

THE APPLICATION OF MYTH AND STORIES IN DRAMATHERAPY

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Author's note: Rather than using both masculine and feminine pronouns concurrently, which can be tiring, I have used female for therapist and client as this is what I will be describing and masculine for the more general.

Myth, its symbolism and effects.

Myths and stories go back to primeval Man. Our understanding of his life has been enlightened by the pictures we have found on the walls of caves. His etchings of animals are an example of primitive magic, the antelope was the totem for the animal he would hunt the next day. Thus, he 'imaged forth' the symbol, perhaps using his imagination for the first time in history. This process later enabled him to 'image' in his mind the hunt itself, and, later still, to elaborate and conceive the first 'story' from which mythology would develop.

According to the Oxford Dictionary:

Myth. Purely fictitious narrative usu. involving supernatural persons etc. & embodying popular ideas on natural phenomena etc.
and

Story. Piece of narrative, tale of any length told or printed in prose or verse of actual or fictitious events, legend, myth, anecdote, novel, romance.

From a very young age children love listening to stories and often they will have a favourite which they want repeated, time and time again, until the specific need the story fulfils no longer exists and they can move on to the next stage of their development. Gersie and King mention the reassuring effect of a story on the listener. 'Have you ever wondered why so many children want to hear a story at bedtime or why adults so often read before going to sleep? We suggest that apart from wishing to delay the moment of falling asleep by clinging to the known consciousness, a story performs a function of reassuring the recipient that the unknown can become knowable, that the road between the known and the unknown can travel both ways.'

(Gersie and King 1990, p.33)

In my work as a dramatherapist I have used myths and stories in different ways, according to the needs of my clients at any given time. I have chosen a story which mirrors or exemplifies the client's state, or I have listened to a story the client has remembered. Secondly, I have encouraged clients to write their own story, either during our session together or at their home. The first method is easier to utilise, and it is up to the Dramatherapist to have a good repertoire of stories and myths. The second depends on the client's inclination and interest in creative writing. In groups I have found that it is often easier for members who are afraid of being exposed, if they cooperate with others in creating a group story. However, when one has clients with a love for writing, as is the case of the second vignette I will be

describing, their writing can take on a far more personal quality. Freud believed (as mentioned in A.Storr's book *The Dynamics of Creation*), that 'creative writing was nothing more than a surrogate, an inferior substitute for what the author is unable to obtain for himself in reality' (p.30). Whether this is the case with many authors, I am not sure, but I find it is very often the case with my clients. However through working with the material therapeutically it ceases to be surrogate and can become a new reality.

In Paul Diel's book on *Symbolism in Greek Mythology*, he writes that all forms of psychopathology have been described in the myths, thus allowing the ancient Greeks to make sense of human psychology. Myths provide us with the opportunity to study the immediate symbolic meaning. Paul Diel writes, 'The symbol contains a primeval psychological truth, in other words, the capacity to 'symbolise' is a natural physical quality. Myths allow us to study this direct symbolising capacity.' The ancient myths have such a wide application that almost any human situation can find its equivalent in them.

Ancient Greek myths, which preceded the Christian ethics, are far more tolerant of human nature and far less prudish about touching on controversial issues like incest, adultery, etc. According to Diel, the ideal of ancient Greek civilisation was not sainthood as in the Christian belief. The saint has not only conquered his physical desires in practice but also in his imagination. He, therefore, has overcome temptation, whereas the ancient Greek ideal was to achieve harmony in all desires, not only intellectually but physically, in an attempt to find the right measure.

This is also the aim in therapy. One needs to be able to accept one's conflicting desires and be at peace with oneself as a whole person.

