triplett, Robert. *Stagefright*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall. 1983. Book.

Von Franz, Marie-Louise. *Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales*. Irving, Texas: Spring Publications Inc., 1980. Book.

Wilson, Harold. *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Restoration Drama*. U.S.A.: Ohio University Press, 1928. Print.