



# The Role of Prostitution in the „Inspector Rebus“ Novels by Ian Rankin

## Bakalářská práce

*Studijní program:*

B7507 Specializace v pedagogice

*Studijní obory:*

Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání

Český jazyk a literatura se zaměřením na vzdělávání

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## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

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**Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání**  
Název tématu: **Úloha prostituce v knižní sérii "Inspektor Rebus" Iana Rankina**  
Zadávací katedra: **Katedra anglického jazyka**

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Metody:

1. Studium odborné literatury
2. Analýza románu



Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Jazyk zpracování bakalářské práce: **Angličtina**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Bell, Eleanor. 2008. "Ian Rankin and the Ethics of Crime Fiction." *Clues* 26 (2): 53-63

Effron, Malcah. 2009. "Fictional Murders in Real 'Mean Streets': Detective Narratives and Authentic Urban Geographies." *Journal of Narrative Theory* 39 (3): 330-346

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Severin, Laura. 2010. "'Out from the mentor's shadow': Siobhan Clarke and the Feminism of Ian Rankin's Exit Music (2007)." *Clues* 28 (2): 87-94.

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Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

**18. prosince 2015**

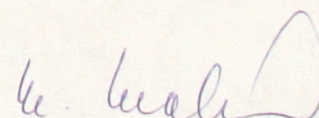
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

**16. prosince 2016**



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Patrik Čech

## **Acknowledgment**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Sándor Klapcsik, Ph.D. for the continuous support during my studies. I also have to thank him for his immense knowledge, unprecedented friendship and especially for his patience. His guidance helped me during the whole time of research and writing of this thesis. For all of that I owe him a great debt that can never be repaid.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank my family and friends for their constant support and encouragements, showing me that even in the darkest of times, the light of hope can always be kindled by the love of those closest to you.

## **Anotace**

Cílem této práce je s pomocí naratologické teorie o literární postavě a charakterizaci v románu analyzovat způsob využití plochých vedlejších postav v narativu detektivní fikce v knižní sérii Inspektor Rebus od Iana Rankina. Tato práce se bezvýhradně zaměřuje na postavy provozující prostituci a pokládá si za úkol dokázat, že hlavní využití těchto vedlejších postav spočívá v symbolické alegorii k pocitu viny a následnému sebedestrukčnímu chování hlavního hrdiny.

## **Klíčová slova**

naratologie, detektivní fikce, Tartan Noir, prostituce v literatuře, Ian Rankin

**Annotation**

The main aim of this thesis is to use narratological theories of the literary character and characterization to analyze the method of incorporating flat minor characters in the narrative of detective fiction in Ian Rankin's Inspector Rebus series. This paper will focus exclusively on the characters which profess prostitution, and will aim to prove that the main utilization of these flat characters is to serve as the symbolic allegory to the protagonist's sense of guilt and subsequent self-destructive behavior.

**Keywords**

narratology, detective fiction, Tartan Noir, prostitution in literature, Ian Rankin

## Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	8
2. Development of the Detective Story.....	11
3. Tartan Noir.....	14
3.1. Guilt and Calvinistic Heritage in Tartan Noir .....	18
3.2. Social Criticism in Tartan Noir .....	22
4. Prostitution in Scotland.....	27
5. Narratology and character-space .....	29
6. The Analysis .....	32
6.1. Lawfulness.....	34
6.2. Addiction and Guilt .....	36
6.3. <i>Hide and Seek</i> .....	38
6.4. <i>Black and Blue</i> .....	41
6.5. <i>The Hanging Garden</i> .....	44
7. Conclusion .....	48
References .....	50



## 1. Introduction

Raymond Chandler, one of the pioneers of the American hard-boiled fiction, states in a letter published in 1962, that “[t]he private detective of fiction is a fantastic creation who acts and speaks like a real man. He can be completely realistic in every sense but one, that one sense being that in life as we know it such a man would not be a private detective.” This must be a misprint as there surely cannot exist even remotely a profession more proper for the real, experienced, gruff, whisky smelling individuals, who know their way through dark, secluded alleys on a rainy, troublesome day.

At least this is what we can deduce from the never-ending interest in the hard-boiled tradition of the detective genre of literature that cannot conceal the lingering inspiration by the works of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, among others. One of them is the bestselling series of Inspector Rebus novels written by a contemporary Scottish author Ian Rankin, his hard-boiled ex-soldier John Rebus, first appearing in *Knots & Crosses* in 1987.

The main aim of this thesis is to use narratological theories of the literary character and characterization to analyze the method of incorporating flat minor characters, as described by E. M. Forster in his series of lectures *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), into the storyline. This paper will focus exclusively on the characters which profess prostitution, and will aim to prove that the main utilization of these flat characters is to serve as the allegory to the protagonist’s sense of guilt and subsequent self-destructive behavior.

The first part of the thesis covers the theoretical background to provide a coherent understanding of the cultural heritage of the detective fiction, with accents on its history and evolution. It further describes a rather peripheral but significant

subgenre of the contemporary detective fiction – *Tartan Noir*. As the term might suggest, novels and short stories of this specific subgenre represent the literary works of authors – for example Ian Rankin or William McIlvanney and others, who situate their narratives into the brooding moors of the Scottish Highlands or the enigmatic capital of Scotland, Edinburgh. It also concentrates on the aspect of social criticism of these novels, which in many cases incorporate real life events in their narratives to make a critical statement on the affairs in current political and sociological situation.

The second part focuses primarily on the definition and description of the narratological theories and principles, utilizing as the primary source the highly comprehensive *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2009) written by Mieke Bal. The thesis will rely on several other works focusing on the narrative and the role of the character and characterization in it, most prominently Alex Woloch's *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (2003).

The final part utilizes the theoretical findings, Bal's semantic axis and Woloch's concept of character-system, as a basis for the actual narratological analysis of the novel's main characters and subordinate prostitute characters. Based on these, three basic character traits (addictive personality, guilt, unlawfulness) can be detected in the prostitute and detective characters. Therefore, this paper finds these characters similar. Furthermore, following Wolloch's argument on the interrelated nature of limited character-space and allegorical reduction, it demonstrates that the flat characters, prostitutes, serve as an allegory to the protagonist's sense of guilt, rebellious nature and addictive personality.

The novels which will be analysed were selected due to their respective importance in the series and the particularity of the prostitute character, which are represented in them and the role they play in the narrative in parallel to the protagonist. Even though there are arguably other Rankin's novels that feature sex workers, these characters are mostly anonymous with no prominent role in the scope of the narrative. In most cases, they just epitomize one part of the criminal, underground side of the Scottish capital, which the main protagonist habituates.



## 2. Development of the Detective Story

Peter Messent (2013) argues that the origin of the modern detective fiction can be traced back 1841, when Edgar Allan Poe introduced a “locked-room mystery” in his *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. The beginning of detective novel as a separate literary genre is then ascribed to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, being especially popular in Great Britain. Authors such as Wilkie Collins, G.K. Chesterton and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle developed the genre and introduced memorable detective characters who are considered iconic even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (6-7).

