

Rebus: A Split Personality in a Split City

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Introduction

“There can't be too many cities in the world whose railway station is named after a nineteenth-century novel, with that novel's author being celebrated by a vast monument on the main shopping street. Welcome to Edinburgh” (Rankin, par. 1).

As Rankin already suggests in his article for *The Guardian* in 2007, Edinburgh is a unique city: a city of many faces. Since this capital is so diverse, it has been, and still is, a great source of inspiration for many authors. Striking events, like for example the famous Burke and Hare Murders in 1828, have covered the city in a dark veil which has become an interesting theme in novels from all kinds of Scottish writers ever since. This is perhaps the reason why Edinburgh has produced world-famous writers like Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who have been the city's pride for the last two hundred years. Therefore, when visiting the capital, tourists simply cannot fail to notice the several statues, museums, and street names dedicated to the famous Scottish writers who grew up there. It is therefore no wonder that the city is proclaimed to be the world's first UNESCO City of Literature, back in 2004. This organisation is established to put in a good word for Edinburgh literature and Scottish literature in general. Moreover, its aim is to demonstrate the city, with its Writers' Museum and National Library of Scotland, as a capital of literature (*Edinburgh UNESCO*).

Edinburgh is also the hometown of Inspector John Rebus, the protagonist of the popular Inspector Rebus series, written by Ian Rankin; a Scotsman, born in Cardenden in Fife. The Inspector Rebus series consists of seventeen detective novels, spread over exactly twenty years. The first novel of the series, *Knots & Crosses* (1987), contains a forty-year-old Rebus, and the last and final novel, *Exit Music* (2007), a sixty-year-old. Since sixty is the official retirement age for policemen in Scotland, and the series is based on real-life Edinburgh

detection, Rankin sadly had to put an end to the series by organising a retirement party for his protagonist.

Keeping the capital's contrasts and dichotomy in mind while reading these novels, it seems that Rebus himself is contaminated by the city's dualism; one wonders whether this idiosyncratic, and rather egocentric character is actually on the good, or on the bad side. Whether this was Rankin's initial intention is rather vague, but he does acknowledge that Robert Louis Stevenson's book *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) was his main inspiration for creating these books. At first he only wanted to write one novel, a modern-day adaption of Stevenson's story, but as his main character John Rebus developed he became more fascinated by him. Rankin therefore gave this character the opportunity to start living a life on his own, and telling him what to write instead of the other way around (Foley, par. 6).

Split personality, or schizophrenia, is the main theme in Stevenson's novel, and also known as the 'Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome' (Beverly Engel)¹ which psychiatry uses to describe people who have different kinds of personalities. Rankin, as a big fan of Stevenson's novel, used this specific theme to depict the split personality of Edinburgh; a schizophrenic city of heights and depths. He wanted to show his readers that the capital is not only that what people see on the surface, but that there is an underworld, a dark side, of which not many people know (par. 7).

However, during the writing process it becomes clear that not only Edinburgh as a city, but also Detective Inspector Rebus as a person himself, is schizophrenic. A great example of this, amongst others, is the curious 'friendship' between him and his biggest enemy, and on top of that the city's greatest villain, Morris Gerald Cafferty, or 'Big Ger',

¹ Beverly Engel is an American psychotherapist who has written a book about the 'Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome', named *The Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome: What to Do If Someone in Your Life Has a Dual Personality – or If You Do* (Beverly Engel MFCT).

which calls to mind a famous quote by Sun Tzu: “keep your friends close, but your enemies closer” (*The Art of War*). It is a relationship that continues to grow during the twenty years of Rebus’s existence. At times it is difficult to tell whether Rebus is chasing, or helping ‘Big Ger’ Cafferty.

This dualistic relationship is very similar to the one between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s famous character Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty, whose story admittedly takes place in London. However, Doyle is a Scottish writer from Edinburgh, which makes this resemblance all the more interesting. For example, like Rebus and Cafferty, Holmes and Moriarty are much the same; they are both equally intelligent, which has them think in the same way. Moreover, according as Rebus and Cafferty, Holmes and Moriarty’s relationship is very indistinct; there are no distinct boundaries.

