Memory and Method

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Emily Keightley 00:04

My name is Professor Emily Keatley. I'm from Loughborough University in the Centre for Communication Culture. And I've been doing research for longer than I care to remember, at the intersection of media and communications research and memory studies research. And so I'm coming coming at this from a media and communications background. What I'm going to talk to you today about is, I want to just say a little bit about postcolonial memory studies what we might, might think of it as and why we should care. Then I want to think about a set of methodological challenges that postcolonial memory studies poses for researchers in academia, and then think about a potential methodological framework for studying it. So I'm going to launch straight in.

Emily Keightley 00:52

So memory studies has, in recent years, it's become much more sensitive to trans cultural features of contemporary remembering, certainly in the West, but also in other parts of the world. And it's been got much better at considering diversity in memory, of inequalities in and through remembering and the ways in which marginalisation is evident in an addressed through memory and remembering processes. However, attention to what we might think of as distinctively post colonial memory, i.e. a memory that's indivisible from the politics and power structures of colonialism and decolonial processes has largely been the preserve or post colonial studies, somewhat unsurprisingly. So memory studies has been kind of on the sidelines, if you like in relation to some of these questions. So Michael Rothberg has written about this, you know, quite quite a number of years ago now that that actually, there's been this kind of separation between post colonial studies and memory studies. So I'm sort of starting this presentation from a position which argues for joining together post colonial studies' central focus on the production of memories in and through the power structures of post colonialism, and the sensitivity of memory studies to the practices and processes of doing remembering across and between different national contexts and cultures. So, the explicit aim, you might think of post colonial memory studies as having is to understand this relationship between memory as process and memory as product after colonialism, and to uncover or, or might be covered during colonialism, different forms of colonialism has structured not only what can be remembered in contemporary social life, but also how, what resources and to what ends. And obviously, for today's purposes, I don't want to address the conceptual and theoretical questions that underpin this, I want to think about the empirical dimensions

of these issues. So this is this is a methodological question as well as a conceptual or theoretical one. So understanding the contemporary conditions and consequences of remembering the colonial past requires research in post colonial remembering has a lived experience contemporarily and historically situated comprised of sets practices, of intersectional, always emergent and future oriented. So we need to think about what we need to do, I guess, in the first instance, so empirical research on remembering practices, as embedded in post colonial power relations is essential for a number of reasons. It's essential if we're going to understand the dynamic relationship between memories product and process, as they're enacted in and through colonial and postcolonial power relations, if we're going to understand the complex positioning, and intersectional identities of post colonial subjects, and the ways in which post colonial relations of power are negotiated, reproduced and challenged through remembering processes.

Emily Keightley 03:46
So we've been trying to grapple with some of these questions in empirical setting, by doing some empirical research in this project called Migrant Memory and Post Colonial Imagination Project and it's a five year project actually going to be a six and a half year project now because we have an extension funded by the Leverhulme Trust, and we're looking at cultural memories or partition and decolonisation in South Asian desperate in the UK, and we use cultural participatory methods, and it's a split size ethnography. So we're working with communities in the Midlands, and in London. So what are the methodological challenges that we encountered? Well, the first, the first challenge is about pain, and the painful nature of of post colonial remembering. This is a practical question. It's an ethical one. So the first of these challenges derived from the often inherited nature of memories of colonialism, and the complex intergenerational dynamic in play in post colonial conditions. Intergenerational communication of the past is always a central part of the complex and multi layered ways in which remembering is socially experienced and practice and performed across time and space in different social categories and we've written about I've written about this quite a lot with my colleague Mike Pickering. But the radical shift and ruptures that resulted from decolonizing processes make these generational differences in mnemonic inheritances even more pronounced and challenging. Radical differences in circumstances between generations make the communication of memory particularly difficult as inherited accounts are often those of rupture and change rather than succession and continuity, making their integration into mnemonic stories and narratives of those who inherit them particularly complex. Okay, so the attention to the facticity of memory. So when we, when we talk about truth in memory, they often elides and decentres post colonial subjects from uncomfortable and painful narratives in which they're implicated, particularly those which challenge contemporary identity. And so there's this tension between how do you inherit painful pasts and painful memories? How do you articulate those and, and this kind of tension between first hand experience second hand experiences of pain is a methodological challenge to deal with. Okay. And this links into this idea of epistemological uncertainty around a second hand memory. So the first is about access. How you deal ethically with these, epically with these questions of people, inheritances, and then people's concern about how truthful they are. I only know this secondhand and, and that's a particular a particular issue in and of itself. And there are there are sets of spatial dimensions that that are really important. The memories relating to the post colonial past also present challenges for doing post colonial memory studies research with diasporic communities, remembering practices, and processes traverse across continents and produce memories characterised by hybridity as they emerge in an interstitial moment of cultural translation,