Despite the fact that detective fiction was initially considered a source of light reading, and an insignificant literary genre that many writers perused to get rich quickly and easily, its reputation was consistently expanding. William W. Stowe states (1983) that there were typical features of the genre shared by many authors: “In conventional detective stories crime is usually seen as a symptom of personal evil rather than social injustice” (xiii). However, the genre has been progressively advancing since its establishment and literary critics have since perceived the impact of the genre that involves a broad spectrum of aspects that go beyond the crime solving, such as the complexity of characters and diverse social issues and moral conventions. John Muncie and Eugene McLaughlin (2001) also argue that “Detective novels are not simply stories of criminals, victims and “whodunit”, they also tell stories about the relationship between types of crime and types of social order” (3-4).

Detective fiction can be divided into a number of subgenres; the most common of them the “whodunit”, is mainly associated with Great Britain. The hard-boiled detective fiction, on the other hand, is the most typical feature of the American crime writers. Another highly influencing subgenre in contemporary crime fiction

is the police procedural. In contrast to the “whodunit”, police procedurals frequently reveal the perpetrator's identity early in the story, making it an inverted detective story —“howcatchem”. Other subgenres include the crime thriller, locked room mystery, historical crime fiction, etc.

Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, in an era now referred to as the Golden Age of Detective fiction, the genre of detective fiction became dominant among a great number of British authors who followed the standardized rules of the genre and wrote in similar styles. During this period, many female writers became successful by writing crime fiction; for instance, Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Ngaio Marsh and Margery Allingham, who are now referred to as the “Queens of Crime”.

At the same time, American writers such as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler established the hard-boiled style of detective fiction, which intended to modify or even reverse the conventions of the Golden Age. These authors criticized the British crime fiction for its use of peaceful, orderly setting of the British countryside and high-class society. They also strongly argued against the sense of order, the overt intellectuality of protagonists and the abstract nature of crime, which devaluates its realistic value.

Chandler (1950) claims in his essay “The Simple Art of Murder” that Golden Age writers “are too contrived,” their novels have “the austere simplicity of fiction, rather than the tangled woof of facts”. Chandler (1950) further adds that hard-boiled writers utilized chaotic settings, tangled storylines and worn, cynical protagonists to illustrate the corruptions, fake facade and violent reality of the American city. The abstract and fictional nature of the Golden Age is criticized, while realism in the hard-boiled stories is emphasized. “Fiction in any form has always intended to

be realistic,” says Chandler, who tries to find such realism in the description of immoral city life as: “the realist in murder writes of a world in which gangsters can rule nations and almost rule *cities*” (14-15).



### 3. Tartan Noir

In the recent years, the sleuthing protagonists of crime fiction stories are undergoing a notable change in their characterization. According to Julie H. Kim (2005), long gone are the days when the fictional detectives were defined by the ratiocination style of E. A. Poe. Nowadays, they are no longer delineated by their brilliant deductive skills, but rather by their gender, cultural background and national identity. It is not uncommon to go into a bookstore and find out that some of the books in the crime section are labelled as “Emerald Noir,” “Nordic Noir,” or “Tartan Noir” (4).

Taking its name from the criss-crossed pattern of kilts, the piece of clothing infamously associated with Scotland, “Tartan Noir” or Scottish crime fiction has proved one of the most popular and fast-evolving creations of the Scottish imagination in the past 20 years. Scottish crime writers such as Denise Mina, Val McDermid, Alexander McCall Smith and Ian Rankin are recognized not only locally, but have achieved international success.

McDermid, in her article “Living the tartan noir in Edinburgh” (2014) accentuates the distinctiveness and hypothetical lineage of literary works which resulted in this new genre. He connects the first stirrings of crime novel in Scotland with James Hogg’s experimental novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) and Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). It should be also noted that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the most famous fictional private investigator Sherlock Holmes, first appearing in short novel *The Study in Scarlet* (1887), was a Scotsman himself.

However, the hereditary literary lineage moves westward from this point on, as the distinctive features and characteristics of tartan noir have much more

in common with the American tradition of hard-boiled detective stories written by Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler than with the English Golden Age crime novel represented by Agatha Christie. McDermid (2014) notes that the “Dark psychological exploration, obsession, the potential for sudden explosive violence, the importance of the intellect, and a persistent seam of black humour” characterize this subgenre. “The resemblance of the American and Scottish mentality, in opposition to the British one, characterized by the preference of “the dark night of the soul to the tea with vicar”.

One of the most prominent features of Tartan Noir novels, reminiscent of the American detective stories of 1920’s and 1930’s, is the character of the main protagonist. This is especially the case in the works of Ian Rankin, arguably the most accomplished author in contemporary Scottish detective fiction. His character Rebus represents the typical clichés and conventional themes of hard-boiled detective. John Rebus is a lonely ex-army turned copper, constantly battling his inner demons with the abuse of alcohol and cigarettes. His obsession with police work has more than once resulted in problems with his personal life and his maverick style of investigation combined with inclination for insubordination hurts his career in the police force in several instances as well. He often faces violence, even uses it himself, but he always faces his problems with cynicism and wisecrack remarks, which clearly resemble Chandler’s Marlowe:

“Do you drink?”

“Teetotal is my middle name.” The Major grunted his satisfaction. “Trouble is,” Rebus went on, “my first name’s Not-at-all.” (*Black and Blue*, 210)

Another link between hard-boiled stories and tartan noir is in their use of the settings. Both genres depict the urban world as an embodiment of corruption, crime and death under the facade of fake modernity and glitter. Gill Plain (2002, 33) states that it is a “fragmented landscape of alienation, corruption and decay,” while John G. Cawelti (2004, 155) sees the world of hard-boiled stories as a wasteland, a man-made desert or cavern of lost humanity.

The dichotomy of Rankin’s Edinburgh with its contrasting sides of the Old Town and The New Town is somewhat parallel to the fictional depiction of Los Angeles by Chandler. Liahna K. Babener (1995, 127) argues that “Marlowe’s Los Angeles is a city of facades, of stucco and fake marble. It is the home of Hollywood, ‘the kingdom of illusion.” Rankin (1987) himself characterizes Edinburgh in a rather similar fashion:

“Edinburgh’s an easy beat, his colleagues from the west coast would say. Try Partick<sup>1</sup> for a night and tell me that it’s not. But Rebus knew different. He knew that Edinburgh was all appearances, which made the crime less easy to spot, but no less evident. Edinburgh was a schizophrenic city, the place of Jekyll and Hyde sure enough, the city of Deacon Brodie<sup>2</sup>, of fur coats and no knickers (as they said in the west).” (106)

Nevertheless, it is not only the Scottish capital that Rankin depicts in his stories. In an attempt to take his character from his comfort zone and change repetitiveness of the urban narrative, Rebus is from time to time forced to travel to different parts of Scotland while indulging in his police duties. This is particularly

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<sup>1</sup>area of Glasgow

<sup>2</sup> real life inspiration for Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*



prominent in the novel *Black and Blue*, which depicts various areas of the country: the Central Belt area, the West, the Highlands and Shetland. Each area is described with its unique culture and history, even language, for example in Aberdeen, "when they asked you where you were from, it sounded like they were saying 'Fury boot ye frae?'" (Rankin 1997, 164).

