

Towards a Literary Cartography of Ian Rankin's Edinburgh

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ABSTRACT : If maps have long been a source of literary creation in Scotland, the interactions between cartography and literature have multiplied in recent years. Maps work in tension between stasis and movement, and they are in essence deeply subjective. They are also a place of creation and interconnection, and, when enhanced by the latest digital tools, they can make the Scottish cultural heritage come alive in a new way. In Ian Rankin's urban crime fiction, and especially his Rebus series, the map of Edinburgh is the starting point of the police investigation and therefore the narration, as the policemen comb the streets around the crime scene for clues. The referential precision of the representation of the city allows for a symbolic mutation of places into *lieux de mémoire*, which in turn support literary tourism. Ian Rankin's maps exist in a continuous, three-dimensional flow of movement, where motion serves to reveal the underlying mystery of each novel's plot. Chaos projected in space creates the mental map, the storyline, and the fictional world of the city. Conflictual polarities shape the structure of Rankin's living city. The Rebus series records the evolutions of Edinburgh over decades, uncovering but also creating part of the Scottish cultural heritage.

KEYWORDS: cartography, crime fiction, cultural heritage, digital mapping, Edinburgh, geocriticism, geopoetry, Inspector Rebus, literary geography, lieux de mémoire, mental mapping, Rankin Ian, Rebus series, Scottish fiction, spatial turn, spatial studies, tartan noir, urban studies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Si les cartes sont depuis longtemps une source de création littéraire en Ecosse, les interactions entre cartographie et littérature se sont multipliées ces dernières années. Les cartes fonctionnent en tension entre stase et mouvement, et sont par nature profondément subjectives. Elles sont aussi un lieu de création et d'interconnexion, et, lorsqu'elles sont augmentées par les derniers outils numériques, peuvent donner une nouvelle vie à l'héritage culturel écossais. Dans la littérature policière d'Ian Rankin, et plus particulièrement dans la série sur l'inspecteur Rebus, la carte d'Edimbourg est à la source de l'enquête policière, et, subséquemment, de la narration, car les policiers parcourent les rues autour de la scène de crime à la recherche d'indices. La précision référentielle de la représentation de la ville permet une mutation symbolique des espaces parcourus en des lieux de mémoire, sur lesquels s'appuie ensuite le tourisme littéraire. Les cartes d'Ian Rankin n'existent qu'en mouvement, dans un flux continu qui agit comme un révélateur qui permet d'élucider l'énigme sous-jacente à chaque roman. Le chaos projeté dans l'espace crée une carte mentale, une intrigue et tout un monde diégétique. La ville, représentée comme un organisme vivant, se structure sur la base de polarités conflictuelles. La série policière rend compte des évolutions d'Edimbourg sur plusieurs décennies, dévoilant mais surtout créant un pan de l'héritage culturel écossais. Mots-clés : cartographie, roman policier, héritage culturel, cartographie numérique, Edimbourg, géocritique, géopoétique, inspecteur Rebus, géographie littéraire, lieux de mémoire, cartographie mentale, Rankin Ian, roman écossais, études spatiales, tartan noir, études urbaines.

Robert Louis Stevenson's first novel *Treasure Island* (1883) sprouted from a map. The famous Scottish writer explains how, on a spring afternoon, he was doodling an imaginary map: It was elaborately and (I thought) beautifully coloured; the shape of it took my fancy beyond expression; [...] I ticketed my performance 'Treasure Island'. [...] As I paused upon my map [...] the future characters of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods; and their brown faces and bright weapons peeped out upon me from unexpected quarters, as they passed to and fro, fighting and hunting treasure, on these few square inches of flat projection. The next thing I knew I had some papers before me and was writing a list of chapters. (Stevenson 1896: 288-9) The creation of *Treasure Island* based on a map makes sense for Peter Turchi, who explains in *Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer*: "Maps suggest explanations; and while explanations reassure us, they also inspire us to ask more questions, consider other possibilities. To ask for a map is to say: 'Tell me a story.'" (2007: 11) In a private letter written to Charles Baxter on 27 April 1892, Stevenson announces the completion of his novel *David Balfour*. He describes a map of Edinburgh he has attached to the letter, and comments: "The topography is very much worked into the story, and I have alluded in the dedication

to our common fancy for exploring Auld Reekie.” (Stevenson 1892: 297) Since then, maps have been a source of literary creation in Scotland. Real or imagined, maps contain potential worlds that come unfurled under the writer’s quill. They give birth to narratives and contain them, allowing them to be perceived at one glance. Contemporary author Ian Rankin, nicknamed the ‘king of Tartan Noir’, draws from this heirloom and writes his crime novels with a map of Edinburgh always at hand.¹ Rankin’s police procedural Inspector Rebus series, which started in 1987, is now 25-volume strong. The series takes place mostly in and around the capital city of Scotland, giving him the opportunity to map out the city’s historical, cultural, and literary heritage. Rankin’s map of Edinburgh weaves together the topography of the geographical city and its imagined literary doubles in a continuously moving, expanding representation, or mental map. In turn, Rankin’s fiction leaves its mark on the city’s landscape, and contributes to a rich tapestry of texts that create the city as we know it.