Robert Landy in his book DRAMA THERAPY Concepts and Practices refers to aesthetic distance. ‘At aesthetic distance, the individual achieves a balanced relationship to the past; that is, he both remembers and relives past experiences. In reaching this state of balance, he is able to experience a confluence of thought and feeling, to «see feelingly,» like the blinded Gloucester in *King Lear.*’ (Landy 1986 p.100)

Dramatherapeutic work with myth, fairy tales and modern stories which reflect on personal issues allows for the distance which is necessary for these to be seen in a different light. Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment* shows how the client can resolve inner conflicts through the implications of a tale, ‘The fairy tale is therapeutic because the patient finds his own solutions, through contemplating what the story seems to imply about him and his inner conflicts at this moment in life (p.25)

Through stories, it is possible for the client to identify with a character and see members of her own family in other characters. Myths and fairy tales with their exaggerated conflicts and larger- than life characters illuminate our own conflicts, while permitting the consideration of the problem in a depersonalised way.

In their book *Mutative Metaphors in Psychotherapy*, Murray Cox and Alice Theilgaard describe how a patient is facilitated to express his inner feelings through poetry and symbolism. The authors believe that, ‘through the force of poesis and aesthetic imperative, man defends, proclaims and becomes his story. It is possible to go blind (literally and metaphorically) if one sees too much; and the force of poetry can furnish both the therapist and the

patient with a ‘dark lamp’. Such is the force of poetry and symbolism that it becomes a most powerful tool in the hands of the dramatherapist.

For a client relating a traumatic experience, using a story or a myth about other people could be less painful than talking about their own abuse, thus achieving the ‘dark lamp’ effect Cox and Theilgaard mentioned. In fact Murray Cox had told me that those words came from a psychotic patient he had been working with.

When unconscious material is brought forward and worked with imaginatively and creatively, through the medium of the story, it becomes positive and no longer a source of harm. Stories become therapeutic because the subject finds outlets through working with and understanding the narrative on many levels, from the symbolic to the intuitive.

Working with a story which the therapist brings to his/her client.

The Jungle Book was a story I believed would be appropriate for my client Louisa whom I had been seeing for one year on an individual basis. In the case I am going to describe the story I chose to work with was not only appropriate but turned out to be a story the client was very familiar with and attached to. Louisa was 35, working as a secretary in a large advertising company. She lived alone but had close contact with her parents. Her mother was a very controlling woman and Louisa had to discourage her from telephoning frequently at work. Her father was a retired army man and kept a back seat in the family interactions. Louisa was the second child, with a

brother two years older than herself, also in the army. When they were young, her brother was very violent and domineering with her.

Louisa first started therapy three years previously, together with her partner. She needed help in order to end their relationship, which had become violent. She continued the therapy after her separation, but felt confused. She decided to try Dramatherapy with the hope that she might understand more about herself.

As we had been working together on an individual basis for over a year, I had suggested she might be ready to join a group and she agreed reluctantly. The work on this transitional period will be described in the following vignette.

This is a sample of Dramatherapeutic work where the therapist chooses a story she believes to be appropriate to her client. The story I chose was *The Jungle Book*, as I believed that Louisa resembled Mowgli the hero in the story and would be feeling the part very much when she entered a Dramatherapy group. In her life she felt as a naked, vulnerable human living amongst a herd of wolves who were her family.

When I told her that I had brought *The Jungle Book* for us to work with she replied that she knew the book by heart. This story became well known in Greece only after it had been made into a Walt Disney film so her knowledge and memory of the story from childhood (which was before the film) indicated that it was very precious to her. Instead of reading the story to her, I asked her to recall the first chapter as she remembered it. I had recently re-read the book, so I could tell that she had left nothing out. She described Mowgli's

arrival in the jungle and his being chased by a tiger until he stumbled on a family of wolves, who took him in and treated him like one of their own cubs. When Louisa had finished I asked her to choose three scenes which held some significance for her and then to draw them. She chose and drew the following:

- a) the male wolf carrying Mowgli in his mouth so gently that an egg would not have cracked.
- b) Shear Khan, the tiger, peers into the wolf's cave and the mother wolf sits up and faces him with her angry eyes, fearless, protecting her young.
- c) Mowgli sitting on the ground naked, playing with some pebbles, during council, at which it will be decided if he is going to be accepted by the wolf pack as a brother.

