

Rituals of Remembrance

Roulla Demetriou

In Greek culture, when someone dies there is a ritual of remembrance called a *mnemosyno*, that is practiced at specific intervals in the first year after death and annually thereafter. The ritual ensures that the deceased lives on in the memory of the living. Part of the ritual involves a dish of pomegranate and boiled wheat grains. This recalls the anamnesis of Demeter and Persephone, but also the goddess Mnemosyne, who is the personification of memory and from whom the name of the ritual is derived.

Further, Mnemosyne holds all myths and histories. She created the language with which they were told. Her counterpoint, Lethe, is the personification of forgetfulness. Ironically, Mnemosyne is forgotten over her more memorable daughters, the nine Muses who embody all the arts. The arts therapies connect directly to this ancient archetypal lineage.

In practice, at the heart of dramatherapy are people's stories, populated with personal history, echoes of trans-generational voices and a socio-economic context. The therapeutic process involves the *re-membering* and *re-imagining* of ourselves via narratives told through memory but also through what we have forgotten or cannot remember.

Steeped in layers of ritual, dramatherapy facilitates the intentional separation from the literal to the metaphorical, explored in the liminal space of imagination. De-roling and reflection complete the return and integration. The holding through session structure, the creation of a play space and the method of story enactment are some of the ritual layers.

In this workshop we will invoke Mnemosyne and Lethe to explore the relationship between memory and forgetting. Through play, embodiment and storymaking we use the concept of a memory thread to create a ritual of remembrance to honour both the remembered and forgotten. Together, we will reflect on the meaning created via the shared experience.

Biography

Roulla Demetriou is a UK based dramatherapist, clinical supervisor in private practice and a permanent lecturer on the MA Dramatherapy at Anglia Ruskin University. She was a pioneer of dramatherapy in Cyprus where she lived for 15 years and contributed to the introduction of the arts therapies into mental health services in Cyprus. She has conducted training workshops in Greece and contributes regularly to dramatherapy conferences. Her research interests include the interplay of the personal and archetypal in the therapeutic application of myths and stories in dramatherapy. She is a former editor of BADth's Journal, *Dramatherapy* and is the ECARTE rep for Anglia Ruskin University.

Recent publications and conference presentations

Presentations

2019: Workshop: Ritual Story Enactment, C.I.A.P.T Conference, Thessaloniki, Greece 2019.

2018: Workshop: In My End Is My Beginning - Harmonising the Opposites, BADth Conference 2018.

2017: Workshop: The Voices in The Room, BADth Conference 2017

2017: Paper and workshop presentation: The Interplay of the Archetypal and the Personal - A Kaleidoscopic View. Day conference 'When Jung is playing with Winnicott': Active Imagination, Archetypes and Playfulness in the Therapy Room and in Psychotherapeutic Playback Theater. Israel, 2017.

2016: Paper: Psyche's Spirals - Ritual in the Service of Transformation, EDPE Dramatherapy Conference, Athens 2016.