

VOL. 3 NO. 2
SPRING 1984



**A ROLLING DRAMA
SHADES OF GREY**

**Dance Performance for
the Primary Child**

DRAMA AND P.S.D.

FACING THE 80s

**Impressions of a
Dance Festival**

DRAMA 14-19

A JUNGLE DRAMA

WALL DISPLAY SET UP IN DRAMA ROOM

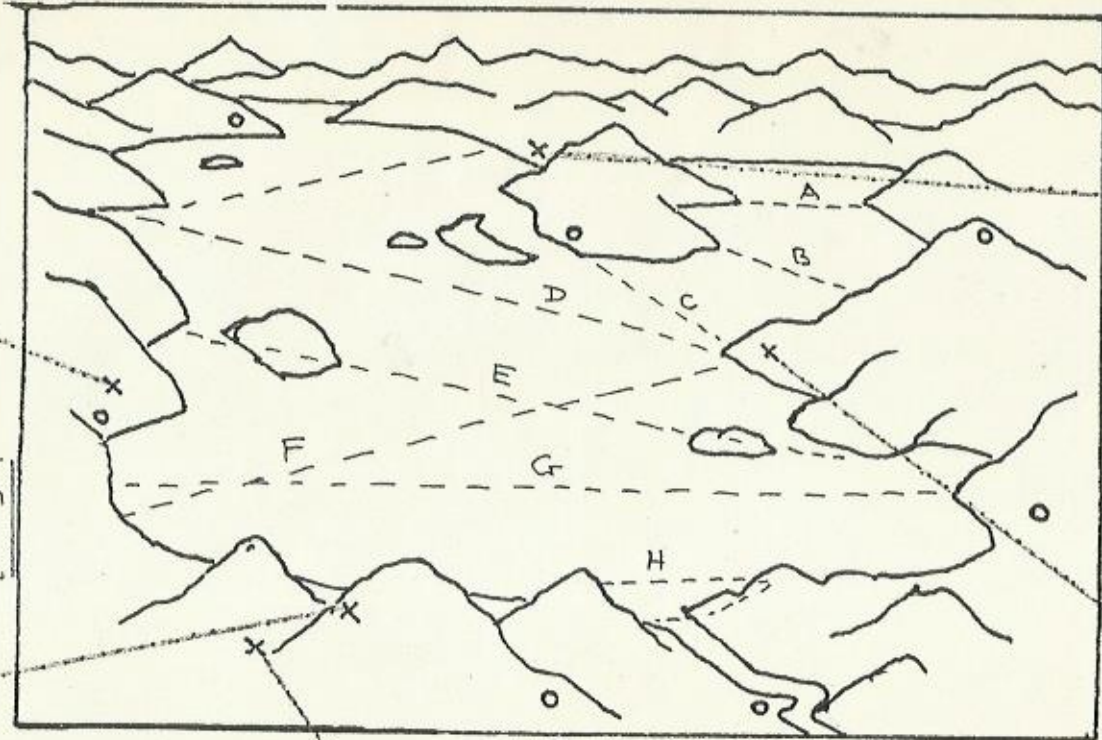
- JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL
TROWBRIDGE WILTS.

ROCK PAINTING No. 1



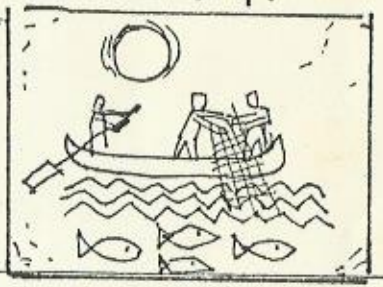
(Dotted lines show rock fractures)

Label: Fish Ritual-The Great Fish
Basic Facts 50' x 30'
Limestone Overhang



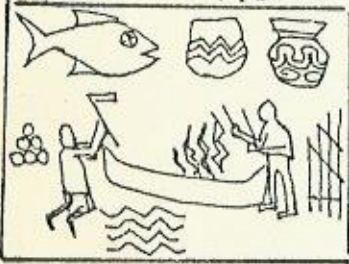
Central painting naturalistic
painted in acrylic to represent
aerial view. Lake supposedly
in upland Brazil.
(3' x 5')

No. 4.



Label: The Harvest of Four Fish
Basic Facts: Friable Conglomerate
30' x 18'

No. 2.



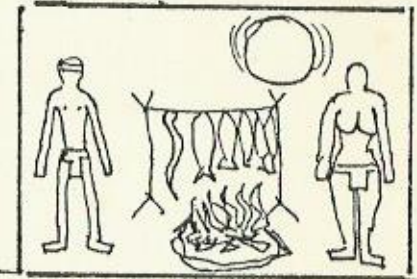
Label: Canoe fabrication Ritual
Basic facts: 20' x 13' Ochre
mudstone protected by
overhanging andesite strata,
subject to water damage

No. 3



Label:
Fishing Methods Painting
Basic Facts 40' x 95'
Friable Limestone

No. 5.



Label: Fish Drying Painting
Basic Facts 30' x 50'
Firm Andesite

Rock painting "copies"
were 1'2" x 1'6", Drawn in
charcoal and white conte on
brown paper to represent rock
Figures simplified, stylized +
symbolic.

