Article

Sonic Spectres: Word Ghosts in Madeleine Thien's *Dogs at the Perimeter* and the Digital Map Project, 'Fictional Montreal/ Montréal fictif'

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Abstract

This article analyzes various ghosts and their connections with the unsaid and said in relation to Madeleine Thien's *Dogs at the Perimeter* (2011) and the digital map project, 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif' (Morgan and Lichti, 2016–17). Drawing on Jacques Derrida's work on spectres, it suggests that Thien's novel offers both negative and positive hauntings, by drawing attention to the far-reaching effects of the Cambodian genocide. It goes on to reflect on absence and presence, voice and body in relation to the digital map, which features recordings of authors reading extracts of their fiction set in Montréal. Arguing that 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif' performs an interplay between material and imaginary geographies, the article proposes that the map offers the possibility of new conceptualizations of Montréal. In so doing, it argues that both it and *Dogs at the Perimeter* embrace the potentially utopian aspect of spectrality identified by Derrida. This is due to their encouraging readers to think about our collective responsibilities to each other in a world characterized by mobility and migration.

Keywords: ghosts, sound, map, Madeleine Thien, Montréal

In 'Walking in the City', Michel de Certeau claims, 'haunted places are the only ones people can live in'.[1] This assertion tends to be overlooked in responses to a text which has become ubiquitous in urban studies. These usually focus on the distinction it makes between the map – associated with authority – and the path formed by walking.[2] Like walking, Certeau identifies remembering as part of a set of 'everyday practices', which offer micro-resistances to pervasive workings of power.[3] Returning recently to his chapter after a gap of some years, I have become fascinated by the potential for positive, as well as negative, hauntings. Derrida points to the likelihood of such following his own re-readings (of Marx's re-readings of Shakespeare), by referring to 'la possibilité du spectre, le spectre comme possibilité'.[4] In this article, I consider how (re)reading – by following words on the page or via listening[5] – and haunting come together to produce particular 'spectro-geographies'.[6] These embrace the critical aspects of Derrida's account of Marxist ghosts. I shall bring together literary analysis and reflections on a digital map project I devised and undertook with sound and media artist, Philip (Phil) Lichti, called 'Fictional Montreal/ Montréal fictif'.[7] In so doing, I examine how the unsaid and unsayable in Madeleine Thien's novel, *Dogs at the Perimeter* contribute to a set of troubling textual hauntings which nevertheless offer a politics of hope.[8] Contrasting the absence of sound in *Dogs at the Perimeter* with the presence of sound on the map, I argue that both embrace the potentially utopian aspect of spectrality identified by Derrida.[9] These sonic spectres enable imaginative engagements with the city which may, in turn, become material ones.

Derrida highlights the connection between spectrality and the uncanny:[10] Freud's famous account of 'that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar'.[11] In literary studies, haunting is generally identified with the uncanny; associated with the return of a repressed wish or desire or, as Avery F. Gordon identifies, a broader superstition.[12] Another psychoanalytically informed conception of haunting is at play in the work of several postcolonial theorists, who suggest that it reveals the workings and history of colonialism which are otherwise rendered invisible by their power. In his analysis of some of the limitations of this approach, Michael F. O'Riley describes how 'postcolonial haunting . . . is figured as an interruptive or affective moment in the course of Western consciousness where the repressed colonial scene returns'.[13] Significant here are the responses provoked by hauntings, such as anxiety and feeling unsettled. The uncanny has been taken up by several *québécistes*, including myself, to describe the ways in which Montréal is often represented in fiction in French in terms of the 'unhomely'.[14] It is not possible to identify broad trends in the city's English-language

fiction,[15] besides noting that much of the work associated with the post-2000 'renaissance' of this literary scene is produced by writers who are not of British or Irish descent. Whilst individual texts, such as Rawi Hage's *Cockroach*,[16] might mediate a certain 'unhomeliness' in terms of an exclusion from participation in Montréal's middle-class consumer culture and society, others represent a sense of being at ease within the city.[17] Nevertheless, Québec's majority literatures have been very much identified with Montréal, particularly since Québec's French-language fiction's 'urban turn' of the 1940s.[18] The economic and cultural centre of Québec, historic site of a concentration of the province's anglophone population and a pole of immigration more broadly, Montréal is a flashpoint for social tensions.[19] One of a number of cities Sherry Simon describes as 'translational',[20] Montréal offers visual language hauntings in the form of old advertisements in English which seep through into the present of the post-Bill 101 urban landscape – an image the critic uses in discussing the city.[21] Aural hauntings are found in the patterns of many Montréalers' everyday speech, which includes expressions like 'mon chum', 'je vais scruncher mes cheveux' and 'I'm going to the dep'. Literature contains language ghosts, too. Some French-language novels published during the 1960s and early 1970s include anglophone characters and elements of English in their mediation of either struggles between francophones and anglophones or,[22] conversely, Montréal's embracing of modernity as figured through economic success and ethno-linguistic diversity.[23] English-language fiction published in the decades following the post-World War II nationalist assertion known as the Quiet Revolution saw some writers reach out to francophones by including French words and referencing particular politics, or engaging in feminist exchanges.[24] Fiction of the last 10 years or so often mediates today's less obviously fraught language-scape in the use of French or francophone characters.[25]

