

Demo:Dram Workshops

Do heroes feel fear?

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Demo:Dram Workshop summary

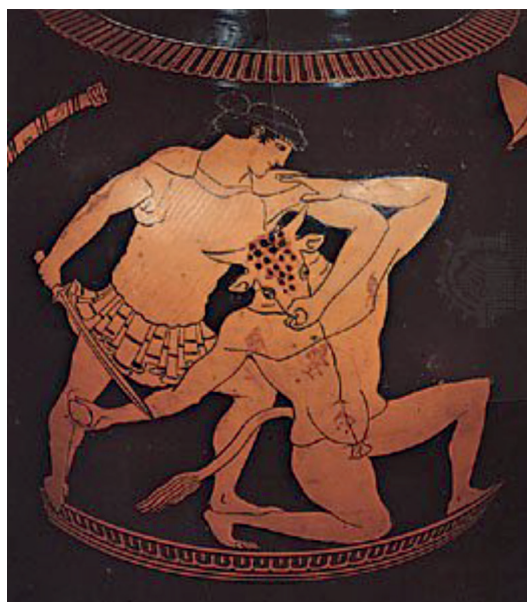
Context: introduction to Greek Mythology themes.

The workshop is based on an approach to the Greek Classical Myth of Theseus and the Minotaur.

In Greek mythology the Minotaur was:

A fabulous monster of Crete that had the body of a man and the head of a bull. It was the offspring of Pasiphae, the wife of Minos, and a snow-white bull sent to Minos by the god Poseidon for sacrifice. Minos, instead of sacrificing it, kept it alive; Poseidon as a punishment made Pasiphae fall in love with it. Her child by the bull was shut up in the Labyrinth created for Minos by Daedalus... A son of Minos, Androgeos, was later killed by the Athenians; to avenge his death, Minos demanded that seven Athenian youths and seven maidens should be sent every ninth year (or, according to another version, every year) to be devoured by the Minotaur. When the third time of sacrifice came, the Athenian hero Theseus volunteered to go, and, with the help of Ariadne, daughter of Minos and Pasiphae, he killed the monster and ended the tribute. Theseus escaped with Ariadne (Albert, 2019).

The workshop explores the themes of fear of losing a battle, fear of not managing to fulfill a promise to oneself and to the community. Moreover, it explores the issue of fear of superheroes. Do superheroes have human features (like fear, for example) or not? Do they have doubts about their own abilities?



Pic 1. Theseus killing the Minotaur 6th Century BC, British Museum

Target audience

Students of 9-12 years

What are the aims/overall goals of the workshop?

- Understanding the concept of promise.
 1. What does a promise to a group of people or to the society means to the person who has taken a responsibility to achieve something?
 2. What are the consequences of a promise?
 3. Can a promise be broken?
 4. What does fear mean for a person?
 5. What are the implications of fear?
 6. Can a superhero be fearful sometimes?
- The development of student empathy through theatre activities.
- The development of student ability to decide for themselves.
- The development of student ability to accept the responsibility of a decision and stick to its consequences.
- The development of student awareness of human and social diversity.

What are the objectives/stages of the workshop?

- Stage 1: Reenactment of the story. Students assume the role of the Athenian youth, while the teacher-facilitator assumes the roles of Theseus and King Minos.
- Stage 2: Application of theatre techniques: teacher in role, student in role, consciousness alley, still images, thought tracking, interviews.

Why this workshop; what is the rationale?

The concept/story has been selected as it is strongly linked to the debate on democratic values in the form of collective decision-making, as well as the theme of responsibility in decision. Moreover, this workshop aims to make students aware of issues of individual rights within a group. More specifically, a person's right to decide for himself/herself and to accept responsibility of his/her own decisions and actions.

In addition, the workshop aims to explore the theme of fear and what are the implications of fear at a personal and social level. Is fear an emotion common to all people and circumstances? What about superheroes and socially powerful people?

Description of workshop process: what we did and how we did it

We are in Athens 3000 years ago. Students as the youth who are trained to fight and to compete in sports are training in a school-like environment. Students create representation of a day in the school. They use the technique of improvisation to create scenes of everyday life of a male and female youth in Athens. They decide on the environment and the props they are going to use, in order to make it happen and then they improvise the actual scene. In order to create that scene, they are provided with information about the typical lives of a male and a female youth in Athens: Differences in male and female upbringing.

Next, the teacher in role of a messenger announces the facts of the story: That is that every year, 14 youths (7 male and 7 female) are chosen to travel to Crete to be killed by the Minotaur. Recall how King Minos is avenging the killing of his son by the Athenians in that way. Students then attempt to immerse deeper into the role of disillusioned Athenian youth. As they take up the role of these youth,

the dramatic concept is introduced.

Teacher in role as Theseus comes in and asks them to accompany him to his mission to kill minotaur and end the unfair sacrifice and loss of life. Through the technique of the interview the youth interview Theseus and learn a lot more about his life, mission and determination.

The ethical concept of responsibility and promise is introduced when Theseus asks all youth to agree upon a social and ethical contract concerning their mission. The terms of the contract are decided between Theseus and the youth with an emphasis on social justice and personal commitment. It is here that the concepts of fear of losing, fear of dying are introduced and discussed in the form of an assembly. Once the contract is signed, the mission is set.

Then the trip is reenacted as Theseus and the youth embark on it and arrive in Knossos.

The labyrinth is created by the students, as the teacher asks them to decide how the labyrinth looks like. A discussion follows of how Theseus has imagined the labyrinth. What sounds/smells and other creatures live in the labyrinth? In here, the students use the technique of collage and make a collective image of the labyrinth. Students also make the soundscape of the labyrinth.

Meeting of Ariadne and Theseus: Teacher in role as Theseus announces to the youth that he has met Ariadne, a beautiful woman who she gave him a thread to make his way out of the labyrinth.

Next, Theseus declares that he is very satisfied and all set to fulfill his mission.

The night falls and all are off to sleep before the big day.

In the middle of the night the messenger wakes the youth to announce that Theseus is very upset and has decided to call off the mission.

The technique of conscious alley is performed, in order to find out what are Theseus' thoughts and what made him call off the mission.

Theseus is being interviewed once again by the youth in order to make his decision clearer. It is upon the students as youth to decide what they are going to do. Whether they are going to agree or not and decide what to do with Theseus' decision.

Reflection: Students out of role will talk to Theseus in role without him answering what they think his decision means to them or to the Athenian community.

Theseus writes his diary. Students write his thoughts.

Resources to support the workshop

Classroom props: A hat, the sign/logo of the contract signed by the youth in a sticker that all students will wear on their tops, a black large cloth for the sail of the boat and the thread of Ariadne.

Post workshop ideas

Students reflected on the process and the theatre techniques used. They evaluated their comprehension not only of the text but also of themselves as individuals in a democratic society:

- How did the experience affect your learning?
- From the experience, what has been modelled for you that you found interesting?
- How did the experience challenge your thinking?
- How did the experience engage you?

Further reading:

Minotaur: History and Mythology of the Greek Bull-Headed Monster. (2019, June 24). Retrieved from <https://www.realmofhistory.com/2019/05/21/minotaur-history-mythology-bull-monster/>