I will first delineate some definitions and recent theory of mapping in literature, showing how in spite of accusations of stasis, the increasing precision of maps in the past few decades has run parallel with an increase in critical scrutiny of mapping in literature. Cartographic mapping demands choice, interpretation and subjectivity. It also leaves room for creation and interconnection, giving rise to new digital modalities of sampling and cataloguing the literary heritage of Scotland’s capital city. I will then question my findings in relation to the mental map of Edinburgh that Ian Rankin’s novels slowly patch together, and determine in what way each novel’s plot springs from a map. Maps are often explicitly referred to within the narrative, and encourage readers to physical or digital explorations of the city. Motion on the map keeps the narration moving, and the paradigm of the dual nature of Stevenson’s city emerging. The narration engages with issues pertaining to politics, history and identity, unearthing this heritage while creating new spaces and new connexions.

II. MAPPING, WRITING

A parallel can be drawn between the act of mapping and that of writing, insomuch as both imply to make structural choices that will shape the reader’s (or viewer’s) experience of the world. In Ian Rankin’s literary work, the latter cannot be achieved without the former. And yet, maps, as well as their perception by writers, scholars, and critics, are places of tensions and contradictions. A writer who creates with maps treads on an unsteady ground.

Movement vs Stasis : After World War II, according to French essayist Bertrand Westphal, “Time and space suffered a chronic and topical breakdown, a dreadful wrench. They eventually resonated in common metaphors that pertained to the point, the fragment, the shard”² (Westphal 2007: 24). The city has become a labyrinthine collection of places to be walked through and wandered around. In a fragmented, ever-changing world, any conclusion is postponed, and literature in all its subjectivity is as legitimate a medium as cartography to express our experience of the world. Indeed, in the last few decades, the interactions between cartography and literature have multiplied, and the critique surrounding them has increased accordingly. Some of the ground-breaking works on the topic include Edward Soja’s *Thirdspace* (1996), Franco Moretti’s *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary Theory* (2005), and Westphal’s *La géocritique : Réel, fiction, espace* (2007), made popular among anglophone critics thanks to a translation by R.T.Tally. In the words of Bertrand Westphal, “the ‘spatial turn’ invoked by Soja is not just a pet cause of the American scholars. Gilles Deleuze kept repeating that ‘the future is geographic’.”³ (Westphal 2007: 37)

But how can geography work with literature when maps appear to be a static, objective media to the general public, and even to some scholars? Westphal takes a stab at maps, whose detailed rendering of spatial features now has reached a climax with satellite imagery. According to him, this kind of “ultra-map” promotes “excessive stabilization, a denial of transgression, a consecration of stasis. The map favours the name over the

¹ Cf. the preface to *Black & Blue* (1997: XIII)

² « Le temps et l’espace souffraient d’une rupture chronique et topique, d’une effroyable déchirure. Ils se retrouvaient finalement dans des métaphores communes qui les associaient au point, au fragment, à l’éclat » (Westphal 2007: 24). This and the following excerpts were translated from French by the author of this paper.

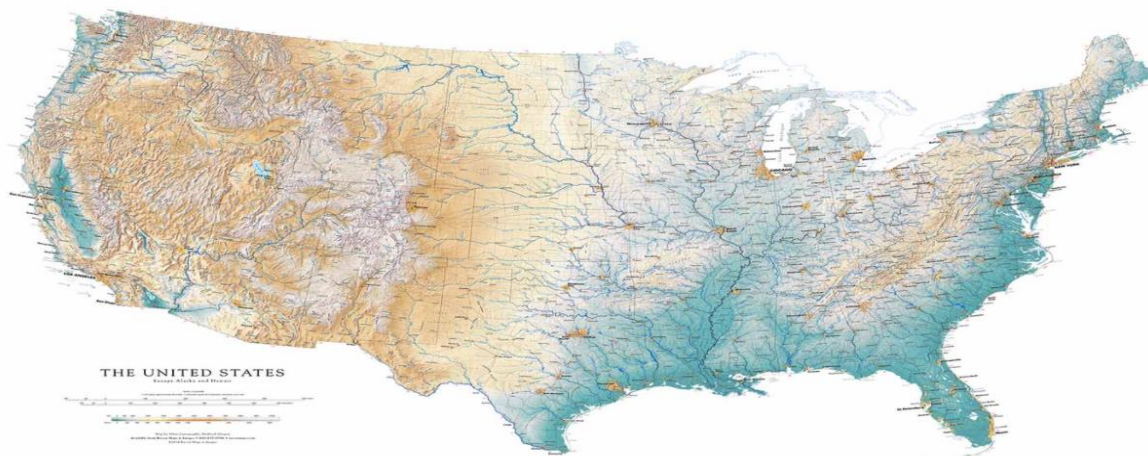
³ « Le ‘spatial turn’ invoqué par Soja n’est pas une marotte des seuls penseurs américains. Gilles Deleuze n’a cessé de répéter que ‘le devenir est géographique’. » (Westphal 2007: 37)

phrase or the variation. It induces a reduction of the world.”⁴ (2007: 100-1) This amounts to saying that maps empty out living, breathing spaces of their substance and reduce them to inert, minimal toponyms. And yet, the opposite is also true, for modern satellite imagery is updated in short intervals, so that the images – superimposed on maps – become an ongoing record of change (erosion, consequences of climate change, even effects of warfare).