The story of Mowgli could be seen as describing Louisa's life pattern. She was a highly intelligent and sensitive person, who found it difficult to be amongst people. The relationships she had formed in the past had a raw quality about them and did not seem to fulfil her on an emotional level. On the other hand, her relationships with various pets had a deeper involvement on her part. She was also a great plant lover and looked after these with knowledge and understanding. It would seem that she wished for a comforting physical relationship, which did not include sexual interactions. She was not a person who wished to marry and raise children. She was content or rather managed with one or two friends together with her cat and plants. The social contact she had at work, both with her employers and her colleagues, involved a great effort on her part (which she concealed), so that when she returned home after work in the evenings she just wanted to be by

herself. What frightened her was her isolation from the outside word and what her future was likely to hold or rather not hold.

For these reasons I believed that her involvement in a Dramatherapy group would be a good start in her being closer to other people in a less threatening environment. Her entry into a group, experienced as a microcosm, could be seen as equivalent to Mowgli entering the animal kingdom.

Looking at the images Louisa picked from the story one can see her need and trust for a gentle male wolf, who could carry her to safety without any physical harm. Was this something she had experienced in her own life or was it something she would like to happen? Or on another level, was this the side of herself which was always rescuing injured strays from the street?

In the second image we have the mother wolf protecting her young, especially the newcomer over which the threat has occurred. She is strong and fearless and is watched by her mate with admiration. Had Louisa identified with the brave mother, protecting an infant which was not her own? or the naked and powerless human baby? And, finally, at the wolve's council we have Mowgli playing with his pebbles, oblivious of the dangers inherent in the decisions which are about to be taken concerning his welfare. Is he too young to know any better or is it that he trusts implicitly in the strength of his adopted parents?

Louisa's own statements were that they took him in because he was naked and unafraid, but also that the wolves were frightened of him because he could out stare them.

Does this mean that she saw herself as vulnerable but also brave? Is it this bravery which has kept her safe when faced with difficult situations?

In Louisa's case I believe her reality was in the images themselves, which were in fact two different sides of the same coin. Louisa had experienced the position of the powerless naked baby and, therefore was aware of his vulnerability. The fearless mother, protecting her young, was also an extension of herself.

Grainger, in *Drama and Healing*, recognises that even without analysis, the mere act of involvement in a story as a listener can bring about a therapeutic effect. He writes: 'To allow oneself to enter the sphere of myth is to travel along a path which has the fragility of a dream and the rock-like durability of the dream's real meaning that underlies and sustains life itself, and which can be experienced but not analysed. The experience of such meanings transforms our relationship to life and death' (Grainger 1990, p.126).

Working with the client's story.

This second sample is again with a client on a one-to-one basis. Here the story comes from the client herself. Instead of using Dr.Mooli Lahad's SIX- PIECE STORY- MAKING (6 PSM) method to help her create a story, I

applied his technique backwards. That is, instead of giving my client the titles to make up her six-part story, I asked her to apply them to her already made up story.

Dr. Lahad writes: (about the 6-PSM) 'My assessment tool is based on the use of bibliotherapy: a therapeutic technique which uses the story and story-telling in order to assist the individual reach self-awareness and improve internal and external communication. The basic assumption is that it will not always be easy for the client to relate what has happened, especially in time of distress. The 6-PSM has the objective of helping the therapist to reach an understanding and develop contact with the client based on the therapist's understanding of the patient's 'internal language' (Lahad 1992, p.156)

Using the 6-PSM method, the therapist asks the client to draw a story in 6 parts following the instructions: Divide the page into six spaces, think of a main character- a hero or heroine, the mission, a helper, an obstacle, the coping and the outcome and draw these in the different boxes.

