

Michael Pickering Podcast FINA.mp3

Voiceover [00:00:03] This podcast is brought to you by the University of Aberdeen.

Intro [00:00:26] Hello, and a very warm welcome to the Culture and Everyday Life podcast produced by the Elphinstone Institute at the University of Aberdeen. The Elphinstone Institute is a centre for the study of Ethnology, Folklore and Ethnomusicology, with the research and public engagement agreement covering the northeast and north of Scotland. Through interaction with researchers and practitioners, this podcast explores cultural phenomena in everyday life.

Speaker 1 [00:00:51] So I think it's time to introduce our guest professor, I believe Emeritus at Loughborough. An interesting array of work that he's done over the years, interested in quite a broad range of subjects, including imperialism, theatrical history, an interesting study on music in the workplace and the effect that has on people when they're actually at work, and whether it has the effect that that the people who introduced music in the workplace hope that it will have. Sometimes it doesn't. Turns out, although in the case of dairy farms, it does increase milk yields seems to have made that kind of milking parlour. But tonight, on the fascinating topic of music and memory and part of the music and memory series of workshops and lectures that we've run as part of Ian's AHRC grant to explore music and memory in connection, in particular with the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention running as a theme of workshops and concerts between the two conventions, the last one in Cape Breton and the one next year here in Aberdeen. So, without further ado, Michael,

Michael Pickering [00:02:06] thank you very much for that introduction. I know that in this series of lectures and workshops, you've had contributions from cognitive psychology, digital humanities and performance studies. One of the interesting things about those contributions is that they're all sort of adjacent to the main field that I've worked in for the last thirty five years, which is media and communications. The only one of those I had any difficulty with really is digital humanities, I'll just say a little bit about that. I first came across digital humanities at a conference in Sydney several years ago, and everybody was abuzz with it. It was the brand new thing, but nobody could really explain or define what digital humanities was all about, and nobody seemed to be inclined to compare it with the use of computational methods of enquiry and analysis that we've been using in the social sciences for a lot longer than they have in the humanities. Since then, I find out more about it and feel that I have an understanding of digital humanities, but it still seems to me rather kind of vaguely defined field and seems to mean different things to different people. And that is true, of course, also of Memory Studies although perhaps to a lesser extent, because memory studies does have a more specific focus of enquiry in losses, but it is nevertheless still the case that it means different things to different people. And that is part of the excitement of these new emerging fields, but also part of the difficulty of working within them. I'm not going to be talking about memory studies as a whole, but I will situate some of what I'm going to say in the still emerging field of Memory Studies. What I'm going to talk about is the relationship of music and memory and the significance of music for remembering. But an initial point I want to make is that most of the music that we hear is very, very quickly forgotten. And of course, that's especially the case where music is just in the background in a department store or restaurant and so on, where you're not concentrating on, on it, on it, at all. It's being used for other purposes. And contrary to that. We all know I'm sure you've all got experience of how, what, what, how music can, whether it's a tune or song, how it can strongly evoke the past and makes us feel intensely that we're back there. Back then, in the same conversation we had years and years ago,