- X = sites of rock paintings
- O = village sites of descendants of rock painting tribes
- = sites surveyed for possible dams - marked in chalk

} all negotiated
with class - i.e.
their placings

A ROLLING DRAMA

Don McAra



Don McAra is Senior Lecturer in Drama at Christchurch Teachers' College, New Zealand. His work involves both initial training and school-based in-service. He has an M.A. in English Studies and in 1980-81 took the Diploma in Drama course at the University of Newcastle-on-Tyne. It was on this course that he undertook the project he describes here, in collaboration with Sally Pearse, another teacher from New Zealand.

The article describes a 'Rolling Drama' project in a secondary school in Wiltshire, undertaken in an effort to find some kind of solution to the problem of the typical timetable of the secondary drama specialist. The principle of the 'Rolling Drama' is that one set of stimulus materials and one basic drama framework be planned and employed with a number of different classes (and perhaps over a substantial period of time). The work of each class is different because they are 'framed' differently in relation to the material, and, as the article shows, the work of one class can produce materials which provide a starting point for the work of another group. The 'Rolling Drama' approach offers a number of advantages, for example:

● *One plan and set of source materials is used economically and extensively — although admittedly that one plan and set of materials needs time and care in the preparation.*

● *The teacher and the children can gain a sense of work developing and building in a way that does not always obtain.*

The project described lasted only a week but Don McAra's account is enough to suggest how the principle could be employed over a much longer period.

The principal drama mode employed in this project was that of 'Mantle of the Expert' — although many other teaching strategies were also employed. This basic mode of working meant we had to withhold our own expertise — which helped us to offer choices rather than directives to the pupils and to use fewer 'guess-the-answer-I'm-thinking-of' type questions and rely more on a few open, genuinely important questions which hung upon real matters of human concern.

We used Mantle of the Expert as the main teaching mode principally because of the circumstances under which we were expected to teach, circumstances which are all too familiar to some drama specialists in British and New Zealand schools, or to music or art teachers. The teacher works once a week with each class, for one period only, or at most two. Despite some attempts to relate to other staff taking that class to ensure follow-up or introductory work on the same topic, the teacher can easily be trapped in a series of 'one-off' lessons which give no chance to class or teacher to become truly involved with a topic and its potential to provide fuller learning experiences for the pupils. Moreover, the teacher working under such circumstances has no time to go through more than the opening manoeuvres of a drama that might involve any depth of thinking, belief or feeling, and so is in the business of having to constantly re-invent the wheel since the gaps between lessons are so long. Often such a teacher is forced to fall back on short-term exercises or drama games whose general aims may be to lead to the building up of a bank of 'drama skills', but because these skills are not being applied in a context which allows any degree of real 'Obsession' with working at a problem of human concern, the pupils' and teacher's energies are dissipated and build in the long run to frustratingly shallow achievements.

Sally Pearse and I felt the dangers of this happening, as it has often happened in our previous work. We consulted with Dorothy Heathcote, our tutor, who suggested that if we could not have the timetable changed, that we might try a kind of 'Rolling Drama' situation which could be made to offer a wide range of points of entry. **The basic tension or problem for solution would have to be important enough to hold all the classes' attention, and allow them to function from the point of view of several different kinds of experts. Indeed,**

it seemed to Sally and me that because the Mantle of the Expert puts specific demands on a class to work on a clearly definable 'task area', even in circumstances where teacher and class do not know each other well, that that was the mode to use. Moreover, the Rolling Drama would have a simple story-line which would give it enough appeal to classes through outer appearances, although what was to go on beneath the surface would provide the real learning area, and this would have to be revealed to the pupils in order to gain their interest at a deeper level.

It may interest the reader if I attempt to record how we came to choose the topic we finally arrived at. Certainly the topic was connected by associative thinking with the theme of an island people and their tombs and artefacts and their laws surrounding the assumption of adult self-responsibility. Sally and I had been in at different stages seeing Dorothy at work, first with a group of teachers, then with a class of nine-year olds. During the week's work with the class I watched with interest how the nine year olds functioned within the drama as if they were virtually anthropologists, studying the Tribe (represented by three people in role) from the outside, then shifting to becoming members of the Tribe, in order to be finally studied in their turn, and when all was ready (after in fact five days!), by another class coming to act as if they were another set of anthropologists. This kind of turning inside out of the dramatic sock, so to speak, interested Sally and me, and we often worked for it, though we achieved it in only one or two ways.

At any rate, it gave us a kind of continuity, even a logical coherence, to pick up the idea of anthropologists studying a set of artefacts left behind by an ancient people. In a half-hour discussion Dorothy suggested some possibilities for the drama which I shall state here to demonstrate the kind of assistance she gives to teachers working with her. For example, she suggested that **the very first class should come in to discover a well-set up 'Other', or attention-arresting lure/display which would enable the class to grasp an initial problem.** This could entail working as anthropologists who had the necessity of explaining to the world, through the United Nations if required, the importance of the rock paintings they had discovered. Sally and I decided that this could have occurred on the site of a large inland lake "in the highlands of Brazil". Even though no such lake actually exists, we believed that the situation is analogous to many real situations, and a dramatic fiction of this kind often prevents a class from becoming bogged down in a welter of factual simulation. Sally and I also decided that the 'Other' would consist of a large painting (5' x 3') representing the lake as seen from the air (and conceivably worked up from an aerial photo), this being surrounded by 'artist's copies' of five enormous rock paintings to be found around the lake, as if left behind, protected from the weather, in caves or rocky overhangs. Dimensions of the paintings were written on card and placed alongside the exhibits.