located at the intersection of past and present, public and private. This is particularly so for post colonial remembering as mobility across space as well as static bodies in changing places are irreducible features of colonialism and decolonizing processes. So in the MMPI project, many participants are geographically removed from the physical places of former colonies and live outside the nations that were created as a result of partition. However, there were very strong connections that are maintained through family and international imaginaries with other spaces. So how can we kind of elicit fragmented memories, spatially fragmented memories, and how can we understand these as distributed in a wider memory ecology across complex spatial divisions. And then there's a diversity of experience when we talk about post colonial we're not talking about one thing, the scale of colonialism on its own means that we're talking about radically diverse sets of experiences. And so bringing these together in some sort of methodological approach, it can be quite challenging. And those differences occur even across communities and within communities and dealing with diverse experiences of decolonial processes can be can be very challenging. And there's also this sense of people's multiple positions within a colonial and postcolonial contexts, you know, gender differences. Veena Das has written extensively about this in relation to 1947 partition of British India. The narrative's unfinished character meant that the event lived on in different versions in the social memory of different social groups. So people are always positioned in in complex and multiple ways. So trying to understand the ways in which post colonial memory is performed is a methodological challenge, because we have to deal with such radical diversity. So what are we going to do about it? I guess it's next question. I'm sorry, I'm just sitting over my own slides. So I'm just going to move it. So, am I missing a slide? No, just skipped past one.

Emily Keightley 09:19
I think there are four things that I would say. This isn't perhaps a integrated methodological approach, but it's a set of methodological principles, I think that we might want to think about. The first is dealing with this issue of diversity and complexity, the last thing that I mentioned. How do we deal with that, in our in our empirical work? I would suggest that one way we have been dealing with this in the MMPI project is by integrating collaboration and community engagement at all levels of the research. I think it's very difficult coming in as an outsider to understand how different positionings impact on people's mnemonic experience and working with groups that are already embedded with within communities is absolutely essential to understand that ecology before you even start. So dealing with those complex, complex, multiple positionings in research design means that partnerships, community collaboration and community engagement in research, the research design phase, in the data collection phase, and also in the analysis phase, is absolutely essential in order to be able to make sense of, of the diversity that we're talking about. The second thing is inherited memories in changing socio political contexts. How do we deal with the fact that people are talking about second time memories often? How do we deal with this challenge where people say, Well, I wasn't there, so I don't know. But actually, that the meanings that they've inherited are of considerable value and understanding how how experiences of colonial and postcolonial life get transmitted and handed on was to embed creative methods in what we did. So thinking not just about the role of recollection, but the role of imagination, of cultural and creative expression and practice, in allowing people the space to step outside of those things that will tell me what's happened. Tell me what happened is actually a very challenging question. When you are in epistemological or epistemological uncertainty position. So allowing people to express not just their knowledge, but their feelings, and their thoughts about decolonial processes, and then tracing where the roots in influences within those through an ongoing process of creative engagement, which is really,

really important. I'll give some examples of that in a minute. And then how do we deal with painful pasts? Well, this is this is not just a problem, but obviously, for post colonial memory, it's a more more general problem. But it is something that we we thought long and hard about. Processes of participation were really, really important in in decentring, you know, decentering, the traditional one on one interview, and allowing people to create spaces for themselves, where they could express themselves in ways which weren't necessarily sort of a question answer, set up allowing people to have space to articulate their own payment in their own ways. And we use everything from stories around food and storytelling, poetry, photography, to try and allow people ways to to address painful pasts which were, it's not that we ever thought we will get get away from the painfulness of it, but allow people to express them in ways that they found more comfortable.

Emily Keightley 12:50
And then the spaciality. How do you deal with multiple sites? Well, we were already dealing with multiple sites in this project, because we wanted we were very keen that we didn't take London and urban centre as a defining kind of space for post colonial memory. And we look beyond that to to small market towns and other places. But thinking about how we address between here and there, the cross continental dimensions was really important. And so we actually went off and traced the the memory networks, communicative networks that people worked across and between. So we did fieldwork in South Asia with family members and friends of people that were people that were located here. So I just wanted to sort of give a little bit more detail, how much longer do I have? I have about five minutes. Five minutes. Lovely.

Emily Keightley 13:44
Okay, I'm just gonna get give a little bit more detail, just a couple of examples, that might just help explain a little bit more what we've been doing. So in terms of collaboration and community engagement, the things that helped us with in terms of navigating these complex ecologies of memory and understanding people's position in relation to decolonial processes and colonialism was ensuring that we recruited participants, beyond those who were immediately visible. Some people in the communities that we were working with were very visible, were very accessible. And were very comfortable talking. It was abundantly clear that there were groups within within the community on fringes of community, who were less accessible, less well heard, and working with partners, we were able to really think through how we access different parts of the community, which we felt was essential. It also meant that we could develop safe and culturally appropriate data collection activities that actually some things just weren't appropriate with some sections of the community and we were we were able to discuss these and talk through some of the challenges with people who really understood the context that we will working in and that was that was fabulous. And it meant that through the analytical process, we were able to talk through what we were finding and ensure that in that process of interpreting qualitative data that we weren't homogenising experiences, we were remaining alive to differences. And the interpretations that we were making if those, the inferences that we were drawing were, were appropriate. And that's. Nowhere is that more important than particularly as you know, my own positionality as a researcher as a white, middle class woman coming into largely working class, brown communities. And, and obviously, you know, belonging to that that historical trajectory of of colonisation in a particular way, it was absolutely essential that we, that we made sure we addressed that fully and properly. And these are just some of the people we've worked with.