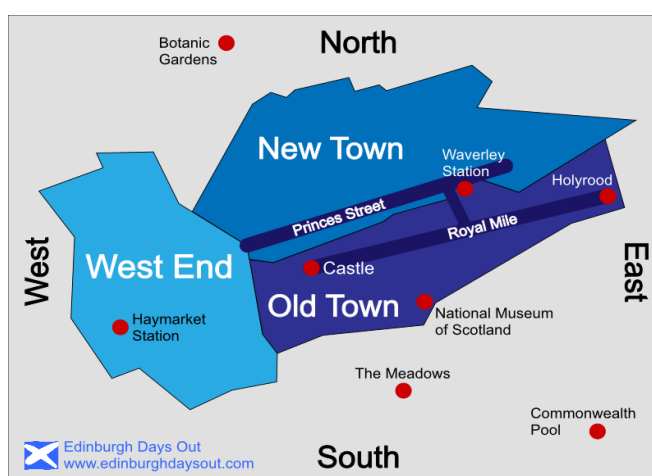
In other words, Ian Rankin uses Edinburgh’s duality in his Inspector Rebus series to clarify, to renew, and to give his own point of view of Scottish novels from the nineteenth century in which this theme of dualism plays an important role, like for instance Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes series. However, this statement raises three questions, namely: what is ‘Edinburgh’s duality’, how did Ian Rankin use this duality in his books, and is Edinburgh’s dichotomy infectious to its citizens, and in particular its writers?

1. Edinburgh's duality

Some tourists emerge from Waverley station, deep in the heart of Edinburgh, and catch their breath: the ancient castle perched on the rocky hillside, the distinctive architecture of the tall buildings amidst the glitzy new shops on Princes Street, the sound of bagpipes emanating from the busy thoroughfare [. . .] but there are other people who emerge from the station and see nothing but derelict souls in the dark, washed-out facades of the old buildings and ominous shadows slumbering beside the high-street shops. (Cabell 17)

Although it is already mentioned above, the notion of 'Edinburgh's duality' is still a bit dim. Craig Cabell, writer of a biography about Rankin and his most famous character, *Ian Rankin and Inspector Rebus* (2010), attempts to summarise the main idea of Rankin's novels, but there are a few more contrasts that make Edinburgh dichotomous.

Firstly, the image of Edinburgh as a schizophrenic city is particularly based on its division between Old and New Town. However, this division did not exist until the eighteenth century, when the Old Town became overcrowded and the elite started to move outside the city. The result is shown on the abstract map below²: a divided city with on the one hand (pre-)historic sights and buildings, and on the other hand neo-classic and modern architecture. The Old Town lies between Castle Rock and the University of Edinburgh and goes all the way down to Holyrood



²“Edinburgh Areas Map.” Map. *Edinburgh Days Out*. 30 May 2011 <<http://www.edinburghdaysout.com/map/default.html>>.

Palace, whereas the original New Town lies somewhat between Queen Street and Princes Street. During the course of many years the city has developed and expanded whereby, consequently, the New Town started to stretch out. Nowadays, the New Town is larger than the Old Town and shows a great contrast between both parts of the city.

In his book *Rebus's Scotland: A Personal Journey* (2005), Ian Rankin mentions Charles McKean's book *Edinburgh* about the history of Edinburgh, and his view on the city to illustrate this duality of Edinburgh. To make his point clear, he aptly quotes the impression of visitor Nathaniel Willis, an American journalist who says: "A more striking contrast than exists between these two parts of the same city could hardly be imagined . . . Paris is not more unlike Constantinople than one side of Edinburgh is unlike the other. Nature has properly placed a great gulf between them" (qtd. in Rankin 88). The Old Town being poor and dark as opposed to the New Town being rich and light are some of the contrasts Willis noticed. In *Fleshmarket Close* (2004), number fifteen of the Inspector Rebus novels, Rankin depicts this contrast between the New and Old Town as follows:

Fleshmarket Close was a narrow, pedestrian-only lane connecting the High Street to Cockburn Street. The High Street entrance was flanked by a bar and a photographic shop [. . .] This end, its entrance boasted a bookmaker's one side, and a shop opposite selling crystals and 'dream-catchers': old and new Edinburgh, Rebus thought to himself. The Cockburn street end of the close was open to the elements, while the other half was covered over by five floors of what he assumed to be flats. (23)

This creates an image of the way in which the industrial town on the one side meets the historic town on the other side, which is, of course, a vivid example of this magnificent, and unique feature of the city.

Apart from the division between the two different Towns, Edinburgh is also split in a sense of heights and depths. The city is built on two levels; high, like Castle Rock, Calton Hill

and Arthur's Seat, and low, like all of New Town. In his article for *the Guardian* Rankin says that "[w]hether you're peering down on to Princes Street Gardens from the castle, or craning your neck to look up from the Cowgate at George IV Bridge above, you sense that Edinburgh contains an intensity of heights and depths" (par. 13). It is quite extraordinary to see how this city is split between a high, and a low level. Walking up Princes Street, you will see the flat side of the city on the right-hand side, whereas on the left-hand side you will see a different part of the city, built on rocky hills.

