Using Digital Tools to Explore Spatial Strategies and the Illusion of Realism

in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *Oliver Twist*

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ABSTRACT

This paper interprets the literary spaces of London as depicted in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892) and *Oliver Twist* (1838) through acts of mapping and reading the city. Digital mapping tools when combined with analysis of spatial meaning in the text enable us to visualise and understand spatial meaning in literature far more fully than ever before. However, while many digital mapping projects for literature seek to align fictional space with the "real", this study argues that such correspondence is often secondary to the narrative strategies through which writers construct a totalising sense of place that is ultimately illusional. In contrast to many digital literary mapping projects that treat historical maps as a benchmark for fictional accuracy, then, we approach mapping as a way of making visible the different techniques through which Dickens and Conan Doyle construct verisimilitude and how these strategies illuminate broader questions about the relationship between maps and texts in literary interpretation.

The paper is in four parts. The first section maps the fictional onto real world maps using digital map layers and compares the two. The second turns from visual acts of mapping to verbal and looks closely at Conan Doyle's textual and spatial strategies as Holmes and Watson move across different parts of London. The third section compares strategies in an early work also centred on criminal London: *Oliver Twist*. The final section problematises the desire for fiction to be "accurate" in a detailed reading of the short story "The Blue Carbuncle".

Keywords

Digital Literary Mapping; Digital Humanities; Literary Cartography; Conan Doyle; Charles Dickens.

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This paper is concerned with the ways in which acts of mapping and place-making in literary fiction construct a verisimilitude that is vital to the sense of place that underpins the work. We focus on two authors and texts that address London through a criminal geography that allows for a second hidden city beneath the controlled surface layer of the map. Conan-Doyle turns this opacity into the (literal) grounds for detection: maze-like streets and dangerous slum areas require the spaces of the city to be fully known, with Sherlock as the master-guide imposing spatial logic. Dickens uses the same geographic area to explore how urban form shapes movement, perception and the limits of knowledge. This makes the pairing highly productive. The comparison illuminates not only two distinct narrative uses of London but also the broader question of how fiction negotiates the tension between the mappable (referential) and unmappable city.

Digital mapping tools, combined with analysis of spatial meaning in the text, enable us to visualise and understand spatial meaning in literature far more fully than ever before. However, while many digital mapping projects seek to align fictional space with the "real", this study argues that such correspondence is often secondary to the narrative strategies through which writers construct a realist totality. In contrast to many digital literary mapping projects that treat historical maps as a benchmark for fictional accuracy, we approach mapping as a way of making visible the different techniques through which Dickens and Conan Doyle construct verisimilitude and how these strategies illuminate broader questions about the relationship between maps and texts in literary interpretation.

When considering realist strategies, particularly in relation to literary cartography, it is important to always bear in mind that "Literary realism is a representational form and a

representation can never be identical with that which it represents" (Morris, 2003, 4). Pam Morris continues:

> The problem with definitions of realism and related terms that use phrases like 'fidelity of representation' or 'rendering of precise details' is that they tend to be associated with notions of truth as verifiability. (2003, 5)

The inherent danger of mistaking the representation for the thing itself that realism deliberately encourages, is heightened by the effect of mapping a literary representation onto a cartographic representation and becoming caught up in questions of map "accuracy" (accuracy to what?). Rather than use the problematic term "realism" throughout, therefore, we have chosen to discuss the texts in terms of "verisimilitude". Here the term itself draws attention to a degree of (authorial) artifice that is certainly in play: *appearing* to be true rather than purporting to be so. Spatial verisimilitude is thus to be understood not in terms of factual correspondence but as a totalising aesthetic produced by narrative conventions that is central to both writers' representations of London. The Holmes stories generate a city that can be read and decoded: clues matter, streets connect, distances are meaningful. In contrast, *Oliver Twist* requires a city whose spatial textures can persuade the reader of the plausibility of its criminal networks and social conditions, merging referential and fictional elements with psychological, outer and inner spaces. Mapping therefore becomes a means of revealing distinct 'ways of seeing': the spatial strategies through which each writer generates an illusion of the real for the reader.