WALL DISPLAY SET UP IN DRAMA ROOM

ROCK PAINTING No. 1



(Dotted lines show rock fractures)

Label: Fish Ritual —
The Great Fish
Basic Facts: 50' x 30'
Limestone Overhang

No. 2



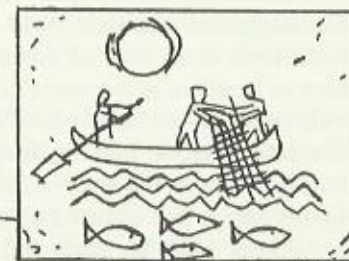
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Basic Facts: 20' x 13' Ochre
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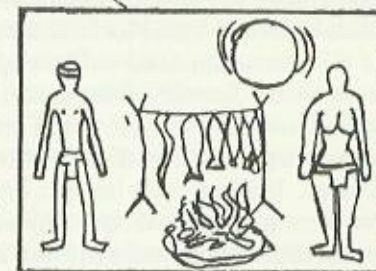
Label: Fishing Methods Painting
Basic Facts: 40' x 95' Friable Limestone

No. 4

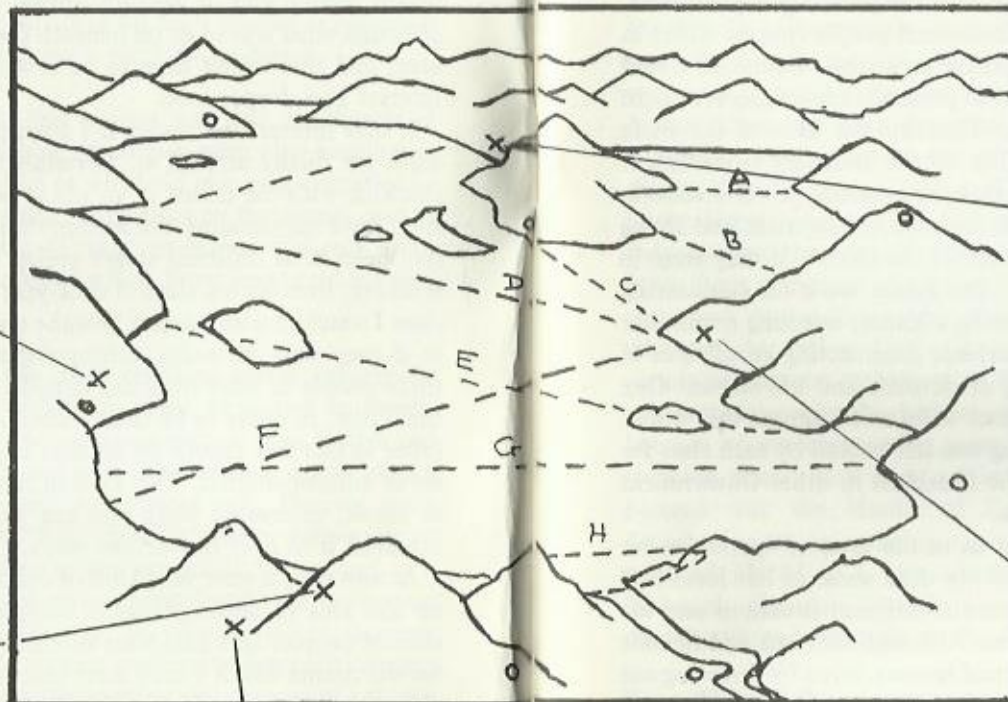


Label: The Harvest of Four
Fish
Basic Facts: 30' x 18' Friable
Conglomerate

No. 5



Label: Fish Drying Painting
Basic Facts: 30' x 50' Firm
Andesite



Central painting naturalistic painted in acrylic to represent aerial view. Lake supposedly in upland Brazil. (3' x 5')

Rock painting "copies" were 1' 2" x 1' 6", drawn in charcoal and white conte on brown paper to represent rock figures simplified, stylized and symbolic

x = sites of rock paintings
o = village sites of descendants of rock painting tribes
- - - - = sites surveyed for possible dams — marked in chalk

placings
all negotiated
with class

Dorothy suggested that the point of 'Internal Cohesion' for all our lessons be a final appeal to the U.N., and indeed an appeal to all those coming into contact with the paintings, to decide their relevance as a memorial not only to a vanished race, but to ecological practices. This would enable us to shift past the lesser matter of merely deciphering what the paintings represented. She suggested that lists could be made by concerned people (pupils either as themselves or in role) of possible ways of making an appeal. Decisions would have to be taken as to who to go to with regard to preservation. Engineers might well need to be involved. We explained to Dorothy our idea of the main dramatic tension coming from the possibility of the Brazilian Government wanting to raise the level of the lake to power a hydro-electric power station to supply farms and industries downstream and improve employment and living conditions. Dorothy suggested that one or more of the classes, if they were to act as if they were engineers, could, within the drama work on engineering drawings, lists of equipment and prices, choosing a leader, selecting a route for the journey inland, having yellow fever injections, constructing certificates of entry, passports, and their own engineering credentials and life stories. One class could make references for another (in fact Sally and I agreed this would be an excellent idea to contrive that something was left behind by each class for the others to follow). Letters from and to the President or other Government officials could also be included in the drama.

