

"De-romanticised and Very...Different" Models for Distinguishing Practical Applications of Collective Memory-Work

Hamm, Robert

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Hamm, R. (2020). "De-romanticised and Very...Different" Models for Distinguishing Practical Applications of Collective Memory-Work. *Other Education: the Journal of Educational Alternatives*, 9(1), 53-90. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-85932-4>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY-NC-ND Lizenz (Namensnennung-Nicht-kommerziell-Keine Bearbeitung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY-NC-ND Licence (Attribution-Non Commercial-NoDerivatives). For more information see:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

**“De-romanticised and Very...Different”
Models for Distinguishing Practical Applications of
Collective Memory-Work**

Robert Hamm

Department of Sociology, Maynooth University
Institut für kritische Theorie e. V., Berlin

Abstract

This essay is about Collective Memory-Work (CMW) and the learning opportunities offered by different ways of putting Collective Memory-Work into practice. I will give a brief contextualisation of the development of CMW and describe its core tenets including its character as a process of re-construction of results of earlier education and societalisation. Then I am going to unpack different models of applications of CMW for their learning potential for participants. For this purpose I will revert to illustrations of the methodical steps in CMW to demonstrate the shifts of learning opportunities in four ideal typical models. The models presented in the essay are meant to offer a way to describe what happens if something is done in a particular manner. By being able to describe effects of opening or closing down of learning opportunities, it will be easier for anyone considering the use of CMW to plan and conduct their own project against a background of emancipatory learning.

Keywords

Collective Memory-Work, learning opportunities, emancipatory learning, experience in research, researcher-researched-divide

Introduction

- J: “Thanks a lot, that was very...different.”
S: “I pay much more attention on how something is written, how something is read, and what it actually means.”
B: “Those blind spots, somehow they are visible now....Now we are so de-romanticised and have to go our merry ways.”
(Feedback round at the end of a CMW project)

These quotes refer to learning experiences and effects based on a group working with the method of Collective Memory-Work (CMW). For the persons quoted something impactful has happened. Something significant has changed through the CMW project that resembles one of the four “risks of critical reflection” depicted by Stephen Brookfield (1995): The feeling of having traded an innocent naivety for a much clearer understanding of a given problem. What Brookfield terms “lost innocence” is a risk that is actually a gain. From the very start of its development CMW had a double character as a method of research and a method of learning (see, e.g., Projekt Frauengrundstudium 1980, 1982, 1984). The focus of publications dealing with projects in which CMW has been used in its original format or in adapted versions is predominantly on its character as a research method. This is also how it is presented in a number of research guides (e.g., Johnson 2018; Livholts & Tamboukou, 2017; McLeod & Thomson, 2009; Schratz & Walker 1995; Willig, 2001;).

My interest in this present article is to look at CMW with a particular focus on the learning opportunities offered when putting CMW into practice in different ways. If referring to CMW, I am speaking of the method developed by Frigga Haug and the group Frauenformen during the 1980s. Frauenformen was the umbrella title of a number of projects that took place over a period of approximately 15 years. The composition of the project group changed over the years. To refer to Frauenformen as one group is a simplification for the purpose of this essay. For a historical reflection see Haug (2015, pp. 69-74).

For better or worse there is no copyright on the term memory-work, neither is there or should there be a rule book that regulates all applications of memory-work. When studying the international literature there are a number of different approaches and methods presented in rather similar terms, always referring to working with memories (see, e.g., Radstone, 2008). This can easily lead to confusion. In a recent publication Sabine Marschall (2018) attends to this problem by taking recourse to the hyphen as a solution. Thus when referring to the method developed by Frigga Haug and Frauenformen, CMW to be written including the hyphen as in *Collective Memory-Work* can function as a means of clarification. At least for the English literature work this would provide a clarity that is lacking at present.

From the outset CMW was a collective project of emancipatory learning closely linked to a political movement. Emancipatory learning here presupposes a process of adults un-learning and re-constructing results of their earlier processes of education and societalisation. In the essay I will give a brief contextualisation of the development of CMW and describe its core tenets before unpacking different models of applying CMW to showcase their learning potential for participants. To this end I will revert to illustrations of the methodical steps in CMW to demonstrate the shifts of learning opportunities in four ideal typical models. These models are

meant to be descriptive, not prescriptive, not the least because local circumstances are always a factor in the concrete adaptation of the method for a given project. Each setting in which CMW is supposed to be applied accounts for certain conditions that are to be considered when planning and conducting a project.

For anyone considering initiating a CMW project the description of the effects of applying the different models will provide a yardstick to anticipate their own efforts in relation to the learning opportunities for participants. It will also allow for a more distinguished assessment of CMW projects in relation to their potential for emancipatory learning.

Collective Memory-Work: Development and Core Tenets

Collective Memory-Work was developed by Frigga Haug and the group Frauenformen in the 1980s at the crossroads of the feminist movement, social science and Marxist theory. The development of CMW was understood as a practical critique of traditionally male dominated science by taking the level of everyday experiences of participants in CMW projects as the starting point as well as a constant point of reference.

Since its inception CMW has been picked up by researchers in a variety of disciplines like gender studies, sociology, political science, education, business studies and in a number of regional pockets in the USA, Austria, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

Closely associated to the discussions about German Critical Psychology the starting point of Frauenformen was the desire to enter into a process of transformation, with effects also for research projects.

If we refuse to understand ourselves simply as a bundle of reactions to all-powerful structures, or to the social relations within which we have formed us, if we search instead for possible indications of how we have participated actively in the formation of our own past experience, then the usual mode of social-scientific research, in which individuals figure exclusively as objects of the process of research, has to be abandoned.Since however we are concerned here with the possible means whereby human beings may themselves assume control, and thus with the potential prospect of liberation, our research itself must be seen as an intervention into existing practices....Indeed memory-work is only possible if the subject and the object of research are one and the same person. (Haug et al., 1987, p. 35)

Dissolving the categories of researcher and researched immediately makes research into a learning project and learning into research. Hence every CMW project is at all times an educational project, regardless of any other characterisation, e.g., as

academic research or professional reflection. For Frigga Haug “memory-work is an emancipating learning project” (2008, p. 40).

Besides merging subject and object of research into one, “the second premiss was that research itself should be a collective process” (Haug et al., 1987, p. 36). CMW is a group process intended to “...expand the knowledge about modes of socialisation of women and at the same time increase the ability to act of the individual women taking part.” Whereby the method is “by no means meant as individual therapy, but rather a kind of politicizing research process in groups.” (Haug & Hauser, 1985, p. 60).

A word about the difference between therapy and research is here warranted. In their book on Collective Biography as a derivation of CMW, Bronwyn Davies and Susanne Gannon had included a passage in which they stressed that they are “doing research” and not “doing therapy” while the group of Frigga Haug and her colleagues would “focus very strongly on what might be called ‘therapeutic outcomes’ of their work” (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 6). This passage has been re-used by others to set apart Collective Biography from Collective Memory-Work for the latter being concerned with therapeutic benefits. E.g., “[w]hile drawing on Haug et al. in the writing and analysing of their collective stories, Davies et al. (1997) are more concerned with the research potential of collective biography, rather than its therapeutic benefits” (Hartung, Barnes, Welch, O’Flynn, Uptin, & McMahon, 2017). It is a misrepresentation to play out therapeutic benefits against research when it comes to the work of the Frauenformen projects. In fact, in all sorts of situations therapeutic effects can be the outcome of what is not at all intended to be therapy. The learning effects for the participants in the CMW group quoted at the start of my essay, i.e., their “lost innocence” could just as well depicted as a “therapeutic effect,” but putting it that way evokes an association with therapy that is simply out of place for CMW. The aim of using CMW is not the production of knowledge for knowledge’s sake. Instead it is explicitly understood as a political project towards an increase of what is termed generalised action potency by Critical Psychology.

Generalised action potency is generalised because it exists for one as for all. It would be the only kind in an ideal society, but as an analytic category it applies as well to less-than-ideal bourgeois society. It does not characterise individuals as such—that is, it is not like a personality trait—and does not even characterise positions or classes. It is better thought of as a characteristic of instances within the generalised network that includes subjective grounds and possibilities for action. The same must be said for its opposite, *restrictive action potency*, which is restrictive because it confines its benefits to particular individuals, though not without costs to them, and always at a cost to others and to society as a

whole. Whereas in generalised action potency the individual gains his or her power through cooperative participation in societal production, in restrictive action potency the power is gained through participation in the power of the dominant forces in society. An extreme example would be the young Central America peasant who finds that he can improve the quality of his own existence by joining the army, thus moving rapidly from the status of the oppressed to that of oppressor. More ordinary examples are the numerous instances familiar to us as characterised by the phrase, “if you can’t lick ‘em, join ‘em.” However extreme or ordinary the instance, it contains an important contradiction. On the one hand, restrictive action potency is subjectively functional for individuals in a society like ours. On the other hand, to one degree or another it constitutes a denial of the true social interest, and to that degree, owing to the fact that in the final analysis our individual interests are identical to the collective societal interest, it puts us in a position of hostility towards ourselves.” (Tolman, 1994, p. 116)

What is looked for in CMW is an expansion of the capacity for action for the participants towards this generalised action potency. Capacity for action here refers to the individual engaging with existing social relations in the direction of an increasing and collective appropriation of structures that determine life instead of blindly surrendering to them (Haug & Hauser, 1986, p. 79).

Conceptually CMW builds on a critique of consciousness raising groups (Haug, 1990, p. 33) and significantly expands their practice. Experiences are not only shared and stories told by participants but these stories are then used as material for a systematic and rigorous analysis, with critical reference to pre-existing theory. In the English translation of the essay *The Hoechst Chemical Company and Boredom with the Economy* (Haug, 1992) an important passage from the German original is left out, where Frigga Haug notes

it raises self-consciousness to know that one is not alone with different experiences. But there comes the point where it doesn’t lead any further, stories start to turn in circles, no-one likes to listen any more...Our proposal to work with memories and everyday experiences, to theorise them, tries to employ the joy of starting with experience and connect it with the burden of intense theoretical work. (Trans. R. Hamm)

Central to CMW is the analytic engagement with self-generated text/s. These are memory-scenes, short accounts of remembered experiences. The analytic approach with these texts accounts for the necessity to critically scrutinise what we say or write. It is underpinned by basic assumptions (see, e.g., Haug, 2008, pp. 28-29):

“De-romanticised and Very...Different”

- what we regard as our personality is an ongoing inter-active process of working ourselves into historically developed social contexts;
- in doing so there is a constant tendency to blank out contradictions;
- the negotiation of meaning in this process relies on the use of language;
- language is not a neutral instrument;
- in and through language politics are made that speak through us and regulate our construction of meaning.