In some ways, then, Montréal is the perfect location for haunting tales. All the same, the city appears only occasionally in Thien's novel, despite being the setting for much of the present of the narrative. *Dogs at the Perimeter*, which contains lengthy sections set in the past, can be described as a 'ghost stor[y]' in the sense of Gordon's description of this as 'concerning exclusions and invisibilities'.[26] It opens with 44-year-old neuroscientist Janie recounting the invisibilization of a friend and colleague from Montréal's Brain Research Centre (BRC). We learn that on 29 November 2005, security footage shows Hiroji Matsui leaving his workplace and descending a flight of stairs. He then 'walked into the city and disappeared into air'.[27] This vanishing figure is the first of many in the novel, much of which is set in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge. Janie

guesses that Hiroji has left Montréal to search for his brother, Junichiro, or James, Matsui. James had gone missing in 1975 whilst carrying out humanitarian work for the International Red Cross, first in Vietnam and then in Cambodia – Janie's original home country. Some months previously, Janie had offered to help Hiroji in his quest for his brother and, in so doing had become overwhelmed by what, in a Western context, would be described as depression and traumatic flashbacks.[28] These symptoms are compounded by the death of her adoptive mother. Janie becomes increasingly unable to maintain domestic routines with her partner and child and moves out of the family home to stay in Matsui's empty apartment. As the novel goes on, we learn that Janie – then named Mei – had arrived in Canada aged 12, after being saved from a shipwreck by fishermen and adopted by a woman living in Vancouver. In between her abrupt expulsion from her home in Phnom Penh and her arrival in North America, the girl had: seen her father taken away, worked in a series of cooperatives where she had witnessed people tortured and killed, observed her brother align himself with the Khmer Rouge, then use his trusted position to enable himself and his sister to escape, been subject to sexual and physical assault when the boat taking the siblings to Malaysia was hijacked and seen her brother float away from her in the sea to his certain death. The dead or lost also include Mei's grandfather, the girl whose bloody clothes the 10-year-old Mei is forced to wear on the first cooperative to which she was sent, Mei's biological mother who dies alone surrounded by rats in an infirmary run by children, Mei's friend Bhopa, James's wife and the baby son he never met, and many former neighbours, associates and guards.

Many of the novel's 'disappeared' refuse to remain in the past, with Janie telling Hiroji, 'some ghosts could never be put to rest'.[29] One example is a former patient who, like the doctor, is of Japanese descent. Hiroji had treated the man many years previously and is astonished by the latter's sudden appearance in a café near the BRC in Montréal: 'Hiroji stared at the stranger and he knew, instantly, that it was his brother. That it could not be his brother. And yet, that it was'.[30] Similarly, whilst walking on Côtes-des-Neiges and Queen Mary, Janie/Mei encounters her father 'in the shape of another person'.[31] Given that Montréal is significantly less ethnically diverse than Canada's other metropolises – Toronto and Vancouver – one way of reading these moments has them signal the hypervisibility of Asian faces in the city's streets.[32] However, the similarity with 'A Map of the City' prevents this. Thien's 'long short story'[33] published in 2001 opens with the following wistful observation: 'in the years after I left home, I used to glimpse my parents in unexpected places. I would see the

two of them in the Safeway, my mother standing patiently by while my father weighed oranges in his hands, feeling for signs of imperfection'.[34] We later discover that the narrator's parents separated several years prior to these recollected instances. There are a number of similarities between Thien's 2011 novel and 'A Map of the City', in which the father's inability to maintain a stable job and family life in Vancouver is connected with the political turmoil in Indonesia which led him and his wife to emigrate.[35] *Dogs at the Perimeter*'s epic reach means that we move away from the focus on the individual family that we get in the earlier story to confront the large-scale destruction wrought by the Khmer Rouge. The novel presents a context where Angkar (the ruling party) is in power, but no one can identify who or what Angkar is, as alliances become broken, people denounce others or confess to fantastical crimes, names and identities are put on and shrugged off. The disembodied and all-pervasive quality to Angkar means that it is, at once, nowhere and everywhere: it is impossible to find its origin or source. It has undergone what Derrida describes as a 'fantomalisation',[36] reinforcing its hegemony.[37] In this way, a father warns his son, who is reciting verse, 'Angkar is listening'.[38] Announcing itself as the new and only time, Angkar takes on a monumental quality, standing outside of chronological time like Derrida's ever-watchful spectre: 'la hantise est historique, certes, mais elle ne *date* pas'.[39]