Dorothy's assistance in this way provoked us to the level of operations we could think about trying. It will be seen that we used some of her ideas and many more of our own to suit the contingencies of different situations and the needs of different classes as we perceived them. Although we remained flexible and made several readjustments during the actual lessons (often by throwing out surplus material that had become irrelevant), the initial detailed planning and preparation of materials distinctly paid off, and the main idea 'held' in spite of mistakes which could have ditched the entire enterprise. In actual fact the topic of this drama appealed well enough to most pupils in most classes; at least they gave us the benefit of the doubt as strangers, undertaking through a simple verbal contract to act "as if they were" whatever role/attitude we were attempting to interest them in within the ongoing dynamics of the whole Rolling Drama. Neither of us has any desire to push what we did beyond saying that we were glad to have Dorothy suggest it to us, and glad to see the learning possibilities which were opened up if not fully realised.

THE LESSONS

MONDAY

Form V C.S.E. : 1 hr

Frame: Class as themselves place the paintings around the lake, deciding where

it was likely that they might have been positioned by the original tribal artists. (These places are marked 'x' on the diagram.) Then the class worked as if anthropologists, interpreting the paintings, working in groups of three or four "with those they knew they could work with", making notes on the paintings. **Tension:** Pupils asked as anthropologists to explain to the Cultural Attaché of the Brazilian Government (Sally Pearse in role) their findings on the paintings, since the Attaché needed advice about the value of the paintings in the light of proposals to build a dam on the lake.

Notes: Class had been described to us as apathetic. However, after a rather laboured introduction by me as they sat in chairs a short distance from the display they did agree to "act as if they were anthropologists" and came forward to the display after we had obtained from each a statement or at least a nod to indicate that they would maintain the agreement. This simple contract was carried out with most classes, and was rarely broken. We supported those who expressed doubt about their ability to work as anthropologists, engineers or whatever, by saying: "Of course, we know you are not such people. We are simply asking you to behave as if you were, and we will help you by treating you as such people. Do the best you can." Such a simple contract was necessary because of our only seeing most classes the once. Although greater depth of working would have been achieved if the class had had more time, we were pleased that the Mantle of Expert approach did elicit some interested deciphering and speculating on the meaning of the paintings. Significantly these were all placed in a way which facilitated the continuation of the drama. Although the class varied in written ability, group representatives spoke confidently and seriously to the Attaché when she appeared.

Form II L : 1 hr

Frame: Class as if engineers developing rough working drawings while brainstorming ways in which the great rock paintings might be protected should the lake be raised by damming. Drawings to be passed on.

Tension: Again from a role: myself as Chief Engineer, Brazilian Public Works, requiring to satisfy Departmental Enquiry. The role pressed for 'Lateral Thinking' at this stage, with judgements suspended to some imaginary later date.

Notes: The class settled down quickly to Sally's clear setting of the frame, contracted in as engineers as described above, and worked in small groups to produce interesting ideas. We would have liked to obtain more technically detailed and accurate drawings from some, but knew we could have achieved this had more time been available. Only two groups had time to report back to the Chief Engineer, but most drawings were clear enough to be passed on to the next class.

Several groups worked on the idea of slicing away the rock from behind and

raising the paintings up on jacks, or even by a fleet of helicopters fitted with powerful winches. One group of girls confessed themselves at first quite unable to think as engineers, but when asked to focus on just one small element came up with a remarkably apt drawing of a cutter which they said was inspired by the sort of chopper found in a kitchen liquidiser. The most complete drawing showed how a coffer dam could be erected to seal off the painting which could thus remain in situ with new access provided for those wishing to study the painting down a stairway through the rock in the hillside above. This drawing was now calling out for further study in the design and reinforcing of engineering structures — again, had this been a class we could have gone on with, there was much motivation for further endeavour.

A complete list of their ideas was written up ready to be passed on to another class:

IDEAS FROM A GROUP OF ENGINEERS FOR REMOVING ROCK DRAWINGS OF THE LAKE PEOPLE

- Scaffolding to be erected to enable stone to be inspected and cut up
- Numbering of fragments for removal and replacement
- Helicopters adapted for lifting
- Preservation of some caves by sealing of the entrances
- Strengthening mudstone with cement
- Carving behind the stone with machinery, and slicing it away
- Making a by-pass through the mountains at the head of the lake and reversing the outflow of the lake
- Small coffer dams to be erected around caves
- Paintings, if removed, could be floated to better sites
- Existing entrances to the caves could be sealed off, and concrete-lined tunnels could be built down to the paintings:— these could be further protected by covering them with plastic glass

Form II J : 1 hr

Frame: Class contracted into acting as if they were descendants of the original tribe which painted the pictures. They did this in order to prepare a statement for the anthropologists to further assist them in their work of deciphering the paintings.

Tension: Participation in a ritual and knowing that their turn would come in demonstrating their interpretation, via the 'waxworks' drama convention, of one of the paintings.

Notes: After an initial discussion about the meaning to them, as descendants, of the paintings of their forefathers, the class broke into groups to work upon the implications they had found in the paintings — the meaning of the word "implications" having been discussed. The class was asked to break into groups of two or three in such a way that every painting could be represented by a

couple of groups. Each child represented a figure in one of the paintings. A short statement of what person s/he represented was prepared by each child, what she was doing, what she was thinking about and what she was remembering, eg:— "I represent the man who is shaping the canoe with his axe. I am thinking what sort of damage could be done if my axe got into the wrong hands. I remember two summers ago when a man from another tribe got my axe and cut off my father's arm."

Some members of this class had difficulty sustaining belief in the exercise, and I had to use 'teacher power' to get a couple of giggling lads to take seriously the kind of celebration a fisherman and his wife might have after taking the great fish in painting No. 1.