When the client tells her story, the therapist must listen to it on several levels:

1. the tone in which the story is told.
2. the context of the story and its message (themes).
- 3 . finding the dominant coping modes of the story (BASIC Ph).

The BASIC Ph is a model to understand the strengths of a client. Dr. Lahad has deduced six fundamental elements which underline the coping style of the client: Belief and Values (Frankl/ Maslow) **B**, Affect (emotional) (Freud/ Rogers) **A**, Social (Erikson/ Adler) **C**, Imaginative (Jung/ De Bono) **I**,

Cognitive (Lawarus/ Ellis) **C**, and Physiological (Skinner) **Ph**; he has named it BASIC Ph. This is a multi- modal approach that suggests a combination of these elements in the unique coping style of each person.

Many think that coping behaviour is only detected in the fifth picture, but this is not so. Each picture gives information on coping modes. If, for example, the hero is a fairy, that gives a suggestion, or hints at the use of imagination. The goal can be connected with values and beliefs. The obstacle can be social, imaginary or very realistic, and demanding of a solution.

Coping can come in all kinds of ways, and the conclusion can be emotional, intellectual, social or imaginary. Therefore, it is important to pay careful attention to determine the modes the individual does or does not utilise, and begin the contact according to those guidelines. (Lahad p.157, 1992)

Having Dr. Lahad's six parts as a basis, I asked my client to identify the six parts - hero/ heroine, the mission, helper, obstacle, coping and outcome- in her already created story, thus giving it a structure which was easier to work with.

Dina

She was 34 when she came for therapy. An only child, she and her parents had a good relationship until their end.

Both parents were professionals in the sciences and had worked all their life. My client studied marketing and was a civil servant. At the age of 26 she married a person her parents did not approve of. As their marriage developed, her husband urged her to make financial demands on her parents, thus alienating them from her. He was violent with her from the

beginning and was aggressive sexually. They lived together for seven years, during which time he beat her up frequently. After his last outburst during which she was badly injured, (a broken collar bone and several broken ribs) she left him and was taken in by a close girlfriend.

She lived with this friend for a year and a half during which time they formed a homosexual relationship. My client, however, believed that she was basically heterosexual. This relationship developed more as a result of the violence she had received from her husband and the anger towards men that this had produced in her. Towards the end of that relationship she met a man with whom she formed a new relationship. At the time this man had a parallel relationship with another woman, who did not know about Dina. During their time together, he borrowed large amounts of money from Dina, which were not returned.

When she came to me it was four months after her parent's were both killed in a car accident. In many ways she had not felt the full impact of her parents loss at the time, as she was very much involved in her relationship, which had supported her in her grief. After our second session together she asked her boyfriend to choose between herself and the other woman. (This was a decision she had probably taken before coming to therapy, but she had needed the reassurance that there would be somebody to look after her when she faced the consequences.) Her boyfriend decided on the other woman, and that is when my client really broke down, realising that she was alone in the world. Also, she felt guilt for not having mourned her parents enough, as though somehow because of her love affair she had not given them the appropriate caring.

The session I will be describing is the 15th during which she is still very much involved with the thought of her ex-boyfriend.

SESSION 15

Dina : 'I have decided to put some order in my life and to fill it with many activities. At work we are organising this theatrical evening with different artists and I have given the project its name. It will be called "A Glass full of Sea".' (This was the name she had given to a cup she had made out of clay, earlier on in our work together, which had led to the investigations of her place of origin.)

My boss asked me why such a title and I made up a story about the sea and ancient Greece which impressed him. Also I suggested that the whole venture should be insured and I put forward the name of Paris (her ex-boyfriend, who is in insurance) to do the job for us. They were impressed with my idea and agreed.'

(In Greece the concept of insurance is still fairly new so it was certainly a strange proposal to have a project insured. This request made it obvious that Dina still had the need to contact Paris and give him nourishment, under any pretext.)

Dina : 'During certain moments even though my life is much fuller now, I feel panic and loneliness. I still haven't done the work on Apollo I wanted to do.'

