Article

Songlines Are for Singing: Un/Mapping the Lived Spaces of Travelling Memory

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Abstract: Putting to work the dialectical concept of 'un/mapping', this paper examines the immateriality of cultural memory as coalescent in and around *songlines*: spatial stories woven from the autobiogeographical braiding of music and memory. Borrowing from Erll's concept of 'travelling memory' (2011), the idea of songlines provides a performative framework with which to both travel *with* music memory and to map/unmap the travelling *of* music memory. The theoretical focus of the work builds on empirical studies into music, place and cultural memory in the form of interviews conducted across the UK in 2010–2013. The interviews were designed to explore the way peoples' musical pasts—memories of listening to music in the domestic home, for example, or attendance at concerts and festivals, music as soundtracks to journeys, holidays or everyday commutes to work or school, music at key rite of passage moments—have coloured and given shape to the narratives that structure a sense of embodied selfhood and social identity over time. Songlines, it is shown, tether the self to spaces and temporalities that map a tangled meshwork of lives lived spatially, where the ghosts of musical pasts are as vital and alive as the traveller who has invoked them. Analysis and discussion is centred around the following questions: How should the songlines of memory be mapped in ways that remain true and resonant with those whose spatial stories they tell? How, phenomenologically, can memory be rendered as an energy that remains creatively vital without running the risk of dissipating that energy by seeking to fix it in space and time (to *memorialise* it)? And if, as is advocated in the paper, we should not be in the business of mapping songlines, how do we go about the task of singing them? Pursuing these and other lines of enquiry, this paper explores a spatial anthropology of movement and travel in which the un/mapping of popular music memory mobilises phenomenological understandings of the entanglements of self, culture and embodied memory.

Keywords: memory; popular music; cultural mapping; spatial anthropology; liminality; everyday; wayfinding; lines; embodiment

1. Opening Propositions

One should perhaps visualise the Songlines as a spaghetti of Iliads and Odysseys.
Bruce Chatwin (1987, p. 13)

For some traditional West African societies printed memory in the form of records or books is considered unnatural, even abhorrent. The positive and negative powers of living things, including thoughts, memories and historical events, are understood as embodied in words but, transferred in written form, are seen as trapped in an undesirable state of rigidity and permanence, a state contrary to life.
Tina Oldknow, quoted in Toop (1995, p. 84)

. . . man [sic] is both a structural and an anti-structural entity, who grows through anti-structure and conserves through structure.
Victor Turner, quoted in Toop (1995, p. 255)

2. Songlines | Mappings | Unmappings

Some of the key ideas that form the basis of this paper can in part be evinced by ruminating briefly on these three quotes, which each, in their own way, provide an opening contention or proposition. The first is taken from writer Bruce Chatwin's book *The Songlines* (Chatwin 1987). While some further contextualisation is required with regard to Chatwin's treatment—or appropriation—of the term 'songlines' (which is provided in the next section), for the purposes of this paper it is a concept that undergirds the spatial and temporal architecture that informs the way that mapping, music and memory are theoretically untangled (or tangled, spaghetti-like) herein. As a writer and self-styled nomad, Chatwin set about tracking the embedded 'spatial stories'[1] and pathways of Australian Aboriginal culture. Lain down over many millennia, these songlines define landscapes that are cartographically 'fugitive' in the sense that they are rooted and routed in cultural and mytho-historical geographies that can be 'sung' but not so readily 'mapped'. From this, we understand songlines to be spatial stories that unfold—as, indeed, a map might be unfolded by spreading it out across the flat surface of a table—through the process of their being told. Moreover, songlines are just that: lines, but their lineation is what concerns us here insofar as the literal and metaphorical process of inscription that commits such lines to durable record (whether this be in the form of, say, a map, book, museum artefact, or academic article) might run the risk of inflicting symbolic violence on the very thing it seeks to fix in discourse. That is to say, the process of lineation, and the way this is conceptualised and put into practice, requires careful, critical and reflexive consideration.

Mappings, it can be agreed, presuppose the production and/or consumption of maps (Cosgrove 1999; Dodge et al. 2009; Roberts 2012). The latter may be the instigator of the former, enlisted in the on-going production of *re-mappings*. Maps do this by offering the possibility of geographical immersion in a space and of empowering the map-user or wayfinder (Lynch 1960; Ingold 2000) to navigate their way confidently through that space. Insofar as this entails entanglement with lines—whether those inscribed on a map or those embodied in material spatial practices such as walking—the wayfinder becomes cognizant of the fact that, (a) such lines are there in the first place, and (b), that from this *new* lines are potentially inscribed. These lines might be tactically drawn in ways that subvert the original cartographic template (the Cartesian, or geometric space that epistemologically frames the shape of any given lineation and its attendant navigation). Or they may be drawn such as to add more detail to the map being entered into dialogue with: more discursive information, more contextual flourish, more densely-packed contours that impart ever-more fine-grained layers of symbolic meaning; more spatial stories: more *Iliads* and *Odysseys*. But equally, any newness ascribed to the lines that subsequent mappings help redraw may be attributed to nothing more than the sharpening of definition, lines drawn thicker and more authoritatively so as to reinforce or re-entrench existing patterns of lineation. Yet while maps beget mappings, and mappings, in their turn, beget more maps, the idea of songlines poses not just the question of *how* to map (a methodological and practical problem), but whether they should in fact be mapped at all (a political and ethical one), and to what uses might such mappings be put (an instrumental one).