Form IV Drama : 35 min

Frame: In this short period, the class reviewed, as if they too were engineers, the work done by class II L. The advantages and disadvantages of each system of protecting the cave paintings were listed, but time ran out before much could be reported back to me in role as the Chief Engineer.

Note: Given the amount of negotiation that any worthwhile drama lesson needs, Sally and I henceforth agreed not to expect too much of 35 minute periods!

TUESDAY

Form I C : 1 hr

Frame: Class as if surveyors gathering data at various sites chosen by them on considering the painting which represented an aerial view of the lake. Sign on wall reading "Surveyor's Office — Base Camp", also, on the blackboard, a diagram showing how to convert a hillside drawn in cross-section into a contour map, and a diagram listing rocks expected in the area: topsoils, clay, glacial moraine, mudstone, limestone, gritstone, sand, schist, basalt, shale, granite.

Tension: Provided by the class's discovery, once they had been contracted in to the drama, that the Chief Surveyor was rather dodderly and incompetent, not having been "as recently trained as they".

Notes: Sally in a shadowy role as Secretary to the Surveyor negotiated various problems with the class that they might find when they went out on the lake surveying. Survey teams then distributed themselves around the drama room to write up data about particular sites which had also been chalked in on the lake painting. (See A-H on the diagram.) When the class had been returned to base by means of a walkie-talkie call, they took it in turns to inform the Chief Surveyor what he was to pass on to the Consulting Engineers, whose task it would be to select the dam site which would actually be developed. Some groups had gone so far as to consider specific problems as to foundations for dams at the sites they were concerned with. Although I was pleased with this period for the involvement shown by the class, I am sure the interest level tapped could

have led to an introduction to sonar surveying as well as basic triangulation or even trigonometry!

Form IV Drama : 1 hr

Frame: Class asked as if consulting engineers to consider the surveyors' findings and choose the best site for the erection of a hydro-electric dam should the Brazilian Government finally give the go-ahead.

Tension: Roger Day, in role of Chief Engineer, read aloud to the assembled engineers a letter from the Government stressing the urgency of decision-making from the point of view of employment the dam would create, and from the gathering of ecological and historical interests in opposition to the dam.

Notes: Roger, who is Drama Adviser in Wiltshire, had dropped in and he adopted the role of chairman at the engineers' meeting in so he was able to push legitimately for reasoned argument and decision-making without intruding ideas of his own about the placing of the dam. All of this small and apparently very able class were fully involved, with one girl holding out courageously to the last for the placing of a high structure at A (see diagram) while most of the class settled for a low structure at H.

The language of oral negotiation developed in this class was of a high order, and I regret not having been able to make a tape. Roger obtained very positive feedback from a cross-section of the class after the lesson was over: "Working this way," said one pupil, "we were able to get on working out our own ideas without being stopped as we generally are in most school classes." This remark seemed to typify what this class and others felt, though it must be taken within the context of teachers ensuring quality of reflection in what is being done, and doing this without depriving pupils of the power to influence what is happening in the drama.

Form IN : 1 hr

Frame: Class as if engineering students, about to graduate, and studying how to apply for a job, using the proposed dam as an imagined job opportunity.

Tension: Scarcity of jobs for engineers, therefore need to help engineering firms offering employment to realise the thoroughness with which training at Engineering School has been undertaken.

Notes: Sally in role of the students' supervisory tutor, wondering with the 'students' what they remembered from their training at Engineering school. Although the class were somewhat diffident at first when asked to 'remember' the course they had supposedly undergone, they were surprised and pleased to discover what they collectively could 'recall'. As 'tutor's secretary' I recorded their 'knowledge' of:

- Accuracy of measurement processes
- Different types of dam structure

- Energy types: Electricity
 - Gas
 - Water and tidal forces (and controls of floods)
 - Solar
 - Wind (propellers)
- The use of differing construction materials:
 - Concrete
 - Brick
 - Stone
- Erection of scaffolding, and temporary bridges
- Use of different kinds of construction machinery
- Use of maps and plans
- Safety in using explosives
- Security of the dam structure:
 - Foundations
 - Prevention of cracks, seepages
 - Protective surfacing
 - Waterproofing
 - Awareness of "high tension points"
- Security of work force — rescue and recovery operations, rules
- Protection of the environment

Our only input here was setting the task. I have merely re-ordered the sequence of listing; the language was theirs. There are many teachers who would feel that a first form class would be unable to produce such a list. The class then proceeded to fill in individual forms labelled "Credentials of..." which in retrospect we think would have been better labelled under the two headings of "Personal" and "Professional", and possibly "Related Experience".

Again, it was a pity not to be able to go on with this particular class as the drama mode would have driven towards matters of layout, calligraphy, and spelling. An example of how the so-called 'Basics' can be set into a purposeful context at the level of real meaning!

The last part of this lesson involved my coming into the student engineers as if I were the Principal of the Engineering College to assist the pupils role-play being engineering students who were role-playing a job application: i.e. I was to role-play the Principal role-playing the Personnel Selection Officer of an engineering firm. This was a fairly complex bit of framing which nonetheless appeared to raise no difficulties whatsoever for the class.

I was pleased however when I saw the opportunity to add a further step by asking the class the sort of interviewer they wanted me to be. How, for instance, should I sit? How should the desk be placed? And the interviewer's chair? Body angle? Hands clasped on the desk? At what angle exactly? Or fiddling with my

glasses? Or, if I was to be wearing my glasses, exactly how far should they be down my nose? (I was wearing an actual pair.)