Emily Keightley 15:55
In terms of creativity. It was, it was about opening up the role of imagination in data collection to think about memory, as involving codependent co creative ways of knowing to allow multiple tracks of people to progress down and to find ways of expressing themselves, which might be not through traditional forms of language. And we weren't imposing kind of traditional interviews on people who didn't want them. And it also allowed us to deal with the fragmentary and unstable nature of post colonial memories, but there were big gaps. And there were kind of very intense or symbolic moments, but they didn't necessarily conform to a narrative structure as we would understand a life story or, or a historical account. And using non narrative cultural forms of communication allowed us to respect the integrity of the of those memories as, as they were, as they were articulated. So here's just a few pictures about some of the activities that we did, some photo workshops, some cooking workshops, and various different things. And then the question of managing pain, so the ethical questions where we distinguish between trauma and painful pasts - we're clear where, you know where, where it's appropriate to talk about one or the other - and to develop ways of eliciting people's accounts without amplifying their pain. And that's really, really hard. And we didn't always get it, right. So finding ways for non narrative articulation that people found comfortable, developing collective participate participatory settings where people wanted to do that, and also decentering, the researcher, you know, this idea of the the intervening person who questions all the time, allowing people, the space to articulate themselves in ways they felt comfortable was really important. And there was cooking was really, really crucial to that. I'm not going to go through that, because I'm attending, running out of time. And then I'll just give you the pictures actually about the spaciality. So I've already mentioned the international field work, you know, they have just some of the pictures from the South Asian field work, interviewing friends and relations, participants in the UK. And thinking about how memories were transmitted across these two different settings, thinking about the different ways in which memory is articulated in different locations, and through different kinds of networks, and the role of media and communications technologies and doing that. And yeah, we visited the different key sites in Bangladesh in this instance, Dhaka and, and select, and our Pakistan fieldwork was unfortunately disrupted by COVID. So that was done remotely, so less exciting.

Emily Keightley 18:46
And then just a few conclusions, because global memory studies had particular methodological challenges, which actually just go beyond the issue of reflexivity of the position of the researcher, which is obviously important, but there are other questions to answer. And those four things that I talked about: community collaboration, using creativity and imagination in data collection, thinking about ways that we manage pain in research interactions, and accounting for spacialty mobility. All four things are essential to addressing the ways in which post colonial memory is articulated and how it fits in with this kind of understanding of post colonial power structures. That's it, thanks.

Abigail Croydon 19:27
My name is Abigail and I have been working in the field of learning disability and learning for quite a few years and autism and I'm going to be talking today about my current doctoral project, which is based at the University of Southampton. I'm a member of the Centre for Research and inclusion there. And I'll be using the lot of pictures and the stills are all taken from the video that I've used in my research. So that

starts from this introductory slide, showing one of my participants at work. So I'm going to be talking about using video to revisit experience, and to stimulate discussion dialogue, exchanges of views in qualitative research. So quick outline, I'm going to talk about exploring experience in qualitative research, I'm going to talk about experience versus memory. And then I'll go on to my research project and why I chose metadata rationale for my methods, then it'll be quite kind of a messy account of how it actually worked in practice, how things changed. And what I think I've learned from that experience.

Abigail Croydon 22:12
So in qualitative research, we're always or very often talking about exploring people's personal experiences, and, and seeking cultural understanding through that. So we take that perspective, that reality is subjective. So you can only know it as people tell you about their experiences of it. So that involves methodologically engaging with people's accounts of experience, often through interview, and the question, the problem that I have wrestled with a lot is, is how do you make that engagement, you know, lively, interesting, meaningful and, and not superficial? And I have in a way, followed this dialogic turn in social science, of using dialogue and communication for a while as a way to understand reality. And in particular, it's been about videos supporting that dialogue.