The concept of personality here is indebted to Lucien Sève's theory of personality with its emphasis on social matrices. E.g.,

[t]o be a capitalist or proletarian in a capitalist society is therefore quite different from conforming to cultural patterns or to occupying a social role through “need for favourable response” or by virtue of any other psychological motivation emanating from the individual; on the contrary, this is a matter of necessary matrices of activity which stamp objectively determined social characteristics on individuals...owing to the fact that they are relations between men, social relations, while being absolutely different from psychic acts, constitute social matrices within which concrete human activity necessarily comes to be moulded. The capitalist, the worker is not a basic personality, a psychological type, a set of cultural patterns or a set of roles; it is the objective social logic of the activity of some concrete individual as far as he extends his activity within the corresponding social relations and as far as this activity is considered within these limits. The same observations can be made a propos of all social forms of individuality, from the forms of needs to the basic contradictions in processes of personal life. (Sève, 1974, no page number)

The name of the original project, *Frauenformen*, is an immediate derivation of the engagement with Sève's theory and the forms of individuality he suggests. However the *Frauenformen* collective also sees the acquisition of a particular form of individuality (e.g. to be “a woman”) as an inter-active process of *societalisation*. Hence in the ongoing education process that underlies this acquisition the individual is not only a passive receiver of a predetermined and unchangeable socialisation.

In the conceptual framework of CMW history is understood as the concrete lived practice of people with (explicable) interests. Historical conditions in which we find ourselves are the result of earlier struggles, negotiations on societal planes

that are reflected in established structures and institutions as well as in specific constructions of meaning and constructions of self. In this sense at any given time what we understand as our selves can also be seen as a temporary identity-balance (Wellendorf, 1973, p. 48) in a process of continuous identity-bargaining against the background of the social matrices imposed on us by historical social relations. Biographically we cannot escape an educational process that gears towards the acquisition of a general acceptance of the “chances” offered to us according our social position with the respective identity patterns. But we can—and by a closer look actually do—negotiate our position in this process.

Hence in our respective (personal) constructions of meaning and of personality we are always involved as active agents. Within the margins determined by historical conditions there is not an indefinite set of possibilities for us in these construction processes. We are bound to the historically possible spectrum of attribution of meaning. To start with we have to use the existing forms of thought and of action. We can put them together in new compositions, and try to develop them further, but we cannot get rid of them completely. Consequently what we experience as an act of individual construction of meaning and personality is more than a unique creation. It is at the same time an act that we share with, and in which we are connected to others in the same historical-spatial context.

The analysis of memory-scenes written by the group members starts from the premise that it is possible to make conscious the trajectories of constructions of meaning that determine our own respective lived practice. This includes new insights that eventually offer the option for re-constructing meaning structures and perspectives of self, thus accounting for new and increased capacity for action. Implicit in this assumption is the idea that human action can be changed via processes of un-learning and (self-)reflection.

In practical applications of CMW the group becomes particularly important for the critical analysis of the written memory-scenes. It is assumed that the view of others can help finding blind spots that otherwise remain undetected (by the authors of the respective memory-scenes).

Collective Memory-Work is an extensive work of gaining back, and appropriating history by following the traces of becoming this particular person. This is done by way of experiencing one’s own complicity in the process of societalisation as a praxis that happens always together with others. Hence changes to this praxis are similarly possible and necessary only collectively. (Haug, 2020)

Methodical Steps

Frigga Haug has always pointed out that CMW is not meant to be a concept set in stone. There should be space for anyone using the method to adapt to their group's

particular situation, and according to theoretical interests. Nevertheless she presented a “Detailed Rendering of the Method for Social Science Research” (1999; 2008) twenty years after the initial project on female sexualisation. Further descriptions of the method in English can be found in publications by the group of June Crawford and colleagues (1992), Michael Schratz, Rob Walker and Barbara Schratz-Hadwich (1995), or Carla Willig (2001). There are differences in these descriptions regarding details of certain methodical steps (writing of scenes, text analysis). But in relation to the general sequence of steps and the commitment to the three components collective, memory and work they are all in line with the model developed in the Frauenformen projects. In a recent publication by Corey Johnson (2018) a model is presented that resembles a focus group approach. I will attend to this model further below.

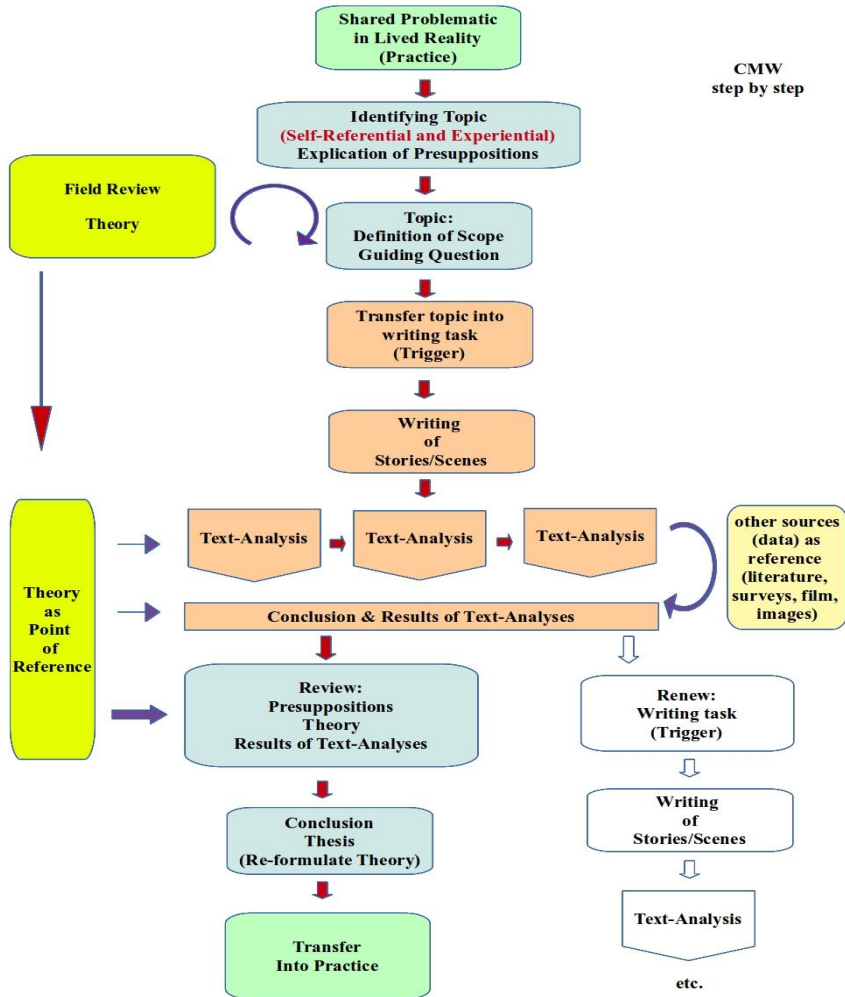
The diagram that follows next depicts the methodical steps of CMW and their sequential order (see also, Hamm, 2018). The overall order of steps in the process is in line with the generally followed route of most academic research projects.

A characteristic feature of CMW concerns the starting point which is meant to be anchored in the lived reality of the participants. CMW is conceptualised as a collaborative process of a group working together on a shared topic that is self-referential and experiential for the group members.

In the early stages of a CMW project the recursive loop between a field review and the explication of presuppositions held by the participants should lead to the definition of the scope of the project and the guiding question (or research question). This will give direction and functions as internal point of reference in the following process of working with the self-generated texts. With the topic narrowed down and the guiding question in mind a writing task, a so-called trigger is formulated. The trigger is meant to bring up personal memories for the participants. The form of this trigger can be a single word, e.g., Kaufman, Ewing, Montgomery, Hyle and Self (2003) used the words fire, earth, water, tree as cues to stimulate memories. It can also be in form of a sentence, e.g., “Once as she was embarrassed by women’s politics” (pro:fem, 2007, p. 34). Individual memories are then written by each participant depicting a situation they experienced and which they recount from their memory. The memories are meant to be of one experience, event or scene.

Sequences or biographical stories should be avoided....The construction of oneself, which determines the format of any biographical note, shall be broken through because it is the development of the construct that we look for, not its final outcome. (Haug, 2008, p. 24)

The methodical steps of CMW and their sequential order



Collective Memory-Work Schematic Overview of Methodical Steps

“De-romanticised and Very...Different”

Usually the texts written are not longer than one or two pages. It is a common feature of CMW projects that the texts are about an event experienced by the author, yet they are written in third person singular. This is a consciously introduced distancing mechanism that is meant to “force[s] the participants to explain themselves as not self-evident and, therefore, unknown persons....We might call this choice of third-person narration historicizing or distancing the narrator” (Haug, 2008, p. 24). Writing in third person, and also using pseudonyms for all characters appearing in the scene helps avoiding personal reference to the author when scrutinising use of language and content in the memory-scenes. I refrain from presenting a sample story here. There are lots of examples in the literature of such texts (e.g., Coffee, Stutelberg, Clements & Lensmire, 2017, p. 45; Forseth, 2005, p. 449; Haug et al., 1987; Hyle, Ewing, Montgomery & Kaufman, 2008;).

Within the spectrum of CMW there are varying practices regarding the writing of memory-scenes. Some groups have concentrated on writing their earliest memories (Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault & Benton, 1992), memories are written either ad-hoc on the spot (Barber et al., 2016; Vlachou, 2016) or with a time delay (Travis, 2003). In groups that follow the concept of Collective Biography memory-scenes are verbally exchanged and refined prior to writing (Davies & Gannon, 2006).

Once the memory-scenes are produced they are subjected to a text analysis with a specific focus.