The whole class seemed totally absorbed in building me into the role they wanted me to play, and 'directed' me in these pertinent minutiae in a way that demonstrated to me most clearly the detailed knowledge of non-verbal signalling, indeed of 'theatre sign' that young children have at their disposal.

How often do teachers really capitalise on such awareness?

WEDNESDAY

Form: E.S.N. Unit (About 12-15 pupils, three teachers) : 35 min

Frame: Pupils acted as if workers assisting a rather incompetent and slow packer to deal with the problems of packing a theodolite, a full size drawing of which was displayed.

Tension: Provided by the role's press for help.

Notes: This period was one of our lesser successes! The main reason was our failure to ensure the pupils understood the nature of the role: namely, that it was somebody acting *as if* he had problems. We failed to negotiate this with the class, and in consequence several of the pupils dismissed the role as being "not really stupid — just pretending". So several were able to opt out of the drama, and what we were doing must have appeared as manipulation to the observing teachers. However, some of the pupils did accept the challenge and spent some time trying to assist me as the role. One boy in particular came up with some very full explanations and detailed drawings of how to design an expanded polystyrene box. He took his drawing to a secondary stage of showing exactly where each part of the dismantled theodolite could be fitted into the box's compartments, and included careful measurements in his design.

Form III.1. : 35 min

Frame: Here the class agreed to work as if they were the descendants of the cave painters. There was no particular tension employed other than the usual request to the class to see if they could make a further contribution to the 'Rolling Drama'.

Notes: The class were asked to look at the large lake painting from the point of view of determining where around the lake's shores they would have found it wise to establish their communities. After a short discussion among themselves, the 'descendants' directed me to carefully place the small "o" marks which are shown in the diagram. Then the class turned their attention to the paintings of their ancestors, and reflected upon "what was common to them all, and led to the stories handed down to us by our ancestors". As a tribe they selected for their memories the image of 'The Great Fish'. We all then gathered around a large sheet of paper on the floor and each child in turn took the pen and added to the myth of the Great Fish or to some other point of tribal Lore.

As each statement was written it was also read aloud with high sincerity which was not broken by a single giggle. No one factor contributed to this, but the "They do say" phrase helped in several instances:

e.g. They do say the Great Fish glimmers like gold.
You must always celebrate when the Fish appears.
They say the fins are big and like a wave.
His eyes glow up like summer as he comes.
The Fish shall swallow men.
The Earth swallowed one of our towns in seconds when the Great Fish dived.
His teeth are like diamonds,
To find one brings you luck.
If you give him nothing your family will die.
Last year one of my children died.
I shall sacrifice my finest bull for him...

and many more. I realise as I select and order the above that there is the basis for writing a Great Poem of the Tribe here, and maybe that is a follow-up we could have taken had we had that class again. As it was, we were pleased indeed to have among all the contributions one real GIFT as far as the ongoing drama was concerned:

When they try to build this dam it will fall down and
The people who built it will be drowned!

Thus Cassandra.

Form I J : 1 hr

Frame: Class agreed to act as if they were a group of civil engineers called in to investigate a set of problems concerning the development of the dam at site H. Gathered around the following modified version of the engineering skills list left by form I N, the members of the class were taken by us through a formal "contracting in" ritual under which, using their surnames and "Mr" or "Miss" they chose the tasks/problems they would work on. Books on engineering, dams, etc. from the school library, were available. The adapted list:

ENGINEERING PROBLEMS TO DO WITH:

Knowledge of Energy:	Electricity
	Gas
	Water power
	Tides, flooding
	Solar and wind power
Methods of propulsion	
Methods of construction:	Brick
	Stone

	Concrete
Methods of erection:	Scaffolding
Methods of using:	Maps and plans
	Machinery of different kinds
	Explosives
Knowing how to provide security for:	The construction crew
	The equipment
	The environment
	All life on site

Though the list could be criticized from the purist Engineering point of view, it provided a suitably varied choice.

Tension: The class were advised that a newspaper reporter from one of the big South American dailies was wanting to interview them on the care with which the dam was going to be constructed, so that people downstream, and those concerned with ecological matters could be reassured.

Notes: The class worked for the most part absorbedly on the tasks, though as so often in the overall Rolling Drama initial excitement needed more time to get to deeper levels. Also perhaps the tasks above were too big to even begin to get to grips with. Again, all one can say is that the will and potential was there for deeper learning from a system such as this.

Form II C : 1 hr

Frame: Class as if art historians, whose task it was to add to the anthropologists' decipherings accurate descriptions of the paintings as artefacts.

Tension: None other than having a newspaper reporter arrive — and having to explain, from an art historian's point of view, why the paintings should be preserved or otherwise.

Notes: A fairly rumbustious group of pupils, but some of the records kept of their work in the art historians' folder show evidence of trying to work out accurate descriptions of size and proportion in converting a visual experience into a written one. Some groups worked upon what kinds of paint may have been available to the primitive tribe. (Here a resource book on the history of paint might have been useful.) Others began to enquire into the nature of symbolism in painting — this for some of the class at least could have become an area of much deeper study.

Not a period of great endeavour for some, however.

THURSDAY

Form I G : 1 hr

Frame: Most of the class most of the time as if they were the descendants of the tribe, now living on the point of land marked on the diagram of the river

where it flows down from the lake. Some of the class who found concentration difficult in the long session of writing up our tribal customs were used to become part of the survey team in the short 'film'.