This way, Rankin gives the reader a picture of a country not only historically and culturally incoherent, but also linguistically divided. Plain (2002) argues that "as Rebus travels between Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Shetland he constantly encounters new challenges topographical, conceptual, and linguistic – and each location comes to act as a new frontier complicating the reader's sense of Scotland as a coherent national unit" (27).

The strong focus on the locale is not only characteristic of Rankin's fiction, but this can be found in the works of other Tartan Noir writers. William McIlvanney, considered by McDermid as the first actual author of the tartan noir style, explores in his novel *Laidlaw* (1977) the city of Glasgow. He describes the work of a local police officer in direct contact with the different social spheres of the city, especially the working class and the middle class areas, while also commenting on the culture of violence. Similarly, Denise Mina's dystopian *Garnethill* trilogy investigates into the urban and suburban terrain of the city, painting a depressing picture of the city's institutions and organs of governance. The mapping of the city is characteristic of many other contemporary Scottish crime writers and one could argue that it is one of the defining features of the genre.

### 3.1. Guilt and Calvinistic Heritage in Tartan Noir

There is also yet another dichotomy characteristic to all of the Tartan Noir writers – the question of guilt and innocence. In Rankin’s novels this is represented by the imminent presence of crime – it is everywhere and everyone is somehow implicated in it, particularly the main protagonist. Rebus even comments on the ever abounding sense of guilt rooted in the Scottish mentality due to a strongly religious background and Calvinistic heritage. Through Rebus, Rankin shares this not only with William McIlvanney’s fictional detective Laidlaw, but also with other Scottish writers.

The theme of the duality between guilt and innocence functions as an echo to the tradition of Scottish gothic fiction represented by Stevenson. Rankin refers to the Gothic through the use of bleak atmosphere, the titles of some of his novels (e.g. *Hide & Seek*, *Set in Darkness*, *Dead Souls*, *Resurrection Men*), even the horror-like description of crime scenes. For example in *Mortal Causes* (1994) the murder victim is found in the typically gothic setting of a buried, underground street beneath Edinburgh’s City Chambers, known as Mary King’s Close.

It too consisted of a vaulted room, again whitewashed and with a floor of packed earth, But in its ceiling were a great many iron hooks, short and blackened but obviously used at one time for hanging up meat. Meat still hung from one of them. It was the lifeless body of a young man. His hair was dark and slick, stuck to his forehead and neck. His hands had been tied and the rope slipped over a hook, so that he hung stretched with his knuckles near the ceiling and his toes barely touching the ground. His ankles had been tied together too. There was blood everywhere, a fact made all too plain

as the arc lamp suddenly came on, sweeping light and shadows across the walls and roof. (9)

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestant Reformation was spread throughout the whole Europe. John Knox, a former galley-slave and a devout follower of John Calvin's reformatory teachings, led the protestant movement in his native Scotland, breaking with the Papacy and establishing predominantly Calvinist national Kirk. In 1921 The Kirk was recognised as the national church by the British Parliament in the Church of Scotland act and to this day remains the largest religious grouping in Scotland.

The main aims of the Scottish reformation were represented in the protestant confession of faith, rejecting the catholic papal jurisdiction and the Mass. In addition, the central system of its theology was based on John Calvin's interpretation of the "Original Sin" committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. According to Calvin's teachings, the humans inherit the Adamic guilt and are in a state of sin from the very moment of conception. Their inherent sinful nature results in a complete alienation from God and the remedy can be attained only through Jesus Christ. As stated by Calvin (1960):

Original sin, therefore, seems to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls "works of the flesh" (251).

The existence of concealed guilt is essential to the narrative of the detective fiction. As W. H. Auden (1962) argues that “[t]he interest in detective fiction is the dialectic of innocence and guilt” (146). The original place of innocence, “the Garden of Eden”, is shrouded in the shade of committed crime and the final moment of magical revelation of the real crime perpetrator is one of the main appeals to detective fiction “addicts”. The agent behind this redemption - the detective, is in classical detective fiction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century viewed as “a genius from outside who removes guilt by giving knowledge of guilt” (157).

However, the trend of Golden Age’s insufferable genius detective was challenged and deconstructed by the writers of the hard-boiled genre, whose sleuth hero was far from being, as Chandler (1950) states, “the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world,” (15). This new detective was plagued by his own vulnerabilities and delimitations, inadequate the same way as the rest of society.

Bill Phillips (2014) argues that “This acceptance of the detective’s fall from omnipotent self-sufficiency has led, in some cases, to recourse to religious faith, a development which implicitly recognizes the detective’s acceptance of his own limitations as agent of redemption” (140). The primary example of this notion in the contemporary hard-boiled detective stories given by Phillips is Rankin’s Inspector Rebus. Rebus is explicitly identified in the first novel *Knots and Crosses* as an essential Scotsman, but also a Christian with problematic affiliation.

He hated congregational religion. He hated the smiles and the manners of the Sunday-dressed Scottish Protestant, the emphasis on a communion not with God but with your neighbours. He had tried seven churches of varying denominations in Edinburgh, and had found none to be to his liking. He had

tried sitting for two hours at home of a Sunday, reading the Bible and saying a prayer, but somehow that did not work either. He was caught; a believer outwith his belief. Was a personal faith good enough for God? Perhaps, but not *his* personal faith, which seemed to depend upon guilt and his feelings of hypocrisy whenever he sinned, a guilt assuaged only by public show. (1987, 71; emphasis in the original)

Several aspects of Rebus's character are in liaison with his religious heritage and upbringing in Scottish tradition. His obsessive, workaholic demeanour is often compared to the Protestant work ethic concept and his brooding, self-destructive way of life attributed to the Calvinistic sense of inherent, Adamic guilt. As claimed by a fictional Catholic priest and Rebus's friend Father Leary in the novel *Mortal Causes* (1994), "[I] know what you Calvinists think. You think you're doomed from the start, so why not raise some hell before you get there?" (227)

Erin E. MacDonald (2012) further emphasizes that the typical Scottish Guilt Complex is coming from the harsh environment of the Highlands, combined with strict upbringing. Rankin states that "[t]he basic tenet of the books is, it's impossible to escape history. Especially living in Edinburgh, and living in Scotland, you can never throw off the shackles of the past" (qtd. in Hasted 2011).

Plain (2002) adds that "the detective's pain is an integral part of the narrative ... his pain emerges from an inability to distance himself from the suffering of others. Although he tries to resist it, he is haunted by the victims he encounters, and he takes their pain onto himself, tearing himself apart through his excessive identification and feelings of responsibility" (39). It is also further argued that through the abuse of alcohol and occasional wounds from encounters of physical nature Rebus wants

to be punished for his shortcomings and mistakes – and, metaphorically, in a way similar to Calvinist doctrines – for the “Original Sin”.