Collective memory-work examines and analyses texts looking for the processes used to construct the stories and for the *processes* individuals use to form their personalities. The goal of the work is not that the participants understand and accept who/what/and where they are, but to identify the points at which change is possible. In order to accomplish this, collective memory-work asks participants to look for points where they actively colluded with the existing structure in order to fashion a life relatively free from contradiction. (Travis, 2003, p. 28)

For this purpose different ways of dealing with the texts have been applied. Frigga Haug suggests a mix between linguistic analysis and hermeneutic interpretation with a number of clear procedural steps (2008). It is noteworthy that the descriptions of these steps became more concrete in her publications only over time. When the second volume of *Frauenformen* was translated into English in 1987 it did not yet contain as much detail on the actual procedures as were made available in later years.

Based on their early contact with the method June Crawford and colleagues, and those who follow their advice approach the texts with a less strict approach. Yet, they are also asking a set of distinct questions in which they search the memory-

scenes for clichés, contradictions, sequences of actions, role relations, statements made, absences, emotions stated, emotions implied (Crawford et al., 1992, pp. 49 & 57). Ralph Hammond operates with a series of questions addressing structure, form and content of the written scenes (2013). Marion Thuswald and her collaborators refine Frigga Haug's version in a manual consisting of 18 subsequent steps (Thuswald, 2016).

When the texts are scrutinised for the construction of protagonists in the memory-scenes it is a usual experience in CMW groups that the analysis of a memory-scene of approx. 500 words takes one and a half to two hours or sometimes longer. The search here is for meaning that goes beyond the apparent presentation offered by the author. There are affinities in the text analytical approach used in CMW to other concepts. Picking two of such affinities it can be compared, e.g., to depth-hermeneutical interpretation (König, Burgermeister, Brunner, Berg & König, 2019), obviously without the same obligation to psychoanalysis. It can also be compared to the methodical attitude of rational reconstruction derived from the work of Jürgen Habermas. Here it is similarly a search for "deep structures, meaning a fundamental set of rules, such as the production of meaningful linguistic expressions." (Pedersen, 2008, p. 462) And, "[w]hat is reconstructed is a competence that acting subjects possess. The reconstruction uncovers some fundamental competencies (horizontal reconstruction), but also the way these competencies have developed over time (vertical reconstruction)." (Pedersen, 2008, p. 463).

Whereas the competences to be revealed in working with the memory-scenes are understood in CMW as essentially contradictory, i.e., mirroring the contradictory social relations that constitute the historical environment in which we are positioned.

What we have managed to attain is a competence in non-competence. It is a competence that consists in a skilful manipulation of pre-given standards, an adoption of the most sophisticated tricks in our attempts to meet those standards. It is a necessary form of competence within existing social structures, if we are to retain our capacity for action. At the same time, it works to consolidate our social incompetence, insofar as it leads us to acquire expertise in operating within existing standards, and thus both to assimilate and accept those standards, rather than questioning what lies behind them. Once trapped in a network of prevailing standards, we see no way out. (Haug et al., 1987, p. 129)

With this in mind the aim in the search for latent content in the texts is to discover connections between the individual and the social. The findings about the written memory-scenes are referred back to the topic at hand and the guiding question,

thereby driving the discussion of the group to an expanding range of interpretations, opinions and insights. At this stage it is possible to re-construct the results of earlier processes of education and societalisation. On this basis eventually a transfer of re-constructed opinions, views, meaning structures, positioning of self in social relations back into practice, i.e., everyday life, can happen.

Frigga Haug also points to the advantage of obtaining a second version of a given memory-scene, in which the author rewrites

...all parts where she felt she was misunderstood, did not express herself clearly enough, or where she remembers now that things were different. She should be instructed to fill in the vacant spots that were found and make statements about the obvious contradictions....The writer soon realizes from her undertaken corrections that the whole scene does not fit anymore, and she will rewrite more and more. The group will be surprised to see that the opposite of what was initially written has sometimes appeared. In summary, the levelling of contradictions, the artful vacancies, all of these attempts to make the narrative cohesive now all of a sudden appear fragile. The new story is a lesson to everyone—the writer herself and the editors—and it adds new proof of the value of strategies for the harmonization of memory. Most of the time it is the persona of the “victim” who suddenly appears in an unfavourable light in the rewritten memory. (Haug, 1999; also 2008, p. 39)

Other sources may be included in the topical considerations. In the Frauenformen project on female sexualisation etiquette manuals were used in their “legs project” (1987, p. 153) or photographs in their “body project” (1987, p. 113). Others have acted out memory-scenes to support the analytic process (Clements, personal communication, December 14, 2018; Gannon, Byers, Rajiva & Walsh, 2014). Each and any material that a group finds suitable is possible here.

On concluding the analytic engagement with the written scenes and potentially other sources the group may decide to start another cycle of writing, now taking into account the insights, considerations, new questions that arose in the process up to then. Due to the length of time involved in thoroughly following the different methodical steps such a renewed cycle is feasible in cases where time is of little or no concern for the group. Where a group is not going into a renewed cycle at this stage a review of the entire process should take place with the aim of formulating a concluding thesis, taking into account the theory that was a point of reference at the beginning and during analysis. Groups with an explicit interest in disseminating their results will usually include producing a written document for publication. In groups that come together without this interest the conclusion may as well be done

in the format of a less structured collection of documents from the project, and/or a verbal exchange amongst the group members.

Learning Opportunities and Possible Effects

Overcoming the “binary divide in ... research paradigms” that “view the researcher and the researched as two distinct groups, creating a them-and-us-notion” between them (Meerwald, 2013) is a characteristic element in the conceptual idea of the method as emancipating learning project. This implies that participants in a CMW project have a common interest that is anchored in the topical engagement, and a desire for new perspectives. Accordingly the shared negotiated interest of the group that is formed should be the deciding factor in terms of determining adjustment of methodical steps and development of topical trajectories. Coming from this side, what counts are the learning experiences and effects which participants aspire to and which are made possible by the group. Such a view provides a route to evaluating models of CMW in terms of learning opportunities and possible effects for participants.

So far there is only one study that explicitly looks at effects of CMW for the participants. On the basis of a project that involved five women, including herself, Mary Travis records changes in thinking, in feeling and in action. She notes “[i]n two cases, participants risked taking profoundly different actions. One participant did this in her personal life and the other in her professional life” (Travis, 2003, p. 184). The group in this project met six times for three hours over a period of four months. This is a rather common time scale for projects within an academic environment. Mary Travis is aware of the importance of time as a decisive factor in relation to experiences and effects for participants. She also notes that “collective agency has not been examined in the collective memory-work literature, and many of the studies have been too short-term for this type of agency to develop” (Travis, 2003, p. 40). She understands the key feature of collective agency to be “people’s shared belief in the collective power of their group to achieve desired results” (Travis, 2003, p. 37). As examples where she believes such agency could develop she refers to *Frauenformen*, and also to the collective of June Crawford and her colleagues. These groups worked “over a long period of time (six to nine years) and produced books that contributed to a rethinking of women’s sexuality and emotions. They also worked with the common goal of effecting personal and political change” (Travis, 2003, p. 40).

For *Frauenformen* it is very obvious that the project groups grew out of a political movement to which the women involved had a shared commitment from the very outset. The history of the group and its precursors has been documented by Frigga Haug (2015), but most of all in the nine volumes on their joint memory-work projects. There is no systematic documentation of learning experiences and subsequent effects for the participants in the *Frauenformen* projects. In their

“De-romanticised and Very...Different”

publications they mostly concentrate on the topical questions under scrutiny. In a retrospective reflection Karen Haubenreisser and Evelyn Gottwalz collected comments by members of the Frauenformen projects on their experiences. A list of what they learned from the projects reads: “learned to think; learned something about myself; gained orientation; learned not to get lost in immediacy; learned to engage not only with social relations but also with myself; learned to correct my own perspective; learned to construct everyday life as insightful” (Haubenreisser & Gottwalz, 2002, p. 59).

Which brings us back to the quotes at the very start of this essay. Another example of “lost innocence” can be found in the book by Judith Kaufman and her colleagues who note a profound and long-lasting effect when they write

[a]s a result of this project, we have altered our relationship to traditional science. While we were all critical of a science enveloped by empiricism and positivism, memory-work enabled us to bring science to a personal level of experience...as a result it is now impossible for us to conceive of science as we once did. (Kaufman et al., 2003, p. 3)

In the context of my essay what is of particular interest in relation to the group of Judith Kaufman and colleagues is the way their work is organised and determined by the entire group at all times. This will play a role soon in describing four ideal typical models for their learning opportunities for participants. But learning effects are also observed in projects that follow a different model of facilitated work organisation. A group of teachers in Germany who worked over a period of five weekend seminars on the topic of learning from experience concludes,

[w]e got wiser as to the constructions of our selves and our acts. We realised that we live in error, that in our efforts to do good and do the right thing we are only scratching the surface of reflections on our being....In working with our stories in the seminar we experienced us as it were from outside. This allows us to understand a societal context that effects our impressions, insights and acts far deeper than we had assumed....We have learned to think in contradictions and to see them as productive. (Lehrende aus Freien Alternativschulen, 2007, p. 103)

In this project the group could rely on a facilitator to guide them through the methodical steps and provide theoretical input at strategic points during the process. June Crawford et al. (1992) identify facilitation as two-sided.

...we also set up memory-groups in which one of us has acted as facilitator....A skilled facilitator may be able to relieve anxiety, enable the

writing of memories and the collective discussion, and redirect attention. In these groups, however, we were always aware of a problem created by our presence. The group facilitator becomes the leader and the sense of collectivity is diminished. (Crawford et al, 1992, p. 44)

Addressing the role of facilitation, or in her terms leadership in CMW groups Frigga Haug refers to the Gramscian concept of the organic intellectual, who can give guidance in the work process without assuming a position of elite judgement. “Because the leader has had the same experiences, she should be free from the expert feeling and be able to participate in mutual discussion.” She notes that not every member of a group needs to have all qualifications, “e.g., not every group member has to study big books on the topic in question.” Rather it is sufficient (and necessary) that “research leaders...are familiar with the theories that are associated with the topic and...try to pass on as much knowledge as possible...” (Haug, 2008, p. 26).