Therapist : 'Perhaps you are not ready yet.'

Dina : 'I have brought you a new version of the story of the fisherman and the mermaid which we had worked on. I will read it.' Once there was a fisherman who went out fishing on a stormy day, he caught a mermaid in his nets. She beseeched him to let her go with the promise that when freed she would do anything he liked. He agreed, so he freed her and proceeded to send her on a pearl hunt. The mermaid brought him back pearls, but he was seized by an uncontrollable lust for more and kept on sending her to find more. The mermaid eventually filled his boat, which made it very heavy so that when a storm blew up the boat was overturned. The fisherman was then saved by the mermaid who took him to her own world in the depths of the sea on a rock. They stayed there together for a while with the mermaid looking after the fisherman, until one day he asked to go and see his own people. The mermaid agreed and so together they made a raft which would carry him away. The mermaid cried quietly during the process. When at last it was ready the fisherman said goodbye and left. The mermaid was left alone wondering whether she would see him again.

After a period of time, he returned and because of her joy the mermaid became a real woman again. The magic spell that had made her into a mermaid was lifted.'

This was a fairy tale with a happy end obviously describing Dina's broken love affair and her wish for it to end as the story did. It described how she felt caught in her boyfriend's nets and how she promised to do anything for him if he let her go. He freed her physically but she was still attached to him on another level and gave in to his excessive demands (like the excessive money lending).

Therapist : 'I would like you to divide your story into six parts which fit into the following headings: hero/ heroine, the mission, helper, obstacle, coping and outcome, so we can look at each individually. Then I would like you to give them each a title.'

Dina gives the titles to six parts of her story and puts them in her own order. At the same time she makes comments on them :

- 1) The hero of the story: *The Fisherman Catches the Mermaid* - 'an addictive relationship' (her comment).
- 2) The obstacle to the hero :*The Storm* - 'the storm in a relationship which must result in change.' (her comment)
- 3) The task of the hero :*The Mermaid is Keeping and Maintaining the Fisherman on her Territory* - 'an addictive relationship with a role reversal.'
- (her comment)
- 4) The helper of the hero :*Together they Make a Raft for him to Leave* - 'resolving of the addiction.' (her comment)
- 5) The action of the story: *The Mermaid stays Alone* - 'each in their own world.' (her comment)
- 6) The outcome :*United again, Wedding Bands*- 'And they all lived happily ever after.' (her comment)

Dina would really like this to happen but wasn't sure how feasible it was.

Dina : 'I realise that this story is about me and Paris.'

Therapist : ' How did the mermaid achieve his return?'

Dina : ' She left him to make up his own mind. She didn't push him in any way.'

Therapist (I am thinking that this relationship from the start hasn't been ideal and I have my doubts that it has the makings of a happy-ever-after story. I feel that my client has allowed herself to be used but is unable at this stage to see this) : 'You say that someone has put a magic spell on the young girl turning her into a mermaid (making her impotent perhaps or asexual). When did this take place and who caused it?

Dina : 'It is true the mermaid doesn't have a vagina. The spell took place many years ago.'

Therapist : 'Perhaps that is something we could look into at our next session.'

Dina had confided to me in the past that she never reached full satisfaction during intercourse, as though something interrupted her just before the end.

Reflection.

Dina has begun to organise her life externally by work and creativity. She had also found a way of innocently contacting Paris. What she was in fact doing was giving him another pearl. She hadn't found time to look into the story Apollo, which would have been something purely for herself.

Her story with the fisherman and the mermaid was interesting. She believed it represented only the last year of her life with Paris, whereas I felt it went back much further than that. As a tentative way of looking at things, I told her we would investigate the spell which has turned the young woman into a mermaid during the next session. This was something Dina had more

or less passed over as insignificant and yet perhaps it was very basic and a reason for the unsatisfactory relationships she had made so far.