This brings me to the second of my opening propositions. The idea that committing memory to some form of documentary form (again, whether book, map, recording, and so on) might be 'unnatural', or even 'abhorrent', usefully foregrounds the culturally-specific sets of practices and dispositions that determine how memory is practised in different sociocultural settings. For some, as the quote suggests, such a reworking of what memory is or should be might conjure a social reality that is 'contrary to life', where memory without life is as meaningless as life without memory; both life and memory, these antagonists would cry, are to be irreducibly *lived*.[2] But clearly, for memory to be rendered rigid, permanent or fixed is no less a concern when considered in the context of memory-work that is transacted more generally, regardless of sociocultural or geographical setting. While broader discussions around orality provide obvious points of departure here, not least on account of the 'high somatic component' of oral memory (Ong 1982, p. 66), it is

not the distinction between textual and oral memory per se that I am principally concerned with but the question of how memory can be theorised in terms of travel, movement and the 'unfixity' of memory practices that are transacted in lived spaces. Accordingly, what Oldknow's quote shifts attention towards is consideration of the *obverse* of travelling memory: where living things and memories become 'trapped in an undesirable state of rigidity'. These concerns become particularly pertinent when wedded to debates linked to the museumification or heritagisation of everyday life and culture (Hewison 1987; Hartog 2005) or the 'memory boom' (Huyssen 2003; Hoskins 2014) that has been resounding across interdisciplinary fields of academic study—as well as wider, increasingly coextensive sectors of the neoliberal and postindustrial cultural economy—for several decades. In the same way that, phenomenologically, songlines are most fully realised and most immersively lived when they are being 'sung'—when, through practice, they are organically woven into embedded and embodied structures of everyday living,—memory is in one sense only memorable insofar as it too is afforded a status whereby it cannot be neatly 'parked' in what Pierre Nora refers to as 'sites of memory' (Nora 1989). It needs the warmth and fleshiness of bodies, of vivacious culture, of engaging social intercourse, of healthy political contention, so as to keep memory alive in ways that are not wholly or functionally dependent on the representational. Memory, as with maps and music, needs to be *felt* as much as seen or heard. Moreover, as travelling memory—an approach that moves away from 'site-bound' or *'cultures*-bound' perspectives on cultural memory (Erll 2011, p. 15, emphasis in original; Clifford 1997)—the idea of movement along routes and pathways prefigures a 'mnemonic dynamics [that unfolds] across and beyond boundaries'. Viewed thus, memory is not stationary—or stationed—within sites. It is on the move: travelling along lines.

The third, most avowedly anthropological proposition, that of Victor Turner, furnishes a triangulation of sorts, whereby songlines, memory, and creativity are brought into productive, if inchoate, alliance. The concept of 'anti-structure' stems from Turner's foundational work on liminality, ritual and performance, referring to the creative potential that may be conferred on individuals entering a spatial or temporal state of 'in-betweenness', a common feature of many social rituals and rites-of-passage (Turner 1969; Andrews and Roberts 2012, 2015). By temporarily shedding the burdensome weight of everyday social identities and conventions, initiates passing through liminal spaces—an appropriate example in the present context being those that play host to the tribal rhythms and affordances of electronic dance music cultures (St. John 2008, 2014; Roberts 2018, pp. 175–80)—can embody a different sense of selfhood fashioned from the materialities, affects and experiential flux of the spatiotemporal moment (Andrews 2009). From this liminal experience there is the potential (but not the inevitability) of growth and transition: the creative mobilisation of life being lived; of moving forward to inhabit a new, or at least significantly reconfigured habitus of being. Turner's intrinsically anthropological take on liminal phenomena, and the creative and transitional potential of anti-structure, bears close comparison to ideas propounded by the object-relations psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, whose writings on play and the psychodynamic potential of transitional spaces similarly points to the role played by cultural experiences and the creative boundlessness of the imagination (Winnicott 1971; Kuhn 2013; Roberts 2018, pp. 43–47). While anti-structure allows for the possibility of growth (as long as, crucially, there is not too much anti-structure), structure provides the means whereby that growth can be stabilised or consolidated. But too much structure, as with too much anti-structure, can have adverse affects, restricting or stifling growth, ossifying culture by over-determining the lineation or curation of that culture, at the expense of living it. And with this we come back to the problems posed via the previous two quotes: How should the songlines of memory be mapped in ways that remain true and resonant with those whose spatial stories they tell? How can memory be rendered as an energy that remains creatively vital without running the risk of dissipating that energy by seeking to fix it in space and time (to memorialise it)? How can the unfixity of anti-structure and the disciplinary rigours of cartography be combined in ways that provide experiential and anthropological insights into the spatiality of musical memory? To what extent can

mapping be productively repurposed as the phenomenology of unmapping? And if, as I am proposing, we should not be in the business of mapping songlines, how, then, do we go about the task of singing them?

These and other questions will be pursued, if not necessarily answered, in the sections that follow. The main theoretical focus of the paper—underpinned as it is by the titular proposition that songlines are for singing—builds on empirical studies into music, place and cultural memory in the form of interviews conducted across the UK in 2010–2013.[3] The interviews were designed to explore the way peoples' musical pasts—memories of listening to music in the domestic home, for example, or attendance at concerts and festivals, music as soundtracks to journeys, holidays or everyday commutes to work or school, music at key rite of passage moments—have coloured and given shape to the narratives that structure a sense of embodied selfhood and social identity over time. A selection of this interview material is presented in the form of short 'songline samples' or vignettes that are considered in the latter sections of the paper.