Secondly, the duality lies in the discrepancy between, on the one hand the beautiful, tranquil city that tourists see, and, on the other hand the dark, and rough city that lies beneath it. In Rankin's first Inspector Rebus novel *Knots & Crosses* he describes Edinburgh's flipside from John's perspective:

Gill looked at him, but he was watching from his window as the city's late-night drunks rolled their way up and down the obstacle-strewn hazard of Lothian Road, seeking alcohol, women, happiness [. . .] Lothian Road was Edinburgh's dustbin. It was also home to the Sheraton Hotel and the Usher Hall [. . .] It was typical of Edinburgh to have a crumb of culture sited amidst the fast-food shops. A requiem mass and a bag of chips. (65-66)

Looking from his window, John Rebus sees both sides of the capital: the dark side with its alcoholics, criminals and junkies, and the prosperous, touristic side with its expensive luxury hotels, theatres and restaurants. He describes it as "a requiem mass and a bag of chips" (66), an ambiguous combination that does not fit. Nobody takes a bag of crisps to a funeral service, but nor is it customary to take a bag of chips to a performance of Mozart's divine masterpiece either. A bag of chips and a requiem mass do not go together; just like the junkies, the criminals and the fancy hotels and theatres.

Being a tourist in Edinburgh, people only see its surface: the beautiful, diverse city

with many historic buildings and marvellous sights, such as Castle Rock and Arthur's Seat. However, criminality, drugs and drinking problems are very common for most of the city's citizens. Its crime rate, especially during Rebus's period, is relatively high compared to other cities in Europe. Alan McEwen says in an article for *The Scotsman's* evening edition, *Edinburgh Evening News* from 2007, that "Edinburgh has a higher murder rate than cities including Paris, Rome and Madrid [. . .] placing it nineteenth worst on a list of thirty-three European capitals" (pars. 1-2), and another article from 2009 in that same newspaper, titled "High crime rate revealed for New Town", states that it is a fact that most of the criminality takes place in Edinburgh's New Town (par. 1). These articles prove that Scotland's capital is not all beauty and forbearance, but that there is a hidden Edinburgh. An Edinburgh only known by the people who are able to look behind its 'facade'.

The title of Rankin's tenth Rebus novel, *Dead Souls* (1999), is a reference to Nikolai Gogol's nineteenth-century novel, which is also titled *Dead Souls* (1842). Rankin was intrigued by its plot about "MisPers", or missing persons, and wanted to write his own story about this phenomenon (ix-x). Moreover, in this novel Rankin suggests, admittedly through the words of Nicol Petrie's character, that the city in fact loves its hidden aspect. Here, Petrie talks to Rebus about his dealings with Charmer Mackenzie, a club owner and moneylender for criminals. It says:

But there was something ... the idea of dealing with Mackenzie was so much more appealing.' 'How so?' 'The danger, the whiff of the illicit.' He turned back towards Rebus. 'You know Edinburgh society loves that sort of thing. Deacon Brodie didn't need to break into people's houses, but that didn't stop him. Strait-laced old town, how else are we going to get our thrills?' (344)

What Petrie really says, is that the Edinburghers like to seek danger, for the sake of being thrilled. Without the "whiff of the illicit" life would be boring.

Moreover, the city's history knows a couple of world-famous stories which have ensured that its hidden personality came to light. In his book about Rebus's Scotland, and in particular its capital, Rankin mentions a couple of historical figures who have become famous by the crimes they have committed. Firstly, already mentioned in the quotation above, there is William Brodie, a deacon who led a secret life, namely that of a gambler who had to steal in order to get his gambling money. Secondly, he mentions William Burke and William Hare, who murdered people for the purpose of selling them to medical science (86). Moreover, the capital is famous for its so-called hauntings and ghost stories. In her article "Ghosts of Edinburgh" for *British Heritage* in September 2009, Jennifer Dorn writes about haunted Edinburgh: "Edinburgh Castle is said to be haunted, with a bagpipe player and a headless drummer among the resident ghosts. In fact, the city is famous for its ghost stories" (52). In fact, and Dorn also mentions this, the city is so famous for its hauntings that some people have made a business out of it. An advertisement titled "Edinburgh's Underground History" even invites people to take part in a tour through Real Mary King's Close and experience its mysteriousness (*British Heritage* 14). Mary King's Close is a tiny village "buried under the City Chambers that were built in 1753 to try to block out the plague that stormed through this network of hidden streets where people lived and worked for centuries" (Dorn 52). This, of course, is a perfect setting for all kinds of ghost stories, and again an example of dualism; abandonment meets tourism.