III. SUBJECTIVITY AND COERCION

A simple notion resolves this apparent contradiction: that of subjectivity. Not only do maps proceed from the subjectivity of a wide range of mapmakers, sometimes with conflicting points of view, but they also try to record an ever-changing reality, which introduces a second variable. Therefore, their interpretation must also be multifarious. The postmodern subject (and, arguably, the modern metropolitan subject ever since the early eighteenth century) is defined by plurality and movement. According to Peter Turchi, “in the name of usefulness, [all maps] must assume a bias. The first lie of a map – also the first lie of fiction – is that it is the truth” (2007: 73). *All* maps are subjective. Any projection of the features of the earth onto a flat surface requires adjustments and creates distortions. Thus, Mercator’s famous world map misrepresents distances and surfaces. Greenland for example, being close to the North Pole, appears to be the size of South America – although South America is actually nine times larger (Turchi 2007: 74-5). Africa is also dwarfed on the Mercator map. The location on the map of the cardinal directions themselves is just a convention. Why should the North even be on top of the page in the first place? On Medieval maps, East was on top – because of Jerusalem. Any map is a representation which proceeds from a series of subjective choices and deliberate omissions, often guided by a history of earlier choices and omissions. In order to be readable, a map must exclude everything which does not serve its chosen purpose. Turchi writes about

The United States Mural Map by Raven Maps & Imaging: The map neatly shows us something no one has ever seen. This is true not only because a curved and irregular surface has been flattened, but because any eye far enough away to take in the entire continent would almost certainly have seen clouds, and more certainly would not have seen the political borders of states, or place names. The colors of the land have been carefully selected to create an ‘elevation tint scheme’. This ‘clear’ image, then, is an artistic representation of certain natural and political features. It is an intellectual construct. (2007: 85)



The United States (Except Alaska and Hawaii) – Raven Maps & Images

Peter Turchi also underlines that this representation excludes Alaska and Hawaii: “For roughly two million Americans, these are disturbing omissions” (2007: 88). Mexico and Canada are left completely blank and therefore are perceived as inconsequential. A map asserts, supports and structures a point of view. It can also be a very efficient tool to support nationalism, or even imperialism.

⁴ « le cartographe postmoderne subit des tourments que ses prédécesseurs, en proie à l’euphorie du remplissage, ne connaissaient pas. Quels sont ces tourments ? Ceux que l’on rattache à la stabilisation excessive, déni de transgressivité, à la consécration de la stase.

La carte privilégie le nom au détriment de la phrase ou de la variation. Elle débouche sur une réduction du monde. » (Westphal 2007: 100-1)

IV. CREATION AND INTERCONNECTIONS

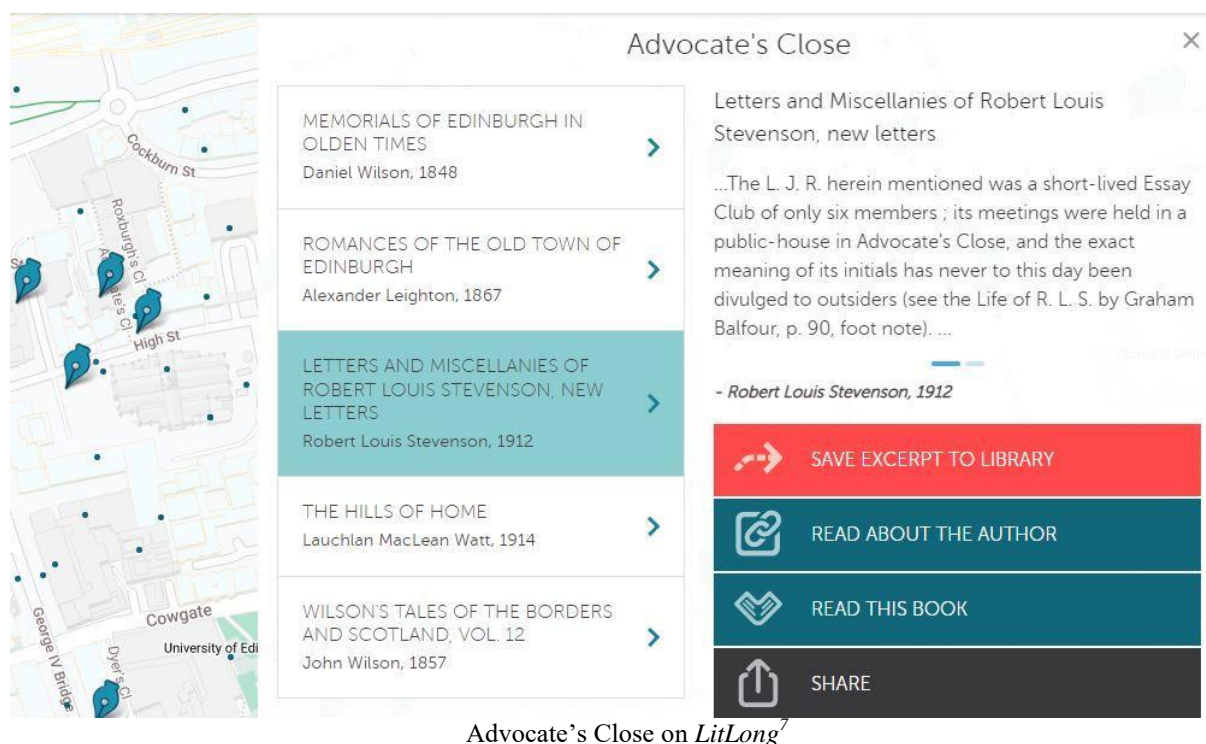
Mapmaking is a form of encoding; therefore, it is in many respects analogous to creating a text. Since the XVIIIth Century, maps and literature have contributed to each other in Scotland. In 1766, architect James Craig won a competition for the planning of Edinburgh's New Town. His plan has not survived; however, we do have an engraving (published by John Laurie) based on it. "His prize-winning plan shows a carefully laid out, formal city with a symmetry and elegance which was perfectly in keeping with the eighteenth-century Smile of Reason" (Royle 1980: 93). Craig's plan appealed to the aesthetic tastes of the *literati*, the city's intelligentsia, who decided to establish their residences in the New Town. There, they made a conscious attempt to cultivate the arts and create in Edinburgh an "Athens of the North" or a "heavenly city of philosophers". Literature and philosophy flourished, and gave rise to many authors of the first distinction: David Hume, Adam Smith, and Henry McKenzie, to name but a few (1980: 94).