If one wanted to interpret her story on a deeper level, it may have been describing two different parts of herself; one being the fisherman, a materialist who was concerned with satisfying his needs in a compulsive fashion. He lives on the land but he makes his living from the sea. (So he is also drawn to the magic of the sea.) And the other being a mermaid who is an imprisoned young woman, forced to live in the sea owing to the shape of her body. She lives alone on a rock in the depths of the sea. When she was young, before the spell, she also lived on land, and this was a place she wished to return to. She believed that she would become a woman again when the man she loved comes back for her.

When we started to investigate the spell, through sand play, Dina found that there might have been a connection between that and her relationship to her father when she was young. She remembered him cuddling her and holding her in his arms with great affection. He was always very demonstrative and physical, as perhaps is more common with Mediterranean parents. Then suddenly, or so it seemed to her, when her body started changing into that of a woman's, all physical contact on his part stopped, because 'she was too old for that kind of stuff'.

Maybe this rejection she felt towards her changing body was what forced her to wear the 'skin' of a mermaid. She said herself that mermaids do not have vaginas. They also live in the depths of the sea, so perhaps she had hidden this side of herself in her unconscious and the only indication of its existence was her not reaching sexual climax.

Her own comment about the story was that the relationship was addictive. Perhaps that was the way her father felt towards her. She was his addiction, which he had to give up. Maybe like the alcoholic who after taking one drink may begin drinking all over again, he was afraid that if he caressed his little girl when she was turning into a woman, there would be no controlling him.

On her part she felt compelled to give her father more and more straight 'A's from her school reports and never felt that she had satisfied him. 'I felt I was never good enough for him. I tried hard and studied for long hours. Even my teachers felt I was good. All my life I have been trying to prove myself to him.'

The work with Dina and her relationship with her father needs to continue as these are not matters which can be resolved in a short time. It is even more difficult for her owing to his sudden and violent death. It becomes even more complicated if one considers all the implications of his driving the car when the accident took place and that her mother was also killed.

All this began with 'The fisherman catches a mermaid'.....

Working with a specific myth connected to the group theme.

I would like to give a sample of using a specific myth which touches on the group theme, allowing the members to change the myth's conclusion in order to suit their own purposes.

The myth in question was the well known one of Demeter and Persephone. During this myth Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, the

Goddess of earth and growth, is abducted by Hades the God of the Underworld. Demeter in her distress over the loss of her daughter refuses to allow anything to grow on earth. In order to protect the humans from catastrophe Zeus, the father of all Gods, intervenes, whereby Demeter and Hades come to the arrangement that Persephone remains for six months of the year with her mother (spring and summer) and the other six months in the Underworld with Hades (autumn and winter).

This story fitted well with the group's predicaments involving possessive mothers and unfulfilling relationships with a partner/spouse, thus making the break from the original family more difficult. In Greece, it is not uncommon for a young couple to begin their life together at one of the original family homes with the extended family. The reason would be financial and inevitably this can involve tension.

In this group there were eight female members and one female therapist, ages ranging from mid-twenties to mid-forties.

Session 30

(Nina, Sofia, Mary, Lena, Lily, Sassa, Mimi, Pepi)

All the members were present except Nina, who had informed the group from the previous session that she would not be coming. Sofia was 20 min. late.

The theme embodied in this myth had been of concern to the group for some time and the story had already been worked with in two sub groups of four. I had introduced the myth to the group originally, but as it is a well known myth in Greece, I had allowed the members to relate the story themselves,

with myself filling in the details. We had planned to continue the work on this myth two sessions previously, but until this particular session other matters took precedence, perhaps because the members had not been ready to work with it. For this session we had planned that one of the sub groups would act their version of the myth. There was some concern about this plan being hindered again. The session begun with:

Mimi: 'I will not say a word, so we don't waste time.'

This member often brought to the group personal issues she had difficulty facing and, as a result, used up a lot of the group's time, or so she felt.