Abigail Croydon 22:18
So I want to start by talking for a moment about Kahneman's view of experience versus memory. And I'm doing that partly to undermine it. So he says that there are two selves: an experiencing self, and the remembering self. And the experiencing self does that living for you. It passes through a succession of moments, but most of those are lost and forgotten. And all you're left with is the remembering self, which is a summary story about your understanding of the experience. So he, he specifically contrasts memory with a film of experience, as if, in fact, experience is equivalent to a film, which I think is highly debatable, but he sets up a contrast between the two. And in particular, memory is edited, it's time compressed, and it's a story. So in his version, the experiencing self, who does the living, doesn't have a voice. And he says, the nature of the story depends on a very simple peak and end rule. So whatever was the maximum kind of intensity moment and the closing moment of an experience, determine the story that you tell about it. And so, memory in that way, is tyrannical. Because that's what you carry with you. And that's the input fuel for fuel future behaviour. So my experience has not been like that at all. I think that. I think that the difference is really to do with the messiness of lived experience versus the sort of clinically controlled, and experimentally controlled circumstances that Kahneman investigates. So he investigates something like, experienced pain over a short period of time, where people record as it happens, their level of experience pain, and then they summarise it at the end and the two are quite balanced. But, so, so memory seems to me to be very malleable and doesn't doesn't follow this peak end rule. Because memories, sorry. Memories are subject to bias. So the versioning of what you remember and how you remember it according to what matters at the particular time of remembering or time of asking. So, for example, a very simple thing like a mood congruent bias where your mood at the time of remembering selects how you remember. And I think this is important methodologically and it's something that I think I've kind of used and relied on in, in, in the research.

Abigail Croydon 25:29
So the starting point was, the methodological starting point was video stimulated recall, reflection, and dialogue using what Mel has written about that, which I've kind of summarised here, in my in some of

my words, and some of hers. It's a retrospective think aloud interview technique, where you allow the interviewee to re experience a film situation after the event, perhaps immediately after, or perhaps some time after. And it may be useful to make accessible things that are, are difficult to see and know in the moment. It combines data about participants behaviour, what they actually did it that moment, with the opportunity to think about what they will experience and examine the thinking that that came with it. And in this, in this version, the interview material is the data that goes forward for analysis. So my project title here was about what young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities can be and do, their capabilities. And it's about work, learning and social participation. So just summarise the context here, because some of the videos that I'm going to show will, will kind of draw on that context. And I'm saying that at the end of schooling, when people with intellectual disability, can't get into employment, that that's a kind of a deep social, spatial and experiential divide in their lives, between people who are in the mode of employment and the time that that dominates and the processes and experiences that it provides, and the people who are cut out of it. And amongst other things, it leads to a lack of means to develop as an adult to develop skills, and social connections, and, and to have agency. And so what I mean, specifically about have agency is have any ability to influence those facts to influence, what you're able to do and be. And the specific point is that a policy has changed, a relevant policy has changed to make it possible for eligible people to employ a personal assistant, who they choose, and they brief and work with, and that this might increase the possibility for them to work and the social participation and then learning that comes with that. So the question revolves around what kinds of reciprocal social and cultural learning can be recognised. So I'm looking at a lot of things that are highly difficult to see in the moment. I'm looking at social and cultural learning. So that is learning that people are not really aware of their their absorption from their environment and from their interactions, and how those interactions also provide learning for the partners of the interactions for the people that they work with. So there is quite a knotty methods challenge in looking for something that's thought to be very difficult to see, underrecognized, and where the person with the intellectual disability is the kind of key informant and so the methods have to be adapted to give them agency if you like. So there's an added role to the sort of VSRRD idea in this context, and I envisage this at the beginning in these sorts of terms that it would support collaborating with, with people, reliving a shared experience where I had lived through it in the first instance. And they had, and we could relate to each other over that. That it would provide a much richer stimulus than the kind of visual supports that are often given to support communication with people with intellectual disability, so simple visual symbols or sort of easy read with with illustrative photographs. And I see that as very uninspiring and unstimulating.

Abigail Croydon 30:42
And so I was hoping that sort of rich visual and auditory stimulus on a matter on a topic that was important to the interviewee would provide that stimulus, that it would rekindle memories of events and, and provide new perspectives, that it would provide opportunities for for direct comment. So rather than setting up a situation by explanation by memory, this happened, then this happened, and I thought, they can simply comment on something that's happening in front of them. And I thought that it would allow attention to what people do rather than just what they say, which, in the context of people whose speech is less articulate might be very important. But I also thought that it might support my own memory, because I'm living through complex fast moving events and paying attention to multiple things.

And it might help me to sort through those. And I realised that I put here a picture of the library job, which was the least fast moving, and eventful of all of them, but there you go.

Abigail Croydon 32:04
And so an outline of the methods that I used is here, and then I'll go into each kind of step separately. So I filmed participants at their work. They're already working, they already have somebody supporting them. And I go and film them on several different occasions. We then go through the film together, check it and edit it with them. I use that video to support an interview with the person working, the primary participant. And then I use the video to support interviews with the other participants. So these were people around the primary participant, family members, parents, the PA the support worker who was working with them, and co workers or supervisors in this sort of work situation.