Nearly three centuries later, the potentialities of maps to create interconnections, in everyday life as much as in literature, are exponentialized by the contemporary digital tools. 'The Sydney that I find on a mobile phone is a cartographic city. It is so completely dominated by and reliant on geo-coding systems, that it is impossible to avoid maps or to express the city without them. Maps form the architecture of the mobile city: they direct flows, produce spaces, and position places.' (Wilmott 2015. Qtd. Cooper 2016: 6) The digital map is everywhere, and it is endlessly adaptable. It is in progress, in motion, and in relation. David Cooper, Christopher Donaldson, and Patricia Murrieta-Flores explain in *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age* that "the maps to be found in Sat Navs [...] can be understood as collaborative cartographies. [...] smartphone applications such as Waze – which provides free traffic information – are exclusively reliant upon user input." (2016: 6). These maps are always open to updates and corrections from drivers, and thus create a sense of sharing and community.

In tune with this, some literary scholars now tap into the potentialities of the digital map to create networks of clickable texts and excerpts. These ambitious projects aim to index and analyse literary texts and the local features they proceed from and contribute to, thus creating a literary and cartographic feedback loop. At Harvard, Todd Presner, David Shepard, and Yoh Kawano started the *HyperCities Geo-Scribe* project in 2014. It is a digital collaborative database gathering literary texts, videos and interactive maps meant to explore space in literature through a few chosen regions of the world (Presner 2014). Thereby, scholars and critics are currently exploring the inherent creative potentialities of the map, co-creating hypertexts, and networks of texts connected through digital interfaces. These digital maps may be useful tools for other academics, but also for locals and any travellers who might be curious about the city's cultural heritage. In Scotland, James Loxley of the University of Edinburgh) and Tara Thomson of Edinburgh Napier University) with their colleagues chose to focus on the capital of Scotland in a project first called *Palimpsest: Literary Edinburgh*, and now renamed *LitLong*. In 2017, they started indexing and mapping dozens of literary excerpts featuring Edinburgh toponyms (Anderson 2016: 47-66).⁵ The interactive map is now available online, featuring more than 50,000 excerpts from around 550 books. The website menu invites visitors in the following terms: "You can use *LitLong* to explore Edinburgh as a literary setting. Browse the map and zoom in and out to see how locations around the city have featured in literature. As you zoom further in, more pins will appear"⁶. As we browse about, we uncover an ever-flowing literary landscape with pleasant nooks where we can stop, rest and ponder on poetry and times past:

⁵ Richard Rodger, from the University of Edinburgh, created a similar project pertaining to history: *Mapping Edinburgh's Social History (MESH)* uses data based on addresses and areas to represent historical information. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/history-classics-archaeology/research/research-projects/mapping-edinburgh-s-social-history>

⁶ Loxley 2022. <https://litlong.org/welcome>

Advocate's Close on *LitLong*⁷

As originally intended, the map is like a palimpsest which presents layers of literary excerpts from different periods of time, sampling the literary heritage of the capital city. The concomitance on the same plane of multiple layers of literary history makes space the primary determining factor instead of time, dynamically asserting the prominence of the spatial turn. This monumental undertaking cross-references and preserves both the material and the intangible artefacts defined by Rodney Harrison as heritage: Heritage might be understood to be a physical 'object': a piece of property, a building or a place that is able to be 'owned' and 'passed on' to someone else. In addition to these physical objects and places of heritage there are also [...] invisible or 'intangible' practices of heritage, such as language, culture, popular song, literature or dress, are as important in helping us to understand who we are as the physical objects and buildings that we are more used to thinking of as 'heritage'. [...] We use objects of heritage (artefacts, buildings, sites, landscapes) alongside practices of heritage (languages, music, community commemorations, conservation and preservation of objects or memories from the past) to shape our ideas about our past, present and future. (Harrison 2009: 9) On *LitLong*, the Scottish heritage is alive and kicking, as the likes of Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson, Irvine Welsh and Ian Rankin digitally brush shoulders together and leave a lasting trail among the streets and monuments of the digital city.

V. IAN RANKIN: A LITERARY CARTOGRAPHY OF EDINBURGH

Scholars seem to conduct this exploration in parallel with the writers themselves. Crime writer Ian Rankin acknowledged in several interviews that Edinburgh was the main character of his novels⁸. He places the city of Edinburgh at the centre of his fictional world, Glasgow, Aberdeen, or London, being occasionally included only as reflections of the capital of Scotland. Each book from his Detective Inspector Rebus series is set in a different part of town, with regular stops at familiar places, such as the various police stations in Edinburgh or the protagonist's flat on Arden Street. The series has been unfolding for over 35 years, bringing about a slow, erratic exploration of the city that gradually adds pieces to the fictional image of the Scottish capital as time goes by.