Lena: 'During the weekend I hurt my foot, but I won't talk about it.'

Therapist: 'There is time for some initial sharing.' (I felt as if there was a high anxiety on getting down to the myth, as though it was a piece of prescribed home work.)

Sofia: 'I also acquired a bruise on my side and the reason was....'

Lilly: 'I went on an excursion during the weekend and had a good time, but today I don't feel like working with the myth.'

Therapist. (I am thinking that some group members need to tell 'Mummy' what awful things happened to them but do not wish to make an issue out of it).

It had been decided that we would be working with the myth in two groups of four. Each group, however, could ask for the assistance from the members of the second group, in any form they needed. For this enactment of the story of Demeter and Persephone the three members from the second group were assigned the following roles: one person was asked to take the

part of Zeus, another to be the wardrobe mistress and the last one to co-ordinate the five scenes, (the fourth person was missing). In the original group of four, the members had already chosen their part so that the following characters would be taking part in the enactment, Demeter, Persephone, Hades, Hermes and Zeus.

Warm up:

For this they responded to the following instructions:

'Get into character, feel your height, weight, colour of hair, eyes, clothing..... and walk in the manner this person would have walked. Walk around the room until you feel you have inhabited the body of the person you are impersonating. When you feel ready begin to communicate with the other characters.... ' This lasted for about 10 minutes.

After the warm up the group members were given some time to rehearse the scenes they would be playing and prepared to act the whole story out.

Mary had doubts about her ability to co-ordinate, but the other members encourage her, so she made suggestions for the scenes and decided on their timing.

The scenes which took place had been decided upon during the previous session as well as their titles, thus giving the participants a vague idea of what would emerge.

This is how the scenes were acted out.

1st scene" Mother- daughter." (Demeter- Persephone)

Mother(Lilly) was making bread while her daughter(Sassa), kept her company apparently feeling bored and wanting to leave in order to find something of interest to do.

Both played their parts convincingly as though they were familiar with them. The mother was working very hard, kneading the bread with all her strength, while her daughter just watched disinterested.

2nd scene “Hades entices Persephone.”

Persephone (Sassa) was playing with her friends while Hades (Mimi) approached. He managed to entice her to go with him effortlessly, promising her that it would only be for a short while. Persephone was curious and a little awed.

Hades was easy-going and charming in his manner, but also fairly insistent, and therefore had no trouble in getting Persephone to go with him.

3rd scene “Demeter is furious with Zeus.”

Demeter (Lilly) was really angry and managed to get past two sentries who were guarding Zeus' private room. When she faced him, she was beside herself, while Zeus (Sofia) reacted calmly and asked her not to shout at him. Demeter made demands, but did not threaten Zeus as much as she could have. She accepted a compromise quite easily.

4th scene “Hermes descent to the Underworld.”

Here Hermes (Lena) acted as the go-between giving the solution to Persephone's predicament. He stipulated that she was to reside for six months on earth and the other six in the Underworld. Hermes also made a suggestion that Persephone could drug her lover when leaving him and also do the same to her mother, when the time came to leave her, so neither of them would feel her absence. (This was not part of the myth. It was Lena's idea)

Hades did not want to let Persephone go, but he did not stand in her way, if that were her wish. He refused the suggestion of the drug however, saying he would prefer to suffer and feel the pain of his beloved's absence.

When Persephone returned, her mother was relieved, but her happiness was dampened as she had resigned herself to having her daughter for only six months a year. She also refused the drug.

5th scene "And that is how the seasons were created"

To the music of Vivaldi's four seasons they danced all together.

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De-rolling. This was achieved by removing all the costumes and placing them in the middle of the room, together with any materials used as scenery. These were then made into one big ball and placed to one side, while the real names of each group member were shouted out by them.