Angkar is one of several negative hauntings in *Dogs at the Perimeter* that disrupt understandings of time. In addition to the monumental time of Angkar, we encounter the elliptical time of grief,[40] the halted time of horror,[41] and temporal fissures in which the past interweaves the present. The temporal shifts in Thien's novel bring about slips in space, as when Phnom Penh and Montréal coincide. Janie describes walking in the city/ies: 'I walk out onto the wide boulevard of Côte-des-Neiges . . . I smell coffee from a nearby bakery, I see my little brother and myself . . . . We are caught outside when the air raid sirens begin'.[42] These spatio-temporal slips and folds are found within both the narrative and form, so that intertextual hauntings in allusions to Thien's earlier work combine with intra-textual ones. One day, Janie forgets to collect her son from daycare. She struggles to engage with her child once the two are reunited, shocking herself by hitting him. Distressed, she reflects, 'I wanted to tie my son's wrist to mine with a piece of string and in this way save us both'.[43] This moment is recalled later, when a flashback reveals that one of the teenage guards at the first cooperative to which the girl who became Janie was sent employed this string technique to ensure that 'if one . . . were taken, the other would wake'.[44] Thien's novel offers the porosity between

the past and the present, the real and the spectral outlined by Derrida[45] to disorienting – and often devastating – effect. *Dogs at the Perimeter* contains both returning and ever-present ghosts, with the latter frequently taking the shapes of past and new selves. Mei is not Janie's first name – in fact, we never learn what this was – but one given to her at the first cooperative in which she worked. Her brother, Sopham, becomes Rithy as he perfects his effacement of his bourgeois past in order to stay alive.[46] For his part, Hiroji's brother, James, becomes Kwan in prison, after his guard advises him that he recognizes him as an old school friend, who was a mute and trustworthy young man:

> In the room, a mosquito buzzed at James's cheek and he wondered how the insect had found its way into the locked room where there were no windows and the air was stale. It must have come in with the man.
>   "Are you Kwan?"
>   "No."
>   Generously, the man extended his hand and hushed the mosquito away. "Can you be certain?"[47]

James remains Kwan for the rest of his life, although opts for taciturnity rather than complete silence. Even when Hiroji tracks down the man he believes to be his brother, it is not clear at first whether the Kwan he meets ever was James as the latter 'didn't respond'[48] when the Montréal doctor arrives on his doorstep. Referring us to the ethnographic work of Janet McLellan, Y-Dang Troeung describes how Thien's novel is informed by *sramay*, which McLellan defines as 'ghost haunting . . . caused by the visitation of spirits . . . of family members or other loved ones who were murdered and not given proper burial rites'.[49] Troeung argues persuasively that Western understandings of trauma are not appropriate for understanding *Dogs at the Perimeter*; highlighting the 'incommensurability between Janie's experience of *sramay* (ghost haunting) and her work as a brain research neurologist'[50] to represent the gap between Canadian and Cambodian forms of knowledge. She draws attention to the way in which, through offering parts of the Cambodian elements of the narrative from a Japanese-Canadian perspective, *Dogs at the Perimeter* 'works against the framing of the . . . genocide as an isolated case in world history',[51] by positioning this within a broader context of Western imperialism. In this respect, the overlaying of Montréal and Phnom Penh is not only a symptom of Janie's being overwhelmed by her traumatic past, but

also a reminder of the connections between West and East, and the material – as well as imaginary and symbolic – impacts of the actions of the more powerful on the less so.

Nevertheless, Thien's novel invites post-postmodern readings as well as postcolonial ones, with these frequently intersecting. *Dogs at the Perimeter* has an emotional resonance found in literature associated with new sincerity, post-postmodernism, or metamodernism.[52] The emotion-work carried out by the novel operates at a number of levels within and beyond the text: dedicated to Thien's late mother, it is partly framed by a grieving for the maternal. Janie's sadness at the death of her adoptive mother overlays her continuing sorrow over the loss of her biological mother, as well as her concerns that she is unable to be an adequate mother due to everything she has endured. The scale of Janie's/Mei's distress alone is likely to be beyond the imaginative grasp of most readers. Thien's characters' collective grief and pain is immeasurable and unchartable, in contrast to the painstaking research carried out by Janie and Hiroji. This mass sorrow is both a response to Angkar and a counter-'fantomalisation',[53] disrupting the present in unbearable ways in order to remember atrocity and yet, offer hope. It can be compared with the 'becoming-ghost'[54] we encounter in the form of the digital Hiroji who vanishes from the screen at the start. As might be expected given that it is not possible to claim that postmodernity is over, *Dogs at the Perimeter* mediates certain aspects of life and culture within late- or post-industrial capitalism which Fredric Jameson associates with postmodernism,[55] even if it eschews some of the formal games identified with the avant-garde or postmodern writing of authors like Nicole Brossard and Daphne Marlatt.[56] These aspects include the degree of easy mobility enjoyed by Hiroji and Janie as adults, which is contrasted with the enforced migration of both as children,[57] and the 'becoming-ghost' of Hiroji and his former patient, since the latter is described as 'a reflection of a reflection'.[58] Writing at the beginning of the internet era, Derrida highlights the spectralities engendered by mass media technologies,[59] pointing to their contribution to global power hegemonies. In our 'post-internet' age,[60] however, we are able to make a constructive connection between the impoverished former patient and the ephemeral digitized Hiroji. Like Hamlet's father in *Spectres de Marx*, these characters function to warn viewers or readers of impending catastrophe. They point to a difficult past, framing Thien's novel from the start with histories of violence, loss and multi-generational trauma connected with the historical relationships between Japan and North America.[61] They also signal a troubling present, characterized by homelessness, poverty, global inequality, forced migration and emotional breakdown. In this sense, they

are both negative and positive ghosts. They act like Hamlet's father as read by Derrida, who interprets the former's warning that '*the time is out of joint*'[62] as paving the way for a potential remedying of affairs.[63]