### **3.2. Social Criticism in Tartan Noir**

One of the characteristics of the early crime fiction stories in Great Britain is that, as Karin Molander Danielsson (2002) states, it did not put as much emphasis on personality and characterisation, leaving the plot almost always dominant, where the background of the story or the depiction of the story’s characters was put to second place (43). The majority of its present-day works tend to deal with issues beyond the puzzle or the mystery, either by concentrating on the individuals’ motifs and thoughts, or providing some sort of social criticism. Stowe (1983) commented on the shortcomings of conventional detective story, specifically Doyle and Christie:

The very satisfying illusion one can derive from or at least maintain while reading one of these stories is that everything in the world is significant and comprehensible, that the universe is full of meaning because the message of every stone, brick, and footprint can be read. In the face of modern and postmodern versions of scepticism, agnosticism, and indeterminacy, this point of view is at best naïve, at worst smug and self-satisfied. (xiii)

However, crime novels which are following in the footsteps of hard-boiled fiction offer a literary description of its contemporary world and its social issues. Chandler’s stories are set in Downtown L.A., with its smoke-filled bars and depressing streets of the Prohibition, where the officers of the law are unable



or rather unwilling to stop the crime bosses due to the suffocating hypocrisy of the corrupt, bureaucratic system.

This realistic, or at least seemingly realistic tradition, continues in the works of contemporary writers such as Ian Rankin or Sara Paretsky. Effron (2009) observes that the contemporary detective fiction intends to create a realistic effect by continually dropping the names of actual streets, roads, parks, restaurants, buildings, tourist sites, etc. of a city continually in the texts. Effron also further adds that this technique does not necessarily provide genuine artistic realism but an “underlying basis of reality to confirm the legitimacy of the events portrayed in the narrative” (334). In other words, the well-known real-life places provide local authority for the main character, the detective, and – seemingly at least – add artistic weight to the author.

The sense of social responsibility and weight is strongly accentuated in the appropriation of the hard-boiled genre by the feminist authors such as Sue Grafton and Sara Paretsky. Heather Worthington (2011) states that “Paretsky in particular uses crime fiction as a vehicle for questioning social and cultural values, especially concerning gender, race and ethnicity and her texts return to social crime in their representation of corruption in business and government. Through her fictional, feminist detective V. I. Warshawski, Paretsky vocally comments on the current public affairs, from the Iraq War to the presidential election”(41).

This is one of the reasons why the crime stories are continually favoured and spread into the world. Muncie and McLaughlin (2001) argue that “Crimes do take place and do get solved, sometimes even to the detectives’ satisfaction. But, more often, the outcomes merely serve to underscore their deepening frustration

and alienation” (87). Indeed, many crime novels suggest that the problems of the country are deeper than the general concerns with crime and law enforcement.

First published in 1977, *Laidlaw* by William McIlvanney was ostracized by the contemporary literary critics. It seemed inconceivable that the author of *Docherty* (1975), award-winning social fiction novel focusing on the inner workings of a mining community in a small town of Scotland in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, would turn to a pure work of entertainment and lower art by planning to write a detective fiction. Fortunately, the same feeling for social strata and understanding of the Scottish national sentiments represented in *Docherty* came to fruition in *Laidlaw*. It became an instant detective fiction classic, often compared to the works of Raymond Chandler, and subsequently the very first novel dubbed as Tartan Noir.

The city itself becomes a proxy protagonist of the story. The smoke-ridden bars, 70's disco club and anonymous, gray slum tenements of the industrial Glasgow are providing the perfect setting for the crime of violence and bigotry. This bigotry and indifference of the public to everyday problems and its victims represent in *Laidlaw*'s the prime perpetrator guilty of the murder of a young woman:

There are tourists and there are travellers. Tourists spend their lives doing a Cook's Tour of their own reality. Ignoring their slums. Travellers make the journey more slowly, in greater detail. Mix with the natives. A lot of murderers are, among other things travellers. They've become terrifyingly real for themselves. Their lives are no longer their hobbies. Poor bastards. To come at them, you've got to become a traveller too. (100)

Eleanor Bell (2008) states that Ian Rankin is following in McIlvanney's footsteps, as he reflects on the significance of genuine and semi-genuine places in his novels by – not too modestly – comparing his books to those of James Joyce: “I mentioned James Joyce before. He once said of *Ulysses* that he tried to recreate Dublin so that if the city ever disappeared, they could build it again brick by brick just by reading his novel. I feel like that about the Rebus series. If Edinburgh were to disappear in a puff of smoke, you could bring it back to life using my books as a template” (54).

In addition, another tool of social criticism is the use of real life events to set the novel in a certain period and through the eyes of the protagonist comment on the public affairs represented in the piece of fiction. In Rankin's work, this feature is prominent in several instances, but most prominently in two novels. The first being *Mortal Causes*, where the streets of Edinburgh are flooded by the herds of tourists during the annual Edinburgh Festival, when a brutally victimized body is found in an underground, historical area of the Old Town. The second, *Naming of the Dead*, takes place during the G8 Gleneagles Summit in 2005. Rebus, a notorious maverick, finds himself in the investigation concerning anarchist political parties, which try to cause political havoc to interrupt the political meetings of world leaders.

Rankin (2007: n.p.) foregrounds that his authorial interest in addressing key social and political issues in his series, and especially as they figure within their Scottish cultural context:

Since I set out to write books about contemporary Scotland, I try to ensure that each novel focuses on a different aspect of life in Scotland – the economy/oil industry (*Black and Blue*); racism (*Fleshmarket Close*);

bigotry (*Mortal Clauses*); local politics (*Let it bleed*); geopolitics (*Naming of the Dead*); educational divide (*Question of Blood*); etc... Rebus, of course, is aware that as a policeman he operates on behalf of establishment, but he is also something of an anarchist himself, more likely to give a small-time crook an even break than some figure of the establishment. Ironically, he does not operate well in an institutional environment, yet has spent his whole life in such (school, then army, then the police).(qtd. in Messent 2012).

Through the lenses of his protagonist with no nonsense attitude, brooding moods, but also a tender spot in his heart for the weak, abused and lost, the readers are subjected to the real face of contemporary Scotland. Rebus's investigation stretches throughout all the social strata as he deals on daily basis with the wealthy businessmen and nobility, but also with the unprivileged, the small time crooks, drug addicts, beggars and in several occasions' prostitutes of both sexes.

#### **4. Prostitution in Scotland**

Prostitution represents the intersection of very strong ideas and beliefs as to the nature of relations between men and women, notions of power, freedom, sexual identity and morality. Johanna Kantola and Judith Squires (2004) observe that there are a number of distinct discourses around the whole area of prostitution, ranging from those that characterize prostitute women as victims of male domination and exploitation to those that stress the public-nuisance aspects of prostitution, and in which greater emphasis is given not to those working within prostitution but to those whose lives are adversely affected as a result of living and working in an area where sex is being traded. Gail Pheterson (1989) states that there are also the narratives of prostitution as 'sex work' within which it is seen to be the right of women to choose to use their bodies in whatever way they see fit. From within this perspective if women choose to work in the sex industry they should not be penalized or criminalized as a result of that choice.