The Plot, the Map : Ian Rankin consistently relies on cartography in his novels, always putting forward the ebb and flow and the interconnections cartography creates. The map picture of Edinburgh is arguably what holds Rankin's abundant body of work together. In the preface of *Black & Blue*, the author acknowledges that he

⁷ Loxley 2022. <https://litlong.org/excerpts/13647/0/0>

⁸ "I think Edinburgh is the most important character in anything I write," Rankin confirmed. "When I walk through it, it's almost as if it's breathing. I can feel it breathing." (Savage 2011)

keeps a map of Edinburgh close at hand when writing (Rankin 1997: XIII). One might even say the entire Rebus series sprouts from maps of the city and its surroundings. Each volume highlights a few specific areas of the city of Edinburgh, which are explored by policemen as part of their investigation. In a typical Rebus novel, the opening describes:

- a) the circumstances of a crime or suicide, or the return of Rebus to an old crime scene;
- b) the meticulous exploration of the crime scene by the Scene of Crime Officers, who sample the locus for analysis;
- c) the inquiry of the police inspectors who spread out and radiate from the locus in concentric circles, questioning everyone.

The original *locus* presents the mystery, then the policemen proceed to methodically comb the city, and the main protagonist walks or drives through it in a more haphazard way, gaining clarity as he goes, until he uncovers the identity and location of the killer. Thus, the plot of each novel springs from the mapping of a point on a grid. As Peter Turchi reminds us, “A plot is a piece of ground, a plan (as in the plan of a building), or a scheme; to plot is to make a plan or, in geometry, to graph points on a grid. When we create a story, [...] we make a plot or map out of the narrative’s essential moments.” (2007: 188) In Rankin’s novels, the map is not only a diegetic object mentioned many times in the narration, but also a structural element of the plot and the narration, as well as a major document of reference for the writer in the act of writing. One might even wonder if, when starting on a new novel, Rankin does not first pinpoint the *locus*, and then build a story around it. The information collected at and around the crime scene by the policemen in *Rather Be the Devil* (2017) is centralized in a special MIT room at the police station: The MIT room was all focused activity, with Alvin James at its centre, keeping it that way. A map had been found and pinned to the wall. On it, coloured pins showed the spot where the body had been found, the victim’s home, and other locations associated with him, from the café where he’d met Rebus to the bars and clubs he worked and the gym where he spent much of his free time. (Rankin 2017: 147) Cartography is an essential requirement for the police to make sense of the huge amount of data to be processed.

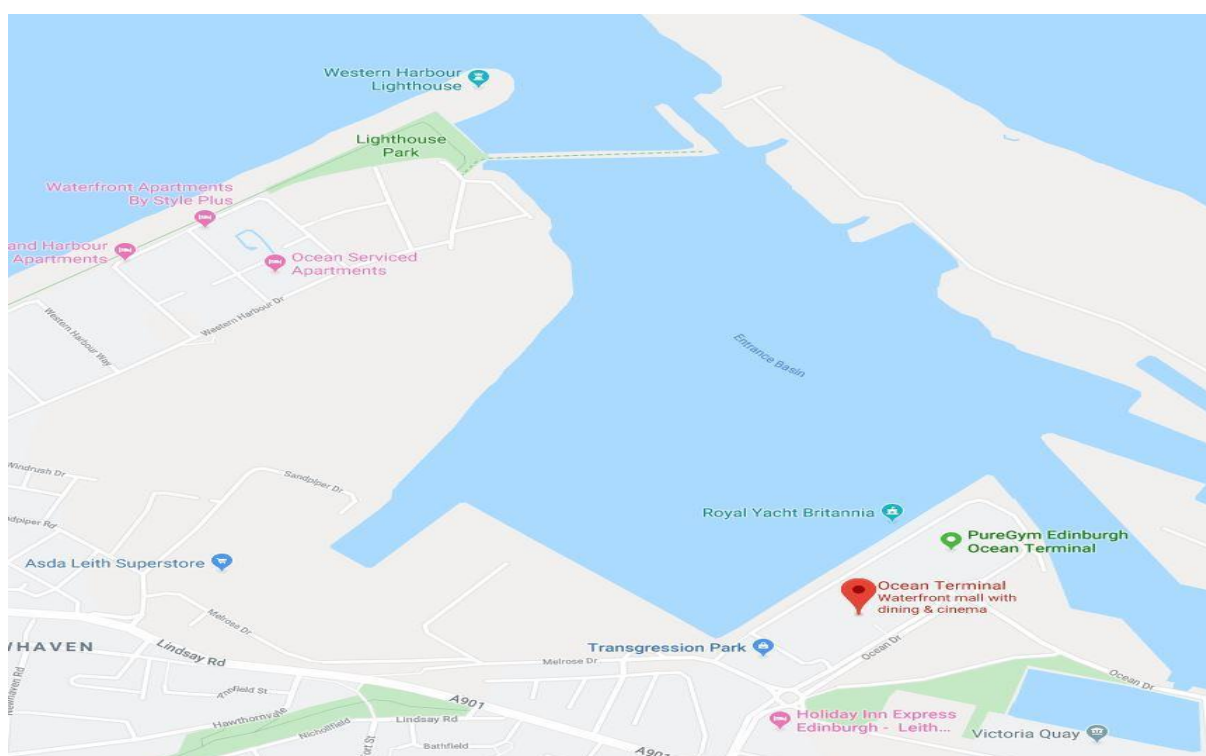


Fig. I - Western Harbour, Edinburgh⁹

⁹ Google Maps. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Edinburgh+Western+Harbour/@55.9862003,-3.1861219,15.75z/data=!4m8!3m7!1s0x4887c94b413cc15d:0x8ea5856b78f56e9d!5m2!4m1!1i2!8m2!3d55.9872745!4d-3.1886532>