In contrast, though, to the voice of the father which reverberates in *Spectres de Marx*, the unsaid and unsayable echo throughout *Dogs at the Perimeter*. Sound plays a key role in Thien's other novels: *Certainty* features a character who is a producer of radio documentaries, whereas music is central to *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*.[64] It is the absence of sound or, more precisely, of certain words, which informs *Dogs at the Perimeter*, as indicated in Mei's account of the attack on the boat: 'time stopped. I have no words for what was done'.[65] These silences are suggested not only narratively but formally, with the underwritten and fragmented prose pointing to the word ghosts of the unsaid.[66] In an interview I undertook with her, Thien discussed how she had been motivated by 'find[ing] a way to articulate what [Janie] is unable to speak'.[67] *Dogs at the Perimeter* silently 'speaks' in that it offers a fictionalized witnessing of terror to raise awareness of the Cambodian genocide. In this respect, it is vital that certain spectres remain restless to remind readers of the continuing tragedy of Cambodia. Offering repeated reminders of how war and violence impact upon multiple generations across two continents, *Dogs at the Perimeter* carries out a refusal to mourn as conceptualized by Freud as a moving towards an acceptance of loss.[68] When I met with Thien in 'late Summer' 2016,[69] she told me how she hoped that the attention being paid to her latest novel would lead readers to discover, or rediscover *Dogs at the Perimeter*. *Do Not Say We Have Nothing* went on to win the Governor-General's Award for English-language Fiction and the Scotiabank Giller Prize. It was also shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. In a café on avenue Mont-Royal against the sounds of clattering crockery, Thien spoke with me about her attachment to Phnom Penh; contrasting this with the way she often feels out of place in Montréal. The writer had just recorded her contribution to 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif', which is a digital map built around sound: audio recordings of authors reading short extracts of their fictional works set in particular locations in the city. A pilot project, it includes readings by a selection of writers – not only Thien, but also Monique LaRue, Nicole Brossard, André Carpentier, Marie-Célie Agnant, Martine Delvaux, David Homel, Anita Anand, Dimitri Nasrallah, Rawi Hage, Neil Smith and Heather O'Neill. Due to Québec's dual star system, there is less crossover than might be expected between French-language and English-language media and cultures. Although the digital literary map is not a particularly new phenomenon, most examples focus on the visual.[70] Informed by geocriticism's commitment to giving

attention to other senses besides sight,[71] 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif' centres on the auditory. As Marcel Cobussen and Vincent Meelberg highlight in their editorial to a special issue of *Journal of Sonic Studies*, there are a number of ways of listening.[72] They cite a 2005 address given by Dutch musicologist and composer, Elmer Schönberger, in which he pleads for 'a disinterested, disengaged listening to "real" music' rather than what he saw as the '"easy" or consumptive listening' of popular music.[73] Cobussen and Meelberg problematize the identification of what Schönberger calls 'Large Listening' with canonical or high cultural forms. They draw our attention to the various listenings proposed by the contributors to the special issue of *Sonic Studies* they are editing, which include: attentive listening to the sounds of daily life,[74] 'Deep Listening',[75] ethical listening,[76] political listening,[77] 'productive' listening to site-specific sound art,[78] and 'affective listening'.[79] 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif' most likely prompts 'affective listening'. The affective turn within the humanities and social sciences has prompted a number of critical and theoretical responses, with considerable discussion around definitions of affect and the distinctiveness of this (or not) from emotion.[80] Musicologist Nicholas Reyland offers a useful shorthand of debates within his discipline, suggesting, 'affects are immediate; emotions respond, in part, to affect, weaving affect into relationships with signification'.[81] However, he goes on to point out that 'there is, in truth, no hard dividing line between affect and emotion'.[82]

Adel Wang Jing describes 'affective listening' as 'listening with and to the body'.[83] An item in 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif''s project notes offers an example of this kind of embodied experience: 'I was meeting with a graduate student in my office, when an audio file shared with me on Dropbox suddenly popped onto my computer screen. It was Phil's recording of Nicole Brossard reading from *French Kiss*; my favorite Montréal novel. My eyes instantly filled with tears'.[84] Certain sounds seem to lend themselves to 'affective listening': in his work on opera and the voice, Michel Schneider argues, 'dans l'ordre ordinaire de la vie, la sonorité, le timbre, les intervalles de la voix qui nous parle sont comme effaces derrière la signification de ce qu'elle nous dit, mais la signification disparaît dès que notre écoute se porte vers la voix en elle-même'.[85] Consequently, the recordings of the readings on the digital map offer more than extracts of canonical and recent examples of fiction. The variety of voices, timbres and accents prompts its own a set of pleasures beyond those provoked by the words performed. Similarly to the photograph,[86] the authors' readings on the digital map offer traces of the latter's presence – [87]even if, as with Certeau's famous 'path', the embodied recording performances are not captured in their

entirety. The words read are both highly significant, in that they link with individual geographical points; and irrelevant, as the voices have particular resonances of their own. On the map, Thien reads from the start of *Dogs at the Perimeter*. We thereby get a play between the absent presence of the writer's voice and the presence-absence of the security footage of Hiroji with which her novel begins. Of course, (re)reading their own writing was itself a source of enjoyment for certain authors, such as Monique LaRue who, after reading a section on Expo 67 from *La Démarche du crabe*,[88] commented on the pleasure she felt in familiarizing herself anew with work she had not thought of for some time. If, as Nicole Brossard suggests, our creative writing alters across the life course,[89] then re-reading is itself an enactment of haunting, with the older self ventriloquizing the younger one.[90]