Abigail Croydon 32:55
So how did it work? There was a collaborative planning event that I hoped would would give them the means to direct to some extent what was going to be recorded. That actually didn't really work because they just wanted to be recorded. And the idea of framing it in some way wasn't wasn't of interest to them. It was also interesting that they, the participant, acted as a leader through these filming events, because I've gone to their their territory, doing the things that are very familiar to them. And they are showing me what work they do. So, for example, there was a participant who introduced me to people as we passed as a reporter, and he was going to be on the nine o'clock news. And I became the camera operator. So the following and recording in a very opportunistic way. So in the literature about using video methods, there are a lot of caveats about the power of the researcher, and the power of the kind of framing of video. And I have to say that in this case, that was absolutely not the case. It was a question of being given a slot, seizing the slot, filming everything and then dealing with it afterwards. The filming itself involved really sustained engagement with the participants and there was lots of activity and a certain amount of talking and I will show clip about that in one minute. But first of all, I'll just talk about the permissions from a practical point of view it was extremely difficult to set up. There were coronavirus impacts. There were delays to get permission from employers and from, to deal with the problem of members of the public appearing. So this is a short clip from showing a participant who is on the edge of a playing field in his rural town. And he's a self appointed sort of sort of community litter picker. And it's a job that he sees himself as a sort of ambassador and has quite a high profile in the community for doing this. And this is just a clip from a video.

Participant 35:45
Right. No. Amazing.

Abigail Croydon 36:11
So, in fact, you probably can't quite see he found a 20 pound note. But to me this short clip, it tells a lot about the way he works. And his attitude towards his work. He's incredibly thorough, he's very conscientious. But there's also a whole lot about the lack of, the lack of content when transcribing to words. So I have some parts of video content where there are no words, but there's still a lot to be said, and a lot of interpretation that can be made. And this is an example of, of how the kind of embodiedness of experience and the sort of affective and sensory aspects are missing.

Abigail Croydon 37:06
So the editing label procedure, I intended for participants to have a veto over what was taken forward. I imagined that there might be parts that they they didn't like that they didn't want to be shown publicly. And that was absolutely not the case. In fact, they saw it as a means of showcasing themselves and their work, that was just important in itself for that purpose. So the clips and the labels were. And the labelling was largely made by me as so, so I uploaded to YouTube for the purposes of sharing. And here is a transcription of about five minutes, sorry, a labelling of about five minutes of video. And I've labelled it according to the things that he says and events that happen in the video so that they can be retrieved quickly. So this kind of process is incredibly time intensive. So you're watching, the transcription process. There's loading, saving, labelling and checking labels and timestamps and so on.

Abigail Croydon 38:40
The reviewing, remembering and discussing process. So the video was really effective at engaging people's attention and an interest quickly and establishing common ground something that you've done together, you're going to talk about together. Choosing a clip, turned out to be a really efficient kind of nonverbal way of establishing what you're going to talk about, that either party could either party party could do. The behavioural responses were was strong, there was kind of sustained interest in engagement. And this illustration, sorry, the picture here shows a participant with very high support needs, who has no speech at all. So the process of showing him was demanding and I didn't know what was going to come out of it. But he, he looked at the clips, and his attention is not always entirely under his own control. He definitely focused and paid attention to what was going on. Now he has one sign, which is this thumbs up, which he gave to the site of himself working in the video clips. And also behaviorally, he, he got up to leave the minute a particular clip finished and the screen went blank. And then he came back, and then the next one came. So there are no words, there is no transcription to this process. But it did tell you quite a lot. And there were practical and technical challenges here that were quite demanding. So I'm taking the equipment to people's homes, onto their territory, the lighting conditions, that all those sorts of things are very nearly completely out of control. So, so that was tricky. So I'm now going to show an example of the kind of, of record of work that participants saw as self explanatory. It didn't really need any, any gloss, and my questions didn't really seem to them to, to be needed effectively. So this is a participant working in a community, sort of zero waste type, shop, a member cooperative. And he's the boy on the left, and his personal assistant is on the right, and he's just learning to use the till.

Abigail Croydon 42:12
If we were in a room, I'd really like to ask what people think they can see in this clip of him working. But instead of, I'll just suggest some of the things that I think are there. You know, I think at the beginning, it shows, you know, his focus and his engagement, his effort. And it shows a kind of coordination between the two of them. There's a lot of information about the context, which is important when discussing participatory learning, which is, which is my, my theme. And then I think that the end shows, obviously, it shows awareness of being filmed. But I think it also shows a kind of, a kind of pride in his work that, you know, I did it.

Abigail Croydon 43:16
So, reviewing with the other participants, so here are some, some parents, revealing the video of their daughter working, again, the videos just really effective in quickly starting up an engagement and sustaining a dialogue with, you know, people that otherwise you don't have much knowledge of, and for these parents, it was their first view of their daughter working, they haven't ever observed it. And they were very, very keen to get some understanding of how it worked. In these dialogues, we talked about the specifics of what was happening on screen. There was a lot of discussion about that. But there was also a process of kind of continually zooming out. I'm going to show some of that in a moment. There was this discussion of interpretation by the other people I talked to so we could we could evaluate interpretations that other people have made, whether it was myself or the primary participant. And it was possible to put together information from different sources and here is an example of that. So this is just after the start of the daughter's work. And they noticed that the support staff, the PA, has just sat down in the corner and opened his phone.