Thirdly, and by far the most talked-about subject on the streets of Edinburgh and Scotland in general is the weather, which is also part of the city's dichotomy, because, like Rankin beautifully describes in his fourth Rebus novel *Strip Jack* (1992), the weather often contributes to the contrasts of the city:

Springtime in Edinburgh. A freezing wind, and near-horizontal rain. Ah, the Edinburgh wind, that joke of a wind, that black farce of a wind. Making everyone

walk like mime artists, making eyes water and then drying the tears to a crust on red-nipped cheeks. And throughout it all, that slightly sour yeasty smell in the air, the smell of not-so-distant breweries. (50)

Spring should be a season of a soft breeze instead of a freezing wind, and of a lovely, floral smell instead of the former smell of fermenting beer. However, Scotland is infamous for its changeable climate, in particular the wind. Rebus talks about the “black farce of a wind”, by which he means that it will not go away, it always comes back; just like the black farce character who is being put away in a box, or closet, but always returns. Moreover, there is the “near-horizontal rain” that Rebus mentions. No wonder, as Rankin writes in his eighth Inspector Rebus novel *Black & Blue* (1997), that “[t]he Scots language is especially rich in words to do with the weather: ‘dreich’ and ‘smirr’ are only two of them” (67). Though it is not very self-evident, summer is for many people in Edinburgh the most tiresome season of the year. During this season Edinburghers have to put up with rainfall, relatively low temperatures and, and this is probably the most bothersome, the Edinburgh Festival which causes the city to become overcrowded with tourists. John Rebus is one of these people and in *Mortal Causes* (1994), Rankin’s sixth Rebus novel, he explains his hatred:

The Edinburgh Festival was the bane of Rebus’s life. He’d spent years confronting it, trying to avoid it, cursing it, being caught up in it. There were those who said that it was somehow atypical of Edinburgh, a city which for most of the year seemed sleepy, moderate, bridled. But that was nonsense; Edinburgh’s history was full of licence and riotous behaviour. But the Festival, especially the Festival Fringe, was different.

Tourism was its lifeblood, and where there were tourists there was trouble. (3)

2. Duality in the Inspector Rebus Series

In the writer's introduction to his second Inspector Rebus novel, *Hide & Seek* (1990), he confesses that he wrote his first novel, *Knots & Crosses*, to create a modern-day version of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. However, critics did not notice the link between Rankin's novel and the nineteenth-century masterpiece. Therefore, he decided to write another book with the purpose of putting the story of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in a different daylight, but this time so that the reviewers would notice. He even used some quotes and character names from Stevenson's novel to make his point clear (xi). Rankin's main goal, as he says in his interview with Dylan Foley, was to use Stevenson's theme of a split personality for explaining the true face of Edinburgh. He says:

The reason I wrote the first book was in part because there was an Edinburgh that no one was thinking about. People thought that Edinburgh was a very quiet, genteel city where nothing happened. Away from the tourist spots, there were areas of great deprivation and the problems of drugs, drug violence and prostitution. I wanted to write about contemporary society and its problems. (Par. 7)

However, he never thought that it would turn out to become a series of seventeen books. Inspector John Rebus's character rooted himself inside Rankin's brain and was not planning to come out again. Therefore, Rankin constantly felt the urge to develop his main character and his relationship with the city he lives in, resulting in a whole series of detective novels.

The notion of a split Edinburgh is fully explained above, but bringing it across in novels is a different story. The power behind Rebus's popularity lies, amongst other things, in Rankin's use of real street names. Nowadays, the city even organises so-called Rebus tours that guide people along the most famous places named in the novels. The article "Fictional Murders in Real 'Mean Streets' Detective Narratives and Authentic Urban Geographies" by

Malcah Effron discusses the use of real street names and places in detective novels and its effect on the reader. Effron states that “the real setting provides an underlying basis of reality to conform the legitimacy of the events portrayed in the narrative as a description of the society and culture represented in the novel” (333-4) and that Rankin is “using the street names to establish the real background to authenticate his perception of the city” (339-40). This shows that the use of a real setting helps the author to make his story more credible.

Rankin most often uses Rebus’s character and perspective to create an image of his view on the city’s everyday life. Like for example in his eighth Inspector Rebus novel, *Black & Blue*; in this passage Rebus has woken early and is taking a stroll through Edinburgh, which gives its readers the following general impression: “he liked the city quiet: taxis and early risers, first dogs being exercised, clear, clean air. But the night before still clung to the place: a litter-bin upturned, a bench on the Meadows with a broken back, traffic cones hoisted on to bus shelter roofs” (123). A very contrasting image, because the day starts off calm and peaceful, but the remnants of the night before are still visible.