3. Song(s) + Lines = Songlines

In its stripped-down fashion, Chatwin's suggestion that 'One should perhaps visualise the Songlines as a spaghetti of Iliads and Odysseys' captures both the intriguing conjunction of ideas I am setting out to explore in this paper and the problematic assumptions that Chatwin brings to his project as a travel writer unapologetically touting his Eurocentric and universalist credentials. Over the thirty-plus years since the publication of *The Songlines*, the book has generated a great deal of discussion, much of it excoriatingly critical. It is not my intention here to rehearse these debates or stake out a position with regard to the merits or otherwise of the book. But given that (a) the arguments presented in this paper crucially pivot around the term 'songlines', and (b) any discussion of songlines, as a direct result of the impact and notoriety of *The Songlines*, cannot easily skirt around Chatwin's appropriation of the term, some reflection on the origins and specificities of the concept is warranted.

When we consider the conflation of Aboriginal dreaming tracks or songlines with Homer's epic poetry, it is not difficult to see where Robert Clarke is coming from when, citing Mary Louise Pratt, he suggests that *The Songlines* 'seeks to secure its innocence of the European imperial project at the same time as it asserts European hegemony' (Clarke 2002, p. 166; Alber 2016, pp. 97–98). Charges of cultural appropriation (Youngs 1997; Alber 2016; Clarke 2016); of romanticising Aboriginal culture as a nomadic 'Golden Age when men were unaggressive and lived in harmony with nature' (Brown 1991, p. 6); of a dubious research methodology that gave very little direct voice to local Aboriginal people, drawing instead on the 'White noise' of interlocutors Chatwin talked to *about* Aboriginal culture and history; or of pursuing a universal theory of nomadism informed by 'essentialist understandings' and 'borrowed and prefabricated philosophizing' (Nicholls 2019, p. 25) that 'does not really concern indigenous Australians at all' (Alber 2016, p. 109); all of these, and more, have laden any subsequent iteration of 'songlines' with baggage that Chatwin's book still carries with it.

In the context of the present discussion, the problem is not so much the viability or efficacy of songlines as a concept. The problem is getting to 'songlines' as historical, geographical and sociocultural phenomena without at the same time feeling duty bound to cite Chatwin's book. I have already fallen foul of this by choosing to open with a quote from *The Songlines*. But such is the immediacy of the association that it has become difficult to detach the concept from the fame of its author, such that it is almost as if Chatwin is the author of songlines the *concept* rather than *The Songlines* the book (which, by his own account, should be regarded as a work of fiction (Nicholls 2019, p. 30)). Picking up this point, the archaeologist Mike Smith refers to 'Chatwin's bowdlerised version of [Ancestral] Dreaming tracks . . . [which] quickly colonised the arts and humanities', and which, crucially, eclipses 'an earlier anthropological lexicon' (Smith 2017, p. 217). Smith is specifically referring here to the work of the ethnomusicologist Alice Moyle and the

anthropologist Robert Tonkinson (Moyle 1966; Tonkinson 1978). The validity of Aboriginal songlines as an object of anthropological knowledge is therefore not the issue. It is the colonisation of a bowdlerised understanding of the concept—as specifically applied to indigenous Australians—that needs to be held in check. Taking Chatwin and *The Songlines* out of the equation, and accepting Nicholls' observation that the book 'sheds more light on Chatwin himself' (Nicholls 2019, p. 47), when measured against the insights offered by scholars such as Moyle and Tonkinson we are left with a concept that otherwise holds its own in understandings of music, place and memory. Yes, when seen through the prism of *The Songlines* and its embedded indigenous Australian heritage, the concept demands close and careful attention lest its contested socio-political and historical groundings are overwritten by 'an imaginary construction that is "pinned on" to it' (Ingold 2007, p. 50). But at the same time, the simple conjunction of 'song' and 'lines' can be shown to have value in a more general sense. As Smith remarks, 'The most important aspect of songlines is the way they relate individual people to specific places. Sacred knowledge is specific and localised' (Smith 2017, p. 219). If we extend what counts as sacred knowledge to encompass individuals' attachment to their own personal and collective songlines of music and memory, then the linear and tangled nature of spatial stories as these are practiced and etched into everyday memoryscapes, become the starting point for a spatial anthropology of songlines—or, more specifically, of *lines*.

4. Taking a Memory Line for a Walk (or a Ride)

As already discussed, the idea that music memories are the product of mappings or that their representational iteration qualify as maps is not something that should unqualifiedly be taken as read. What such a contention necessarily demands is a critical and reflexive appraisal of how songlines of memory and their associated geographies intermesh. Whether the product of any such intermeshing qualifies as mapping or maps hinges in no small part on exactly how the terms 'map' and 'mapping' are being defined and operationalised in research on cultural memory. Moreover, whether the product of any such intermeshing does qualify as mapping or maps is arguably far less important than what these endeavours are directed towards in terms of the insights they shed into the spatial anthropology of music and memory and the performative application of music culture as cultural memory-work. In this respect, the inherent and open-ended complexities attached to the meanings and practices ascribed to mapping and cartography are already inscribed in the very interdisciplinarity that has begun to coalesce, albeit loosely and rather scrappily, around emerging fields of scholarship in the arts and humanities that carry labels such as 'spatial humanities', 'geohumanities', 'deep mapping', or 'cultural mapping', to name but a few (Bodenhamer et al. 2010, 2015, 2022; Dear et al. 2011; Roberts 2016, 2018; MacLennan et al. 2015). To a certain extent, then, and increasingly so, the paraphernalia and baggage that comes with the term 'mapping' has at times felt more like a hindrance than anything else. This is particularly evident where scholarship has shifted its focus towards, more diffusely, the spatiality of culture or the spatial anthropology of, in this instance, music and memory, rather than the specificities of mapping per se. From a dialectical standpoint, the idea that mapping simultaneously entails a process of unmapping seems a more productive way of theorising the multivalent and relational spatialities that are being invested in spatial practices where the constitutive *locatedness* of cultural phenomena is contingent and up-for-grabs. A 'map' that can just as easily accommodate the dislodging or scattering of its carefully coordinated content as it can the fixing of it seems better equipped to serve the messy, irresolute, impressionistic, and often phantasmal spatialities that are the stuff of arts and humanities proper. In this vein, songlines are un/mappings of music memory: they flow and breathe in the world rather than etch themselves onto the surface plane of that world. As such, they demand the application of phenomenological approaches and sensibilities in order to flow *with* and breath *with* what it is that the songlines 'sing'.