Depending on the (institutional) framing of a CMW project the responsibilities of a facilitator includes attention to the ongoing processes in relation to topical trajectories, methodical steps and potentially their correction. But also in relation to group dynamics, motivation, work atmosphere the facilitator needs to be able to intervene as far as necessary and sensible for progressing the collective efforts towards the initially agreed direction. In concrete applications of CMW the roles of facilitators can differ, depending on the institutional setting in (or outside of) which a project is initiated, and the conceptual framework applied. This will become clearer in the next sections.

Four Models

On the basis of these considerations I am going to use the diagram presented above to schematically demonstrate the effects of different models of adjusting the method in terms of actors. For this purpose the diagram will be populated (in the form of pictograms) and slightly altered wherever applicable. Following the visualisations the models are further explained and commented on. The following variations will be presented:

Model 1:

Entirely group determined projects.

Model 2:

- (a) Facilitated collective projects;
- (b) Facilitated collective projects (teaching).

Here two separate diagrams are presented. (a) One as a general description, and (b) the other referring to a concrete teaching concept by Kerstin Witt-Löw.

“De-romanticised and Very...Different”

Model 3:

Individual research projects.

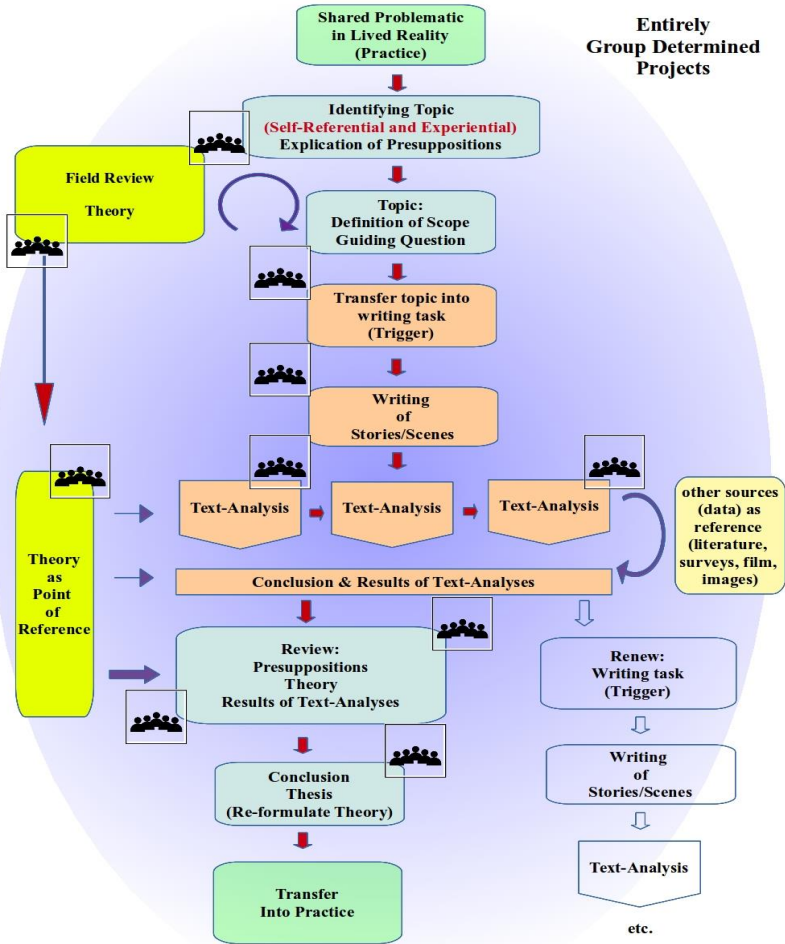
Model 4:

Focus group projects.

The status of these four models is to be seen as a suggestion to allow for closer scrutiny of a given CMW project for the learning potential offered by it to participants. In this regard they can function as a yardstick for an assessment of a given project. But it needs to be kept in mind that they are ideal typical models of describing the scale of learning opportunities. Any such assessment of a CMW project therefore needs to take into account also the particularities of the respective project.

Nevertheless, with these models I hope to provide a descriptive tool that allows for a more distinguished exchange about concrete applications, planned or conducted. The basis for the development of the models was an intense review of the existing literature on CMW, and a series of interviews with more than 40 initiators and facilitators of CMW groups (see acknowledgements).

Model 1: Entirely Group Determined Projects



Entirely Group Determined Projects

“De-romanticised and Very...Different”

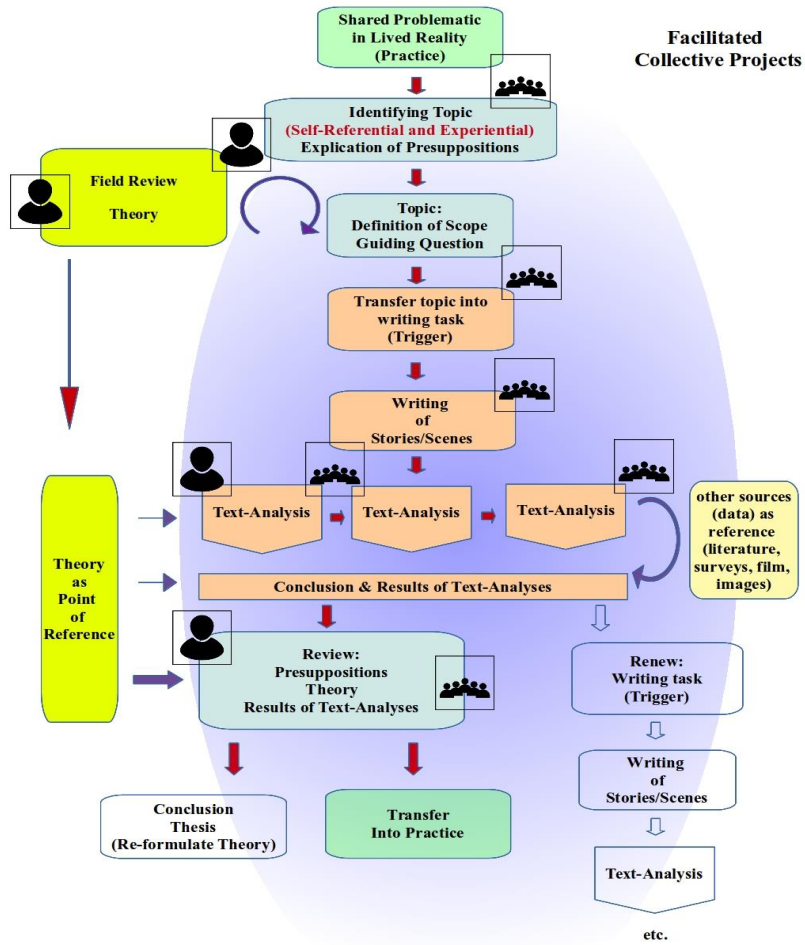
In the first model all group members are involved in all aspects of the work. This does not exclude delegation. Some group members may study a particular piece of literature and report back to the entire group. Or in cases of larger groups the analysis of memory-scenes can be done by sub-groups, whereby the results of such analyses are then collected and collated in plenary meetings again. However, all work processes and the topical direction of the project are at all times decided by the entire group. For every group member being involved in every step of the process the learning opportunities are all-embracing.

For a group to be able to work in this manner it is necessary that on top of a strong commitment to the group’s success participants can invest the time to engage in a potentially lengthy process. It also helps if the group members are not too far apart in terms of extent of knowledge about the respective topic, and experience of working in groups.

This model resembles the work process of the early *Frauenformen* project, the collectives of June Crawford et al. (1992) and Judith Kaufman et al. (2003). It can also be found in projects of a smaller scale like the ones conducted by Val Gillies and her colleagues (2004, 2005), or Darren Langdrige and colleagues (2012). The latter of these two can further be used to exemplify the character of the diagrams as depicting ideal typical models. Depending on local circumstances the actual practices may vary in some details. The group of Darren Langdrige and colleagues for example consisted of two more members who were involved in the production and discussion of the memory-scenes “but did not take part in the data analysis or writing up of the research” (Langdrige, Barker, Reavey & Stenner, 2012, [6]).

The ideal typical character of the visualisations can also be seen in potential effects of status differences between group members in terms of shares of input and voice, particularly also in relation to conclusions for dissemination. An illustrative example of this is discussed in the book chapter “A conversation about the struggles of collaborative writing” by Bronwyn Davies, Susanne Gannon and their collective (Davies & Gannon, 2006, pp. 114-144). In the concrete practice of a collective aspiring to opening up the potential learning opportunities of an entirely group determined project, attention needs to be given to the modes of entry of group members, their status and prior relationships and their development in the course of a project.

Model 2(a): Facilitated Collective Projects



Facilitated Collective Projects

“De-romanticised and Very...Different”

The model of facilitated collective projects is most feasible where a group requires assistance in certain areas. This concerns first of all reassurance in the application of methodical steps and the subsequent connection of these steps in a productive manner. Frauke Schwarting, one of the members of Frauenformen in the mid-80s, reports about groups who

came up with something that was of interest to them....And these were genuinely self-organised groups who worked on a topic...but we received relatively often requests, where they invited us after nine months and said, now we have an awful lot of paper and an awful lot of analyses, what are we to do with it? What was missing there was the entire framework, the basis. They did not know what to do with it. (quoted in: Hamm, 2013, p. 43)

It also concerns the inclusion of theory. In groups that are formed outside academia participants may not always have the time to engage extensively with a set of theoretical literature. Here it makes sense to take advantage of the accumulated theoretical knowledge of a group member in the role of facilitator. The starting point for such projects is still a shared problematic in lived reality.

However, this model also allows for a shift in that the facilitator may provide guidance to a group even in cases where s/he is not necessarily in the same way affected by the problematic as the other group members. It can then be developed further into a model for using CMW in teaching. Judith Kaufman (2008) and Naomi Norquay (2008) provide examples from the USA and Canada, Sharn Rocco (1999) from Australia, and Jo Krøjer and Camilla Hutter (2006) from Denmark. In Austria the method has been adapted to purposes of teaching in undergraduate and postgraduate studies, e.g., in gender studies and teacher training by Kerstin Witt-Löw and Marion Breiter (1991, see also below), in cultural studies by Johanna Dorer (personal communication, September 19, 2018), and in business studies by Anett Hermann (personal communication, October 3, 2018). In this vein Marion Thuswald's teach/learn-arrangement (2016) is also quite informative.

