

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.