Our palimpsestic approach starts with a base layer consisting of a historic map made by Charles Booth (itself a coloured rendering of a pre-existing map – Stanford's Library Map of London and the Suburbs). This enables us to establish a point of comparison for studying literary strategies by beginning with a real-world example of thematic mapping for socio-historical purposes. Booth's pioneering maps of 1889 and 1898-9 are almost exactly

contemporaneous with the Sherlock Holmes narratives (the first book, *A Study in Scarlet* was published in 1887; *Adventures* in 1892). Onto this base layer, using Memory Mapper, we mapped out the earliest Holmes narratives including *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *Oliver Twist.*[1]

A thematic map – designed to display the pattern of distribution of a particular topic over a geographic area – uses visual devices to "tell a story". In contrast, our approach takes spatially and geographically oriented fictional narratives and visualises them – in essence doing the same thing in reverse. Booth's maps were made by translating spatial meaning across form: walking the streets, recording the experience in the notebooks; visualising it on the map. In the act of creating a powerful visual tool, the street in all its fullness – life, sensory impressions, inhabitants – is lost, along with movement through urban space which is compressed into a block of colour. The text is displaced by the map, having already served its purpose. Nonetheless, considered as a whole, the colour coding is a powerful tool.

In our project the same activities are in play. On-the-ground mapping, which literally authorised the map in the case of Booth, may also be undertaken silently by the writer, but now functions only to generate the fictional text. However, because the primary form of representation is verbal rather than visual, the "map" becomes internalised by characters and externalised through enacted movement, with street names and key sites as anchor points for both character and reader. In the case of Holmes or Bill Sikes, movement across and through the urban maze is skilled and purposeful because the map is already well known and held schematically in the mind. In Booth, the physical tour produces the visual map; in fiction, the implicit map generates the verbal text. When – *pace* Booth – we go one stage further and layer this text onto a map base, the act of fully visualising the texts (critically) works to uncover the (authorial) spatial strategies that create an illusion of a geographic totality. As with Booth, the visualisation layered onto the real is fairly reductive in itself but proves

illuminating when read and interpreted alongside the text because it uncovers larger patterns and spatial forms that the text alone cannot show. When we undertake detailed mapping activities that make a direct correspondence between fictional and real-world geographies *across* authors, further questions emerge – above all the question of what the text seeks to correspond "accurately" to, and the challenges this creates. This is addressed in the final part of the paper.

From Booth to Holmes

In 1888 philanthropist and ship-owner Charles Booth decided to make a map in response to Henry Hyndman's report (for the Social Democratic Federation) that poverty in London was at twenty-five percent; a figure that Booth thought was exaggerated. The findings of the map made by Booth and his researchers proved him wrong (thirty-three percent were living in poverty across London and thirty-five percent in the East End (Vaughan 2018, 68)) and in response he dedicated himself to the mapping project and related writings for the next fourteen years.[2] The data for the first map of 1889 was gathered from School Boards. The final map (1898-99) was updated on foot, largely by Booth's assistant (George Duckworth). He accompanied police officers on their London beats, confirming or correcting street colours previously assigned to the map and recording impressions of how the streets had changed since 1889.

In this "early use of information graphics to influence social policy" (Kimball, 355) Booth used visual strategies to enable people to see the city in a new way and bring about improvement. The fact that he himself had needed convincing of the levels of social deprivation is telling – since he also knew what was needed to change people's minds. As Miles A. Kimball points out in his discussion of the visual codes of the map, "many

expressions of concern or anxiety about poverty appeared in terms of vision or seeing . . . of being unable to see clearly" (356). Booth himself uses such a metaphor in his written reports: "East London lay hidden from view behind a curtain on which were painted terrible pictures" (Booth 1889, 592). The map thus "provided a method for visualising a problem" (Vaughan 2018, 87). It did this systematically by linking poverty to space on a street-by-street basis and thus made apparent the way in which "the poor problem had become a spatial problem" (69).