we might, all staring at the high rollers and hollows in it, just in a local valley landscape that we used to frequent. And inverting the power of song and invoking the power of song in that respect is it's interesting to compare it with written prose, whether that's in a prose poem, a piece of literary fiction, whatever it might be. And songs do seem to be perhaps the most powerful means of evoking a memory of some incident, some particular moment or particular person in the past, more powerful than written prose. But I'm not quite sure why that is. Is it this sort of combination of in the song, for instance, of rhyme and rhythm of texture and timbre? And if that is the case, then at least to the partial alignment with that, we need to remember that particular songs and tunes because of their importance to us exist both in time and specific moments when the memory occurs, but also over time and the significance that they accrue over the course of many years, even many decades. As we rove back and forward in our memory, sifting our memories for particular, for the particular values and points of significance that they might have in a present that's ever changing. In a research project that's that lasted three and more years, including the writing up and so on. I'm going to be talking about that more later on, but myself, and my co-researcher Emily Keatley, distinguish between three key overlapping stages in our experience of the relations between music and memory. I set them out in this stage. These are overlapping stages, not usually linear in any fashion. But first of all, we need to make music a resource for remembering in some way or another. And there's both an interior and now, of course, an exterior dimension to that in the modern period. We have to remember certain pieces of music, but we can also use particular pieces of technology to remind ourselves to relive a particular experience of music. And that's very much part of the broader shift from what I call experience as processes as opposed to experiences as product. When you live a particular experience in a present that is very much experience as a process, and it's only over the course of time that you shift out particular aspects of that lived experience of the present into experience as a product and in relation to music. And again, think both the interior and the exterior dimensions of this that involves creating, storing, listening and sharing music as a human source. If we then move on to the second stage, that involves using music and its associations with the past to help establish durable units of meaning and a coherent pattern of narrative over the life course and those music laden meanings and patterns then congregate, particularly around the three mnemonic categories of events, people and places. Now why do I say that? Those three categories have come inductively out of all the field work that we've conducted on the research project I've just referred to, but then seem to be very much confirmed with reading other people's ethnography, reading literary fiction and so on. Those three categories of events people and places of the most significant clusters around which music associations congregate. And then we moved to the third stage. I don't know how we get rid of this thing here, you know? Sorry, it's interfering with your reading of the one on the bottom, but the third stage is perhaps the most significant because it's around the certain memories which have been chosen over the long, longer period of time. The key items of significance and value are crystallised out of the of a longer pattern of experience. And we use those particular moments to help identify ourselves in time, in particular places in relation to a particular pattern of belonging and so on. So, music in that way becomes central to how we think the past and present together in a process of active conjunction with each other. And it also becomes the means of what we call temporal transposition and connection. Now, of course, those three stages will only really work in this way in relation to intentional or voluntary memory, actively concerted recollection of particular moments or episodes in the past. And just as importantly, music can act as an involuntary catalyst, bringing back memories unbidden when we hear a particular song, perhaps by chance when we're listening to a morning talk show. And then, you know, piece of music or song is put on in the interval between the chat, and suddenly we're taken way back into the past in that through that process of temporal transposition. And here's an example from one of my