Approaching geographies of music memory in terms of the flow and movement of lines brings with it the possibility of following, tracing, or perhaps even *riding* those lines.

The latter suggestion alludes to anthropologist Marc Augé's study of the Paris Metro, first published in 1986 as *Un ethnologue dans le metro.* In this work, Augé fuses personal memory, autoethnographic reflection, and symbolic anthropology to magic a Paris metro map that has its lineal foundations in the actual route map used by travellers on the metro but which, at the same time, gives discursive form to the lines of flight that emanate from stopping-off points along the colour-coded network of the metro system. 'Subway lines', Augé muses, 'like lifelines on the hand, meet and cross—not only on the map where the interlacing of their multicolor routes unwinds and is set in place, but in everyone's lives and minds' (Augé 2002, p. 6). Travelling the metro, the subject encounters in the station names toponyms that register key moments in the nation's history (Bastille, Stalingrad), monuments and landmarks (Madeleine, Concorde, Opéra), national figureheads (Charles de Gaulle-Étoile, Gambetta), and cultural icons (Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, Avenue Émile Zola). These symbolic markers and the histories they set in train also function as waypoints that anchor personal stories and everyday social meanings; the more impressionistic lines they etch into cartographies of memory bleed into the solid, primary-coloured significations that harness historical narratives of nationhood and self. Cultural memory—all that surges and clusters in intangible meshworks around what are otherwise univocal markers of place and identity—is 'located' in and along these lines: in movement; at points of connection and encounter; at interchanges; on the cusp of reverie; at moments of sadness or joy, epiphany or despair; or in snatched conversations:

> Sometime the chance happening of an itinerary (of a name, of a sensation) is enough for distracted travelers suddenly to discover that their inner geology and subterranean geography of the capital city meet at certain points, where dazzling discoveries of coincidences promote recall of tiny and intimate tremors in the sedimentary layers of their memory. (Augé 2002, p. 4).

What we can take from Auge's autoethnographic reflections is an understanding that the projection of personal and cultural memory onto a map of a city's mass-transit system is, in the first instance, a framing device and metaphor for the spatial patterning of memory as the product of a myriad of journeys, interconnections, and temporal flows of affect. Representationally such a 'map' holds together inasmuch as it provides a schematic frame with and through which to follow the lines that are mobilised therein. But once through the 'frame' it is a sketch map that takes on a more fitting metaphorical function; through their iteration as memory-work, lines are being *taken for a walk*. Lines on a sketch map, as Ingold observes, are formed through 'the gestural re-enactment of journeys *actually made*, to and from places that are already known for their histories of previous comings and goings' (Ingold 2007, p. 84, emphasis in original). The metro 'base map' metaphor provides the lineal template from which any number of other lines are then drawn, overlaid or entangled:

> To draw on a sketch map is merely to add the trace of one further gesture to the traces of previous ones. Such a map may be the conversational product of many hands, in which participants take turns to add lines as they describe their various journeys. The map grows line by line as the conversation proceeds, and there is no point at which it can ever be said to be truly complete. (Ingold 2007, p. 85)

For our purposes, then, the metro/underground map provides us with an idea of music memory as something that moves around a recognisable, but by no means fixed network of lines and 'stopping-off' points. But looked at from another perspective, one that reflects more purposely instrumental applications, it is interesting to note how the design aesthetics of the classic metro map have informed imagery created by cultural heritage practitioners and their agents looking to express, in graphical form, the dense web of connections and relationships that popular music cultures have spawned. The most recognisably iconic design, Harry Beck's 1931 circuit board-like map of the London Underground, has been reworked and reimagined on a number of occasions, each mapping a particular cultural network that pinpoints significant topologies of British popular cultural

memory, the nation's music heritage being but one. Although, in most cases, the semiotic meanings bundled in to each of the 'stations' on the map have little or no geographical relevance to the location in question, the metaphorical appeal of the format lies in the idea that anyone can place themselves on a particular line that may be meaningful in terms of their own cultural journeys and musical 'routes'; recognising, moreover, that changes of direction are and have been sometimes necessary, with key interchanges symbolising moments of discovery or shifts in musical taste, or perhaps occasions when the arrival of a significant other left his or her stamp on the course of one's own cultural wayfinding adventures.[4]

The geography of music memory has thus given form to cartographic modes of cultural expression that pay heed to the movement and fluidity that underwrites how and where cultural memory translates into spatial stories. In their book *Soundtracks*, geographers John Connell and Chris Gibson chart the development of approaches to cultures of music production and diffusion that sought to 'capture' these processes cartographically. The cultural geography of popular music, and the importance of maps in its study and analysis, grew out of the recognition that

> Popular music, like other aspects of culture, could be represented spatially, explained and described in terms of the location and origins of musical scenes . . . [and] the movement or diffusion of musical genres and styles across space . . . Music in all eras is characterised by particular sets of networks, technologies and institutions that map out cultural connections at different geographical scales. (Connell and Gibson 2002, pp. 12, 10)

Retracing pathways of memory is, therefore, to engage in a process of cultural mapping that follows and 'rides along with' spatial stories as they unfold and carve out a discernible, if constitutively fuzzy itinerary. Songlines are for travelling and for singing not merely for memorialising.