The chromolithographic maps are distinctive and famous primarily because of the striking nature of the visual design. Areas and streets are coloured gold in the wealthiest regions

FIGURE 1 HERE

(around the parks and in the West End) and in varying degrees of red for the middle classes, with more controversial linkage of the poorest categories ("very poor" and "semi-criminal") to dark blue and black (see Figure 1). This is typical of the visual iconography of the period for which "examples of the use of darkness to hint at immorality abound" (Vaughan 2018, 8). Whilst this appears controversial at first sight, Laura Vaughan also makes clear that Booth was concerned to shift the focus "away from a debate about morality and towards a consideration of practical solutions" (69). For this reason his categories were based on "income combined with employment patterns and status, rather than social classes" (69). Booth sought to establish the *conditions which led to crime* and to show that criminality was largely caused by an inability to earn regular wages (not because the poor were inherently amoral). Kimball also points out that *overall* Booth's maps "overturned this visual rhetoric of darkness" (371) because red and yellow predominate across the map as a whole. Black areas occur in pockets and "the resulting maps argue visually that while things are dire they are not hopeless" (371). Thus, visual effects are underpinned by deep human conviction and a desire to bring about change.

For *our* project, the process of mapping literary narratives and characters' movements *onto* the Booth map was only intended originally to be undertaken as a secondary and transitional activity to support the making of an interactive world-build of Central London in Minecraft, allowing readers to literally inhabit the map and walk the beat with Booth.[3] However, in undertaking these activities we began to realise that the mapping out of the narratives was proving revealing in its own right. As we will demonstrate, mapping Sherlock Holmes *onto* Booth reveals various points of correlation – most obviously in terms of the geographic location of crime around riverside locations, to the East and in crowded urban courts. Key sites of poverty within the city have a long and rich history and retain their identity for hundreds of years (e.g. Saffron Hill; St Giles' Rookery). The Booth map also shows the variegated nature of wealth and poverty in central London – with dangerous slum areas such as Devil's Acre located close to popular markets frequented by all classes – Covent Garden and Smithfield. Although Holmes lives in the fashionable doctor's area near Regent's Park, he moves rapidly and freely across all of these areas and across both sides of the river (see Figure 2).

The Booth map was able to display intimate knowledge of the city through the work of Booth's assistants (most notably George Duckworth) who gathered it by walking with policemen on their beats. Figure 3 is a mapping out of these routes as recorded in the Booth notebooks for the area around LSE.[4] It reveals a spatial syntax of continuous surveillance as each beat overlaps with the next at the boundaries and police patrol repeatedly up and down each street in a grid, making sure to enter yards and courts where trouble may occur. A similar level of knowledge exists and is put into place to solve and prevent crimes by Sherlock Holmes. However, in his case the map of London is first internalised within the all-knowing, spatially encyclopaedic mind of the detective and then externalised dynamically by rapid narrated movement through those streets.

Working with a Minecraft design company (Blockworks) we needed to establish the full extent of London covered in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. As a late-Victorian detective series published in *The Strand Magazine* and aimed at the middle-class commuter, the Holmes stories rely on recognisable urban settings, rapid movement, and the spatial logic of pursuit. To map this effectively, we began by categorising the twelve stories according to their narrative geographies. The twelve narratives were easily grouped into different spatial types: two were armchair narratives in which Holmes solves the crime without leaving home ("A Case of Identity" and "The Noble Bachelor"); six were suburban tales with the main action set largely outside London ("The Boscombe Valley Mystery"; "The Five Orange Pips"; "The Speckled Band"; "The Engineer's Thumb"; "The Copper Beeches"; "The Beryl Coronet" –included despite its split setting); and four were central London narratives ("A Scandal in Bohemia"; "The Red-Headed League"; "The Man with the Twisted Lip"; "The Blue Carbuncle"). These latter were selected for the project as well as "The Beryl Coronet". As even this brief summary shows, crime in literary space and place is extremely fluid and does not restrict itself to the neat containment of pockets of black upon the map.

Our initial interest in linking Booth to Holmes partly stemmed from Franco Moretti's argument in Chapter Two of *Atlas of the European Novel* entitled "A Tale of Two Cities" in which he compares Paris and London in terms of wealth and poverty to argue that the tension between the two generates literary spatiality as place acts upon plot and character. Moretti opens the chapter with a detail from Charles Booth's 1889 map and ends with an analysis of Holmes's London compared with that of Booth. Moretti compares the two spaces of West and East in order to argue that the Booth map offers "the exact inverse of Doyle's city of crime" and to make a core distinction between "*fictional crime in the London of wealth, real crime in the London of poverty*" (136).

Like Moretti, we mapped fiction onto history. However, our mapping out of narratives onto Booth show that literary crime occurs across all classes and the West/East axis is offset both by North of the river/South of the river but also by the importance of influx and outflow between the suburbs and the city. Above all, what we found was that the process of tracing literary geography onto the real uncovered the authorial techniques used to generate convincing accounts of fictional space from real world places. Essentially, we were uncovering the spatial strategies used to construct literary realism.