A discussion of applying CMW in a formal school setting following the approach depicted in the second sketch can be found in Ulrike Behrens' study with secondary school students (2002) and in my own project with prospective educators in a vocational school (2017). Here the need arises to find a productive way of dealing with elements like mandatory participation, required assessment of participants, formal and informal roles. These elements can crucially impede on the use of CMW. Hence for anyone considering CMW as a method in a formal school setting it is as much a question of adapting the method to the circumstances as it is a matter of adjusting the circumstances to the method. This requires a departure from traditional forms of teach/learn-arrangements and role definitions of teachers,

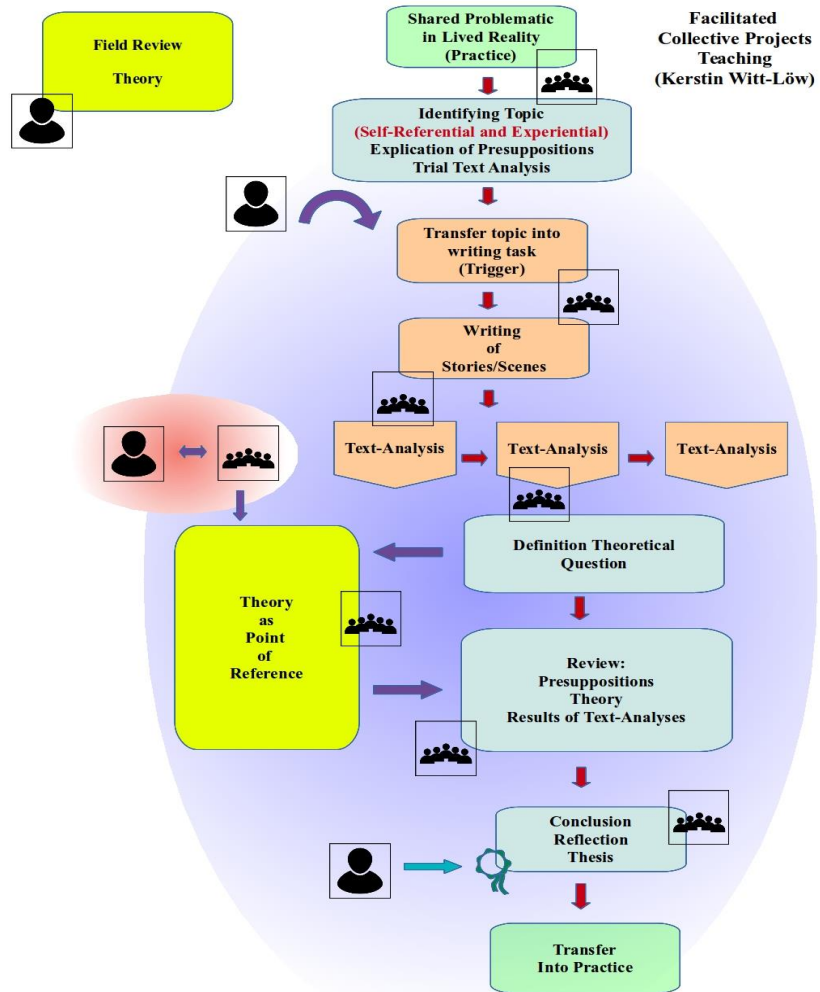
lecturers. There is a productive balance to be found between self-determined learning efforts of students and input from the side of the lecturer. The role of the lecturer shifts towards the concept of mentoring (Mandell & Herman, 2009). Teaching here is clearly understood as providing opportunities, opening spaces and supporting a collective (group) in their self-determined search for answers to problems posed by their own experiential realities rather than conveying a pre-formulated curricular syllabus. In such a model of facilitated CMW there can be a tweak to the sequence of steps that warrants a separate visualisation. I am picking Kerstin Witt-Löw's concept as one example from the projects mentioned above for such a visualisation. She uses CMW in teacher training courses at Vienna University.

As lecturer/mentor she does not take part in any of the group work concerning writing and analysis of memory-scenes. She introduces the method including an exemplary memory scene and analysis thereof, and guides the students who join her seminar through the initial process of identifying a topic. The overall direction is always school experiences in the widest of definitions. To narrow down the topical focus she facilitates discussion amongst the participants according to their own input. She supports the building of small working groups and the discussion leading to a trigger for writing stories in small groups. At this point she lets the group head off to work independently.

Her further involvement takes the form of one or two supervision meeting/s during which the group and herself reflect together on the progress made up to then. She gives reassurance and feedback on the work done so far, and makes suggestions, e.g., for literature on specific theory, or topical directions that the group did not fully explore.

The students work through the theory they find relevant, and bring together theory and text-analyses, again on their own without input by the lecturer/mentor. At the end of the seminar the groups present their results and reflections to the plenary. Each group writes collaboratively a thesis paper as their conclusion of the seminar. Due to the institutional framework the seminar is bound within the structures of formal assessment, thus the group's presentation and thesis are marked for ECTS credits (see also: Witt-Löw, 2020).

Model 2(b): Facilitated Collective Projects (Teaching)



Facilitated Collective Project Teaching (Kerstin Witt-Löv)

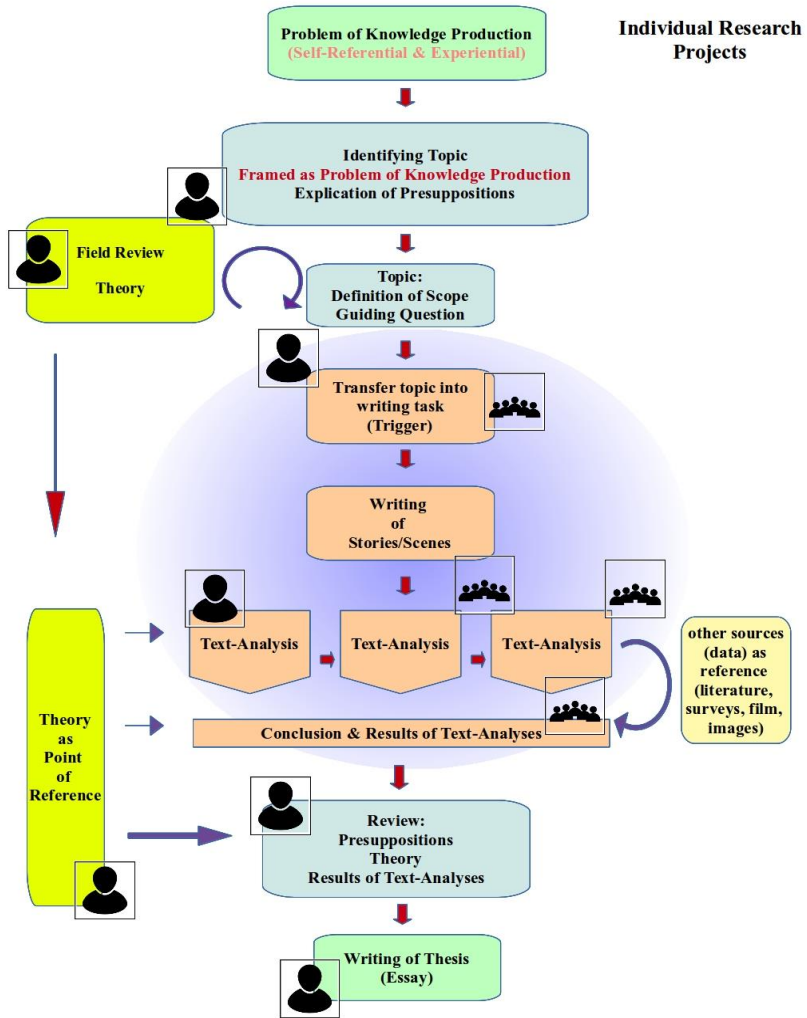
The inclusion of a CMW-project into a structure of formal assessment is a balancing act that clearly throws an element of contradiction into the learning process. Obviously the compatibility of learner's interests, experiences, motivations with curricula and prescribed course content is a problem in all institutional teach/learn-arrangements (on this see: Holzkamp, 1995, pp. 339-563). The conceptual approach in CMW of voluntary participation and self-directed learning (research) runs counter to the systematics of prescribed curricular content and assessment. How far the spaces within institutions can be opened up to allow for the potential of CMW is a matter of ongoing negotiations for each lecturer, teacher, mentor in their own institutional environment. Turned around then, if a lecturer, teacher, mentor is interested to open up spaces for self-directed learning, CMW certainly offers a perfect mode of entry. The contradiction of compulsory attendance and formal assessment however cannot be cracked simply by introducing CMW into the system. This requires changes on a larger scale.

As for the mode of entry of participants into a course that is offered in a formal educational program, and of which it is clear that there is an assessment at the end, it is always double-edged. In this regard it would be desirable to evaluate in a comprehensive manner the experiences of people who have offered CMW in their institutional teaching, and those who took part in the respective programs.

Model 3: Individual Research Projects

In this model the starting position for a project is decisively changed. It depicts the use of the method that is quite common in projects in the context of postgraduate qualification programs leading to Masters or PhD-degrees. Here the initial problem is framed as a problem of knowledge production within academic conventions. It may still have a self-referential and experiential component as far as a researcher's interest in the specific topic of research may be connected to personal experiences. The framing as a problem of knowledge production within academic conventions however shifts the perspectives of all persons involved.