5. Unauthorising Music Heritage: Memory on the Move

The suggestion that songlines are for 'travelling' rather than memorialising is reinforced by Svetlana Boym, who remarks that 'Memory resides in moving, traversing, cutting through place, taking detours', and that personal memory 'can be precisely what escapes memorialization; it can be that *residue that remains after the official celebration*' (Boym 2001, p. 80, emphasis added). Another way of reading this is that the locus of personal memory swirls propitiously around the monoliths of official or 'authorised' heritage (Smith 2006) and the 'regimes of memory' (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003) that overshadow the more delicate currents of memory that lap against them. In the memory regimes that apply to the memorialisation and canonisation of popular music cultures, we can identify distinct modes of heritage practice in operation: *official* authorised music heritage, *self*-authorised music heritage, and *unauthorised* music heritage, the latter enacted independently of (and often in opposition to) official heritage discourses (Roberts and Cohen 2014). The first phase of the *Popular Music Heritage, Cultural Memory and Cultural Identity* (POPID) research project on which this paper draws was very much oriented towards the investigation of official authorised music heritage (e.g., the organisation English Heritage) and self-authorised music heritage (e.g., small DIY organisations such as the Heritage Foundation, or Music Heritage UK, that are sustained through the goodwill and dedication of those involved, and through charitable donations and, where possible, small grants). The second phase of the POPID project encompassed patterns of memory-work that fall into the unauthorised music heritage category or 'heritage-as-praxis' and which aren't necessarily regarded as 'heritage' discourses at all by those who practice them (Roberts and Cohen 2014, p. 244; Cohen and Roberts 2013, pp. 46–51). This includes memory-work that is mobilised not with an instrumental goal in mind (such as the curation of a museum exhibition or heritage website, for example, or the erection of a heritage plaque) but merely as reflexive affirmation of a personal or collective music *inheritance* that exists as part of a broader cultural phenomenology of selfhood and embodied materiality.

Accordingly, riding our way along the metaphorical maps of musical memory that were amassed during the course of the POPID audience research, our aim was to facilitate the productive mobilisation of narratives and to flesh out, wherever possible, the spatial 'environments of memory'[5] from whence these narratives acquired their form and symbolic efficacy. To look upon this as 'sketch mapping', as suggested above, is to methodologically position the work within a trajectory that has its origins in an earlier project coordinated by Sara Cohen at the University of Liverpool. The AHRC-funded *Popular Musicscapes and the Characterisation of the Urban Environment* (2007–2010) explored the ways that the urban environment is used, experienced, interpreted and represented in local music cultures and practices, and considered how the urban environment itself influenced music-making in Liverpool. Working with Brett Lashua, the research Cohen instigated took a number of forms: archival investigation, ethnographic research with groups of musicians involved with rock, pop and hip-hop music (including studio and performance-based research and walking interviews), and the elicitation of music-making memory maps. Maps of Liverpool were shown to musicians in order to prompt discussion and gather stories about particular music sites and experiences; in addition, musicians were asked to draw maps to represent their music-making in the city.

The use of hand-drawn and sketch maps to gain insights into subjective perceptions of urban environments and spatial cognition has its anthropological forebears in the work of, for example, the urban planner Kevin Lynch and the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (Lynch 1960; Tuan 1975; see also Gould and White 1974). The ethnomusicological and ethnographic approaches that Cohen brings to the Liverpool music mapping also has its foundations in the work of anthropologists such as Ruth Finnegan, whose landmark book *The Hidden Musicians: Music-making in an English Town* (Finnegan 1989) examines the 'pathways' that musicians in the Buckinghamshire town of Milton Keynes create as they go about their everyday music-making practices (Cohen 1991, pp. 6–7; 2012b, p. 599; 2016, p. 119). Cohen likewise draws on the ethnographic work of anthropologist Steven Feld, who conducted fieldwork among the Kaluli people of Bosavi in the Papua New Guinea Highlands. Feld's influential study shows how soundmaking and musical expression is interwoven into the minutiae of Kaluli daily life, and how 'Kaluli songs map the sound world as a space-time continuum of place, of connection, of exchange, of travel, of memory, of fear, of longing and of possibility' (Feld, quoted in Connell and Gibson 2002, p. 26; Cohen 2012a, p. 161; 2016, p. 119). In the melding of everyday journeys and spatiocultural practices that are in tune with and embedded within social cartographies of self and body, what these and similar anthropological perspectives contribute to the mapping of music-making memory are the embodied dynamics that mobilise what are otherwise static and mute lines on a two-dimensional map. As Feld writes of the Kaluli: 'The flow of these poetic song paths is emotionally and physically linked to the sensual flow of the singing voice' (Feld 1996, p. 91). For Lashua and Cohen, therefore, mapping Liverpool's popular musicscapes was an endeavour critically grounded in movement: 'in order to gain a better understanding of these mappings and [what Doreen Massey calls] "articulated moments", we found it useful to *move* with musicians, to fall in with the repetitions and social rhythms of musicians' ordinary comings and goings' (Lashua and Cohen 2010, p. 79, emphasis in original; see also Lashua et al. 2010). In these examples, both Feld and Lashua and Cohen, I am suggesting, are engaged in the singing rather than mapping of songlines. The resonance of what, as ethnographers, they are attuning themselves to is carried over into what it is, as ethnographers, they are doing, thereby blurring or erasing the dualisms of observer and observed, or of map-as-representation and mapping-as-practice.