favourite American novelists Anne Tyler in her novel *The Amateur Marriage*. Just sometimes when the car radio played one of those old songs *Are You Going to San Francisco?* Is the saddest show lost in faraway-sounding. She had to blink back tears in order to see the road. She and music has that sort of powerful sense of connection, and it can create can create what we call an oral punctum, borrowing the term punctum from Roland Barthes, who only really confines it to our experience of photography. The punctum can also act in an oral dimension as well. And it's perhaps at its most significant as it is in relation to the visual function. As Barthes describes it, when we're grieving for somebody who has passed away and a piece of music that would be deeply loved by that person is heard by the person who's in mourning and can bring memories hurtling back in a flash flood of emotion that only exacerbates the experience of loss and abandonment. And here's another car radio example from ethnography instead of literary fiction, this time from one Tia De Nora's informants. And she spoke of the importance of for her father of Brahms Double Concerto, which he played as a source of solace when he was separated from his wife during the Second World War and after her father died. Lucy, who's the informant, turned on the radio while she was driving home one evening from choir practice and tuned directly into the double concerto. And this is what she said. "I just had to stop and some friends were coming behind you now and I was in floods of tears and they said, Why didn't you turn it off? And I said, I can't. And it was ages before I could listen to that or anything like it without thinking of him". Now, remembering through music has two major interrelated aspects. Firstly, when we remember through music, we're also remembering the cultural past of that music. That's particularly true, for instance, of specific genres of music, particularly if we've lived through the development – gone through the different stages in the development of a particular genre - whether it's reggae or whatever it might be. But it's also true of the retrospective use of music in in certain kinds of programmes that concentrate on a particular decade, and this is Johnnie Walker, and I put him there because of his programme *Sounds of the 70s*, that is on Radio two every Sunday afternoon. That's a typical example of that. But secondly, the pneumatic associations are attached to a particular historical event or historical periods. Obviously, you know, Vera Lynn's association of the White Cliffs of Dover with the Second World War, is a classic example of that. And there's very much a blurred line between that acting in a very, very powerful way and the cliched use of that, you know, so for instance, anything to do with the 20s, you have to have Charleston music in it, you know, and it becomes narrowed down to that particular cliched associations and other kinds of music that were very predominant at the time and then get it forgotten. And from there, we can identify two further aspects that are involved in the relationship between music and memories. First of all, music in autobiographical memory, you can have a deeply personal significance and value for us, but also music in vernacular memory, where it becomes interlinked with particular families and particular communities and networks. And here we have to identify two highly important features of music in relation to the modern and late modern periods, there's first the market value of music as a commodity. And there's also certainly the spatial and temporal reliance on technology. Now, music and especially popular music over the whole modern period has become a global market, a market commodity and in economic terms, music is a commodity just like any other form of popular culture, popular entertainment, and that has very, very wide ranging implications. But I'm not going to talk about it because significantly, I think in relation in the relationship between music and memory, the commodity status of music is actually almost irrelevant. And that's because of a too seldom noted process of localisation, of making music our own. Despite the mass commodity status of that music. In the abstract to this lecture, I referred to the widely noted ascription of a certain song as our song in intimate relationships. Many people in relation to that song that we talk about as our song will have heard the song because it's globally distributed as a commodity. And so in that sense, it's widely shared. It isn't just our song,

it's shared on a much, much... on a mass scale. But the affective connections and connotations that that song has within the intimate relationship have overridden all that. They've made the song seem to be uniquely special to that specific intimate relationship, something that's only shared within that relationship. So in making the song, they're their own the song is, in a sense, stripped of its commercial dimension. It's transformed into something interpersonally, precious and far more durable than the song's short term or long-term exchange volume. And before I turn to the music technology and memory, I want to say a little bit more about this process of of making our own because it seems to us to be absolutely central to vernacular memory and vernacular remembering. It's a form of localisation, as I've said, and it involves constructing local proximate meanings and values out of mass mediated cultural products and then using that music to forge past present interconnections that are very specific to those within a particular network, particular groups and so on. And that process is important for memory studies precisely because it's vital for the music/memory relationship and because it's very much neglected within memory studies. And here I'm going to widen out now into the context of that field a little bit, because I do want to say briefly something about the context of that neglect. In memory studies as it's developed over the last 20, 30 years or so. The greatest emphasis has been on collective memory, but collective memory, not of vernacular level, but collective memory on a macro social scale. And it's concentrated particularly on collective memory, where it's involved spectacular events and spectacular ruptures in the everyday pattern and rhythm of life. And the preoccupation has been very much with the hegemonic purposes. Consequences of remembering seeing collective memory as a sort of field of ideological conflict, and that's had two major consequences. First of all, it's led to a largely negative emphasis on the way in which memory is manipulated. It also led to an emphasis on painful pasts, rather than the way in which past can heal certain rifts or ruptures within the present. And it's also led to an emphasis on the failures and the flaws of public remembering. And the further consequence of that is that of that neglect is that it's led to a diminution of attention to what happens in the dynamics between how we remember as specific individuals to collective remembering, remembering on a wide social scale. And that. That has also had various consequences, which would lead me to say that we need to develop an alternative focus. Obviously, collective remembering on a macro so scale is very important. But because it's led to a neglect of attention to the relationship between individual and collective remembering that needs to be redressed because that relationship is an abiding issue, it has to be an abiding issue within memory studies. And as I've just said macro scale forms of cultural memory, manipulation of public memory, all those things are important, but they shouldn't necessarily dominate the field. So the personal and the public aspects of memory need to be kept in continual view of each other. And rather than emphasizing painful pasts, severe ruptures in the fabric of social memory and so on. We need to ask what does what is remembering well, all about how do we remember well, how do we recognise and define that? And that's something which Emily and I have been giving increasing attention to in our more recent work. And in doing that, we concentrate very much on the space between individual and collective remembering at a different level to the macro social scale, which has dominated memory studies. But at the meso level of mnemonic interaction and that interspace is where we define vernacular memory as operating with that neglected dimension of remembering or talking about it through remembering in that interspace that this process of localisation, of making our own occurs. Now, to go back to the technological mediation of music that, of course, began with phonography and radio in the early 20th century. It soon expanded from sonic media to to visual media. The first film with synchronised sound was significantly about significantly a musical the jazz singer of 1927 blackface minstrel song featuring Harold Johnson. But then that process continued after the Second World War, with the expansion of television and so on. And a major consequence of all that is not only