Abigail Croydon 45:09
Well, yes, for this period of time, and for both my visits effectively, he didn't need to do anything.

Parent A 45:22
No, I think the feedback I've had from the library is if things don't go quite right, they don't know how to deal with it.

Abigail Croydon 45:33
Yes.

Parent A 45:34
That's why he's there, for when things don't go right.

Abigail Croydon 45:37
And Fiona made that quite clear that it's, it's a backup that she fits.

Abigail Croydon 45:42
So I'm not I'm not sure how loud that was. It sounded a bit, a little bit quiet to me. But so we start from the point that the support staff is looking at his phone. And she says, I suppose he's, he's redundant. And I say, which they don't know that, in my observations, he, he hadn't had to play an active role at any point. And then the the father adds that he's heard from the from the library where she works, and he's had an account of how they can't cope without the support systems. And I had the information that, that the daughter, the participant herself, had discussed this topic with me. So it was a lot of information, a lot of different sources, that's all kind of resolved revolves around the video.

Abigail Croydon 46:41
This is a quick example of the zooming out process. So here, this is the parents speaking again, and she has just discussed her daughter returning to work after lockdown. And I asked her, What difference does it make to her to be able to go back to work after after lockdown?

Parent B 47:06
I think in a world where she's so sort of looked after and guarded, we can't feel safe that she's crossing the road. We can't feel safe, that she'll, when we're out, she'll unlock the door to somebody she shouldn't. Something like that, in that sort of environment that she's used to. I think it's freedom. Yeah.

Abigail Croydon 47:36
So in case that was too quiet as well, she says, In a world where we're so preoccupied with safeguarding, what it means to her is freedom.

Abigail Croydon 47:50
So quick, my my lessons learned. Watching and discussing a video that is personally meaningful to the people that you're talking to revolves around their own interests and experience. It sustains exchanges of information, and sorry, and interpretation. It can help people to re remember things like reinterpreting what work used to be like before locked down to after locked down. And the memory most benefiting from the record was actually mine. So it gives you a really kind of an intensive resource that you can really immerse yourself in to build your understanding of the participants and their worlds and their points of view. And I found in particular that it, it reminded me that experience is embodied and sensory and affective. And its research traditions that lead us to focus on the remembering self, that the summary storytelling that happens. It happens happens in words in our research methodology. Participants saw the film itself as evidence of what I was looking to examine. It's evidence of work. It was evidence of learning, it was evidence of participation, and it didn't need any kind of additional gloss from their point of view. And I think effectively, that that That's right, and that the film itself is an important source of data for analysis. And it usefully enforces a different approach to analysis that I'm kind of still wrestling with. And a video and dialogue can help to bring together those two selves that Kahneman saw as, as as so separate - the expense rinsing, and the remembering selves - and, and helps with that sort of versioning of this, building a dialogue around different versions of events to decide what they might mean. So thank you. And that's it.

Deborah Madden 50:22
My name is Deborah Madden, and I'm a cultural historian based at the University of Brighton. And I'm also director for the Centre for Memory, Narrative and hHistories. And I'm just going to pop a link into the chat because I always want to do a little plug for the centre. We're always very, you know, very keen to get sort of people involved, and particularly kind of PhD students. So please do check out the centre and see if it might be of interest. And my work is predominantly shifting at the moment. I mean, my kind of historical work has always been interested in the relationship between kinds of narrative life writings and cultural history, particularly in terms of cultural histories of medicine. But currently, my work is concerned with the cultural politics of emotion and specifically grief, mourning practices, spontaneous sites of mourning, and the ways in which personal individual and collective expressions of grief can mobilised memories of the past. And thanks very much to Melanie, for inviting me and to the other panellists. I've already learned so much from the two talks and seen sort of really interesting points of connection. So today, oops, for some reason, it doesn't want to move forward. Bear with me, I'm trying to get the slides to move. Okay. There we are.