6. Sampling Songlines: Some Brief Reflections on Method

In the following sections I will sketch three short songline samples or vignettes drawn from the POPID audience research. Before doing so, it is necessary to set out the rationale for the spaces being un/mapped in each of the sections, as well as to provide some brief background on method. Each of the three sections is focused on a specific geographical site

of travelling musical memory that participants either volunteered or responded to during the course of each interview: (1) home and domestic spaces; (2) performance spaces and embodied dislocations; and (3) mobile spaces: memories on the move.[6] All the interviews were recorded and loosely organised around the same set of questions. However, in keeping with the perambulatory nature of the songlines themselves, the exchanges were typically conversational in style and meandered freely across a range of topics and subject areas that, as interviewer, I kept in check only insofar as to prevent the discussion wandering too far off the basic route map which the task at hand demanded. On many occasions I watched as memories serendipitously flowered into presence during the course of a discussion. Elicited in the flow of the moment, songlines were allowed to then organically proceed in whatever direction the interviewee felt compelled to take them; my role was to follow until such time as they appeared to be fizzling out or losing something of their focus or relevance. The interview subjects were selected from information previously provided in the form of responses to a questionnaire, part of which had allowed respondents to provide free-form narrative reflections on aspects of their musical lives and memories. In the main, the respondents (whose ages ranged from the early twenties to seventy) were from backgrounds in higher education (as students, lecturers or administrators) or the cultural and creative industries. This was not exclusively the case; others included a radiographer, librarian, retired civil engineer, full-time parent, writer, secondary school teacher, but most worked in academia or had links through related professions in the arts and cultural sector. No claim is made in respect of the scientific representativeness of the interview findings. It was very much the qualitative richness and depth of detail provided by the questionnaire respondents that guided the process of selection.

University networks that allowed access to potential participants from academic, cultural and related professional backgrounds were judged to be the most effective and practical recruiting sources. These mailing lists and online discussion forums allowed the research team to target the largest number of prospective respondents keen to share their musical pasts with us, either anonymously (via questionnaire) or in a follow-up interview (respondents had the option of leaving contact details when completing the questionnaire). What might be said in terms of the recruitment process and the wider extrapolations that may or may not be made from the 'data' generated can be more than adequately said on our behalf by the sociologist George Lipsitz in his foreword to the book *My Music: Explorations of Music in Daily Life*. *My Music* (Crafts et al. 1993) was the product of a series of interviews conducted in New York in the 1980s designed to shed insights into the significance of and role played by music in peoples' everyday lives. The book compiles and edits responses drawn from interviews with forty one respondents. What Lipsitz (1993, p. xvi) explains by way of an introductory rationale for the project serves equally well as an observation that can be applied to the POPID research:

> The role of the university as the institution generating these interviews also shapes their content; an interviewing project emanating from a day care centre or a labor union hiring hall might show very different results. Yet the very qualities of time, place, and circumstance that would render this study invalid if it purported to be a statistically representative sample, give it great explanatory power as a case study ... [T]hese interviews are not a microcosm of the nation's or the world's experiences with music; they are the afternoon at a busy intersection that reveals many individual vehicles creating the surface appearance of continuous heavy traffic.

7. Songlines Sample #1: Home

Valerie, a forty-something lecturer in languages based in Cambridgeshire, paints a picture of a small family, each member locked in their own sequestered spaces: *Mother in the kitchen listening to Radio 2; father in the shed listening to Radio 3; and my brother upstairs* [in his bedroom] *playing Radio 1*. She describes growing up in a 'claustrophobic domestic atmosphere'. For Valerie and her brother music provided a means of 'release and escape'.

Her brother played an influential role in Valerie's own musical journey and would go on to work in radio broadcasting: *He is my musical life* [. . .] *He played music constantly and I listened to it with him. He is seven years older than me and we had few ways to relate, but music we could share* [. . .] *When I left home he would send me cassette compilations*. But although it is clear that Valerie has fond memories of the music journeys she shared with her brother, the process of looking back on her time as a child is for all that clearly no less difficult:

> *I'm not nostalgic for my childhood, I would never go back to it. I'm grateful for the music, because it was a safe haven. It made me feel calm and not anxious [. . .] I've had years of therapy. Music is an honest thing, you can't like what you don't like. I became [interested in languages and literature] because I was very good at subtext as a child. [My] parents never used to say anything more to one another than 'would you pass the salt?' We could not talk about anything we ever did. But music was never like that. It was just what it was. But music for me was very private. I didn't use it to bond with people at school. It was something that was purely for me. It wasn't something that was subsumed into the family identity.*

Apart from her attachment to a Walkman cassette player that she remembers playing on long car journeys when holidaying with her family, Valerie offers little detail of her own private spaces of musical refuge; it is her brother's bedroom that is cited as a 'haven' rather than her own. My sense was that a reluctance to dwell on the intimacy of her own private spaces stemmed from a desire to avoid opening up too deeply memories of a childhood that was marred by, in her own words, *madness and anxiety, trauma*.

8. Songlines Sample #2: Dislocation

PhD student David grew up in a sleepy market town in rural Shropshire. Developing an interest in hip-hop and the music of the Los Angeles rapper Ice Cube he cultivated a musical identity that very much represented a counterpoint to the *quietness* and *dullness* associated with his home environment. The excitement and edginess of the LA Gangsta Rap scene offered a heterotopic window through which to glimpse a decisively *other* space of cultural selfhood. Hip-hop also reminds him of time spent in his brother's bedroom listening to music together and thinking his brother *was cool* (although he *don't get on with him so much now*). When asked to describe some of the landscapes he associates with his musical memories it is his brother's bedroom that David volunteers first. Emphasising again the *sense of isolation being in the country*, David recalls how he and his friends *used to come up to Liverpool to go clubbing. Drive up through the countryside, stay up all night. Sense of becoming other than what we are—coming to city, excitement staying up, doing drugs then going back to ordinary life*. The significance of place in this process of becoming is, for David, less about locating himself within a landscape of memory as it is about the landscapes he is a part of offering him the means of *dislocating* himself and of uncoiling the baggage of his quotidian self from the person who he saw as the more vital and real expression of a life going forward:

> [It is about] *Dislocation rather than location. Techno in Liverpool clubs dislocated me from my sense of self in [my home town]. My dad had just died. Didn't have a close relationship with my mum, difficult time in my life so clubbing was a way out—it was a means of dislocation.*

For David, as with several other participants interviewed, drugs are an integral part of the music memories and associated experiences being elicited. The memory of the music played at events (whether gigs, raves, festivals or clubs) cannot be easily disentangled from the dislocated sense of selfhood that psychoactive drugs contributed to any more than it can from the social and collective nature of the experience as whole. The visceral and embodied nature of the experience is a re-memorisation in the sense of a temporal dislocation between an experience located in the past and its recall in the present. But the affectivity of dislocation in the terms described by David can no less be thought of as a psychosocial *carrier*

of experience: a travelling memory that may at times be dormant but—crucially—always carries with it the potential of being lived in the phenomenological present.

9. Songlines Sample #3: On the Road

What stands out from the interview with Claire, a thirty-year old lecturer based in the North East, is the importance of music as a world that she can slip comfortably into in the punctuating moments where the trammels of everyday social selfhood are held in abeyance. These are spaces in-between the 'stations' of social identity that are performatively underwritten by the institutions of home, school and the workplace. For Claire, who grew up in London, journeys by bus to school are remembered as transitional in more ways than one as they marked a period in her life when she found herself traversing the difficult and emotionally precarious terrain of her sexuality:

> *I used to listen to music from cassette tapes on the bus to and from school (30 min–1 h). Before I had a reel to reel tape recorder I used to take several cassettes in my bag and switch between them. They prepared me for the day emotionally and I used to have two or three selections for the trip back depending on how I had ended up feeling during the day. I used to sit in the back of the 33 bus on my own, or later at the front of the top deck of the 267, also on my own, looking out of the window and mainly thinking about the situation I had got myself into at the time to do with my coming out. This was when I was 14–16 but I kept on listening to music like this all the way through school and still do it on long journeys now.*

Claire describes taking the bus to school instead of the tube as the journey took longer and she was less likely to bump into other people with whom she would have to talk. It gave her more time to get ready for whatever she might encounter that day at school— *more time for my own thoughts*. She also describes the 'ritual preparation' the night before, choosing and getting tapes ready to play on the journey to and from school the next day. *By 1996/7*, she recalls, *I would prepare one set of things to listen to for the morning journey and another for listening to on the journey back, depending on what had happened.*

10. Notes towards a Phenomenology of Travelling Memory

The songline samples/vignettes reproduced here are rooted and routed in very specific geographical locations. They could, therefore (if anyone thought it productive to do so) be projected onto a map. They could be mapped, in other words, in the instrumental sense. For the individuals whose songlines are being sung (or figuratively lineated through the process of their narration) the locations recalled are very vivid and all-too-legible. They can be read in an instant, but not as points, lines and polygons on a map, but as memoryscapes that have embedded themselves in the interior landscapes of the self. What makes these memoryscapes songlines is the way they allow for the phenomenological re-immersion in worlds that have become indivisible from the map of the self whose spatial stories they tell.

Each of these vignettes is a 'map' (or 'map detail', at least) insofar as they chart significant moments of transition and/or stasis in the lives of those whose song they sing. These moments are not isolated temporal 'bubbles' salvaged from oblivion. They have been invoked or recalled by combing through the spatial residue of lives as they have been lived in the social, but no less discrete worlds of those who have lived them. In the case of Valerie (all the names are pseudonyms), the home she recalls is far from homely; it is a space that harbours painful and disturbing memories. But it is also a space that, through the music she embraced while inhabiting that world, was clearly incubatory insofar as the self who emerged from it found sustenance in the cultural resources that helped her grow and move on, however precariously, in her life. For David, songlines are traced beyond the confines and disenchantments of the family home, drawing energy and life force from shared spaces of communitas (Turner 1969) that enabled him to not so much 'find himself' as lose himself. David had found value in a dance music culture that offered the possibility of *dislocating* himself, albeit fleetingly, in in-between spaces that had in many ways become transitional in the life he was experiencing at that time. In-between spaces, by

their very nature, ought to be unmappable. To map is to territorialise. For David, in search of emotional *de*territorialisation, the idea of mapping makes little sense. But unmapping clearly does. For her part, Claire's songlines are also rehearsed in in-between spaces; the difference in this case is that it is the journey itself, not the location, that is the memory. To a large extent the location is incidental. The social and biogeographical particularities of where she was living at the time are of course not without significance, but the memory is sparked despite not because of any location that can be traced on a geographical map. The geographical journey she took to and from school enabled her to dwell within a space in which a degree of emotional and affective validation of selfhood could be reaffirmed and re-embraced. The geographical journey is remembered not for the landscape unfolding outside the bus window but for the transitional journey that was slowly edging her towards the self she both was and becoming. In Claire's sample, as with Valerie's and David's, songlines are re-glimpsed and re-drawn in their iteration; in their capacity to give voice to songs that are carriers of memory rather than monuments to it.