Several reasons stand behind the involvement of young women, and occasionally men, in prostitution. Mostly coming from the dire need for money, as the great number of sex workers are drug addicts, therefore they need to provide enough finances for the supply to their addiction. Neil McKeganey (2006) argues that even though there are no official numbers, judging by the survey focusing on street prostitution conducted in 1992 by McKeganey and his colleagues in Glasgow, more than 70% of street workers were drug addicts and the number is still growing, estimated to 90% in 2006.

Other reasons for succumbing to the street prostitution are connected to the former experiences with child abuse, which might have shaped the victim's sense of self worth in a way that they find the commercial soliciting of sexual

services as the only possible way of living left. Only a slight percentage of working women surveyed by McKeganey refer to prostitution as a conscious occupational choice.

The official legal statute of prostitution in Scotland is governed by the *Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982*. This act clearly states that sexual acts in exchange for money are legal, but associated activities like public soliciting, operating a brothel or any other form of pimping are considered criminal offences. Nevertheless, as McKeganey (2006) informs: “[t]raditionally street prostitution in Edinburgh occurred in a part of the city that had a well-established reputation for commercial sex due to local agreements between the council and the police, and so women were allowed to work without fear of prosecution” (154).

However, a concerted action by local tenants led to an eradication of existing tolerance zone and resulted into a much more dispersed area of street prostitution. While in the past it would not have been uncommon to see between 20 to 30 women working on the street in this area, according to a fieldwork carried out by McKeganey in 1992 the number had diminished considerably. It was more common to see just a handful of women working in rather isolated conditions (154). Unfortunately, this makes the sex workers more vulnerable to the danger of becoming a victim to several criminal derelicts – including theft, violent abuse, rape or even murder.



## 5. Narratology and character-space

While the importance of any literary work's characters for its narrative function is arguable at best, they play essential role in appealing to its potential readers. Therefore, the narratological theories approach this potentially problematic issue rather hesitantly and with understandable caution. Jonathan Culler (1975) writes that "Character is the major aspect of the novel to which structuralism has paid least attention and has been least successful in treating" (230). This opinion is basically represented in works of other narrative theorists:

Whereas the study of the story's events and the links among them has been developed considerably in contemporary poetics, that of the character has not. Indeed, the elaboration of a systematic, non-reductive but also not-impressionistic theory of character remains one of the challenges poetics has not yet met. (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, 29)

That no one has yet succeeded in constructing a complete and coherent theory of character is probably precisely because of this human aspect. The character is not a human being, but it resembles one. (Bal, 2009, 112)

Bal (2009) further notes upon this resemblance in her definition of literary characters. Although she concurs that the characters possess human-like characteristics, which make them open to psychological and ideological description and analysis, she strongly accentuates their anthropomorphic aspects, which result in the unsatisfactory theory of character in narratology (112). Furthermore, Bal deconstructs the concept of characters into a representation of an actual human being presented with "distinctive, mostly human characteristics"

produced by the narrative, which she calls “character-effects” (113). They are deemed as the major attraction of the narrative for the readers as they represent the aspects of literary characters which are most susceptible to projection.

Even though Bal in several instances discourages any attempts of interpreting the characters in scope of narratological theory, she highlights several aspects of character construction, which she finds less argumentative. These are basic principles, upon which an image of a character is constructed for the reader to apprehend. Bal defines four of these principles: *repetition*, *accumulation of data*, *relations* and *transformations* (127). All of these seem to be rather self-explanatory. The more often a certain characteristic is presented to us, the more we connect these qualities with certain characters. The *accumulation* represents the quantity of differentiating information readers obtain. The *relations* with other characters help with construction of an image. Finally, the characteristics of more complex protagonists are also open to changes through time and their respective experiences, which they come across through narrative in the form of *transformations*.

For the purposes of this thesis it is necessary to expand on the principle of characters relations, which tend to be divided into similarities and contrast. These do not constrict only to connections with other personae in a story, but the character’s relation to itself can be instrumental in forming his image as well, especially in the early stages of the narrative (Bal, 127).

Alex Woloch (2003) further develops this constructional principle into a theory based upon the relations and character’s designated position in the structure of the literary text. He defines two new specific narratological terms, which formulate his framework of interpreting characterization in literature:

[...]the *character-space* (that particular and charged encounter between an individual human personality and a determined space and position within the narrative as a whole) and the *character-system* (the arrangement of multiple and differentiated character-spaces – differentiated configurations and manipulations of the human figure – into a unified narrative structure. (14)

The character-system focuses primarily on the relation between the novel's protagonist and the minor characters represented — their relative positions and the interactions between the character-space of the “hero” and others who crowd and revolve around him (18). In addition to this, Woloch emphasises the means of utilization of flat minor characters, who then provide a symbolic allegory to the protagonist (20). The concept of flat and round characters was first introduced by E. M. Forster in a series of written lectures *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) – the round characters described as complex, fully developed characterizations in opposition to underdeveloped, “constructed around single quality” (103) and “unalterable” (104).

Although Woloch acknowledges the struggles in combining the structuralistic analysis with the reference of the singular human aspect in character-criticism, he argues that his theory solves it: “The opposition between the character as an individual and the character as part of the structure dissolves in this framework, as distribution of character-spaces relies on the reference and takes place through structure” (17).

## 6. The Analysis

The success of the highly acclaimed and bestselling detective fiction novels by Ian Rankin have always been closely tied to the appeal of the main character, John Rebus. However, Rankin himself states in his interview with Sloma (2012, 78) that his initial intention for the novel, which was later published as *Knots and Crosses* (1987), was not a work of crime fiction. He came up with a protagonist with a complicated personality and troubled past, who could loom around the Scottish capital and so his occupation became that of a policeman. However, as Rankin had no substantial knowledge of the police procedure, his protagonist had to operate in an unconventional, maverick style of investigation. He also happened to live in the same street as Rankin himself, the Arden Street in Edinburgh. This was the only actual place in Edinburgh mentioned in his first novel; all of the other places such as Rebus's favourite bar or the police station were to a certain point in the series a work of fiction.

As a series of novels, which is now spanning more than 30 years, the first published in 1987 and the last to date *In the House of Lies* having been published in 2018, the myriad of characters appearing in these novels is practically impossible to be accounted for. Nevertheless, a certain number of the members of this vast entourage captured the eyes of the fans of this police procedural. Be it Rebus's enigmatic arch-nemesis, mob boss Big "Ger" Cafferty or his loyal protégé DC Siobhan Clarke, who slowly evolved from a youthful sidekick into an actual deuteragonist of the whole series.

However, the analytical interpretation part of this thesis aims to focus on a rather specific group of minor characters, instead of the prominent ones. It proposes a perceivable connection between the titular character and a small,

but potentially significant number of the residents of Rankin's fictional representation of Edinburgh, who similarly to Rebus broodingly roam the night streets of the Scottish capital in hopes of a better tomorrow – the local prostitutes.

Although the connection between the maverick policeman and the often overlooked sex workers might seem implausible, through the course of Rankin's novels several prostitute characters of both sexes play a pivotal role in their respective stories. They act as the protagonist's informants, friends, murder victims in several cases and even potential love interest. Through the use of a narratological theory of semantic axes, which will be explained in detail further, and Woloch's proposed theory of character-system, this thesis aims to prove a distinct utilization of the characters with shared and specific background, who in reality serve as synonymous representations of the main characters motivation and deeply troubled psyche.