Tension: Provided mainly by the power of the 'ritual of remembering' our tribal customs. Several of the pupils who were happy to go with the ritual attempted to deal with the one or two who tried to undermine the belief of the class by, in role, inventing dire punishments for those who transgressed.

Notes: It was remarkable to me the length of time that most of the class spent completely absorbed sitting with the lake and paintings in view inventing their tribal customs. I quote the full list:

THE VALLEY OF THE TRIBE

We call it the valley of Life and Death.

Our burial ground is higher to be safe so that the Great Fish will not take our Dead.

We mark the graves with stones and crosses of wood.

We put up stone walls to protect the Living from the Big Fish.

We visit our burial grounds, some of us, every day.

We have a Feast of the Dead there every year.

Then it is we pray there, mark the graves freshly, and repair the burial ground.

We sing on the Feast of the Dead. We praise the Dead.

We sacrifice a sacred animal.

The Feast lasts two days when we do no other work. This is our Holy Day.

We make more drawings on the Feast Days. At the moment there is peace in our village.

We draw pictures of our dead relatives as a tribute to their lives.

We treasure our past.

We have made statues and carvings to show our people's ways.

The carvings show warriors and great people of our tribe.

We have many stories of our people carved and kept near the burial ground.

Our Dead go around the safe part of the lake on their last great journey.

We name our animals in memory of our Dead.

Sometimes we try to hunt the Great Fish from this valley.

We have many tales of our great warriors doing this.

Every person in our tribe has one fish to eat at the Feast.

It represents the Great Fish.

We throw our Law Breakers to the Great Fish, or sometimes we burn them.

Getting rid of their bodies removes the evil.

If anybody spears the Great Fish we make a statue to them.
 We write their name on a pole which is kept safe on the hill.
 We have a temple to the Dead near the burial ground.
 There the names of the Dead are carved on the walls.
 Punishment is done by taking half a person's possessions.
 These are our Laws.

How ready this class is to explore the further aspects, not only of this culture but of many others when they have this degree of understanding about just one aspect of this imaginary people.

Sally asked the class to move to a place where "they could see without being seen" and watch the strangers who had been reported to be moving about in their valley. Rather than shift rostra, which would have implied *hiding*, which we didn't want, several boys crouched in place to *represent* rocks. These boys insisted that the tribe move behind them with genuine stealth when they did not move silently the first time. From that vantage point the tribe watched as I led a survey team on a triangulation survey of the damsite. (The previously naughty boys having sworn to me that they wouldn't have to be made to do it again like those natives had!) Time ran out before we got much farther. It would have been good to know the thoughts that arose in each tribesman's heart at seeing those foreign men invade their burial lands. However, the next class was able to take up one aspect of the story.

Form II M : 1 hr

Frame: This class continued to act as if they were the same descendants of the tribe as in the previous class, and eagerly picked up the thread.

Tension: The class came in to discover a hastily improvised "hole", or rather, the representation of a hole, i.e. a piece of raggedly torn black paper sellotaped to a sheet of buff paper. This the class agreed to accept as a hole which could possibly have been made by the survey party when driving in a peg. The tribesmen recognised the spot as being part of their sacred burial ground — the class had been shown the description of the tribal customs with regard to the burial ground which I had recorded in large 'public' printing with the previous class. The question was what, if anything had been taken?

Notes: However, Sally then led one of the best examples of 'slowing down' I have seen. She asked the class in what order they would gather to sit around the presumably plundered hole, even before they investigated it. The way they sat would represent/symbolise their whole social structure. By careful questions she offered choices which enabled them to build the scene. At one end of an oval composed of the more common warriors and their wives alternating with each other "according to the custom" sat on a low rostrum the chief flanked by wise men and spear bearers; at the other end sat the head woman, and much discussion was held about the extent of her power. This was a fascinating

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example of a secure discussion at one remove about the relative power of the sexes in today's world. This is a hasty description of what took a great deal of negotiation and trying of alternative arrangements. It was an example of the power of space to symbolise. These negotiations could be carried over into the building of many grouping arrangements including those done with a class carefully structuring a scene from a play or a novel. But this class was essentially concerned with the fitting representation of a 'Structure of Power'. Almost as an unnecessary coda, it was finally decided that representatives of the tribe should come forward and state what sacred objects had been plundered from the hole:

- A box of leader's bones.
- A precious ring.
- A box of fishes' bones
- The belongings of our wise men.

These things were written in chalk on the black paper of the hole.

Form V C S E : 1 hr

Fittingly the class with whom we had begun now came in to end it all. As they entered nonchalantly, digital watches beeping, it felt rather peculiar to think about the journey we had come. Would they care in the least that what they had started had kept on rolling? A few seemed politely interested, others were frankly bored as we explained. Peter, the class drama teacher, helped save the situation by setting up a formal square arrangement of chairs for the final debate (he had of course been in touch with all that happened through the week). We asked the class to act as if they were delegates to a U.N.E.S.C.O. decision-making body. Would they cast their eyes over all the documents gathered during the week and decide which side of the issue they would take:

whether to press for the go-ahead for the dam

or to press for the preservation of the great paintings.

Enormous implications were underscoring each case. It was explained that Peter would chair the debate.

Rather sadly, the class did not go through the documents particularly seriously, and one group of girls simply went on talking about their boyfriends. However, we put out a last appeal to their common decency: the fact was there were just so many students in other classes who would be wanting to know what was the final decision about the dam. Sally and I had been asked several times in the playground about "whether that dam was built yet?" And this appeal worked. The girls who had held off strode purposefully into the meeting.