This is actually the main idea of the Rebus novels; a quiet and peaceful city during daytime, but a dark and turbulent city during night time. In *Mortal Causes*, Rankin writes about Rebus’s strange love for the Saturday night shift:

Masochist that he was, he quite liked the Saturday backshift. You saw the city in its many guises. It allowed a salutary (sic) peek into Edinburgh’s grey soul. Sin and evil weren’t black [. . .] but were greyly anonymous. You saw them all night long, the grey peering faces of the wrongdoers and malcontents, the wife beaters and the knife boys. Unfocused eyes, drained of all concern save for themselves. And you prayed, if you were John Rebus, prayed that as few people as possible ever had to get as close as this to the massive grey nonentity. (4-5)

This characteristic is very contradictory compared to most people’s personalities, because

night time is the part of the day most people want to go to sleep, and especially do not want to be thinking of work. In fact, most of the scenes in which the Inspector is working, or at least thinking about his current case, are during night time. It seems that, during this part of the day, Rebus is more focused than ever. Moreover, his mood is often at its best. In *Black & Blue* he explains his nights on the streets as follows: “Sometimes it was easier to stay on the street, or sleep at the station. Sometimes he drove all night, not just through Edinburgh” (13-14). The reason he stays up at night is because the city he is interested in chiefly shows itself during night time. During one of his nightly walks through the city’s streets he is taking in the view of his dark hometown:

He walked along Princes Street, deciding he liked the city best like this: all the visitors tucked up in bed [. . .] He walked up the bridges, stopped at some railings so he could look down on the Cowgate. There were clubs still open down there, teenagers spilling on the road. The police had names for the Cowgate when it got like this: Little Saigon; the blood bank; hell on earth. Even the patrol cars went in twos. Whoops and yells [. . .] Pretty things: ‘Cries from the Midnight Circus’. In Edinburgh, sometimes it could be midnight in the middle of the day . . . (*Dead Souls*, 263)

The contrast here, is that Rebus says he likes the city at its best during the night, when the “visitors” are all “tucked up in bed”, but the streets of Edinburgh are all but peaceful: clubbing people cause for a lot of noise and trouble so that the police have to stay on patrol all night. They even call it a “hell on earth”, while, during these most tumultuous and smallest hours of the day, Rebus finds his own peace and calm. However, it does not always have to be midnight to be able to see the turmoil of the city. If people look closely enough, at the right places, they will see the hidden side of the city during daytime as well.

Nevertheless, Rebus’s darkness is not that hard to catch. In Rebus’s favourite pub, the Oxford

Bar, in Rankin's eleventh Inspector Rebus novel *Set in Darkness* (2000), one of his one-night stands, as well as part of a murder inquiry, holds up a mirror to him and says:

'There's a darkness in you.' 'Probably all the beer.' 'I'm serious. We all come from darkness, you have to remember that, and we sleep during the night to escape the fact. I'll bet you have trouble sleeping at night, don't you?' He didn't say anything. Her face grew less animated. 'We'll all return to darkness one day, when the sun burns out.' A sudden smile lit her eyes. "'Though my soul may set in darkness, It will rise in perfect light.'" (157)

Lorna Grieve hits the nail on the head here because, indeed, Rebus cannot sleep at night and has a lot of darkness in him: his past as a RAF soldier, his divorce from Rhona, all the murder cases he has worked on, and mostly the whole city in itself have made him the way he is now. The passage of the poem she quotes is from Sarah Williams's³ "The Old Astronomer to His Pupil" and is also cited on one of the first pages of Rankin's novel where it contains two more lines, namely: "I have loved the stars too fondly / To be fearful of the night", by which the astronomer means that he, and this also applies to Rebus, is actually afraid of the night. However, when he focuses on the beautiful stars that appear during that night, the darkness around him fades away. To Rebus it means that as long as he focuses on his job, which is his main purpose in life, the darkness around his soul will not haunt him.

Above all, it seems that Rankin has tried to create a human being out of Edinburgh to bring across his view on the hidden city. He has given the city a voice, the voice of Inspector John Rebus. In *Set in Darkness* both Edinburgh as a city and Rebus as a person are being defined in the same way. Firstly, the capital is being depicted as follows:

There were those who said that Edinburgh was an invisible city, hiding its true

³ Sarah Williams is a relatively unknown English poet and novelist from the nineteenth century; "The Old Astronomer to His Pupil" being her most famous poem (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*).

feelings and intentions. Its citizens outwardly respectable, its streets appearing frozen in time. You could visit the place and come away with little sense of having understood what drove it [. . .] You might need half a million pounds to buy one of the better houses, yet outward show was frowned upon; a city of Saabs and Volvos rather than Bentleys and Ferraris. (260)

And nearly a hundred pages back, Rebus's favourite colleague Siobhan Clarke describes him like this:

She'd known John Rebus for several years now, and still they weren't close friends. Rebus, so far as he could tell, saw none of his colleagues outside work hours, apart from when she invited him to Hibs matches. His only hobby was drinking, and he tended to indulge where few women did, his chosen pubs museum pieces in a gallery marked prehistoric [. . .] At first she'd thought him shy, awkward, but now she wasn't so sure. It seemed more like a strategy, a wilfulness. (173)