allowed a much wider mnemonic access to music associated with previous stages in our own autobiographical trajectories, but also to music that's associated with periods which are antecedent to our own lifetime. So, for instance, if we were born in the late 20th century, we might still have memories of the first time we ever heard Duke Ellington, Memphis Minnie, Billie Holiday, Hank Williams, whoever it might be. So music's pasts have in that way multiplied much more than, I think, in any of the previous historical period. And so have our memories of them. And that's not only broadened our own sonic horizons, it's also changed how we conceive of the sonic horizons because although song in vernacular memory has been passed between generations through oral transmission for a very, very long time, how we now revisit and remember music space is very much a product of modernity, and what that means is that, for instance, we can hear exactly what was recorded on November the 23rd 1936, when Robert Johnson, on the left hand side sang the song Come On in My Kitchen or year later, on October the 26th 1937, when the Kentucky Fiddler, Bill Step played this splendid tune Bonaparte's Retreat. And I'll just give you a little sample of that.

Sorry to have to cut that splendid tune short term, apart from oral transmission and the written score, of course, music no longer limited to what people themselves can remember. And for me, the advent of all these different forms of technological production and reproduction of music should be, I think, a source of continual wonder and appreciation. And I've always been puzzled why that's not the case. Is it the fact we just become complacent? Is it the fact that these means of technological reproduction change so rapidly? I don't have an answer to that, and it would be interesting if anybody else can contribute to that. But to me, it's still an amazing thing that is now possible. And I said earlier on that I'd talk more about the specific research project on music and memory that I've been involved with over the past five or six years with this colleague of mine at Loughborough University, Emily Keatley. And the starting point for that project was the lack of any ethnographic work on the relationship between music and memory in everyday life. So I just want to say a little bit about it. It was a three-year research project where we were actually involved in the research, and it focused on media in everyday life and the various ways in which music acts either as a vehicle or catalyst of remembering. And we conducted a dozen pilot interviews to begin with and then on the basis of those drew up a set of questions. We wanted to interview people about and interviewed over 100 people, both single individuals and small groups and through focus groups as well. And that was then supplemented through a mass observation call that we did roughly 150 160 responses. And it was through the published interviews that the two most salient media were remembering and everyday life became very evident. Photography, self-made photography and popular music or music as a whole sorry. And also as a group within the project, we developed a new method in the social sciences, which is the self-interview. And there were various advantages to the show for interview, particularly when you were researching memory. And that is that people have access themselves to the pause button if they're struggling to remember something. If a particular memory is so potent that they were emotionally overcome, they can use the pause button and go back to it later on. And one of the first interviews I conducted in the project was with a man who was about 70 years old, and he had lost his wife 10 years previously. And prior to the interview, I asked him to select half a dozen photographs that he could talk to at the beginning of the interview to get him going and talking about the importance of photography in his life and in relation to the past. And as soon as you started talking, he burst into tears and I offered to stop the interview, possibly go back to it another time. But he insisted on carrying on and eventually overcame his emotions and did manage to continue to conduct the interview. But it became very, very clear how acutely he still miss this person 10 years later. And that's not true only in relation to the photographs he has of her, but also her