'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif''s play between absence and presence, the real (but invisible) radio waves and the imaginary, performs the relationship between material and imagined geographies. It is difficult definitively to establish this relationship, but there is some consensus amongst literary and cultural geographers that cultural productions and physical environments inform each other. For example, Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift argue that, 'a city named in certain ways also becomes that city through the practices of people in response to the labels. They perform the labels'.[91] In this way, the Brain Research Centre in *Dogs at the Perimeter* both is and is not the Montréal Neurological Institute. The city (or suburb, or village) is a dream-space, and cultural productions, including literary fiction, foster a dreaming-haunting/haunting-dreaming which prompt uncanny sensations of knowing, yet not knowing a place. Novels, poems, songs, films, paintings, graffiti and so on give rise to hundreds of micro-hauntings we experience every day in traversing an urban or non-urban space. Tim Edensor, who also reprises Certeau's remarks on remembering, stresses the mundanity of hauntings in a piece on suburban Manchester in which he reads (and re-reads) his commute to work: 'modern imperatives to swiftly bury the past produce cities that are haunted by that which has been consigned to irrelevance'.[92] For him, repetition across generations of routines like shopping and gardening produce their own hauntings.[93] However, spatial hauntings are not only triggered by the passage of time or accumulation of memories, but also by mobilities and migration, yearnings and reveries. For if, as Certeau suggests, remembering is an 'everyday practice' which can help to challenge dominant power relations, it is important to acknowledge that the memories which contribute to the hauntings of a particular place may not have originated there. Places can prompt recollections, dreams or fantasies of others, all of which feed into each other.

Edensor draws on Certeau's description of disruptions to urban order: 'excessive scraps, inconsistencies, peculiarities, incongruities, traces and conspicuous absences can . . . extend the potential for reading and experiencing the city otherwise'.[94] 'Reading and experiencing the city otherwise' means attending to marginalized voices. Although Thien disavows this ambition, *Dogs at the Perimeter* can be said to be carrying out a kind of healing.[95] The end offers a degree of reconciliation with certain ghosts, as Hiroji is reunited with James/Kwan and Janie seems to promise increased contact with her partner and son. Offering performances of (re)readings of creative texts, 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif' is a performance in its own right, which informs understandings and experiences of the city. The project will doubtless contribute to dominant conceptualizations of Montréal as essentially split between its majority languages for,[96] as Graham Huggan and others have made clear, maps are not transparent tools.[97] This is further highlighted by Sara Luchetta, who argues, 'maps . . . guide our gaze to the world'.[98] So, like all maps, 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif' is haunted by what it leaves off. All the same, it offers certain 'spectro-geographies'[99] in that it has the potential to complicate some imaginary mappings of the city and thereby cross cultural-linguistic divides. This is due to its including French- and English-language authors alongside one another.[100] It also prompts readers-listeners to think about belonging to/in the city. The diversity of voices on the digital map connects with the attention given to diasporic communities in *Dogs at the Perimeter* and other featured texts, such as Agnant's *Le Livre d'Emma* and Nasrallah's *Niko*.[101] In their own ways, then, *Dogs at the Perimeter* and the digital map project embrace the potentially utopian aspect of spectrality contained in Derrida's claim, 'au fond, le spectre, c'est l'avenir'.[102] In its fictionalized recalling of an unspeakable past, Thien's novel reminds us of the impossibility of forgetting yet, in so doing, offers a haunting of hope by reminding us of our collective responsibilities to each other. An auditory snapshot of Québec's most literary city, the digital map encourages an affective engagement with fiction on the part of listeners-readers and, through this, imaginary – and potentially real – connections with various spaces, places and communities in and beyond Montréal.

Notes

1 Michel de Certeau, 'Walking in the City', in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall (London: University of California Press, 1984), 108.

2 See, for example, Brian Morris, 'What we Talk about When we Talk about "Walking in the City"', *Cultural Studies* 18.5 (2004).

3 Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

4   Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: L'État de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 34.

5   Matthew Rubery describes listening to audio books as reading. Matthew Rubery, 'Tapeworms: Books on Tape and the People Who Love Them' (paper presented at English Research Seminar, Keele University, March 2, 2016).

6   Guest editors, Jo Frances Maddern and Peter Adey use this term 'as a deliberate reference to Derrida's spectro-politics' in an editorial to a special edition of *Cultural Geographies*. Jo Frances Maddern and Peter Adey, 'Editorial: Spectro-geographies', *Cultural Geographies* 15 (2008): 291.

7   Ceri Morgan and Philip Lichti, 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif', British Academy small research grant project, 2016–17.