This shows that Rebus and his hometown are very much the same: both are rather reserved and reticent. Just like some people say of the capital, Clarke does not know who John Rebus exactly is. They have been working together closely for a couple years, but Rebus never opens up to her; like the city hardly ever opens up to its visitors. The reason the first quotation goes on about the fact that Edinburghers do not want to show off their wealth, is because Rebus is one of them: Although he earns enough money to buy himself an expensive flash car, he owns a Saab 900 classic which, and this is written from experience⁴, is a car that is luxurious on the inside, but does not have the same feel on the outside, not to mention that it is an old car. In a Saab brochure from 1982 it is even said that this car has an "adaptable dual personality" (29). The idea in this is, that the same applies to the city as well, that Edinburgh is an expensive

⁴ "Saab 900 Turbo 16S has no wings – it just feels as if it has" (SAAB 900).

city to live in, but does not show it on the outside. Moreover, like Rebus, it does not show its problems, like drinking, violence and drug use, to its visitors.

Lastly, Rebus's unpredictability and split personality chiefly manifests itself in Rebus's relationship with archenemy Morris Gerald Cafferty, or 'Big Ger', the city biggest gangster and most-feared criminal. As Rebus puts it: "There's not much Big Ger Cafferty isn't involved in: money laundering, prostitution. He's a big bad bastard" (*The Black Book*, 59). Cafferty appears for the first time in the third Rebus novel *Tooth & Nail* (1992), the only story that does not take place in Edinburgh but in London, in which Rebus has to go back to his city to testify in a case against 'Big Ger'. However, his first real appearance is in *The Black Book* (1993). Rankin says in his introduction to this novel, that what is "most intriguing about Cafferty is the ambiguity he brings with him. He is very like Rebus in some ways, something he can acknowledge but Rebus never will" (ix). He even goes as far as compare them to Cain and Abel (x), the biblical brothers who are also each other's enemies, which is a vivid comparison because it is never evident whether Rebus and Cafferty are going to attack, or join each other for a drink in a pub. The conversation they have during a jogging session In *The Black Book* is very typical for their relationship. As Rebus is having some difficulties with his stamina, Cafferty is making fun of him:

'There'll be herbal tea when we get back. Watch out there!' His warning saved Rebus from stepping in a discreet dog turd. 'Thanks,' Rebus said grudgingly. 'I was thinking of the shoes,' Cafferty replied [. . .] Cafferty looked like he might throw a punch, but instead he pounded Rebus on the back. 'Come on, time to go.' Rebus was about to plead another minute's rest, but saw Cafferty walking to the Jag. 'What?' Cafferty said. 'You think I'd run it *both ways*? Come on now, your herbal tea is waiting.'

(190-2)

3. The Dualistic Relationship: Protagonist and Antagonist

As said multiple times above, Rankin's Inspector Rebus series is for the greater part based on the nineteenth-century novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson. As Rankin says in his preface to *Hide & Seek*, he wanted to "drag Stevenson's story back to its natural home of Edinburgh" (xi), and in a later interview he says that he wanted to reveal the "Edinburgh that no one was thinking about" (Foley, par. 7).

"Robert Louis Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde and the Double Brain", an article written by Anne Stiles, states Stevenson claimed that he was not aware of the notion of schizophrenia before he wrote the novel, and that the story had simply come out of a dream (879). However, in the same article, his wife states that her husband "was deeply impressed by a paper he read in a French scientific journal on sub-consciousness [*sic*]" and "gave the germ of the idea" for his novel (qtd. in Stiles 879). The "dual-brain theory", mentioned a few pages further in the same article, comes down to the fact that in the Victorian era the brain was considered as a "double organ" and that the "left and right hemispheres of the brain could function independently" (884), and, according to Stiles, its comparison to the split personality of Dr Henry Jekyll is "remarkable" thorough (888).

Rankin mainly uses Stevenson's theme of a split personality in his depiction of Edinburgh as a town, but it can also be linked to the relationship between Rebus and Cafferty, which is very much the same as the one between Dr Henry Jekyll and his alter ego Mr Hyde, which Rankin acknowledges in the introduction to *The Black Book* (x). Hyde is Jekyll's dark side, whereas Cafferty is Rebus's. The only discrepancy between the two duos is that Jekyll and Hyde are one and the same person, whereas Rebus and Cafferty are two different human beings. However, Rankin makes up for this by making them very similar to each other. In

Mortal Causes Rebus finds out that the rough kids from the Gar-B have mistaken him for Cafferty:

‘Remember you were with a pal, and he thought I was someone else. Remember? He asked me where my flash car was [. . .] And you told him that I wasn’t who he thought I was. Who did he think I was, son? [. . .] But someone a bit like me, eh? Similar build, age, height? Fancier clothes though, I’ll bet.’ (251)