This was the way one sub- group presented and perceived the story with only small alterations to the scenario. What was interesting was the way they each acted their part according to their personal interpretation of it and their feelings at the time. It would appear that each participant had taken a

part which was familiar to them, if not directly, then through a person who was close to them. They were each made aware of these similarities and how the obstacles had to be faced, both in the myth and in reality.

Feedback.

Lena : 'I had tried to think of a way out all week and believed I had the solution but nobody accepted it.'

This story was very close to Lena's real life situation. She and her husband are living in different towns, commuting during the holidays. They wanted to be together, but neither was prepared to live elsewhere. The solution of the drug she had suggested was not accepted by the group, just as commuting cannot go on for ever. Her proposed solution suggested that she believed she could have the best of two worlds.

Lilly : 'I just accepted my fate. I felt I had done all I could and would now have to live with what life had imposed on me without my consent. My only control was the four seasons.'

Sassa : 'I found it very difficult to make a choice.'

Mimi : 'I was certain I didn't want her to leave, but neither did I want to intervene.'

This was the same way Mimi faced her relationship with her partner. She felt passionately, but refused to put any pressure on him. She believed that the other person has to take on his own responsibilities. She had forgotten, however, that in order to entice Persephone to start with, she had used all the

charm she possessed. Was this something she also did with her lover without being aware of it?

There was a lot of intense feeling felt in the whole group during the feedback but also acceptance.

Therapist : 'Next week we shall see how the myth runs with a different ending.'

The second sub group had changed the end. Their scenario went as follows: after all the negotiations about where Persephone should live had taken place, on her return to earth, she left her mother and told Hades she never wanted to see him again.

Often while working with this myth the person playing the part of Persephone feels as if she is just a pawn in a game where she has no say. The second sub group felt strongly about this, so they decided to alter the end of the myth. In Dramatherapy this can take on the form of a rehearsal, through which the scenario can be altered to fit the needs of the client.

When working Dramatherapeutically interpretation and analysis does not necessarily take place. Everything has significance, from the costume a person chooses to the expressions on their faces in different scenes. All this is absorbed and a deeper understanding of each person's predicament can be achieved, often on a intuitive level. This process alone can alleviate the pressures of every day life. As Grainger mentions in *Drama and Healing*, 'Thus myth transmits a message about divine order and wholeness existing in relationship to the 'changes and chances' of life in this world' (Grainger 1990, p.126).

Conclusion.

The application of myth and stories in Dramatherapy is manifold. A story can be used as a starting point or it can be used in itself, as a whole. As a dramatherapist I work with stories and myths eclectically using creative writing or sand play complementary to the Dramatherapy modality.

In the first vignette the story was chosen by the therapist. In just one sentence selected by the client we can understand her feelings. The sentence: 'The male wolf carried Mowgli in his mouth so gently that an egg would not have cracked', shows her need as a child for someone both strong and gentle to protect her. Someone who was not there for her and whose place she took on herself in later life, leaving her own vulnerable self unprotected.

In the second vignette where the story was made up by the client the metaphor alone of the mermaid helped her understand her feelings on a deeper level.

Lastly the final vignette was more obviously Dramatherapeutical. Through the role playing and the adaptation of the scenario the clients were able to find some solutions to their predicaments without analysis or interpretation.

Through working with a story and its conclusion, a person can put an end to the past and grievous experiences, which might remain unfinished. It is

better to bury our dead with ceremony and therefore experience a release of feeling, than to do so in an efficient but phlegmatic fashion, which does not alleviate the pain. The facts may not change but our emotions take on a new balance, a balance that is easier to live with.

VOICES

Ideal and dearly beloved voices
of those who are dead, or those
who are lost to us like the dead.

Sometimes they speak to us in our dreams;
sometimes in thought the mind hears them.

And for a moment with their echo other echoes
return from the first poetry of our lives-
like music that extinguishes the far - off night.

Cavafy (1948)

These are the voices we need to acknowledge, with the aid of a story; past experiences can be seen in a different light and remembered perhaps with a little longing when they were pleasant, and with less pain when they were not.

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