8   Madeleine Thien, *Dogs at the Perimeter* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2011).

9   Derrida, *Spectres*, 71.

10 Derrida, *Spectres*, 165.

11 Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Volume XVII (1917–1919). An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, trans. James Strachey, ed. James Strachey et al. (London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1955), 220.

12 Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, 2nd edn (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). References are to the Kindle edition.

13 Michael F. O'Riley, 'Postcolonial Haunting: Anxiety, Affect, and the Situated Encounter', *Postcolonial Text*, 3.4 (2007): 1.

14 Ceri Morgan, *Mindscapes of Montréal: Québec's Urban Fiction, 1960–2005* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012).

15 In the introduction to a special edition on Anglo-Quebec Poetry, Jason Camlot writes, 'there has not been a coherent, nationally recognized identity for anglophone Quebec writing since the 1960s when a lyric-based poetry in the tradition of Irving Layton and Leonard Cohen was still a dominant mode and was identified as a signature mode of Canadian poetry'. Jason Camlot, 'Introduction: (Im)possible Conditionals: Anglo-Quebec Poetry/la poésie anglo-québécoise', *Canadian Poetry*, 64 (Spring/Summer, 2009): 11.

16 Rawi Hage, *Cockroach* (Toronto: Anansi, 2008).

17 See, for example, Heather O'Neill, *Lullabies for Little Criminals* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2006). O'Neill is from Montréal originally, unlike many of the writers currently associated with the city's anglo-lit scene.

18 See Jean-François Chassay, *Bibliographie descriptive du roman montréalais* (Montréal: Groupe de recherche Montréal imaginaire, Université de Montréal, 1991). The last 10 years or so have seen a return to the rural in fiction in French. See Samuel Archibald, 'Le néoterritoir et moi', *Liberté*, 295 (April 2012).

19 For cities as sites where political tensions crystallize see, for example, Robin James Smith and Kevin Hetherington, *Urban Rhythms: Mobilities, Space and Interaction in the Contemporary City* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 7.

20 Sherry Simon, *Cities in Translation: Intersections of Language and Memory* (London: Routledge, 2012), 3.

21 Sherry Simon, 'Montreal and the City as Translation Zone' (paper presented at the Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies The Postcolonial City conference, Institut français, London, 19 November 2011).

22 Hubert Aquin, *Trou de mémoire* (Montréal: Cercle du livre de France, 1968).

23 Lucile Vallières, *La Fragilite des idoles* ([Montréal]: Éditions du lys, 1964).

24 See, for example, Gail Scott, *Heroine* (Burnaby, B.C.: Talonbooks, 1999).

25 Neil Smith, 'Isolettes', in *Bang Crunch* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), Heather O'Neill, *The Girl Who Was Saturday Night* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2014).

26 Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 17.

27 Thien, *Dogs*, 1.

28 Thien, *Dogs*, 53.

29 Thien, *Dogs*, 53.

30 Thien, *Dogs*, 43. The same is suggested later in Thien's novel when, in a flashback, we learn Mei's reaction on seeing her brother arrive at her cooperative: 'in the same moment, I believed and disbelieved'. Thien, *Dogs*, 127.

31 Thien, *Dogs*, 63.

32 In the 2016 census, just over half of the populations of Vancouver and Toronto identified as 'visible minorities' (a Canadian census term), in contrast to just over 30% of Montréalers. Tara Carman, 'Visible minorities now the majority in

5 B.C. cities', CBC News, 27 October 2017, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/visible-minorities-now-the-majority-in-5-b-c-cities-1.4375858; Julia Whalen, 'Census 2016: more than half of Torontonians identify themselves as visible minorities', CBC News, 25 October 2017, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/census-visible-minorities-1.4371018; Shari Okeke, 'Ethnic, visible minorities want Montréal mayoral candidates to address diversity', CBC News, 31 October 2017, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/ethnic-visible-minorities-want-montreal-mayoral-candidates-to-address-diversity-1.4379795.

33 Madeleine Thien (interview with Ceri Morgan, Montréal, 12 September 2016).

34 Madeleine Thien, 'A Map of the City', in *Simple Recipes* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2001), 161.

35 Thien's deceptively 'simple' story is considerably more complex than it appears, so that here, again, we have more than one set of hauntings. This is underlined by Gemma Allt, who interprets the narrator's walking and driving around Vancouver as a kind of haunting of the city, asking, 'who is the ghost in this story?' (seminar contribution, Canadian Metropolis module, Keele University, 12 October 2017).

36 Derrida, *Spectres*, 75.

37 Derrida describes how Marx writes about 'le signe monétaire' as a kind of ghost (80); with money and the state becoming spectral: 'la métamorphose des marchandises . . . était déjà un processus d'idéalisation transfigurante qu'on peut légitimement appeler spectropoétique' Derrida, *Spectres*, 81.

38 Thien, *Dogs*, 86.

39 Derrida, *Spectres*, 22.

40 Thien, *Dogs*, 71.

41 Thien, *Dogs*, 137.

42 Thien, *Dogs*, 61.

43 Thien, *Dogs*, 38.

44 Thien, *Dogs*, 94. Oliver Clarke identifies a similar technique in 'A Map of the City' (seminar contribution, Canadian Metropolis seminar, Keele University, 12 October 2017).