Rebus and Cafferty are so much alike, that this boy could not even tell them apart, besides from the fact that Cafferty is the handsome version of Rebus. In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* Dr Lanyon finds Mr Hyde, and describes his looks: “there was something abnormal and misbegotten in the very essence of the creature that now faced me – something seizing, surprising and revolting” (65), whereas the good personality, Jekyll, is being described as “a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty, with something of a slyish cast perhaps, but every mark of capacity and kindness” (26), and a “large handsome face” (27), which is just the other way around with Rebus and Cafferty; Cafferty is much better looking than Rebus, which is Rankin’s way of making the contrast just that bit more striking. Cafferty is Rebus’s Hyde, in a way that he is the immoral version of Rebus, just like Hyde is the wicked version of Jekyll.

In the interview with Foley, Rankin also compares his protagonist and antagonist to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty (par. 11), which explains the fact that he has made Rebus and Cafferty so much the same. Holmes and Moriarty are similar in a way that they are both geniuses, especially in mathematics. In *The Final Problem* (1893), Doyle’s last Holmes story, Mr Sherlock Holmes describes Professor Moriarty as a “genius” and a “wonder” (238), and as “a man of good birth and excellent education, endowed by Nature with a phenomenal mathematical faculty”, whereas Rankin writes about the similarities between his characters that Cafferty is “very like Rebus in some ways,

something he can acknowledge but Rebus never will. Both men are ageing fast, finding changing landscape unsympathetic” (*The Black Book*, x). However, Professor Moriarty has the “hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind” and a “criminal strain ran in his blood” (239), which makes him, just like Cafferty to Rebus, the bad version of Holmes. Besides, like Rankin’s creations, Holmes and Moriarty are playing cat and mouse in a way that they are both after each other. In the Inspector Rebus series, this cat and mouse game plays an important role throughout. Even the dialogues between Moriarty and Holmes are at times the same as those of Cafferty and Rebus. In *The Hanging Garden* (1998), Rankin’s ninth Rebus novel, Cafferty and Rebus have the following conversation in jail:

‘Top of the morning, Strawman.’ Arms folded, looking pleased with himself. ‘You’ve had a busy night.’ ‘On the contrary, I slept as well as I ever have done in this place. What about you?’ ‘I was up at four o’clock, checking damage reports. I could have done without driving all the way here. Maybe if you gave me the number of your mobile ...?’ Cafferty grinned. ‘I hear the nightclubs were guttered.’ ‘I think your boys are making themselves look good.’ (283)

When comparing the dialogue of Cafferty and Rebus above to the following Holmes-Moriarty dialogue, it shows that both conversations strike a humoristic note: “‘You have paid me several compliments, Mr Moriarty,’ said I. ‘Let me pay you one in return when I say that if I were assured of the former eventuality I would in the interests of the public, cheerfully accept the latter’” (243), which contributes to their weird relationships; they are each other’s enemies, but sometimes it seems as though they are friends.

The most interesting similarity between Rankin’s characters and Doyle’s, is the way in which they take part in the end of the series. While fighting each other, Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty grab each other by the arms and fall into an abyss. However, they are never found, so there is no proof of the death of either man: “Any attempt at recovering the

bodies was absolutely hopeless” (255), whereas in Rankin’s seventeenth, as well as his last, Rebus novel *Exit Music*, Cafferty has to be taken into hospital and seems to be dying at the end of the novel, while Rebus is trying to revive him. However, the reader will never know whether ‘Big Ger’ will live or die:

The machines were making noises. Sweat in his eyes and the hissing in his ears – couldn’t tell if they were good news or not. In the end, it took two doctors, an attendant and a nurse to drag him off the bed. ‘Is he going to be all right?’ he heard himself ask. ‘Tell me he’s going to be all right ...’ (460)

Theoretically, Cafferty is not exactly Rebus’s alter ego, because they are not one and the same person. However, the idea of the doppelgänger is something that closely corresponds to the relationship between this protagonist and his antagonist. Since they bump into each other occasionally, there has to be a moment in which Rebus recognises himself in Cafferty: *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* is a book about the notion “anagnorisis”, or the moment of recognition (1-9), by Professor Terence Cave. In Rankin’s Rebus novels, Cafferty is the one who can make Rebus think about who he really is. Rebus admittedly ignores the fact that Cafferty could be his doppelgänger, but in fact the mirror that is being held up to him shows Cafferty’s reflection. Cafferty knows how to make Rebus insecure. However, by doing this, he also comes face to face with himself. In *Mortal Causes* Cafferty has accused Rebus of “liking cruelty”, and of “being attracted to it; his natural right as a Celt” (81), while exactly the same could be said of himself. However, as a result, Rebus starts to ponder upon his own accusations, “his time in Northern Ireland” and the things he did back then (81).