Model 3: Individual Research Projects



Individual Research Projects

The shift of shares held in terms of division of labour as well as the reduced learning opportunities make it more appropriate to no longer refer to a collective in the name for the method. Lynn Burnett describes this in a reflection on her dissertation project:

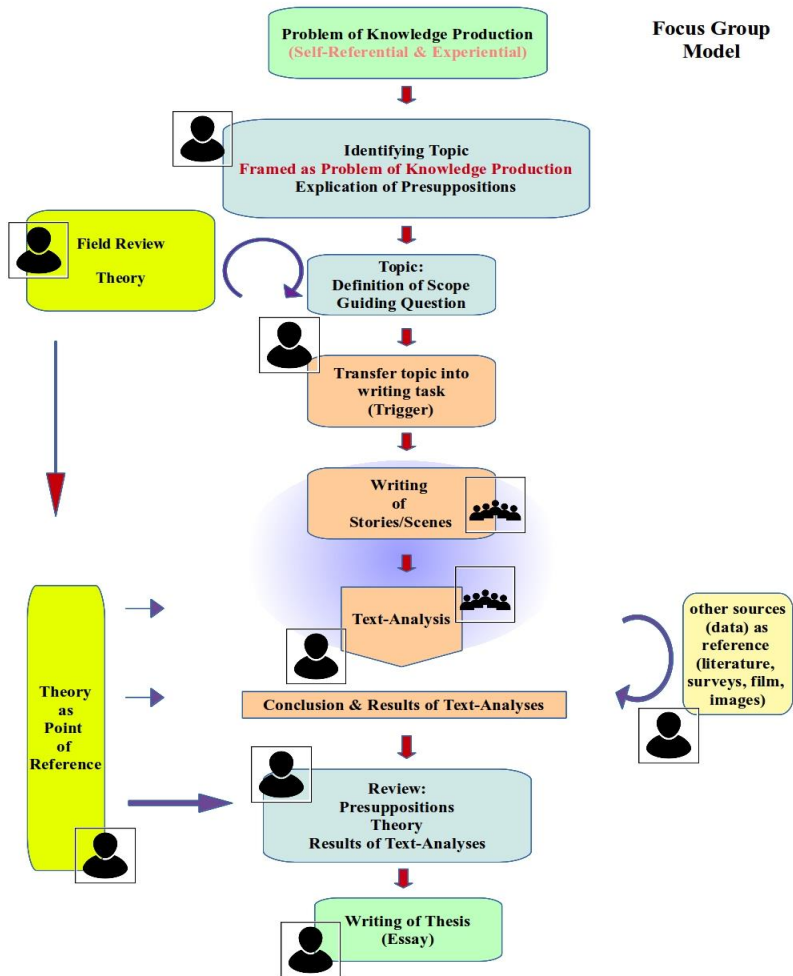
The nature of a doctoral study ultimately means that one person has more invested financially and emotionally than others who make up the Memory Work group....The tension between a desire to share the power of voice equally among all participants, consistent with Memory Work methodology, and the realities of academic power structures was keenly felt by the author of this study....While each participant gained new insights and understandings about themselves and others, only the author could make the final decisions regarding the meta analysis and voice, as it is currently only acceptable within tertiary institutions for Faculty of Education doctoral dissertations to be authored by one person. While the group's contribution and initial analysis is recognised as pivotal to this particular methodology, the nature of doctoral studies necessitates the exclusion of the group at some level during the process in order for the author's individual meta analysis to occur. (2007, p. 269)

The respective researchers may be deeply committed to the idea of collectivity and try to negotiate their role in the actual phases of working with group members so as to overcome the researcher-researched divide. At the end of the day all initial work is done by the person initiating the project, i.e., identifying the topic, explication of presuppositions, field review, definition of scope and guiding question. Participants in such projects are normally not involved in discussions of theory related to the topic, neither are they involved in the subsequent work leading to review of presuppositions and drawing conclusions regarding the guiding (or research) question.

As a further point to consider, researchers in these projects normally work within a fixed time-frame for submitting their work. This puts pressure on them to have the process of working with the memory-scenes (writing, analysing) concluded at a certain date. From the perspective of a researcher, and in academic terminology, the work with the group is in fact similar to the period of data collection that otherwise might be done via interview series, field observations, etc.

In theory it would just as well be possible that a group that is established in the context of such an academic research project might decide to stay together over the initially scheduled period. They could engage further with the topic and by doing so also adapt in their joint practice the models depicted in the first two sketches. In practice I am not aware of any group set up along the third model that managed to go down this line of extended inquiry.

Model 4: Focus Group Model



Focus Group Model

The fourth model eventually departs already conceptually from the idea of including participants in activities other than writing texts and talking about them. This model is designed along the lines of a focus group. It is most clearly formulated in Corey Johnson's publication from 2018 where a list is presented of "Common Elements of Collective Memory Work" for "anyone considering using CMW in their work." This list includes:

- Understand the philosophical tenets of CMW and justify its use for your study
- Determine and focus in on your central phenomenon
- Review the literature and craft your conceptual framework
- Write your positionality statement and make a plan for ongoing reflexivity
- Determine the memories that address your research question
- Decide on your sampling criteria
- Construct your writing prompt
- Recruit your sample and keep them informed every step
- Schedule and prepare for your focus groups
- Facilitate your focus groups
- Prepare the data for analysis and interpretation
- Conduct analysis and interpretation
- Wrestle with presentation
- Check for trustworthiness/credibility/authenticity
(Johnson & Oakes, 2018, p. 130)

The role of participants in such a design is curtailed in a way that veers away from the original idea that was part of the development of CMW whereby the subject and the object of research are one and the same person/s in an emancipating learning project. The focus group model is anchored in the academic institutional framework and serves the conventions that were already identified as impact factors in model three. Involving participants in only one (Dunlap & Johnson, 2011) or two (Kivel & Johnson, 2009) meetings in which texts are discussed cannot possibly generate the same effects on the side of participants as a longer term involvement, at least starting with the joint development of the writing prompt and subsequent analysis of memory-scenes over six to ten meetings. For purposes of generating academically acknowledged research output/s the focus group model is probably attractive. For

purposes of emancipating learning it restricts the learning opportunities for participants to a bare minimum of the potential spectrum of experiences.¹

Another layer that moves even further in this direction is documented in a series of projects in Austria. Here the researchers asked participants in their studies to write texts in the genre of the memory-scene. These texts were then collected and consequently analysed by the researchers (Egger, 2012; Girardi, 2012). In some cases short interviews were conducted with the authors of the texts to clarify elements in the story that were not immediately clear to the researcher (Kikl, 2009; Kuntschke, 2011). In these projects the participants did not come together as a group at all.

However, certain effects are possible even with the focus group model that are similarly observable in all the other models. Rebecca Eaker, Anneliese Singh & Corey Johnson (2018) give an account of a project on parental responses to gender nonconforming children. In the course of this project six participants met on two occasions and engaged with 12 self-generated memory stories. It is virtually impossible to analyse 12 memory-scenes in two meetings in a manner that would remotely match the analysis as envisaged by the text analytic approaches referred to earlier. What is possible though is an empathic reading and supportive feedback from the side of group members.

During the focus group...[the]...story became an emotional focal point where the participants shared in empathy and listened to...[the author of the story]...describe how her father’s disapproval impacted her well into her adulthood. The participants offered support and affirmation as...[the author]...continued to describe how she no longer has a relationship with her father as a result of his choice to require an inauthentic version of her. Through her tears, she expressed gratitude to the other participants for their support. (Eaker, Singh & Johnson, 2018, p. 55)

¹ Writing and talking about memory-scenes are also used as a method inspired by CMW in once-off workshops in adult education settings outside academia. E.g., Ahmadi-Rinnerhofer & Pröstler’s (2013) workshop runs over two and a half hours with a number of up to 30 participants. There is an introduction, a phase of remembering in form of a short exchange of thoughts (resembling a free association in groups), a phase of writing individual memories, a phase of discussing the individual memories in small groups of five or six participants, and a final plenary phase in which the small groups report back about their discussions. The limitation in time and the number of participants account for a conceptually quite different experience on the side of participants than that intended and made possible in the original version of CMW.

Depending on the actual topic of a given project and the personal character of the memory-scenes it is a common feature that participants in all four models can feel a strong emotional involvement when their own (or others') stories are presented to the group.

For a group to work in a productive manner with the memory-scenes, on the one hand it is a necessity to be able to provide empathic emotional feedback and support so that there is a basis of trust among group members. On the other hand it is necessary to overcome the impediment of empathic indulgence in making space for analytic scrutiny as an essential precondition for gaining new insights. "Empathy makes blind," states Frigga Haug (1977, p. 229). Consequently in her text analytic approach an empathic reading of a given memory-scene is subsequently superseded by a distanced analysis of linguistic elements, the search for contradictions and vacuums in the text, and a re-construction of the characters in the scene. And she notes,

[t]his is not easily done because most individual experiences reported rely on empathy and comprehension and are successful in eliciting these in everyday communication. The consequence is the attempt to cultivate therapeutic discourses of sympathy and to relate connecting stories by way of "psychologizing." This stance and practice is not only theoretically unproductive, but it also stands in the way of insight. It invites group members to ally with opponents of understanding and active thinking and simply increases painful perceptions. It is absolutely necessary that distance be established in order to work with the text. (Haug, 2008, p. 30)

To enable a group to follow such a distanced approach requires a certain time. On top of the problem of the number of texts for analysis, building trust relies on the initial necessity of empathic understanding, or at least the assurance that exposing oneself to a certain degree by presenting personal stories in form of memory-scenes does not lead to ridicule or dismissal. And, groups doing CMW will also need to go through the commonly assumed group phases described by Bruce Tuckman (1965). Particularly for groups that are composed of members who have no experience of such a working style it also requires some practice. This all is not possible in only one or two meetings.

Irrespective of the limited learning opportunities for participants, groups organised on the basis of the focus group model may still be very useful even for purposes of advocacy. An example can be found in the project conducted by Corey Johnson, Anneliese Singh and Maru Gonzalez about the situation of transgender, queer and questioning youths in schools in Georgia. "Three separate focus groups delineated the larger research project: one group for gay/bi men, one group for

lesbian/bi women, and one group for self-identified transgender, queer or questioning youth (TQQ)” (Johnson, Singh & Gonzalez, 2014, p. 423). In line with common practice for focus groups the discussions were recorded, and the recordings featured as data for the researchers for further analysis. Beyond dissemination of their results via academic channels the “research findings have materialized into two documentary films...and a resource manual distributed widely across Georgia into over 900...elementary and secondary schools.” And the authors conclude, “[w]e feel that the documentary most effectively ‘captures voices’ of the participants in the current study and makes these research findings more accessible and consumable for parents, practitioners, and policy makers” (Johnson et al, 2014, p. 432).