45 Derrida, *Spectres*, 72. If, as Derrida suggests, a ghost challenges chronology (72), 'revenant' is perhaps not the right term to describe it. Derrida suggests that the spectre is characterized by repetition and return: 'un spectre est toujours un revenant'. Derrida, *Spectres*, 32.

46 Thien, *Dogs*, 105–106.

47 Thien, *Dogs*, 189.

48 Thien, *Dogs*, 246.

49 Janet McLellan, Cambodian Refugees in Ontario: Resettlement, Religion, and Identity (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 104. Cited in Y-Dang Troeung, 'Witnessing Cambodia's Disappeared', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 82.2 (Spring 2013): 157.

50 Troeung, 'Witnessing', 161.

51 Troeung, 'Witnessing', 156.

52 On metamodernism, see/hear, for example, Kristian Shaw, 'BrexLit: Hope and Melancholy in the Contemporary British Novel' (paper presented at the second AHRC Metamodernism Symposium, Keele University, 23 May 2018). Audio recording available at https://ahrc-metamodernism.co.uk/papers-from-the-2nd-symposium.

53 Derrida, *Spectres*, 75.

54 João Biehl and Peter Locke explain that for Deleuze, becoming is a mode of being which challenges fixed notions of identity and hierarchical divisions between self and other: 'in becoming, as Deleuze saw it, one can achieve an ultimate existential stage in which life is simply immanent and open to new relations—camaraderie—and trajectories'. João Biehl and Peter Locke, 'Deleuze and the Anthropology of Becoming', *Current Anthropology*, 51. 3 (June 2010): 317.

55 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 5–6.

56 See, for example, Nicole Brossard, *French Kiss* (Montréal: Éditions du Jour, 1974), Daphne Marlatt, *Ana Historic* (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1988).

57 Other characters who have experienced forced migration include Nuong, with whom Hiroji stays in Cambodia. As a child, Nuong was briefly under the guardianship of the doctor in a refugee camp in Aranyaprathet. Adopted by a family in the United States, he is deported to Cambodia as an adult after he commits a crime and loses his refugee status.

58 Thien, *Dogs*, 44.

59 Derrida, *Spectres*, 93.

60 Guillaume Morissette, *The Original Face* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 2017), 37.

61 Many Japanese living in Canada were subject to internment during World War II, and it is impossible to read an account of

an apparently vanishing Japanese man without thinking of the atomic bombs launched on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

62   Cited in Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, 47, Derrida's italics.

63   Gordon offers a similar view in her description of conjuring: 'conjuring is a particular form of calling up and calling out the forces that make things what they are in order to fix and transform a troubling situation', Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 22.

64   *Certainty* features a character who is a producer of radio documentaries, whereas music is central to *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*. Madeleine Thien, *Certainty* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006), *Do Not Say We Have Nothing* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2016).

65   Thien, *Dogs*, 137.

66   Guy Beauregard discusses the reading practices invited by Thien's novel, which he describes as 'a text that sets out to represent, in [. . .] a fragmentary manner, . . . histories of destruction and loss'. Guy Beauregard, 'Interwoven Temporalities: Reading Madeleine Thien's *Dogs at the Perimeter*', *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en Littérature Canadienne*, 39.2 (2014): 176.

67   Thien (interview with Ceri Morgan, Montréal, 12 September 2016).

68   Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914–1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953).

69   Thien (interview with Ceri Morgan, Montréal, 12 September 2016).

70   See, for example, 'Mapping the Lakes: A Literary GIS', http://www.lancaster.ac.uk /mappingthelakes/How%20to%20 use%20this%20site.html.

71   See Robert T. Tally Jr., 'Translator's Preface: The Timely Emergence of Geocriticism', in Bertrand Westphal, *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, trans. Robert T. Jally Jr (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

72   Marcel Cobussen and Vincent Meelberg, 'Editorial: Listenings', *Journal of Sonic Studies*, 2.1 (May 2012), http://journal .sonicstudies.org/vol02/nr01/a01.

73   Elmer Schönberger, 'Het Grote Luisteren—reikhalzen naar muziek' (Huizinga Lecture, the Pieterskerk, Leiden, the Netherlends, 2005).

74   Ruth Herbert, 'Modes of Music Listening and Modes of Subjectivity in Everyday Life', *Journal of Sonic Studies*, 2.1 (May 2012), http://journal.sonicstudies .org/vol02/nr01/a05.

75   Sharon Stewart, 'Listening to Deep Listening: Reflection on the 1988 Recording and Lifework of Pauline Oliveros', *Journal of Sonic Studies*, 2.1 (May 2012), http://journal.sonicstudies .org/vol02/nr01/a12.

76   Salomé Voegelin, 'Ethics of Listening', *Journal of Sonic Studies*, 2.1 (May 2012), http://journal.sonicstudies.org/vol02 /nr01/a08.

77   Huw Hallam, 'The Production of Listening: On Biopolitical Sound and the Commonplaces of Aurality', *Journal of Sonic Studies*, 2.1 (May 2012), http://journal.sonicstudies.org/vol02 /nr01/a07.