Lastly, the resemblance between Rankin’s main influences is fairly curious when looking back on this thesis, because all three writers, Ian Rankin, Robert Louis Stevenson and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, are from Edinburgh. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the capital of Scotland has the mysterious power to infect its citizens with its split

personality, or its dichotomy, which results in enigmatic best-selling novels that all cover this dark subject in their own way.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Ian Rankin uses the duality of Edinburgh in his Inspector Rebus series to put nineteenth-century Scottish novels in a modern Edinburgh daylight. He mainly uses his protagonist Detective Inspector John Rebus to put across the duality of the city's everyday life. Moreover, Rebus is most often the one who describes the city's atmosphere, which is mostly very dark and mysterious.

This duality is most visible in the division between Old and New Town: Old Town represents the historic part of the city with many breathtaking sights and views, whereas the New Town embodies the modern part with neo-classical buildings and industry. The New Town has helped the Old Town to become less crowded and developed the city in a way that it became bigger, and created room for business, whereas the Old Town became quiet and tranquil. In addition, the city is divided in heights and depths. The heights giving a spectacular view over the city, the depths giving a fantastic view on the various hills.

These contrasts attract a lot of visitors, who only notice the beautiful aspects of the city. However, Edinburgh is not only beautiful and tranquil; it is also dark and turbulent. The capital's crime rate is high compared to other capitals, and drugs and drinking problems are very common. To Rebus, night time is the most interesting part of the day, because especially during that time the city reveals its darkness to the people who pay attention. Moreover, these people, who pay attention, are even said to love the thrill of danger; Rebus does, in any case.

The capital's darkness and mystery is, amongst other things, due to its history of murder cases, like the Burke and Hare murders and the so-called hauntings, which are of course great sources of influence for all kinds of Scottish writers. Rankin has succeeded to keep this mystery throughout his Rebus series. Every single novel is full of suspense and secrecy, from beginning to end. Even the protagonist stays an obscure person throughout the

novels. John Rebus seldom opens up to anyone. Moreover, he uses his work to circumvent the subjects of emotions and feelings.

Then there is the city's climate. The Scottish people have to put up with an awful lot of rain and the nasty wind. The weather is therefore a common subject in the Inspector Rebus series. However, there is one season that is the most annoying to most citizens of Edinburgh, and that is summer. During summer, the Edinburgh Festival takes place and draws a lot of tourists, which causes the city to become overcrowded. Inspector Rebus, being probably the biggest objector to this Festival, mentions it a couple of times in the series; very negatively.

Rankin's main goal for the Inspector Rebus series was initially to write a modern-day version of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. However, this was not noted by the various reviewers. Therefore, Rankin put in another attempt and wrote his second book. By the time this novel was finished, Rankin was dragged into the world of his protagonist, which subsequently resulted in a whole series of seventeen books. Rankin wanted his novels to be realistic to its readers, so he chose to use real Edinburgh street names and places. This approach to make a novel more realistic is also acknowledged by Professor Malcah Effron.

Rankin's view on the city is most often depicted through the words of his protagonist. He is the one who describes the city's dark side, which is often also a metaphor for his own split personality, or the other way around. Moreover, it seems as though Rankin has tried to turn Edinburgh into a character, because Rebus's personality practically represents Rankin's view on the capital. Like Rebus, the city seldom opens up to its visitor, and like the city, Rebus has a good, and a dark side. Morris Gerald Cafferty is the characterisation of his dark side, but looks very much the same as him. He is Rebus's enemy, but he could just as easily be his friend.

This relationship between protagonist and antagonist is something Rankin picked up

from other nineteenth-century novels, like *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Final Problem*, or the Sherlock Holmes stories in general. The relationship, namely, is very similar to those of Dr Jekyll and his alter ego Mr Hyde, and Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty; the latter of each example representing the bad side of the other. In *Jekyll and Hyde* it is genuinely a split personality because it involves one and the same person, whereas in the Rebus and the Sherlock Holmes series it involves two different characters. However, the wicked characters of these series are in many ways the protagonists' doppelgangers, which, according to Professor Terence Cave, has to lead to an anagnorisis: a moment of recognition. In the Rebus series this often happens during Rebus's encounters with Cafferty, in which Cafferty tries to bring him down by pointing a finger at his behaviour, while this finger could be pointed back at him as well.

In any case, the conclusion is that Edinburgh seems to have a contagious, or even an infectious effect on its citizens, which makes it a great source of inspiration for writers like Ian Rankin. It is as though the city stimulates its citizens to seek its hidden personality, and pass it on to others. Rankin has most definitely succeeded in doing this. His Inspector Rebus series rouses interest in Edinburgh's history, and especially in its mysterious dark side.

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