In this particular novel, the body has been recovered from the water of a harbour, next to a yacht: “The Royal Yacht Britannia had a permanent berth to the rear of the Ocean Terminal shopping centre and the adjoining multistorey car park.” (Rankin 2017: 97). The precise location of the yacht is easily checked on Google Maps. Loco-specific features like this abound in Ian Rankin’s novels. The narration frequently spotlights the names of actual streets, buildings or districts. Most of Rankin’s mental maps overlap the maps of the actual city. One might say with Peter Barry: “This ‘redundant specificity’ gives a cartographic precision, rather than just urban-generic, atmospheric details.” (2000: 48-9)

The location of the body in *Rather Be the Devil* brings about an investigation into the local currents and tides: The currents of the Firth of Forth had been scrutinized. Western Harbour, where the body had ended up, was hemmed in by two breakwaters, leaving a narrow access channel. According to the expert, [sic?] they had consulted, the body had most likely either been thrown into the harbour itself or put in the water somewhere in the vicinity. That still left them with a lot of coastlines, and aerial photographs had been sourced and pinned up next to the map. (Rankin 2017: 147) The photographs offer even more detail than the map: they are the “ultra-map” Bertrand Westphal was referring to. Through them, the narrative anchors itself even more firmly into a referential representation of Edinburgh. It is tempting for the reader to pore over maps and photographs sourced from the Internet to pinpoint the *locus*. Google Street View, in particular, affects the act of reading, especially for people who would otherwise have had only very limited local knowledge, or none at all. The coincidence between the fictional and the geographic city also makes it quite possible for the readers to walk through the streets and places mentioned in the novels, thus promoting literary tourism in the city. The Inspector Rebus series touches upon many historical locations such as the Royal Mile, Arthur’s Seat, the New Town, Mary King’s Close, and many more. Rankin’s work is monumental, inasmuch as it cultivates and perpetuates the memory of a multitude of inherited Edinburgh places, spaces, buildings, and characters, stirring reminiscences of Robert Louis Stevenson’s scenic stroll through the city in *Picturesque Notes*. The empirical existence of these places does not preclude their symbolic value. Like Pierre Nora’s *lieux de mémoire*, the will of men and the work of time has made them symbolic elements of the memorial heritage of the Scottish community. They exist as:

mixed, hybrid and mutant spaces, connecting intimately life and death, time and eternity; together spiral the collective and the individual, the prosaic and the sacred, the fluid and the unalterable. [...] For if it is true that the fundamental *raison d’être* of a *lieu de mémoire* is to stop time, [...] it is also clear – and that is what makes them so fascinating – that *lieux de mémoire* can only live through their capacity for transformation.¹⁰ (Nora 1984: XXXV) Fraught with structural conflict, Rankin’s geo-poetic *loci* depict a very Scottish experience of the city, contributing to a sense of national consciousness. The nation acknowledges Rankin by giving his fiction pride of place in the heart of the capital city: in 2017, the Writers’ Museum in Edinburgh displayed an exhibition about Ian Rankin to celebrate the 30th anniversary of his character Detective Inspector Rebus. The *Edinburgh Reporter* quotes Edinburgh’s Culture and Communities Convener, Councillor Donald Wilson, on the topic of the exhibition: Over three decades, Rebus has evolved into one of the nation’s most familiar fictional figures; as ingrained in popular culture as Miss Jean Brodie or Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. This free exhibition at our Writers’ Museum explores how such characters and their creators have inspired Ian Rankin and his relationship with Rebus. (Stephen 2017) Rankin’s fiction, inspired by Edinburgh and its literary tradition, is now etched into the fabric of the city and its collective consciousness. At the contemporary end of a long line of Edinburgh writers featured on *LitLong*, Rankin contributes to mapping the city’s physical and intangible heritage and presenting it to the visitor in a display of physical objects helping Scots understand who they are. His work also appeals to tourists, and the tourism industry markets literature-themed tours of Edinburgh alongside the more traditional historical tours. A tour operator called *Rebus Tours* even specializes in walking tourists through the locations of Rankin’s novels.¹¹

Movement on the Map The map in Ian Rankin’s novels is not just a collection of points on a grid; it is always a place of movement, itself in progress. Contrary to locked-room murder mysteries like Arthur Conan Doyle’s

¹⁰ « Lieux donc, mais lieux mixtes, hybrides et mutants, intimement noués de vie et de mort, de temps et d’éternité ; dans une spirale du collectif et de l’individuel, du prosaïque et du sacré, de l’immuable et du mobile. [...] Car s’il est vrai que la raison d’être fondamentale d’un lieu de mémoire est d’arrêter le temps, [...] il est clair, et c’est ce qui les rend passionnants, que les lieux de mémoire ne vivent que de leur aptitude à la métamorphose ». (Nora 1984: XXXV) This was translated from French by the author of this paper.

¹¹ https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g186525-d672448-Reviews-Rebus_Tours-Edinburgh_Scotland.html

“The Adventure of the Speckled Band” (Conan Doyle 1892), Rankin’s novels span over great distances and time, and motion is often the key to the resolution of the mystery. The murderer usually reveals himself when taking flight and taking the policemen on a chase through the streets of the city. At the end of *Even Dogs in the Wild* (2016), a mortuary attendant runs away. Rebus’s colleague, Siobhan Clarke, chases him: As she emerged into the car park, he was rounding a corner of the building, shrugging off his scrubs. He began to run up High School Wynd, while Clarke faltered. On foot or in her car? ‘Shit’, she said, making up her mind. She set off in pursuit but he was already at the top of the hill and heading for the Infirmary Lane steps. [...] [S]he heaved her way to the top, where she had a decision to make: left of right along Drummond Street? Towards the Pleasance or Nicholson Street. (Rankin 2016: 373)