78   Isobel Anderson, 'Voice, Narrative, Place: Listening to Stories', *Journal of Sonic Studies*, 2.1 (May 2012), http://journal .sonicstudies.org/vol02/nr01/a10.

79   Adel Wang Jing, 'Affective Listening: China's Experimental Music and Sound Art', *Journal of Sonic Studies*, 2.1 (May 2012), http://journal.sonicstudies .org/vol02/nr01/a11.

80   See, for example, Nigel Thrift, 'Intensities of Feeling: Towards a Spatial Politics of Affect', *Geografiska Annaler B*, 86.1 (2004); Deborah Thien, 'After or beyond Feeling? A Consideration of Affect and Emotion in Geography', *Area*, 37.4 (2005); Divya P. Tolia-Kelly, 'Affect—an ethnocentric encounter?: Exploring the 'universalist' imperative of emotional/ affectual geographies', *Area*, 38 (2006).

81   Nicholas Reyland, 'Affect, Representation, Transformation: *The Royle Family*'s Musical Bodies', in *Music, Analysis, and the Body: Experiments, Explorations, and Embodiments*, eds. Nicholas Reyland and Rebecca Thumpston (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 172.

82   Reyland, 'Affect', 172.

83   Wang, 'Affective Listening'. This kind of listening is found in Dogs at the Perimeter, when Elie, one of the patients at the Brain Research Centre, loses language as left side of her brain atrophies. This causes

her to replace words with images: 'the Lord's Prayer touched her in the same bodily way that the wind might, it was the sensation of sound but not meaning'. Thien, *Dogs*, 10–11.

84 Ceri Morgan, Project notes, 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif', unpublished, 2017.

85 Michel Schneider, Prima Donna. Opéra et inconscient (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2001), Kindle edn, p.101.

86 Susan Bruce describes how photography has been linked with ghostliness: 'since its inception, photography has been spoken of in terms of the ghostly, ghosts in terms of the photographic'. Susan Bruce, 'Sympathy For the Dead: (G)hosts, Hostilities and Mediums in Alejandro Amenàbar's *The Others* and Postmortem Photography', *Discourse*, 27.2 & 27.3 (Spring and Fall 2005): 24.

87 Even if we recognize photography as a highly mediated practice, it is still culturally perceived as having a testimonial function.

88 Monique LaRue, *La Démarche du crabe* (Montréal: Boréal, 1995).

89 See, for example, Nicole Brossard, 'Le corps du personage', *Tessera. Bodies, Vesture, Ornament/Corps, vêtements, parures*, 19 (Winter 1995): 68.

90 Or, at least, rereading one's own work aloud offers this kind of ventriloquism, although all rereading offers hauntings in the sense of previous readings framing our current one.

91 Ash Amin, and Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 23.

92 Tim Edensor, 'Mundane hauntings: commuting through the phantasmagoric working-class spaces of Manchester, England', *Cultural Geographies*, 15 (2008): 313.

93 Edensor, 'Mundane hauntings', 326.

94 Edensor, 'Mundane hauntings', 325.

95 When Thien was asked whether she aimed to make the novel a work of healing as well as an account of trauma (or at least, that is how it is understood in Western contexts), she replied 'I think of it more as a record of existence. Here is a life that was lived, in all its complexity' (Twitter exchange, 10 November 2016).

96 Some audience members at a session to discuss the project during the Blue Met literary festival 2017, asked why the map did not include Montréal fiction in other languages. Such a project would require additional investigators with the necessary expertise and a larger budget than the one secured.

97 Graham Huggan, 'Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism, and the Cartographic Connection', *Ariel*, 20.4 (October 1989).

98 Sara Luchetta, 'Exploring the literary map: An analytical review of online literary mapping projects', *Geography Compass*, 11.1 (2017): 12, doi: 10.1111/gec3.12303. The technological tools available to build the map (cheaply and easily) also implicitly inform and instruct users in particular ways. To access the recordings on 'Fictional Montreal/Montréal fictif', users need to click on icons. These are linked to specific points on the city in a way which imposes a geographical precision on texts' locations which may not be present in the original works of fiction. This is especially the case with Marie-Célie Agnant's *Le Livre d'Emma*, which contains references to views of the Saint Lawrence River, but withholds details of the location of the setting. Agnant agreed to my and Phil's suggestion regarding where to plot her recording. This was made with aesthetic and practical considerations with respect to the overall look and scale of the map. Authors who participated in the project were selected on the basis of their having written Montréal-based fiction and to their willingness to contribute. Not surprisingly for readers/users familiar with the city, several readings cluster around the Plateau and Mile End – both are associated with writers and other cultural producers, even if they were originally working-class neighbourhoods. Phil and I therefore suggested a feasible point for Agnant's extract which would offer some visual variety but not cause the map to zoom out too much.

99 Maddern and Adey, 'Editorial: Spectro-geographies'.

100 Although some scholars do comparative work on literatures in Montréal's – and Québec's – majority languages, such as Sherry Simon, Catherine Leclerc and Lianne Moyes, most critics specialize in one or the other.

101 Dimitri Nasrallah, *Niko* (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 2011).

102 Derrida, *Spectres*, 71.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests with this work.