music. She was a very ardent music lover. He pulled out a drawer and he had a whole row of her CDs in exactly the same formation. He didn't want to disturb them. They were part of the way he was remembering her. So the self-interview we started to devise as a method for overcoming that kind of restriction, that kind of a problem. And then the key purposes of the project were comparative study of these two most salient media I'm remembering in everyday life and the value of that is that it gave us a dual focus, obviously, that those two media appeal to different senses, the site and just to hearing. But they seem to complement each other despite their manifold differences in all sorts of different ways, and people were deliberately using both in order to build up a better set of tools than they would have had with just one medium or the other. And the period in which we were searching, of course, also coincided with the shift from analogue to digital. That was true both in relation to photography, with people stopping the compilation of family albums and putting everything on a memory stick or whatever. And also in relation to music and different ways of accessing music, storing music relating to music and so on. And the theoretical framework that we've developed in our first book was the concept of the mnemonic imagination. And then we have gone on to apply that concept in the second and third of the trilogy that we've trying to show how pieces of the past don't exist in separate kinds of ways, but are sewn together through their associations with music and photography, both in life, personal life narratives and in vernacular memory. So just a little bit about this concept because it runs through the whole of the three books that we've written about media and memory in everyday life. And it was very much our starting point that we wanted to challenge the sort of everyday opposition between memory and imagination. They seem to be working very, very much in concert with with each other in the way in which people were talking about the significance of the photography or music for remembering events, people, places in everyday life. So, the widespread conception that they're utterly distinct faculties or processes with memory confined to the realm of experience and imagination to the realm of fantasy untrammelled by truth seemed to us one that really stood in need of a critique. Now, of course, that isn't to say that memory and imagination are simply one and the same, using different names as masks of a covert commonality. But they do interact with each other like cross-fertilise, memory feeds into and fuels our imagination. And imaginatively, we connect together all the different kind of memories that are floating around in our minds, in our everyday conversations and so on. And we then plot them into different narrative sequences and structures, and that process of interaction is a generative one. Or over the course of time, a regenerative form, it fosters a mode of relating to the past that exceeds the separate capacities of either memory on the one hand, imagination, on the other hand, turns the past into a fertile resource. So the mnemonic imagination coalesces out of the productive tension that exists between memory and imagination. And as a result of that, is able to arrive at a creative synthesis of past experience and present needs and understandings of that experience, particularly thinking ahead to the sort of future we want to sail into. So the mnemonic imagination is the mechanism through which those cross-temporal, inter-animations in our lives are brought into being the memory reactivating imagination and imagination stimulated by what memory can offer up. So when we bring pieces of the past into active relation, we don't do that strictly through memory alone. We don't regard the past as simply akin to what we imagine is the productive tension between what we remember and how we imaginatively use, what we remember, which is significant for Mnemonic Imagination. So sorting through and synthesising all those different fragments of the past, which memory bequeaths to us is what is significant to us over time in relation to our own life narrative and so on. And the chief mechanism for that is, as I'm saying, is the mnemonic imagination aligning our memories with our particular concerns and knowledge and feelings in the present and identifying the paths that we've taken on the identity that we've developed as we've moved along those paths. So the mnemonic imagination is the chief mechanism