In this sense a focus group set up for writing and sharing memory stories may restrict learning opportunities for participants in relation to detecting constructions of self and constructions of meaning by the authors and their collusion “with the existing structure in order to fashion a life relatively free from contradiction” (Travis, 2003, p. 28). It may still have a catalyst function in the social arena, albeit that it seems an effect that is less due to the method than it is to the commitment of researchers to advocate for a particular interest group.

Learning Opportunities and Emancipatory Potential

Through the visualisations and explanations of the four ideal typical models I wanted to point out that different models of putting CMW into practice offer quite different learning opportunities. Whereby learning opportunities and learning experiences are not the same. But to have a certain learning *experience* requires that there is an *opportunity* for it in the first place.

By referring back to the original aspirations of the founders of CMW the character of the method as a collective educational project of emancipatory learning has been highlighted. In summary what can be said about the different models depicted in this essay is that:

In its commitment to emancipatory learning the original concept of CMW expects the participants having maximum input into the respective project. CMW projects that follow the entirely group determined model allow for the maximum potential of the method to be utilized.

In facilitated projects the scope of engagement for participants is potentially all-embracing, although in practical applications there will always be some elements that are left to the facilitator.

So far in projects that are planned and conducted as individual research leading to an academic qualification participants are not involved in the planning and conclusion stages of the projects.

Projects that follow the focus group model restrict learning opportunities to the bare minimum.

It is very obvious that the institutional context plays an important role for the planning and conducting of CMW in a certain manner. This is particularly the case with explicitly expressed, or also implicitly assumed academic conventions. Given that we have not reached the historical point yet where “our individual interests are identical to the collective societal interest” we are dealing with contradiction. Whether we like it or not we often find “us in a position of hostility towards ourselves” (Tolman, 1994, p. 116). Then, for anyone hoping to initiate a CMW project there is a need to find their own positioning within, or probably against a given context, institutional or otherwise.

For an assessment of the emancipatory potential of the learning opportunities it is necessary to also look at the idea of emancipatory learning and how it is reflected in the concrete applications of CMW projects. Learning in CMW (and in general) if it is meant to be emancipatory is at first un-learning. It concerns adults who through processes of education and societalisation have always already acquired a position, a stance, a way of constructing their selves and a way of constructing meaning in the world. It is exactly into the intricacies of these areas that the potential for learning in CMW can lead, but only if the self-constructions and constructions of meaning are actually put under scrutiny. Which requires that both the material worked with, and the means to approach this material need to allow for such scrutiny. Here is where beyond the specification of participants’ roles in CMW projects as depicted in the models above, the actual analysis of the self-generated stories plays the central role.

Frigga Haug and Frauenformen started their development of CMW with a bid to overcome the constraints of subjectification.

The concept of subjectification can be understood as the process by which individuals work themselves into social structures they themselves do not consciously determine, but to which they subordinate themselves. The concept allows for the active participation of individuals in heteronomy. It is the fact of our active participation that gives social structures their solidity, they are more solid than prison walls. (1987, p. 59)

Emancipation then is finding cracks, fissures in these walls, to widen them, open them up, knock some of the bricks out of place, eventually bring the wall down. However, nice as the metaphor of the wall may be, it yet bears the danger of locating oppression solely as an effect of social structures, or at any rate forces outside of oneself. The concept of subjectification instead acknowledges the role of our own participation in re-enforcing these very structures, hence our being bricks in the wall as much as heads banging against it.

To decipher our ways of actively participating in heteronomy, mapping our traces on the historical field of struggles for social progress, all the zig-zag moves in

which we are navigating our position, shifting and shuffling desires, needs, wants, solidarity, competition, rationality and emotions: We need to be able to get beyond the surface of our stories. Working with our memories then requires uncovering the latent content, that what is not said, the ways of using clichés and voids to impress upon ourselves the cogwheel mentality of fatalism and helplessness. Such a deciphering of the entanglement of at the same time experiencing and partaking in one’s own oppression is possible via our memory stories. It requires a suitable concept of text-analysis that transfers the basic assumptions underlying the method into a set of questions asked of self-generated texts. And, it also requires sufficient time to go into the nitty-gritty of the detailed process of de-constructing these texts for the purpose of re-constructing their meaning. Any practice that does not fulfil *both* of these requirements will necessarily provide only restricted learning opportunities to participants in CMW projects.

Referring back to the models depicted above, the focus group model does not provide time enough to engage as a group sufficiently with the memory-scenes, albeit that the project organiser approaches the text analysis in the most critical manner. But even if there is time galore in a self-organised and entirely group determined project, as long as the group does not approach the texts of the memory-scenes analytically and in a critical manner the self-generated learning opportunities will equally be restricted. Effectively the opportunities generated will remain in the old limitations of consciousness raising groups. Not the least for this reason a facilitator (organic intellectual) who functions as a tour guide at crucial points in the group’s work process will substantially shift the range of learning opportunities for everyone beyond these limitations. Based on these observations I suggest that irrespective of their field of research or practice, everyone considering to initiate a CMW project can measure their efforts along the descriptions provided in the four ideal typical models. They will also allow for a more distinguished assessment of CMW projects in relation to their potential for emancipatory learning.

For researchers attempting to use CMW the question to be answered is the one of their acceptance and/or negotiation of academic conventions when designing and conducting their work. How much are they willing and able to remain true to the original aspirations of the founders of the method and its character as an emancipatory learning project? Similarly the use of CMW as a method in third level education requires adaptations to local circumstances. The models presented above can help tailoring the respective programs.

Throughout this article I have very consciously distinguished between learning opportunities on one side, and learning experiences and effects on the other. The first is a necessary condition for the latter, but the latter is not a necessary consequence of the first. As I mentioned above there is only one study so far (Travis, 2003) that specifically attended to learning experiences and effects in CMW. As a field of study this is an area that could and should be explored in more

detail. What is missing is a more systematic evaluation of first hand reports of experiences of participants in CMW projects, in both research and teaching/learning environments. This would be of particular interest in relation to Facilitated Collective Memory-Work with a view to making the potential of the method as an emancipatory learning project available to a larger variety of learning environments of adult education, formal and informal.

Acknowledgements

Partners in the interview series on experiences with initiating, conducting and facilitating CMW projects: Adrienne Hyle, Anett Hermann, Angela Coffee, Beate Schröder, Carla Willig, Christina Hee Pedersen, Colleen Clements, Dallas Rogers, David Lilley, Diane Montgomery, Doris Allhutter, Emily Falconer, Erin Dyke, Erin Stutelberg, Fiona Beals, Inge Pröstler, Jeff Hearn, Jenna Cushing-Leubner, Jo Kröjer, Judith Kaufman, Karin Hansson, Katharine Schwabedissen, Katie Anderson, Katie Lee Weille, Kerstin Witt-Löw, Lia Bryant, Maria Vlachou, Mariette Claire, Mary Hermes, Mary Travis, Melanie Stitz, Mona Livholts, Nina Eumann, Nollaig Frost, Nora Bräcklein, Nora Rätzel, Rachel Thomson, Ralph Hammond, Richard Johnson, Steven Brown, Tanja Vogler, Tuula Jääskeläinen, Ulrike Weish, Vic Blake, Zheng Zhang, Zorana Antonijevic.

Their extensive engagement in the respective interviews, discussing their own practices and their theoretical backgrounds, have provided an invaluable source of reflections. I wish to take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all of them for this.

A special thanks goes to Laurence Cox (Maynooth University) and to Frigga Haug whose continued support and feedback proves highly valuable.



This project has received funding from the Irish Research Council and from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Maria Skłodowska-Curie agreement No. 713279

References

- Ahmadi-Rinnerhofer, L. & Pröstler, I. (2013). *Biographie-Arbeit: “Das werde ich nie vergessen!”* Workshopbericht der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Psychoanalytische Pädagogik Wien - Fachtagung 2013 für professionelle PädagogInnen.
- Barber, R., Blake, V., Hearn, J., Jackson, D., Johnson, R., Luczynski, Z., & McEwan, D. (2016). *Men’s stories for a change. Ageing men remember.* Champaign, IL: Common Ground.
- Behrens, U. (2002). *Das Rätsel Lernen. Eine subjektwissenschaftliche Untersuchung zur Konstruktion und Bedeutung des Lernens.* Gießen: Focus.
- Breiter, M. & Witt-Löw, K. (1991). Kollektive Erinnerungsarbeit zur weiblichen Erfolgsangst. Ein erfolgreiches Frauenforschungs-Seminar. In E. Birmley, D. Dablander, U. Rosenbichler & M. Vollmann (Eds.), *Die Schule ist männlich. Zur Situation von Schülerinnen und Lehrerinnen* (pp. 79-87). Wien: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik.
- Brookfield, S. (1995). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Burnett, L. (2007). *Purple poppies in/and fields of green: Young lesbians speak out.* PhD-Thesis. Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
https://eprints.qut.edu.au/16317/1/Lynn_Burnett_Thesis.pdf
- Clements, C. (personal communication 14. 12. 2018).
- Coffee, A., Stutelberg, E., Clements, C. & Lensmire, T. (2017). Precarious and undeniable bodies. Control, waste and danger in the lives of a white teacher and her students of color. In S. Hancock & C. Warren (Eds.), *White women’s work. Examining the intersectionality of teaching, identity, and race* (pp 45-67). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.
- Crawford, J., Kippax, S., Onyx, J., Gault, U., & Benton, P. (1992). *Emotion and gender. Constructing meaning from memory.* London: Sage.
- Davies, B. & Gannon, S. (2006). *Doing collective biography.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Dorer, J. (personal communication, September 19, 2018).
- Eaker, R., Singh, A. & Johnson, C. (2018). How do adults remember their parents’ reaction to gender nonconformity? In Corey Johnson (Ed.), *Collective memory work. A methodology for learning with and from lived experience* (pp. 43-57). New York: Routledge.
- Egger, I. (2012). “*Bezogenes Schweigen*” *Jetzt-Momente in der Traumatherapie.* Unpublished MA-Thesis, ARGE Bildungsmanagement Wien.
- Forseth, U. (2005). Gender matters? Exploring how gender is negotiated in service encounters. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 12(5), 440-459.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2005.00283.x>