Deborah Madden 52:03
So today, I'm going to talk about an oral history and creative arts project that was undertaken collaboratively during the UK's first and second lockdowns. So the talk is a sort of retrospective, but it's also, because the oral histories are still ongoing, it's kind of work in progress. It's a very dynamic project that's obviously based in the centre, and the people on the slide, these are the people that were involved and are involved in the project as it goes along. So although our project did predate COVID, we, we also started to create, curate oral histories from palliative care clinicians and staff working in care homes, primarily to capture and evaluate everyday subjective experiences and emotional responses to the pandemic. These oral histories, as I said, are still ongoing. And we're planning to kind of continue this work into its last phase, following the UK COVID inquiry to gather responses to what emerges from that. Although, so, work here also drew on a preexisting Heritage Lottery funded centenary arts and oral history project, which was about the Spanish flu pandemic 1918. We use this historical pandemic as a heuristic device as part of the kind of ongoing project when capturing perspectives on the differing affective scales related to illness dying, grief and mourning during our own pandemic time. Working closely with Inroads Productions, a Brighton based theatre company, we utilised a range of creative practices, including creative writing, site responsive theatre, as a mode of public history and critical pedagogy. Key themes from our combined oral histories, the combined content of that, became the basis of a scripted performance called Breaking the Silence. And that was written by a creative, her name's Sarah Clifford from Inroads, and it was performed to a live audience via zoom in October of 2020. And this performance formed part of a collection of so-called COVID stories that were hosted by Damn Cheek, again a Brighton based production company. And importantly for our purposes, this company is committed to shining a light on social injustice on the quality, thereby using the creative arts to explore tensions of modern life and politics. In leveraging very different sort of methods and practices, the purpose of our project was to raise political and ethical questions about the use of the historical past as an act of public history and critical pedagogy. This has been prompted by the political political context of the government's militarised NHS nationalism, during the first phase of COVID-19 are mixed methodology sought to draw attention to the hermeneutics of historical inquiry when investigating the emotional red registers of past pandemics in light of contemporary concerns. This was an explicit acknowledgement of the history making processes themselves. We also wanted to draw particular attention to our collectivist principles of collaboration, as a form of political practice when mobilising politically engaged histories. And in taking a nonlinear approach to history, and mobilising multi directional memories, or methodological practices encapsulated what Anna Hickey-Moody describes as the eclectic ethics of invention. Of course, this invention was borne out of the necessity of pandemic times. The work has since been published in the form of a collaborative article, which situates these methodologies and creative practices within a framework of public pedagogy, and hence it featured in the Journal of Public pedagogy as shown here. And provide use of oral histories with end of life healthcare staff during COVID-19. It these indicated the, to the extent to which people needed to capture their experiences and get their stories heard in ways that could also facilitate a multi directional exploration of both public and private brief. And indeed, we were struck by the extent to which healthcare staff were keen to talk about how they coped during the pandemic, but also the necessity for that for these to serve as an impetus for highlighting urgent political issues within end of life care. Our projects analysis thus, included the UK coalition government's austerity measures, and accompanying reduction for funding social care between 2010 and 2015, particularly in terms of weakening the response capacity to COVID-19 within an already beleaguered sector. And this was a recurring point in

our oral history respondents, as it expressed itself as a deeply felt anger, tempered only by a hope that the experience of COVID-19 might see a change of direction in policy, and future funding. COVID-19 was last seen as an opportunity to shift perspectives and improve patient experiences of end of life care, and increased resourcing for palliative care teams in the future. As noted here, in the couple of extracts taken from our interviews, care teams had to constantly adapt to changing regulations, adjusting the assistance they could offer, as far as specific resources key to the principles of end of life care. The interviews show the unique and harrowing challenges that COVID-19 Roll, the volume of patients dying alone separated from their families, the loss of physical contact as a form of comfort and presence, poorer communication due to the barriers of PPE, as well as the heavy emotional toll on staff and their own families. The therapeutic value of end of life care was also compromised with complementary and holistic forms of care scaled back, or only accessible remotely via digital technologies. Yet interviews also evidenced hope that the pandemic might facilitate more open conversations about death and dying, and therefore thereby changing misconceptions about end of life care itself. Our project's emphasis on cultures of grief therefore facilitated a much more expanded and politicised sense of multiple reactions beyond just the clinically defined symptoms of grief, important as they were.

Deborah Madden 59:56
The social and cultural responses picked up on in our oral histories highlighted COVID related deaths, and added psychological drama and the added psychological drama, trauma, sorry, of loved ones dying alone and funerals taking place with restricted numbers because of social distancing measures. Underfunding and neglect within end of life and social care was an important contributory factor for several oral oral history respondents with the backdrop of austerity, evoking a profound sense of discomposure, particularly when the government co-opted the clap for carers and localised community support for the purpose of NHS nationalism. Significantly, perhaps, that constellation of these contested concerns, combined with the mobilisation of localised activity can be seen in the different memorial practices for COVID-19, most of which were instantiated very quickly. There were there were the incorporation of COVID memorialization into the Armistice Day for for 2020 when the NHS rainbow featured alongside the poppy, and where the British Legion's poppy appeal included images of soldiers who've been deployed to build Nightingale hospitals around the UK. At grassroots level of course, we saw a counter narrative in the unauthorised and spontaneous, somewhat spontaneous, national COVID memorial wall on the South Bank organised by bereaved families seeking justice of the government's mishandling of COVID of the COVID crisis. And this one year anniversary site of mourning became a political means with which to tackle injustice and the silences surrounding those deaths weren't officially recorded. The national COVID memorial wall formed part of a broader politics of grief, allied of course with the politics of care. As a number of political theorists and cultural critics have shown, including Judith Butler and James Stanescu, mourning by dint of recognising the finitude, vulnerability and breathability of others is always a political act. And this political dimension of our project was a key aspect of the oral history responses themselves and our project as a whole. What our oral histories with palliative care and social care staff revealed was a very clear understanding of the wider impacts of collective grief, what one respondent referred to as societal grief. And here respondents interpreted grief as complex and multifaceted, pertaining to individual and family bereavement, but also to communal, uncollected forms of grief, as well as last time loss of freedom and an uncertain future. Our

political engagements with nonlinear histories and multi directional memory therefore attempted to fall together past present and alternative futures.

