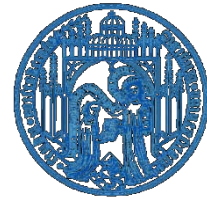


Hochschule für Musik und Theater Rostock



Theoretical Background

The American Psychologist Marlow became very famous for his experimental research with rhesus monkeys during the 1950s. The monkeys with whom Marlow experimented were immediately after their birth separated from their mother and grew up in laboratory settings with two different artificial mother figures. One of them was covered with animal skin the other one was made out of wire, constructed around a milk bottle. Through these experiments Marlow demonstrated that the monkeys spent more than 23 hours per day with the skin covered monkey mother and only spent their drinking time with the mother made out of wire.

These findings inspired John Bowlby, the founder of attachment theory, that the need for emotional and physical proximity was a genetic mandate. Since then numerous studies have documented that this need is particularly activated under conditions of emotional stress.

Harlow designed an experiment in which his laboratory monkeys were scared by a mechanical monster which produced a loud noise when it opened and closed its mouth aggressively. As soon as the monkeys were confronted with the monster figure they looked immediately for safety by the skin covered mother monkey. This same behavior paradigm is repeated in Bowlby's experiments. The behavior of the animals changed after they clinged and burrowed themselves nervously into the fur of the dummy. Marlow said: „The whole personality of the animal changed.“ Clutched towards the dummy, the monkeys moved towards the monster, looked at it and even threatened it.

What happened? The security of the mother dared to change the behavior of the monkey. Instead of delving into the fur, it was able to look at the monster and even threaten it.

In the meantime the attachment theory is a required level of also measuring human behavior. People conduct in the same specified way while handling Stress, anger or trauma. Stress and anger are reduced when people are associated with persons whom they are related closely. The affected person looks for and finds support in the parent person. People are more able to explore the arrangement causes of severe stress, when they are part of a secure relationship. With the help of this theory it is possible to learn about traumatic experiences in the past. A Haven of Safety or a Secure Base (terms in the terminology of the attachment theory) is inalienable to cover current emotional loads and trauma.



What do have Marlow's monkey experiments, Bowlby's theory of attachment and interventions of drama in education and drama therapy in common?

We think that methods of drama in education and drama therapy are suited to create a Safe Space. This Safe Space can help to handle urgent and decisive incidences and traumatic experiences in the life of an individual. This turns out the similarity to Marlow's experiences. This analogy also refers to comparable mechanisms and structures of coping with stress and anger in human's minds.

Now to the idea to publish a book.

This year's conference „Theater - Mit mir?! Drama in Education for Children and Adolescents at Risk“ in Rostock revealed that the concept of a Safe Space has a central point in current discussions. We would like to anchor this concept theoretically and document your experiences in the field of drama in education and drama therapy. In line with this documentation we are interested in questions like:

- *WHICH TARGET AUDIENCE DO YOU HAVE?*
- *HOW DO YOU PREVENT A SAFE SPACE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP?*
- *WHICH METHODS DO YOU USE TO ESTABLISH A SAFE SPACE?*
- *HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE A SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF A SAFE SPACE?*
- *HOW DID THE MEMBERS OF THE THEATRE GROUP REACT TO THE RAISED SAFE SPACE?*
- *WHICH DIFFICULTIES DID ARISE WHILE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SAFE SPACE?*
- *WHICH IMPACT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE TO THE CONCEPT OF THE SAFE SPACE IN THE FIELD OF YOUR WORK?*

If you are interested in collaboration please send us an abstract of your contribution until the 31st January 2010. We hope to gain you as an author for this project.

YOURS SINCERLY

PROF. MARION KÜSTER

AND

PROF. HENRI JULIUS