In her book *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2009) Mieke Bal presents a method of differentiating between relevant and secondary characteristics of fictional personas. This method focuses on selecting *semantic axes*, which are pairs of contrary meaning.

Characteristics like “large” and “small” could be a relevant semantic axis; or rich-poor, or man-woman, kind-unkind, reactionary-progressive. The selection of the relevant semantic axes involves focusing, out of all the characteristics mentioned – usually an unmanageably large number — only on those axes that determine the image of the largest possible number of characters, positively or negatively. Of the axes which involve only a few or even one character, only those are analysed which are “strong” (striking or

exceptional) or which are related to an important event. [...] Once a selection has been made of the relevant semantic axes, it can function as a means of mapping out similarities and oppositions between the characters. (127)

In accordance with Bal's theory of semantic axes, this paper will focus on three dual opposites of characters qualifications: lawful/unlawful, addicted/not addicted, guilt-driven/ not guilt-driven.

### **6.1. Lawfulness**

Bal states that some of the qualifications used to determine relevant characteristics belong to a certain family role or profession (125). Focusing first on the qualifications strongly associated with the profession of a policeman, one would seem to expect a character which is strict, rule-abiding and procedural, as the term of police procedural genre suggests. However, as it was already stated by the author himself, having no experience with the actual police procedure during the creation of the first novel *Knots and Crosses*, Rebus is nothing of the sort.

On the contrary, during his first moments in the spotlight he physically assaults a suspect and even commits a petty crime by stealing himself a couple of rolls and a bottle of milk for breakfast. In his own words: "Nothing tasted better than a venial sin" (Rankin, 1987, 41). The rebellious, maverick part of Rebus's character quickly becomes one of his most prominent characteristics, resembling more of a hard-boiled amateur sloth of Raymond Chandler rather than an actual professional police officer. Prime examples being Rebus's friend and co-worker DS Siobhan Clarke and protagonist of Rankin's other police procedural series DI Malcolm Fox.



Constable Siobhan Clarke first appears in the novel *The Black Book* (1993). In Rankin's Introduction to this novel, he describes her as "Rebus's perfect working partner: someone who respected him but could still be infuriated by his reluctance to stick to the rules; someone confident enough in their own abilities to be able to give as good as they got" (5).

Siobhan is presented as the polar opposite to John Rebus. Growing up in English middle-class left-wing family and being much younger than her colleague, before joining the Lothian and Borders Police Department Siobhan graduated from a university. She is also a devoted fan of the Hibernian Football Club, formerly seen as a Roman Catholic institution, which implies her religious beliefs contrasting with Rebus's.

In addition, to underline the contrast between the two characters, Siobhan is described as strict, ambitious and playing by the rules. Her methods of investigation also follow a more traditional police procedure, while Rebus's depends on his more intuitive and "hands-on" approach. In accordance to her English, catholic upbringing, she is never associated with the Calvinistic inherent Adamic guilt and obsessive work ethic the same way Rebus is, which leads to her much stable standing with her superior and her gradual rise through the police ranks. This is further explored when by the time of the novel *Saints of the Shadow Bible* (2013) Clarke is promoted to Detective Inspector and assigned as direct superior to Rebus himself, who has been degraded to Sergeant following his semi-retirement from the force.

By the end of the novel *Exit Music* (2007) Rebus reaches his retirement age and is reassigned to the cold cases unit, which is staffed by the retired Lothian and Borders police detectives. Therefore, Rankin's next detective novel

featured a new protagonist, who represents the antithesis to Rebus's maverick character – Malcolm Fox.

Malcolm Fox, first introduced in *Complaints* (2009) serves in the Complaints and Conduct department of Edinburgh police force. The differences between Rankin's protagonists are striking from the first moment. In contrast to Rebus's workaholic, yet infamously rebellious methods of police work, Fox is represented as the ultimate stickler for rules, whose own job focuses on investigating the potential unlawful conducts of his colleagues in the force. Furthermore, unlike Rebus, he is actually capable of working as a team player and total abstinent. Though of the same Scottish heritage, there is no mention of Fox's religious beliefs or guilt-driven conscience.

*Standing in Another Man's Grave* (2012) depicts an actual confrontation between these two characters, as the story sees Rebus re-applying for his former job, while Fox is assigned with the task of the former's evaluation. Fox's strict, self-righteous morality comes to clash with maverick Rebus during the whole narrative. "I know a cop gone bad when I see one. Rebus has spent so many years crossing the line he's managed to rub it out altogether" (77).

## **6.2. Addiction and Guilt**

Another vital part of the protagonist persona is his notable abuse of addictive substances, mainly alcohol. Even though the alcohol addiction might seem potentially more prolific with fictional policemen, Rankin himself provides the almost ultimate contrast when confronting Rebus with his literal antithesis – Malcolm Fox, an internal affairs policeman and quintessential "teetotal" in the novel *Standing in Another Man's Grave*. Furthermore, Rebus acknowledges his drinking

problem as yet another part of his self-destructive behaviour in *The Hanging Garden* (1997).

“Not having one?”

“I’m on the wagon.” Rebus rubbed a thumb over the label.

“Since when?”

“The summer.”

“So why carry the bottle around?”

Rebus looked at it. “Because that’s not what it is.”

Claverhouse looked puzzled. “Then what is it?”

“A bomb.” Rebus tucked the bottle back into his pocket. “A little suicide bomb.” (12 – 13)

Finally, the protagonists primary motivation for leaving the army even before the start of the series and arguably the qualification that results in Rebus’s solitary, unhappy life, obsessing over cases nobody cares about and drinking away his problems, is the guilty conscience of abandoning a friend during harsh psychological torture as part of the army special forces training as described in *Knots and Crosses* (1997).

It did worry me, though. What was it all about? I’d exchanged friendship for this informal debriefing. I’d exchanged love for these smirks. And Gordon’s screams were still in my ears. Revenge, he was crying, revenge. I laid my hands on my knees, bent forward, and started to weep (175).

While the workaholic aspect of the protagonist is for obvious reasons absent in the characterization of the prostitutes, the primary guilt-driven conscience resulting in self-destructive behaviour, drug abuse and non-existent family relations is the perfect example of the direct, allegorical connections between all of these characters and the sleuth hero. After evaluating all of these qualifications on the chosen semantic axes, the resulting data can be for clarification purposes illustrated in a table, where + signifies positive pole and x signifies negative pole, like this:

	lawful	addicted	guilt-driven
Policemen	+	x	x
Rebus	x	+	+
Prostitutes	x	+	+

**Figure 1 - Typical characteristics in the Rebus novels**

The subsequent chapters will be devoted to a selected number of novels, which all feature prominent prostitute characters, which will be further analysed and interpreted in comparison with the protagonist on defined semantic axes, their character-space in their respective literary works and the role they are designated to represent in the scope of narrative.