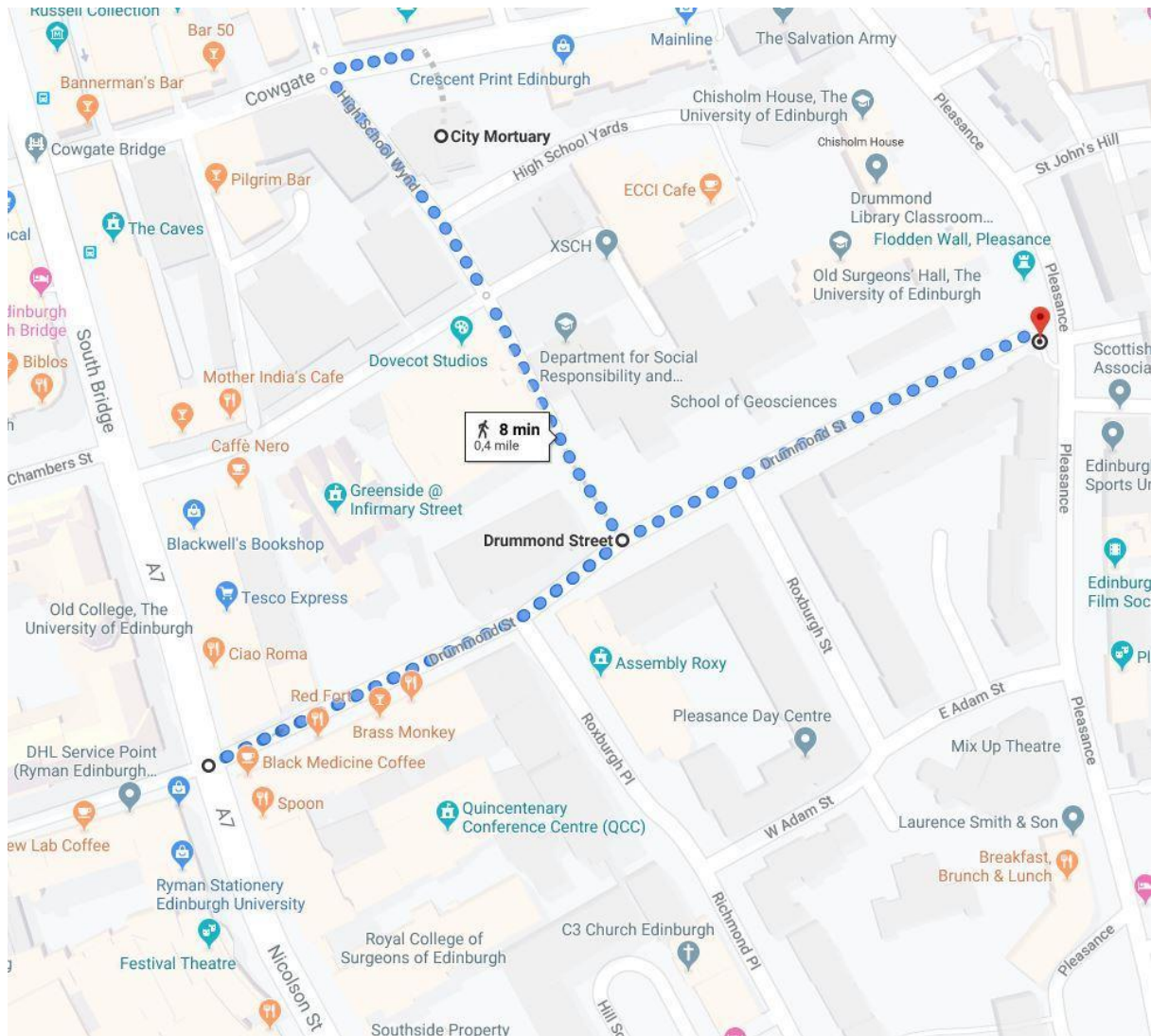


Fig. III – Mortuary to Drummond or Nicholson Street¹²

The policewoman has access to a memorized map of Edinburgh that she uses to guide her own action. Based on this, she can anticipate the routes and trajectories the fugitive might follow, hoping to be able to give directions on the phone to a patrol car which is “two minutes away” (Rankin 2016: 373). The character is mentally browsing and zooming in on locations, bringing the city into existence by projecting and anticipating it. When she loses the fugitive, Clarke runs back to the mortuary to ask for his home address (Rankin 2016: 374). The subsequent visit to his house in Upper Gray Street in Newington then yields further clues, and the

¹² Google Maps. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/City+Mortuary/@55.9481433,-3.1857364,18z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x4887c7853c490857:0x9f09481352a9e66e!8m2!3d55.9488199!4d-3.1849756>

chase goes on until the suspect reverses the chase and challenges Rebus on his own territory by breaking into his Arden Street flat (Rankin 2016: 374). The progress of the Rebus narratives typically involves dynamic exploration of urban spaces, transgressions, pursuits, and disputes over territory. Movement, chaos, and intention projected in space create the map, the storyline, and the fictional world of the city. Urban exploration in Rankin's novels is not just two-dimensional. It also runs along the third axis of depth – or time, and often pertains to archaeology. The narration features some literal excavations when the police dig up bodies for analysis, or the characters witness urban construction works. The inspectors also use “digging” as a figure of speech for taking an inquiry further. The verb even resonates as a dynamic metaphor for the entire series, which delves into the Gothic palimpsest that is Edinburgh:

Darkness had fallen. Shadows seemed to rise all around him as a bell tolled in the distance. The blood that had seeped into stone, the bones that lay twisting in their eternity, the stories and horrors of the city's past and present... he knew they'd all come rising in the digger's steel jaws, bubbling to the surface as the city began its slow ascent towards being a nation's capital once again. (Rankin 1999: 481) In *The Falls*, tiny coffins left at scenes of crimes are reminiscent of some early 19th Century artefacts kept at the Museum of Scotland. The investigators therefore enlist one of the Museum's curators to help with the inquiry (Rankin 2001: 97). At the end of the first volume of the Rebus series, *Knots & Crosses*, the policemen explore a network of underground galleries and historical streets of the National Library: “Rebus was in awe. This was a piece of old Edinburgh, intact and undefiled.” (Rankin 1987: 218-9). This network of streets that have been covered up is a topographic peculiarity of the city of Edinburgh, suggestive of a secret, repressed past. The stairwell leading down from the Library signals early in the series Rankin's intention of putting the city's spatial configuration in perspective through its literary heritage. Only a slow exploration of space over a period of time can uncover the truth of the capital city, in the same way as the police investigation slowly brings about the unveiling of the murderer's identity: “We've maybe not explored the possibility as thoroughly as we could. You come up against a wall, the best thing you can do is find reverse and try another route.” (Rankin 2017: 259) Rankin's maps are alive, and movement on the map keeps the narration going. One might say that the posture of Rankin's policemen is paradoxically transgressive since their job consists in forcing closed doors open, combing the city, shining a light on its darkest corners, and creating chaos and movement where the murderers and the city's dark secrets lie.

Mapping Edinburgh's Cultural Heritage : Mapping in Ian Rankin's novels is intertextual. The inspiration behind the initial novel *Knots and Crosses* is the conflictual couple of Jekyll and Hyde in Stevenson's novella. Rankin brings the Gothic duo into contemporary Edinburgh under the *persona* of a police Inspector and his *nemesis* from the past. In Rankin's fiction, duality is projected onto urban space. The dichotomies between Old Town and New Town, East End and West End, centre and peripheries are a recurring feature of the narration: At one time, the Old Town had been all there was of Edinburgh: a narrow spine running from the Castle to Holyrood, steep vennels leading off like crooked ribs. Then, as the place became even more crowded and insanitary, the New Town had been built, its Georgian elegance a calculated snub to the old Town (Rankin 2001: 17).

Rankin's imagery pictures the city of Edinburgh as an organic, living being with old wounds and intentions, as well as internal tensions and contradictions. He confirms this view of the Scottish capital in an interview: “It's got a history, it's got a life, it's got lungs, it's got a heart, got a brain. [...] And it changes, it grows, it's organic. And the books have been an attempt to chart the organic changes of the city and what that tells us about the physical and mental changes of Scottishness.” (Savage 2011) There is an intimate connection between the living urban space of Edinburgh and the Scottish nation as it evolves through time. The mental map Rankin's literary work offers to the world is a legacy which contributes to making sense of the Scottish nation. A dominant trait in the Scottish literary heritage is the motif of the double. Stevenson describes Edinburgh as follows: “Half a capital and half a country town, the whole city leads a double existence; it has long trances of the one and flashes of the other” (2010 [1879]: 8-9). The *topos* of conflictual duality applied to the perception of space is henceforward carried through the entire series.

Tension creates movement, and this leads to an excavation of the city's secrets. Rankin's novels, written in real-time to include current events and follow the protagonists' ageing, record the evolutions of the city's heritage over decades. In *Set in Darkness*, the city's territorial heritage and its political future are threatened by being taken over by corrupt politicians and entrepreneurs. The plot, set in 1999, hinges on a series of planning permissions granted fraudulently by civil servants to shadowy businesses. Calton Road, Abbey Mount, Hillside Crescent, Greenside, and Calton Hill are targeted in a ploy to appropriate the lands next to the future Scottish

Parliament Building, thus hijacking profitable public property and giving the Scottish Devolution a very inauspicious start (Rankin: 2000: 319). An alternative, non-actualized future is projected on the map. The inspector's task in this novel is to protect Edinburgh's heritage – the very identity of the Scottish nation – in order to lay the groundwork for possible futures. Ian Rankin's chosen task throughout the series is to create an intangible heritage for the city and the nation.

VI. CONCLUSION

The map is a flowing medium without any perceivable boundaries. Its intrinsic bias makes it legitimate to canvass perceptions of space in literature, and sample geographic and cultural heritage. The city of Edinburgh is at the centre of Ian Rankin's literary mapping, and his Inspector Rebus series creates a network of places, spaces and literary influences in a similar way to the *LitLong* digital map of literary Edinburgh: it is a collection of possible points and routes, a potentiality to be actualized by the narration. In Rankin's novels, the map acts as the basis for the creation of the plot. It is referential and mostly overlaps the map of the actual city, thus presenting the city's heritage to readers and visitors alike. Tourism has developed based on Rankin's literary mapping, and his fiction now imprints the capital city's landscape. The inherent movement, transgressions, chases and disputes over territory unfold in three dimensions, not just on the map but also in the depths of time. A slow exploration of space through time brings about a revelation of the murderer's identity, and uncovers the city's spaces and literary echoes. The motif of the double, inspired by the very geography of the city, is a hallmark of the literary tradition of Edinburgh, and a structural principle of Rankin's fictional world. The city's heritage informs its present fiction, which itself inspires the experience locals and visitors have and the routes they take through the real city. After countless iterations, the crisscrossing paths start to slowly create a city of the mind. The map becomes a rich, dynamic fictional world that trespasses on the geographic city and seems to become more real than its model. Rankin may be inspired by a real city, but in a certain way his novels continuously create the city of Edinburgh.

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