Deborah Madden 1:03:02
The collaboration evidenced the range of affective meaning making processes through an exploration of historical death, dying and mourning, by bringing the Spanish flu and COVID 19 pandemics within the same analytical frame. It should be noted here, however, that our project did not entail making direct comparisons with or so you know, the idea of learning from the Spanish flu in didactic ways, there's not time here to map out the very interesting points of contact between the two. But we were also very keen to show that although these comparisons are interesting, this in itself had its own limitations. Rather, the collective experience of COVID-19 helped to uncover another interlocking history, lying behind an entrenched national screen memory of the First World War. Within historical scholarship, the Spanish flu pandemic, has been mischaracterized, as the so called forgotten pandemic. Although its scale was deliberately hidden by government by governments in Germany, England, France and the USA, at the time through censorship in order to maintain wartime morale. Its obscurity within mainstream British history and cultural memory is due primarily to the ritualised national and local commemorative practices around both the First and Second World Wars. And this was further compounded by the recent centenary events of 2018. Despite a proliferation of localised creative arts, projects and initiatives around the UK that aimed for the inclusion of other narratives, experience and perspectives, that also in some instances included the Spanish flu. Living through the pelvic nine living through COVID-19 meant that it was possible to see the multi dimensional impact of that pandemic in ways not fully realised at the time or it made sense, and re articulating hitherto silenced memories about the Spanish flu was a means of historicizing contemporary cultural politics, as well as evidencing a critical method with which to develop an historical awareness of how emotions were experienced or might have been experienced in the past, without in any way universalizing those.

Deborah Madden 1:05:31
And in this regard, the centrepiece of our project was the scripted monologue based on some of the oral histories collected from both palliative care staff, as well as intergenerational memories of the Spanish flu. And these were further contextualised with primary sources from the local archives. The script itself was perhaps a good example of what my fellow panellists, Emily and in her work with Michael Pickering has called mnemonic imagination, a deliberate move to reconfigure linear time by reactivating archival sources. These methods help to explore everyday experiences and emotional responses to pandemic illness both then and now. The scripted performance itself focused on the character of Joy seen here, an older woman, who was mourning the loss of her cousin and lifelong friend, though because she can't attend the funeral in person is unable to grieve properly, and is attending via zoom. And this represents a type of disenfranchised grief when a person's grief was not socially facilitated, or if public mourning is denied. It marked a very specific moment during the first lockdown, where numbers attending funerals were restricted and research at that time, so a lot of research has obviously been done since this study here, but this was the research that was available at the time that we utilised, which indicated that 59 per cent of respondents interviewed believed that their grief had gone unacknowledged in the midst of global pandemic. So the research was carried out by the Sue Ryder palliative, neurological and bereavement support. So the character Joy, her narrative moves through different historical timeframes and temporalities shifting between various emotional

states and affecting behaviours, which indicate a deeply felt historical empathy. And these registers focus alternately on personal social and political subject experiences changing seamlessly in perspective between family and collective memory of the First World War, and the Spanish flu, as well as current experiences of COVID-19.

Deborah Madden 1:08:01
So, to try and wrap up if I can, in what our project revealed is the value of material that is Co-constructed and created in very different methodological ways. Uses of the historical past with oral histories, creative writing, and performance proved vital for a deeper exploration of the different effective engagements, and disengagements resulting from COVID 19. Analysis of these different modes and its creative context for wider public pedagogy and engagement drew attention to both the historical and contemporary cultural resonances of everyday experiences of pandemic illness, and the politics of grief and at specific specific historical conjunctures.

Deborah Madden 1:08:53
Modes of public engagement. Sorry, I'll stop sharing the screen. Modes of public engagement has significant value in their own right, as artistic interpretations of course, but they also have enormous capacity to yield critical insights into into the processes of creative practice as effective relational and embodied. And this pertains to the politics of history making and the formation of historical knowledge. How traces or atmospheres of the past, invested with feeling might be reinterpreted and reactivated through oral histories and creative practice. Our research process evidences emotions that are historically situated and politically situated too. Yet the reactivating the archive through embodied memory can in this very process of effective encounter help attune us to somatic and emotional registers of the past, or at least an exploration of them. Further to paraphrase Anna Hickey-Moody, effect is often the way that art can speak. Artistic, experimental and activist engagements and enactments of public pedagogy have the pinch potential to create new ways of being, new ways of doing, new ways of feeling and knowing.