To propose the idea of un/mapping is simply to rethink the process—the praxis—of cultural mapping dialectically: to pay greater heed to the way memory is enfolded into and extracted from the everyday production of space. Filtered through a Lefebvrean lens of space-in-the-making (Lefebvre 1991), the task of un/mapping music memory does not entail the wholesale rejection of a representational cartographic discourse anymore than it does the fulsome embrace of so-called non-representational approaches. Songlines are indeed for singing rather than drawing, but that doesn't mean that the 'song sheet'—the textual apparatus by which lines are representationally lain down for others to follow and 'sing'—should not also be valued as a means by which the rhythms, textures and timbres of the song can be productively felt and woven into the experiential fabric of lives as they are being lived in the present. Mapping has as crucial a part to play in the spatial anthropology of memory as unmapping. To visualise songlines 'as a spaghetti of Iliads and Odysseys', to borrow once again from Chatwin, is to reimagine the task of curation as one in which a tangled web of spatial stories are purposely left entangled, slippery and ungraspable, while at the same time showing how each individual thread might be followed or tracked; not to then territorialise the space of that story or memory—e.g., by burdening it with the cumbersome mantle of Heritage or by rendering it cartographically mute and docile—but to fashion a space of everyday hospitality into which others are invited to enter and share.

11. Closing Propositions

The Songlines of Australian cultures, the Native American trails, the sung tracts of land all over the world act as an organizing system for the songs, a set of subheadings to all the knowledge of the culture. Songs are located in the landscape and recalled when that landscape is walked in reality or in imagination . . . I believe the method of loci—creating songlines—is by far the most effective memorisation method ever devised.

Lynne Kelly (2016, pp. 18, 65; see also Neale and Kelly 2023)

Writing more specifically on the interface of popular music and memory, Bennett and Rogers's observation that 'in terms of its current repertoire of approaches, cultural memory theory appears to be less than adequately sensitive to the more micro-social contours of everyday life' (Bennett and Rodgers 2016, p. 49) hints at the need for, and efficacy of, exactly the forms of fine-grained memory-work being proposed in this paper. Although 'cultural memory theory' may seem a little nebulous when couched in such circumscribed terms, the more substantive point to be taken from this is the recognition that personal and cultural memory is lived, embodied and embedded in everyday spaces and practices. From this starting point is the further recognition that memory cannot—or should not—be neatly disentangled from the spaces, landscapes, routes and pathways through and along which memory *travels* and from which it draws the energy, vitality and affectivity needed to keep memory in motion. As Erll contends, 'the term "travelling memory" is a metaphorical shorthand, an abbreviation for the fact that in the production of cultural memory, people, media, mnemonic forms, contents, and practices are in constant, unceasing motion' (Erll

2011, p. 12). The same can be said of songlines inasmuch as the motion attributed to them is me3asured not from the vantage point of a stationary observer (who, standing at a distance, and with a metaphorical pencil and sketchbook in hand, seeks to trace the pattern or lineation of their movement rather than the affective cadences that afford them life). Songlines are measured by soundings: by intersubjective immersion in lived spaces that can only ever be known to the extent that their constituent properties of depth, intentionality and movement can be disclosed phenomenologically—in lived time. Spatial anthropology works as a means by which the soundings of these spaces may be taken, 'not with the intent of territorialising—or disciplining—them but rather to permit them space to breathe more freely, to sing, to conduct, to listen, to intuit—to expand and contract in their responsiveness to those passing through' (Roberts 2018, p. xvi, emphasis in original). Songlines are sung so that others might sing or interpret them as they see fit as memory travels onwards towards the future.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the University of Liverpool's Policy on Research Ethics.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

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Notes

1.   In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau refers to the way that stories, or narratives that are the product of everyday lives lived spatially, 'traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories . . . Every story is a travel story—a spatial practice' (De Certeau 1984, p. 115).

2.   As a further perspective on this we might consider Jan Assman's notion of 'communicative memory' which places emphasis on memory as a socially-embedded practice and product of everyday communication (Assman 1995). This is distinguished from 'cultural memory' insofar as the latter is understood as that which is circulated, produced and consumed in textual and documented form, and which thus is more closely aligned with institutions and mediated practices of popular or collective cultural memory. However, depending on how it is being defined and theorised, cultural memory can also encompass what Assman attributes to communicative memory. Cultural memory need not, therefore, presuppose a more structured or fixed notion of memory, or, correspondingly, memory that is not 'lived' in the everyday.

3.   The interviews were part of research activities linked to the project *Popular Music Heritage, Cultural Memory and Cultural Identity* (POPID). Funded by the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA), POPID was an interdisciplinary and collaborative initiative that brought together researchers based in the UK, The Netherlands, Austria and Slovenia. The UK contribution to the project, which also received funding support from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), was the combined efforts of myself, Sara Cohen (Director of The Institute of Popular Music at the University of Liverpool and UK POPID Principal Investigator), and Gurdeep Khabra, a doctoral student whose work explored the heritage of British Bhangra music: https://www.eur.nl/en/eshcc/research/ermecc/projects/popid-popular-music-heritage (accessed on 17 May 2023).

4.   For examples, including Dorian Lynskey's music tube map published in *The Guardian* in 2006, see the blog *Musings on Maps*: https://dabrownstein.com/tag/dorian-lynskey/ (accessed on 17 May 2023). See also *The Guardian*, 'Going Underground', 3 February 2006: https:// www.theguardian.com/culture/culturevultureblog/2006/feb/03/post51 (accessed on 17 May 2023).

5.   Pierre Nora's concept of 'environments of memory' (*milieux de mémoire*) bears some comparison with Assman's 'communicative memory' inasmuch as it seeks to locate memory in the face-to-face environs of everyday organic social habiting. In this sense, and in Nora's rendering, it can be seen as a nostalgic or idealised paean to a 'traditional' form of social memory deemed lost; it is often associated with the 'pre-modern', before the development of mass media cultures. See Nora (1989).

6.   For a fuller exposition of these three-fold sites of musical memory, see Roberts (2018, pp. 170–85).

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