### **6.3. *Hide and Seek***

*Hide and Seek* (1991) is the second novel of the Inspector Rebus series. A body of an overdosed drug addict is found in an Edinburgh squat full of ritualistic symbols. Even though most are inclined to categorise it as a routine death of a junkie, Rebus finds himself haunted by some unusual facts of the case. As part of his investigation, Rebus meets a young woman named Tracy who knew the dead

man and heard his terrifying last words: "Hide! Hide!" It emerges that the dead man was a male prostitute and a photographer who took and hid some sensitive photos in a specialist private members' club — Hyde's. Rebus soon realises that this club is a meeting place of privileged, highly connected people in society, who amuse themselves by betting on illegal boxing matches undergone by forced drug addicts. Rebus is able to arrest Hyde's owner and several high profile members, but to his outrage and disgust all the prisoners die suspicious deaths to prevent a scandal.

Ronnie is a young gay prostitute, who was forced from home by his father on the account of his sexual orientation. Due to this childhood trauma, Ronnie at first finds solace in drugs, but later becomes a male sex worker to provide for his addiction. Even though his brother, who is a police officer, is trying to help him, Ronnie finds his death after an unsuccessful attempt to blackmail the owners of Hyde's club, where he was forced to fight with other prostitutes.

In accordance with the concept of flatness of a character by E. M. Forster (1927), this example is rather typical for characters appearing in detective fiction. Furthermore, Woloch (2003) argues that his theory redefines "literary characterization in terms of this distributional matrix: how the discrete representation of any specific individual is intertwined with the narrative's continual apportioning of attention to different characters who jostle for limited space within the same fictive universe" (14). This awareness of the distributional matrix help further develops the "flatness" of characters. Woloch claims that precisely this "[...] flatness simultaneously renders subordinate characters allegorical and, in its compelling distortion, calls attention to the subordination that underlines allegory" (20). The limited distributional matrix of the character-space is in correlation to its own allegorical reduction.

The distribution of the character-space is particularly limited in this case, even though the character in question is the murder victim. Instead, the main narrative focuses primarily on Rebus and his investigation, which through the course of the novel expands from a case of “just another junkie who died on his own volition” (259) into an exposure of a high-profile organized crime hidden under the public face of Edinburgh. As a result of the reduction, the poles corresponding to the selected semantic axes are immediately visible. This minor character was driven from his home due to the guilt forced upon him by his father on the basis of his sexuality. This further leads him on the self-destructive path of drug addiction, prostitution and ultimately his death.

In addition, the character-space of the young prostitute, even though severely limited, is delegated to the crucial part of the narrative, because it occupies the very first pages of the story:

‘Hide!’

He was shrieking now, frantic, his face drained of all colour. She was at the top of the stairs, and he stumbled toward her, grabbing her by the arms, propelling her downstairs with unfocussed force, so that she feared they would both fall. She cried out.

‘Ronnie! Hide from who?’

‘Hide!’ he shrieked again. ‘Hide! They’re coming! They’re coming!’ (1)

By doing this, Rankin forces even more of the attention of his readers on the consequent “disappearance” of the original focal character. The tension insinuated by the scene of a delusional, panicking boy is underlined by his immediate

vanishing from the character-system, which then counts as his most significant memorable gesture, until he is absorbed in the story of the main protagonist (Woloch 2003, 38).

The first time Rebus looks at Ronnie's dead body is the most relevant piece of information to judge the character. In a damp, uninhabitable squat in Edinburgh, Ronnie's body is perceived by the detective using a torch to illuminate the unnerving details. His body position is compared to a painting of a crucifixion by Carravagio, which invokes the symbolism of innocent sacrifice for the guilty of this world.

#### **6.4. *Black and Blue***

First published in 1997, *Black and Blue* is the eight novel in the Inspector Rebus series. Being awarded The Golden Dagger, the top award of Crime Writer's Association, it is potentially the most highly acclaimed of Ian Rankin's novels, even dubbed by the critics "an entry landmark in the Tartan Noir genre". It was also the first story to be adapted in the *Rebus* television series starring John Hannah, airing in 2000.

In the course of this story, DI John Rebus is working on four different cases. One concerns the investigation of a serial murder of four young women, one of them being a close associate of his, prostitute Angie Riddell. This rather unprecedented and specific relation internally obligates Rebus to pursue the investigation, even after receiving a warning from his superiors. The killer behind these devious acts is believed to be the infamous Bible John, a serial killer active in the 1970's and never apprehended. Rebus's investigation is proving to be one of his hardest cases, as he has to face an internal inquiry concerning his past mentor on the force.

The most significant prostitute character appearing in this novel is undoubtedly Angela Riddell, called Angie. A former street prostitute turned escort, she first comes in contact with John Rebus during a police sweep near Leith docks, where she quickly catches the detective's eye as she is the only working woman who doesn't panic at the sight of the police officers and even goes on as to console a young, crying, inexperienced colleague of hers. Rebus later comes back to the scene with a sole purpose of meeting her and they spend a good portion of a day talking and drinking coffee.

In the course of the story it is very strongly hinted that during that time Rebus began to develop a romantic feelings towards her, which later serves as a motivation to his obsession with the Johnny Bible cases, as Angie is the second victim of this case. The TV series featuring John Hannah goes even further and explicitly depicts them as lovers.

As is the case in Rankin's novels, the narrative is not disrupted by long passages concerning the explicit characteristics of various personages. The only time an explicit description of Angie's bodily features is given to the readers when Rebus looks at the wall containing information about the victims and he sees her post mortem picture. His first thought 'good body' quickly turns into a severe case of guilty conscience over his sexual urges.

Thus, every time a picture or a memory of Angie is mentioned by Rebus it is almost exclusively with feelings of pain and insufferable guilt, already mentioned above as a part of Scottish Calvinist upbringing. As Plain (2002) writes of the novel, "the detective's pain is an integral part of the narrative ... his pain emerges from an inability to distance himself from the suffering of others. Although he tries to resist it, he is haunted by the victims he encounters, and he takes their pain onto



himself, tearing himself apart through his excessive identification and feelings of responsibility” (39).

Even though the primary focus of the almost masochistic tendencies for pain and guilt rest on the shoulders of the protagonist, one of the limited number of qualifications known about Angie implies the amount of pain and suffering this intriguing woman deals with under the mask of experienced, aloof, even cheerful exterior.

“Her hair seemed to be dyed a different colour in almost every picture, like she never was quite happy with herself. Maybe she just needed to keep changing, running from the person she’d been, laughing to stop herself crying. Circus clown, painted smile...” (103).

The hauntings, whether personal or national in origin, combined with the proper amount of alcohol to keep them away bring the detective to the verge of a mental breakdown. He begins to see ghosts everywhere and to expect to see them whenever he is alone, whenever he attempts to close his eyes or whenever he is sober. He expects to see the ghost of Angie Riddell in a doorway or, at least, as according to Rankin (1997): “something of her there, the trace of a shadow, something left behind. But all he sees is darkness” (231). This explicitly proves the dramatic value of a minor characters vanishing, accentuated through the perspective of the main protagonist. “The minor character rests in the shadow-space between narrative position and human personality: an implied human being who gets constricted into a delimited role [...]” (Woloch 2003, 40).