through which we maintain a sense of continuity, often over some quite difficult transitions and turning points in our lives. So, the concept refers to the way in which we qualify, adapt, refine and reorder past experience into qualitatively new and ongoing understandings of our lives and the lives of those around us as that continually moving on, continually changing and our conceptions of them are continually changing. So the mnemonic imagination isn't simply confined to personal experience or what seems to us to be of primary significance to us in our personal lives. Personal relations with the past are situated within and informed by networks of social relations, and that makes individual and collective memory conceivable only through their multiple intersections. And as I said, that's that's the kind of meso level of interaction between individual and collective remembering would be very much concentrating on because of its neglect in memory studies. So for that and other reasons, the concept of mnemonic imagination embraces not only our own experience, but also what you can call second hand experience, whether that derives from a tale told by a friend or something we hear on television, a narrative we might hear through popular song or whatever. Both those forms of experience first hand and second hand, a key resources for developing a sense of who we are, both individually and collectively with mediated forms of remembering being at times just as important to us. Situated forms of remembering and the mnemonic imagination helps us to relate our own memory with the memory of others, whether they're both, whether they're the proximate to us or distant from us. So the basis of any empathic engagement with other people's memories comes through that the engagement of the the mnemonic imagination with them. So here are examples of our engagement with the two technologies of remembering within those always shared frameworks or schemata of us remembering we develop purpose. If uses of both photography and music ask key mnemonic resources in everyday life might be the photos we put on the mantelpiece in the family album. Whatever pieces of music that we connect very closely with particular friends, particular relationships. But we also regard photographs and recorded music as encapsulating for us certain elements of our experience that help mark our passage through life that contribute to our sense of selfhood, that help us tell stories about ourselves, our families and social groups to which we belong. And thirdly, we value images and music for the ways in which they spontaneously seem to melt time, as in that process of temporal transposition generated a sudden and precipitous sense of that temporal transposition. And here's an example from from our fieldwork. One woman we interviewed and the song by a particular band which became predominantly associated for her with generic, not specific memories but generic memories of childhood holidays in Wales. She was called Lisa and when we interviewed her as a married woman in her mid-thirties and she said "when I was really young, we used to go on holidays with, well, they weren't my aunt and uncle there, and my parents, best friends, had sort of grown up with them and they had two children and we used to go and stay in a cottage on a farm in Wales. And we always used to listen to the Beach Boys like the whole time we were there. This would also happen on the journey, so you can imagine what the weather and the weather to you, and you could guarantee that the weather would always be crap. And so listening to the Beach Boys was kind of like, we know the weather is going to be rubbish, but it doesn't matter. So if ever I listen to the Beach Boys. It just makes me takes me straight back to going to where I was when I was eight or nine. Especially to being in the car on the way there." And Lisa also went on summer holidays to Wales later in her childhood. But with her own family and and she told us about a much-enjoyed activity that they engaged in her father and the other children who were in the family when they first arrived at their holiday destination - holiday cottage that they hired year after year. And that is encapsulated in the hymn Jerusalem by William Blake in Hubert Parry's famous arrangement of it. And this this hearing that or singing act was like a kind of a vocal beacon lighting up her memory. This is what she said "at the back of the cottage there was a huge hill and so you could walk out the gate of the cottage

walk across the path. And then there was the hill, and it was really, really big on on the first day when we got to the cottage. Me and my dad, Michael, said, Jeff, Sarah and Josh, who we used to go with. We always used to hike to the top of the hill and it would take forever and then we'd get to the top of the hill. My mum, and auntie Pauline, would be sitting in the cottage, drinking gin and tonic and watching us walk up the big hill. And then the thing that we had to do was when we got to the top, we all had to sing Jerusalem really loudly to see if I could hear the bottom of the hill. We'd take the binoculars and they would wave to us if they could hear us singing to it (you can imagine how they had to belt it out). It was ridiculous, but that's always something that has come to stay with me. Always. Whenever I hear Jerusalem, I just imagine standing on the top of a huge hill in Wales, belting the character at the top of our voices." I want to now give you an example from a couple that I got to know through university Helen and Michael and this time I'll play the music first and then tell you about its mnemonic significance. Now, I kind of have to cut it short, I'm afraid. I'll give you an....