- Gannon, S., Byers, M., Rajiva, M. & Walsh, S. (2014). Deterritorializing collective biography. In M. Gonick & S. Gannon (Eds.), *becoming girl. collective biography and the production of girlhood* (pp. 59-78). Toronto: Women's Press.
- Gillies, V., Harden, A., Johnson, K., Reavey, P., Strange, V., & Willig, C. (2004). Women's collective constructions of embodied practices through memory work: Cartesian dualism in memories of sweating and pain. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 43, pp. 99-112. doi.org/10.1348/014466604322916006
- Gillies, V., Harden, A., Johnson, K., Reavey, P., Strange, V., & Willig, C. (2005). Painting pictures of embodied experience: The use of nonverbal data production for the study of embodiment. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2, 199-212. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088705qp038oa>
- Girardi, C. (2012). *Schulwege zur sicheren Bindung. Videogestütztes Lehrertraining auf Basis der Bindungstheorie in der Sonderschule*. Unpublished MA-Thesis, ARGE Bildungsmanagement Wien.
- Hamm, R. (2013). *Memory-Work as a method of critical reflection*. Published online: <http://www.roberthamm.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/memory-work.pdf>
- Hamm, R. (2017). "Im Sinne eines intellektuellen Abenteurers." *Eine Handreichung zur Anwendung und Einschätzung von Erinnerungsarbeit als Methode in der ErzieherInnen-Ausbildung*. Published online: <http://www.roberthamm.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/erzieherinnenausbildung-und-erinnerungsarbeit.pdf>
- Hamm, R. (2018). Collective Memory-Work – a method under the radar? *Other Education* 7(2), 118-124.
- Hammond, Ralph (2013). *The Construction of physiotherapists' identities through collective memory work*. PhD-thesis. Brighton: University of Brighton. <http://eprints.brighton.ac.uk/12122/1/Ralph%20Hammond%20thesis%202013%20final.pdf>
- Hartung, C., Barnes, N., Welch, R., O'Flynn, G., Uptin, J., McMahon, S. (2017). Beyond the academic precariat: a collective biography of poetic subjectivities in the neoliberal university. *Sport, Education and Society*. 22(1), 40-47.
- Haubenreisser, K. & Gottwalz, E. (2002). Die (etwas) andere Erinnerungsarbeit. In J. Meyer-Siebert, A. Merckens, I. Nowak, V. Rego Diaz (Eds.), *Die Unruhe des Denkens nutzen. Emanzipatorische Standpunkte im Neoliberalismus* (pp. 57-62). Hamburg: Argument.
- Haug, F. (1977). *Erziehung und gesellschaftliche Produktion: Kritik des Rollenspiels*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus.
- Haug, F. et al. (1987). *Female sexualization. A collective work of memory*. Transl. Erica Carter. London: Verso.
- Haug, F. (1990). *Erinnerungsarbeit*. Hamburg. Argument.

- Haug, F. (1992). *Beyond female masochism. Memory-work and politics*. London: Verso
- Haug, F. (1999). *Memory-work as a method of social research*. Published online: www.friggahaug.inkrit.de/documents/memorywork-researchguidei7.pdf
- Haug, F. (2008). Memory-work: A detailed rendering of the method for social science research. In A. Hyle, M. Ewing, D. Montgomery, J. Kaufman (Eds.), *Dissecting the mundane. International perspectives on memory-work* (pp. 21-41). Lanham: University Press of America.
- Haug, F. (2015). *Der im Gehen erkundete Weg. Marxismus-Feminismus*. Hamburg: Argument.
- Haug, F. (2020). *Letter January 2020 to the Symposium Collective Memory-Work*. http://collectivememorywork.net/?page_id=218
- Haug, F. & Hauser, K. (1986). *Der Widerspenstigen Lähmung. Kritische Psychologie der Frauen. Band 2*. Hamburg: Argument
- Hermann, A. (personal communication 3. 10. 2018).
- Holzkamp, K. (1995), *Lernen: subjektwissenschaftliche Grundlegung*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus.
- Hyle, A., Ewing, M., Montgomery, D., & Kaufman, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Dissecting the mundane. International perspectives on memory-work*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Johnson, C. (Ed.). (2018). *Collective memory work. A methodology for learning with and from lived experience*. New York: Routledge.
- Johnson, C., Singh, A. & Gonzalez, M. (2014). “It’s complicated”: Collective memories of transgender, queer, and questioning youth in high school. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 61, pp. 419–434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.842436>
- Kaufman, J. (2008). Schooling and socialization: Memory-work with preservice teachers. In A. Hyle, M. Ewing, D. Montgomery, J. Kaufman (Eds.), *Dissecting the mundane. International perspectives on memory-work* (pp. 173-184). Lanham: University Press of America.
- Kaufman, J., Ewing, M., Montgomery, D., Hyle, A. & Self, P. (2003). *From girls in their elements to women in science. Rethinking socialization through memory-work*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Kikl, C. (2009). *Die Bedeutung von Diversity Management unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von relevanten Unterschieden für den Verein JUVIVO*. Unpublished MA-Thesis, ARGE Bildungsmanagement Wien
- Kivel, B. D. & Johnson, C. (2009). Consuming media, making men: Using collective memory work to understand leisure and the construction of masculinity. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 41(1), pp. 109–133. <https://www.nrpa.org/globalassets/journals/jlr/2009/volume-41/jlr-volume-41-number-1-pp-110-134.pdf>

- König, J., Burgermeister, N., Brunner, M., Berg, P. & König, H.-D. (Eds.). (2019). *Dichte Interpretation*. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Krøjer, J. & Hutter, C. (2006). *Metodehåndbog i fortælleværksteder*. Folkehøjskolernes Forening i Danmark
- Kuntschke, E. (2011). *Kaiser, König, Edelmann, ...Biografien der BewohnerInnen im Arbeitsalltag der Pflegenden. Umgang und Konsequenzen*. Unpublished MA-Thesis, ARGE Bildungsmanagement Wien
- Langdridge, D., Barker, M., Reavey, P. & Stenner, P. (2012). Becoming a subject: A memory work study of the experience of romantic jealousy. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research Vol. 13(2)*, Art. 5 <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs120258>
- Lehrende aus Freien Alternativ Schulen. (2007). *Aus Erfahrung lernt man nichts. Ohne Erfahrung kann man nichts lernen*. Hamburg: Argument.
- Livholts, M. & Tamboukou, M. (2017). *Discourse and narrative methods: theoretical departures, analytical strategies and situated writings*. London: Sage.
- Mandell, A. & Herman, L. (2009). Mentoring - When learners make the learning. In J. Mezirow, E. W. Taylor & Associates (Eds.). *Transformative learning in practice* (pp. 78-88). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Marschall, S. (2018). Memory work versus memory-work and its utility in heritage tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*. doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1544230
- McLeod, J. & Thomson, R. (2009) *Researching social change*. Los Angeles - London - New Delhi - Singapore - Washington DC: Sage.
- Meerwald, A. (2013) Researcher | researched: repositioning research paradigms. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 32(1), pp. 43-55.
- Norquay, N. (2008). Pedagogical uses of memory-work through family immigration stories. In A. Hyle, M. Ewing, D. Montgomery, J. Kaufman (Eds.), *Dissecting the mundane. International perspectives on memory-work* (pp. 151-172). Lanham: University Press of America.
- Oakes, H. & Johnson, C. (2018). Are you next? Common elements of collective memory work. In C. Johnson (Ed.), *Collective memory work. A methodology for learning with and from lived experience* (pp. 129-148). New York: Routledge.
- Pedersen, J. (2008) Habermas' method: Rational reconstruction. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 38(4), pp. 457-485.
- pro:fem. (Eds.). (2007). *Das feministische Dschungelbuch. Expeditionen durch den Alltag*. Hamburg: Argument.
- Projekt Frauengrundstudium. Vol. 1-3. (1980, 1982, 1984). Berlin: Argument
- Radstone, S. (Ed.). (2000). *Memory and methodology*, Oxford and New York: Berg.

“De-romanticised and Very...Different”

- Rocco, S. (1999). *One day my prince will come: the discursive production of the desire for (hetero)sexual marriage*. PhD-Thesis. James Cook University Australia. <http://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/3254/2/02whole.pdf>
- Schratz, M., Walker, R. & Schratz-Hadwich, B. (1995) Collective memory-work: the self as a re/source for re/research. In M. Schratz, & R. Walker. *Research as social change. New opportunities for qualitative research* (pp. 41-67). London and New York: Routledge.
- Sève, Lucien (1974). *Man in marxist theory*. retrieved July 7, 2015 from: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/seve/index.htm>
- Thuswald, M. (2016). *LLA - In Widersprüchen handeln. Kollektive Erinnerungsarbeit zu pädagogischen Situationen*. retrieved February 16, 2019 from: http://www.facingthedifferences.at/?page_id=783
- Tolman, C. W. (1994). *Psychology, society and subjectivity. An introduction to german critical psychology*. London, New York. Routledge.
- Travis, M. (2003). *Detach to power: The collective memory-work experience*. PhD-Thesis, Santa Barbara, CA: The Fielding Graduate Institute. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2003. 3090837.
- Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6), 384-399. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/cd78/c763010e6eb856250b939e4eec438e14ef8f.pdf>
- Vlachou, M. (2016). *Researching experience in global higher education. A study of international business students in the UK*. PhD-Thesis. Business School University of Leicester.
- Wellendorf, F. (1973). *Schulische Sozialisation und Identität*. Weinheim: Beltz.
- Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology. Adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Witt-Löw, Kerstin (2020). Collective Memory-Work for Teacher Training. *Other Education*, Vol. 9(1), pp. 359-373

Pictograms:



<https://thenounproject.com/search/?q=people&i=16571>



<https://thenounproject.com/search/?q=people&i=807487>

Author Details

Robert Hamm is currently a research fellow at Maynooth University, Department of Sociology. In cooperation with the Institut für kritische Theorie, Berlin (InkriT e. V.) he works on a study on the adaptations and adjustments of Collective Memory-Work with a particular focus on the potential of the method within adult education settings. E-Mail: robert.hamm@mu.ie (www.collectivememorywork.net)



This work by Robert Hamm is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Unported](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)