Then it was discovered that nobody wished to take the side of the dam. Sally thereupon took up the challenge and played a role as a representative of the Brazilian Government. The groups she faced had designated themselves as:

The Welfare Group for Tribal Relations

Ban the Dam

Anthropologists' League

The Representatives of the Tribe

As the debate flew to and fro I kept a written record of the language thrown up by the pupils themselves. The degree of involvement shown and the concern and oral fluency particularly of some of the previously nonchalant girls was startling. One needs to realise that these pupils were not regarded as particularly able, or cohesive as a group. Also it is easy for the highly educated to derogate the lack of formal debating structure, but it seemed clear to me that this situation was stretching the pupils genuinely, and from glimpsing their written work from the first class I knew there was an enormous gulf for some of them between their oral and written language. Yet there were potentially several real politicians here, and Sally as an experienced drama teacher had her time cut out keeping her end up. The 'classic' nature of her role, and that of the chairman, of course did much to help raise the standard of the pupils' language in turn.

What follows is a selective reconstruction (from my notes) which conveys the spirit of the debate. The more complex language is that of the pupils themselves and truthfully indicates their level of concern.

MINUTES OF THE U.N.E.S.C.O. SELECT COMMITTEE (debating the issue of Lake 102 in Brazil)

WTR: Welfare Group for Tribal Relations

BD: Ban the Dam Movement

RT: Representatives of the Tribe

AL: Anthropologists' League

P: Mrs Sally Pearce (as Chief of Brazilian Public Works)

CH: Chair – Mr Peter Harris, U.N.E.S.C.O. representative

CH: *Introduces the debate, outlining the issues at stake.*

P: *Points out the tremendous good which will come from the Dam regarding employment; development of new skills; industrial growth etc..*

AL: *Has Mrs Pearce inspected the site with regard to preservation of the paintings?*

P: *Some preservation methods have been considered but were very expensive.*

AL: *Pictures of this kind are vital to certain peoples.*

P: *I suggest that the pictures, though maybe important, are not necessarily "vital".*

AL: *We must consider the history aspect... the paintings are like books, they're necessary as a record...*

BD: *A way of life is being threatened. The minority group need to be*

remembered... These paintings have a wealth of information for mankind...

- BD:** We have surveyed the site. There would be tremendous difficulties in shifting these people. They should not be brought into the 20th century... they should be studied to help us to see how we have graduated from apes. What would happen to these people?
- P:** They would receive training...
- BD:** They are not sophisticated... I very much doubt if training would help them... They are way back in the evolutionary scale.
- AL:** Can you not see it from their point of view?
- P:** What would they have to offer me?
- AL:** They could give us a vantage point from which to see our own way of life.
- WTR:** How would you like being forced to undertake another way of life?
- BD:** You think this (*the world of Western Civilisation*) is a fit place to move people to?
- WTR:** Brazil has a housing problem already.
- BD:** This is a people's lives we are talking about... The whole world is our history... You can't cut yourself off this way... We must find out more about them. There may be a wealth of things going on in their way of life. (*emphatically*) It's like moving someone from New York to Chicago... like letting faceless companies take people over...
- WTR:** The paintings themselves are enormously valuable as teachers of how other ways were!
- P:** (*under pressure*) Through the chair please! I'm sure we can find a way to accommodate people.
- BD:** Mrs Pearse has no obvious affinity with people... Once history is lost we will never get it back... I'm sure Brazil has other sites and opportunities for development.
- CH:** (*Reminds participants of the ground rules for debate. Then to Mrs P.*) The lake under consideration is the only suitable lake is it not?
- P:** It is the most suitable place according to studies made by engineers.
- WTR:** (*pouncing*) If you can't answer exactly... if the paintings should be ruined... you should clarify just why you need to build the dam at that place.
- CH:** Have other sites been investigated?
- P:** Investigations are proceeding still...
- CH:** Has anyone any further ideas before we call for a decision?
- BD:** It seems to us that the Brazilian Government has made an insufficient study... not enough evidence...
- P:** I refute that... this is the cheapest of all available sites...
- BD:** Tribal life is not cheap!

- CH:** (*Presses P. for further information*) Is it true, Mrs Pearse, that the burial ground will be flooded?
- AL:** Why destroy what should be respected?
- P:** Twentieth century graveyards are often dug up!
- BD:** Postpone the decision... certain modifications could be made...
- CH:** Postponement?
- P:** Not indefinitely... there must be a time limit.
- WTR:** Time is needed to do further work on the meaning of the paintings.
- BD:** On this I'm not an expert; let the Welfare Group advise...
- WTR:** (*after brief consultation*) We seek at least a further two years. There is so much evidence to go into.
- WTR:** Two years absolute minimum.
- AL:** We think five or seven at the minimum.
- WTR:** Five is too long...
- P:** ... (*objecting*)
- BD:** We feel the representative of the Brazilian Government is not a qualified person to... } *confusion*
- P:** ... }
- WTR:** Maybe if the Brazilian Government introduced an independent group of non-Brazilian archaeologists... They have taken bones and important things from...
- CH:** *Draws towards a decision. Proposes that the Brazilian Government be subject to a delay of two years pending further investigation.*
- BD:** (*concur*) Provided that it is agreed that the dam is not built immediately at the end of that time.
- The Chair called for a vote on the proposal: P. against. Three groups in favour of the proposal. One undecided.*

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