Unidentified [00:45:11] I think it's paused

Speaker 4 [00:45:40] Sorry again, having to cut it short, but this is what Helen said of that piece of music. Hildegard of Bingen Collection, a Feather on the Breath of God, it was introduced by Helen to her husband, Michael. She said it was one of our very favourite recordings. And then the only CD in our collection. And after Michael died, Helen heard this track by chance on the radio one morning. Vivid memories came back, flooding back to her. She said it was inevitable that I would suddenly hear a piece of music that forcibly revives the memory and reduced me to tears and create a physical ache in my chest. The term broken-hearted feels more than just words at times, but very significantly Helen also links that moment on the conjugal memories that are associated with another memory which she told us about one deriving from her initial encounter of the album. She said, I heard it first at the house of a friend and...of a friend of a friend. I'd never met it before and I knew nothing of her. But when we arrived, she had this recording playing and I was bowled over. I rang the the next day for details, but that day, read what it is that the news of the death of the Labour leader John Smith had been announced and I was upset and I actually cried on the phone and she too was sad about it. So that shows how memories of the same piece of music can encompass different scales of remembering one that's very personal and local one she's relating to a national public figure, one that situated on this mediated but both linked together in the first case through grief and second through empathy with somebody else's personal loss. And it was after she'd lost Michael, and she was grieving very intensely that she then related that back to the memory of somebody else who had passed away - the Labour leader, John Smith - and it started to take Helen out of herself to help her move on. And I know moving on is a very trite phrase, particularly in relation to such intense experiences, grieving and mourning. But in this case, the first real signs of it seemed to be happening through the interlinking of those two different kinds of memory of the same piece of music. And another example of music's centrality in memories of close relations comes from a female archivist in Nottingham who was looking back to -from the age of 40 - to the one song that stood out in her memory from her early childhood in Crieff in Scotland, of course. And this is the story of her grandmother singing Brahms Lullaby a lullaby to her as she lay in bed as a young girl. This is what she said to us, she said, "I can picture myself from the lower bed of the bunk beds I shared with my sister and my gran stroked my hair and singing this lullaby when I was seven, and that by then she'd moved with her parents to live in East Co-occurrence in Somerset. She gave me a jewelry box for my birthday, and when the lid was lifted, it had a small ballerina pirouetting in front of the mirror to the tune of Brahms Lullaby. I still have that jewelry box and it still works the memories it evokes a strong and clear, never sad. And the final

example I want to give you comes from a 32-year-old woman who's lived in England for over 20 years during the period of her adolescence and early adulthood, she was born in England, but she came with her parents to England at the age of 13. She called Kia Kapoor. That's the pseudonym we've given her. And Kia Kapoor exemplifies many of the problems which second generation Asian migrants living in the West seem to encounter when they're caught in the crossrip between two different sets of cultural values, actual views and expectations, and the consequence of being caught between cultures in that way for Kia has been an abiding, turbulent conflict with her parents, particularly her mother, and an abiding, laborious struggle to come into her own to become her own person. And that struggle has involved coming to terms with all the memories that she has now of being a undutiful daughter and is trying to remember the difficult legacy that all those memories entail by developing an artistic identity as a professional photographer and our extended case study of her mainly focuses on that on that process. But her difficult negotiation of the past isn't done entirely through photography and in the example I'm going to give you, she speaks of trying to counteract her strict upbringing and her antagonistic feelings to towards her mother by making over a miscellaneous album of traditional Indian songs that was purchased by her mother when they were last in India together. And that's, of course, where Kia's extended family still live and they were they were visiting that extended family too together. Here's what Kia said about it, she said "I renamed the album 'Mum India 2007' and I did that because I directly associated with her. She bought it and played it, and it blends in with a time when everything seemed better when time was trouble free. I took the CD because it was a few days before she was going to fly home, and I was about to go off my internship. I knew I was going to be a different person when I got back. I remember feeling closer to her during that trip, very different to when we were in England and just at loggerheads all the time. Later, even though we've been through that experience of bonding in India, once we were back in England, it all started to go back that way again. Nothing but conflict. So when I hear those songs, I think of that time in India and God, you know, the life I've always really wanted. But it doesn't really exist, at least not here in England. It's only there in glimpses." So the life that Kia was always wanted and might only exist in glimpses, but those glimpses very important to her, they helped put him in place what has never been in place when, particularly when she's most needed it. So, it's as if she's trying to re-enact the past by parading what she feels is missing from it. And in doing that is huge. What she's doing is using her mnemonic imagination to bring the past and the present into a different cross temporal relationship to the one that they otherwise have. So those glimpses of what might have been possible only find any kind of definite form in her new mnemonic imagination and of course, in her art. But it's through that imagining that the possibility of something different becomes very apparent to her, and it's also in that space that symbolic space that she's created, that her own maternal feelings, her longing to be a mother and have a child of her own and now nurtured. And as she puts it herself, "there are no plans, but there are hopes". Now, the last aspect of the memory spectrum that I want to talk about before I draw to a close is that the realm of nostalgia. Now nostalgia is a very distinctive modality of remembering, and it connects very closely with the evocative quality of the whole power of music. It also felt sort of manifested in very diverse ways, but unfortunately the term nostalgia is usually used in a pejorative and negative sense. And I think that's really quite misleading. So those uncritical, superficial celebratory images of the past are only one form of nostalgia in which modern temporalised forms. It's not amenable to any singular or hardened fashion definition. And at the very least, I think we we need to make a to follow a very broad but two fold distinction. First of all, we need to identify manipulative uses of the appeal to nostalgia. And that's what's Emily and I call processes of retotyping, which become, you know, very manifest in forms of advertising promotional culture more generally. And did this to distinguish that from critical uses of the nostalgic impulse for the sake of creative

