

## WORKING WITH TENSION

For drama to take place four aspects must be present:

1. People
2. Agreement to 'Make believe'
3. Exploration of tension: (Luke Abbott)
  - a) Impending doom
  - b) Dealing with the aftermath
  - c) Experiencing the doom in the now

Dorothy Heathcote - aspects of tension can be categorised into 12 levels:

### Level 1

#### Uncontrollable presence which threatens:

- a watcher, god, witch or soldier which is not benign.

### Level 2

#### Danger known in advance:

- quest in the face of an enemy, in a forbidden place

### Level 3

#### Duty in the face of distraction:

- Territories which daunt, are unpredictable and challenging such as ruins, wastelands, caves, water

### Level 4

#### Herculean tasks:

- challenges of time, climate, terrain, threat

### Level 5

#### Danger from guile:

- Gethsemane, spy infiltration

### Level 6

#### Threat from stupidity:

- foolish carelessness, losing or forgetting critical information like the birthday of a loved one or the key to a secret code

### Level 7

#### Pressures of time:

- vampire day/night, bomb defusing, plague spreading

### Level 8

#### Pressures from sickness:

- wounding, accident, traps of various kinds

### Level 9

#### Breaks in communication:

- Minotaur labyrinth, failure of messages, technical resources, power failure

### Level 10

#### Missing or misreading signs:

- Dracula not been as no neck wounds

### Level 11

#### Breakdown in relations or differences:

- threat to the whole system

### Level 12

#### Loss of faith in companions:

- so called honourable betrayals

According to Bruner there are three ways of representing the world, in the iconic, symbolic and the expressive. These 33 drama conventions, as devised by Dorothy Heathcote, fit into the same categories.

## DRAMA CONVENTIONS

**ICONIC:** icons, symbols, images, drawings, film

**SYMBOLIC:** language, writing, verbal, charts, maps, maths, music, dance - representing thoughts through language

**ENACTIVE/EXPRESSIVE:** Physical action

1 Role actually present, naturalistic, yet significantly behaving, giving and accepting responses.	2 The role actually present, except framed as a film. That is, people have permission to stare but not intrude. 'Film' can be stopped and re-started or re-run.	3 The role present as in 'effigy'. Can be talked about, walked around and even sculpted afresh if so framed.	4 The role present as in 'effigy', but with the convention that effigy can be brought into life-like responses and then returned to effigy.
5 The role as portrait of person. Not three dimensional, but in all other ways the same as effigy.	6 The role as portrait or effigy activated to <u>hear</u> what the class is saying. This causes selective language.	7 The role as a portrait or effigy, but activated to speak only and not be capable of movement.	8 The role depicted in picture: removed from actual life, as in a slide of a role, a painting, a photograph or drawing. This includes those made by the class, as well as prepared depictions.
9 A drawing seen in the making, or someone important to the action, as on a blackboard.	10 Stylised depiction of someone e.g. identikit picture made by the class in frame - as detectives.	11 Stylised depiction of someone except made beforehand, so it is 'fait accompli'.	12 Life sized (cardboard) model with clothing (real) or role e.g. framed as if in a museum or sale rooms. 'This is the dress worn by Florence Nightingale when she met Queen Victoria after Scutari'.
13 Life sized model, except the class is dressing the model so as to see 'how it was' on the day when these events happened.	14 Clothing of person cast off in disarray e.g. remains of a tramp's presence, or a murderer and escape as in a highwayman situation.	15 Objects to represent a person's interests. Works as above, but more closely can indicate concerns rather than appearance e.g. a ring of Borgia.	16 An account of a person by another person in a naturalistic fashion e.g. 'Well, when I last saw him, he seemed alright. I never dreamed anything was wrong'.
17 An account of a person written as if from that person, but read by someone else e.g. a diary entry or letter.	18 An account written by a person who now reads it to others e.g. a policeman giving evidence or a confession. The role is present in this case but in contact through their writing as an author might well be.	19 An account written by someone, of someone else and read by yet another.	20 Story told of another, in order to bring that person close to the action, e.g. 'I saw him open a safe once. It was an incredible performance. I'm not sure if he would assist us though'.
21 A report of an event by formalised by authority or ritual. E.g. an account of bravery in battle on the occasion of presenting posthumous medals.	22 A letter read in the voice of the writer. This is an emanation of a specific presence, not just any voice communicating the words.	23 A letter read in the voice of the writer, but the letter is read by another with no attempt to portray the person who wrote it, but still expressing feeling.	24 Letter read without feeling e.g. as evidence or accusation in a formal situation.
25 Voice of a person overheard talking to another - informal language i.e. naturalistic tone.	26 Voice of a person overheard talking to another, but in formal language.	27 A conversation overheard (persons not seen). Deliberate eavesdropping as in spying.	28 Report of a conversation, written and spoken by another.
29 Reported conversation with two people reading the respective 'parts'.	30 Private readings of conversations, reported as overheard.	31 The finding of a cryptic code message e.g. 'tramps' or 'spies'.	32 Signature of a person found e.g. a half-burned paper.
33 Signs of a particular person delivered e.g. Scarlet Pimpernel (his special mark).			Notes from MoE Terling Network meeting 12.1.06 - Allana Taylor