In a way similar to Ronnie in *Hide and Seek* (1991), although with definitely more nuanced and noticeable character-space, Angie is basically deconstructed through the allegorical reduction into the very symbol of Rebus's guilty conscience. Her eyes haunting the detective in his sleepless nights:

“Next thing I knew, she was dead. It's different when you know someone. You *remember* their eyes. I don't mean the colour or anything, I mean all the things their told you about them.”

He sat in silence for a long, solemn moment.

“Whoever killed her, he couldn't have been looking at her eyes” (231, accent added)

### **6.5. *The Hanging Garden***

This is the ninth novel in the series, published in 1998. The main narrative of this crime fiction focuses on the territorial war between Rebus's archenemy, mob boss Big “Ger” Cafferty and the gang led by Tommy Telford from Newcastle. In liaison with Telford is a certain Tarawitz, a well known Chechen human-trafficker. The novel opens with presumable hit-and-run attack on Rebus's daughter Sammy, that puts her in a hospital and the furious detective is from that point capable of anything, to find the culprit. On the other hand, a prostitute girl known as Candice, who tries to commit suicide in the stalls of Rebus's police station, is perceived as a possible lead in the ongoing investigation of Tommy Telford and his gang. In addition to this entire conundrum, Rebus is assigned to a case of a possible Nazi soldier posing as an innocent pensioner in Edinburgh.

The pivotal prostitute character presented in the narrative of this novel is the Chechen girl Karina, employed by gangster Tarawitz as a sex-worker under the name Candice. After her unsuccessful suicide attempt, she quickly forms a bond with the hard-boiled detective, who in several instances notes her resemblance to his hospitalized daughter. Although she is provided with a safehouse, her location is uncovered and she is blackmailed into returning to Tarawitz. When the police force is finally able to arrest the members of Telford's gang, Karina vanishes under the implication of a potential brighter future.

The first moment Karina's character-space comes into relation with Rebus is during her failed attempt to gag herself with a toilet paper in the police station bathroom. Once the detective stops her in her endeavour and saves her, the desperate crying woman clings to her saviour on her knees, as if seeking redemption for her sins. Once saved, she begins to show more cheerful side of her character in her next interactions with Rebus. However, after the life of her little son is threatened, she resumes her former profession. During this time, she is yet again confronted with Rebus in a bathroom, but with much more tragic perspective.

“Go John” There was powder at the corners of Candice's mouth. A tiny piece of tablet had lodged between her front teeth. “Please, go now.”

“I don't want you getting hurt.” He sought her hands, squeezed them.

“I do not hurt any more.”

She got to her feet and turned from him. Checked her face in the mirror, wiped away the powder and dabbed at her mascara. Blew her nose and took a deep breath.

Walked out of the toilets.

Rebus waited a moment, time enough for her to reach the table. Then he opened the door and made his exit. Walked back to his car on legs that seemed to belong to someone else.

Drove home, not quite crying.

But not quite not. (280)

When considering the previously selected semantic axes, both Rebus and Candice share the same values on all of the chosen axes, which by Bal's (2009) definition denotes them as synonymous characters (129). The two moments in the bathroom between them clearly represent this, especially their second meeting as quoted. At this moment in the narrative they are both desperately fighting to survive, while at the same time worried about their children. Rebus, anxiously trying to find the culprit behind the attack on his daughter even forms a pact with his big nemesis, Cafferty. Similarly, Karina is once again forced to attain her prostitute Candice persona to save her boy.

This quintessential guilt they both feel is yet again represented in their respective self-destructive patterns. Rebus finds his solace in the bottle of alcohol and Candice numbs her senses abusing an unidentified drug. While the sleuth protagonist is clearly projecting his attempts to save Candice with the well-being of his daughter, the allegorical connection drawn from the character-spaces between these two characters suggest that Rebus from a certain perspective is just trying to save himself from the guilt-driven highly developed masochistic sensibility (Plain 2002, 63).

Surprisingly, Candice is to date the only prominent prostitute character in Rankin's Rebus series to survive the events of their respective narrative.

In accordance to this, she is designated relatively more character-spaces and qualifications than the examples mentioned before. Nevertheless, she is still considered a rather flat character, whose allegorical reduction furthermore underlines the semantic axes, which she shares with the main protagonist. She may resemble the daughter, but her self-destructive tendencies are utilized to highlight the inner workings of Rebus's troubled soul.

In the end, both of these characters seem to follow the path to the redemption of their shared sense of guilt.

Clean and sober he went to the hospital. An open ward this time, set hours for visitors. No more darkened vigils. No return visit by Candice, though nurses spoke of regular phone calls by someone foreign-sounding. No way of knowing where she was. Maybe out there searching for her son. It didn't matter, so long as she was safe. So long as she was in control [...]

"I need a few fantasies to sustain me in here," Sammy said. Rebus beamed at her, said hello, then bent down and kissed his daughter. (408)

## **7. Conclusion**

While presenting the narratological theory on literary character and characterization in narrative Bal (2009) explicitly states that due to the anthropomorphic aspects of these phenomena, there does not exist a satisfying narratological theory of the character (112-113). She then further argues that “when a character is presented by means of her actions, we deduce from these certain implicit qualifications. Such an implicit, indirect qualification may be labelled a qualification by function. The reader’s frame of reference becomes a crucial element in picking up such qualifications.” (121)

This indicates that from their specific perspective two different analysts will not necessarily come to the same conclusions. Where one sees a pacifist, the other might see a sign of cowardice. Their respective frames of reference indicate the pole of qualifications due to their separate experiences, world views and general opinions. Therefore it should be noted that the conclusions of this paper are based not only on the narratological theory, but also on the specific frame of reference of its author. Because of that, the findings presented might be susceptible to different or even contrasting interpretation.

The main aim of this thesis was to analyze the utilization of the flat prostitute characters in Ian Rankin’s Inspector Rebus series through the narratological theory of character and characterization. It provides the interpretation that through a conscious delimitation of character-space and flat characterization, the prostitutes serve as allegory to three basic qualifications of the main character that further underline his self-destructive tendencies – his rebellious nature, addictions and first and foremost the primordial Calvinistic sense of guilt, which epitomizes his main motivation.

The first part of the paper provided the brief history of the detective genre, although it primarily focused on the definition of the *Tartan Noir* subgenre, this rather peripheral, but highly enjoyable addition to the contemporary detective fiction. The second part concentrated on the narratological theories and aspects, which were then further applied in the subsequent part of the thesis, which provided the interpretation of the method of minor character utilization in Ian Rankin's novels *Hide and Seek* (1991), *Black and Blue* (1997) and *The Hanging Garden* (1998).

The scope of this research could be even extended further, as it focuses solely on the similarities between the protagonist and flat characters. It would be interesting to take a contrasting approach and concentrate on the role of the round, fully developed characters that represent the antithesis of the main protagonist, DI Rebus. Prime example being the criminal boss Gerald Cafferty, the detective's arch-nemesis. Like Moriarty to Sherlock Holmes, Cafferty shares several traits with the titular hero, even though they stand on opposing sides of the law. During the course of the series they even begin to see it as their ultimate goal to eliminate the other.

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