renewal in the present and the realisation of new possibilities in the future. And we identify or conceptualize nostalgia in this particular way - a bringing together of three key components: loss; lack, and longing and in critical forms of nostalgia all those components, those three components are in place and they act actively in relation to each other. So that a deepening sense of loss, then goes hand in hand with the growing realisation of the present being lacking in some serious manner, such as sense of certainty or stability in the past, then becomes a source or measure of that lack. And out of that process is generated the longing to overcome or redress the current deficiency for the sake of a different future. With retrotyping on the other hand, the critical realisation of what's been lost and what is lacking is something that was considerably played down, if not cast aside. And the sense of longing for what is idealistically portrayed as the past or some element of the of the past is what is then very much, by contrast, played up and made the chief sort of retrospective appeal. So, through distinctions like that, we can see that nostalgia isn't simply innately conservative or with an emphasis solely on pathos. That's a gross oversimplification, and nostalgia can have many different diverse manifestations and be given many different forms of expression and representation. Now, in relation to song and music, certain... I know an in danger of generalisation here, but certain genres or areas of music seem to foster or be expressive conveyances of nostalgia more than others. So, for example, from the Fields of Athenry and Thousands a-Sailing, Irish popular music often seems to be redolent with those three components of nostalgia a lost, lack, and longing, perhaps primarily because a lot of Irish music is associated with the experience of exile on and emigration. Another example from the mid-19th century on which is the genre of Portuguese Fado that's been strongly associated with those three components of nostalgia manifested in people longed for or places keenly missed. Whether it's because those people are away at sea or because the contemporary city is haunted by the city of the past. And in both cases, nostalgia is never uniform it varies from one song to another so that with Fado, for instance, amongst other things, it can convey a critical form of nostalgia and its expression of what's being called a sorrow that is almost hope. And in this sense of an alternative future of the past and the final example I want to give you of critical nostalgia, is blind Alfred Reid and his most famous song, How can a Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live? Reid was an early 20th century West Virginia singer and songwriter and fiddle player, and his songs show both a conservative attitude on the one hand, but also a desire to protest against what in his time were current social ills and injustices as he saw them, and to look ahead to better times. And this is a song I'll just play the first two verses. [plays music]

[01:01:13] Thank you for listening so attentively. If you've got any questions or comments or suggestions, I'd be very open to them.

Voiceover [01:01:47] This podcast is brought to you by the University of Aberdeen.