Our maps were made using University College London (UCL)'s Memory Mapping tool.[5] Points were derived from place-names given within the texts with direct correspondence to geographic and historic London. Lines were drawn between them based on best fit (the most efficient route characters might be assumed to have taken between points). Where detailed information was not given in the text we signalled this in the route marker stating, "possible route from Baker Street to . . ." and using three degrees of "probable", "possible" and

FIGURE 2 HERE

FIGURE 3 HERE

FIGURE 4 HERE

FIGURE 5 HERE

"speculative". The question of "accuracy" in digital mapping that emerges here is discussed in a later section below.

Looking back to Moretti's earlier mapping attempts (1996) showed us both how far digital literary mapping has already come, but also how far it still has to go. For example, in Moretti's map of "Sherlock Holmes' London" (Figure 4), according to the key provided Holmes's two early novellas and the totality of the short fiction are represented spatially on the image. A hollow square symbolises "Holmes' Movements" for *A Study in Scarlet* and *The*

Sign of Four and black dots stand for "Holmes' Movements" across the entirety of the short stories. We compared this visualisation with our own mapping out of Holmes's movements onto Booth's Map of London Poverty (1898-99) across just the two early books and the first volume of short stories (Figure 2).[6] Our use of lines as well as points to display routes within a narrative draws attention to the problem of Moretti's use of dots to represent dynamic movement (Figure 4). What exactly does each dot stand for? What do the total number of dots represent? If we assume a dot per story, there are still 56 stories and 90 dots. Even if it *were* a dot per story how would this represent Holmes's "movements"? A quick look at a single story from *Adventures* – "The Man with the Twisted Lip" – mapped onto London (Figure 5) also shows that those movements are quite wide-ranging and definitely *not* capable of being represented by a single dot. Not only this but the map also needs to incorporate movements for both a main narrative of investigation (Holmes and Watson) and a secondary narrative told by the victim or criminal.

So, despite the appearance of authority, Moretti's Holmes map provides an inaccurate representation of the spatial scope of the narratives and is ultimately unreadable. At the same time our own visual images are not perfect because the visualisation tools are unable to allow for variable degrees of relation to real world geography. The problem here is that a more nuanced mapping model is needed for the Humanities that allow for high levels of uncertainty in spatial meaning. Such ambiguity may actually prove to be a critical element of the spatial construction of a realist fictional world.

The Illusion of Accuracy in Conan Doyle's Mapping

The first part of the paper has compared real-world thematic mapping to fictional literary mapping using the former as a comparable activity that begins to make a link between visual

and verbal meaning, cartography and narrative, movement on the ground and representation in word and image. The second part now moves on to consider exactly how the illusion of accurate correspondence in fiction is created. We have seen that one effect of the Booth map, according to Kimball, was to seek to diminish the scale of the poorer and criminal classes, thus soothing "bourgeois alarm" and fears of mass uprising; since the pockets of black are contained and manageable. This aspect of the thematic mapping of London compares directly to the *fictional* depiction of Sherlock Holmes for whom a knowledge of the streets of the capital and preternatural ability to predict and control crime functions in a similar way.

In his presentation of Holmes's London, Conan Doyle uses the device of a highly place-specific, nested, fictional location within a larger framework of pre-existing but rapidly changing, streets and buildings. This is an adaptation to the urban space of techniques used by earlier realist novelists such as Austen, Eliot, Trollope and Hardy who intermingle real and fictional place at a larger scale out in the countryside. Conan Doyle works in a comparable way, but with greater localisation within his urban environment. He provides real names for well-known public sites with a long history that remain relatively unchanging in the city – e.g. parks (Regent's Park), the bridges over the river (Vauxhall Bridge); stations (Paddington); theatres (The Lyric); and key sites such as Bow Street police station and Scotland Yard. These create anchors for a totalised spatial fabric of the real, within which other more detailed pockets remain fictional. As Stephen Knight notes, "the great detective and his chronicler relish this busy London" (45) and this is reflected in the naming of popular restaurants, famous hotels and so on. In a well-known city, this tactic aids the reader with their own cognitive mapping of the fictional world. Familiar waypoints and landmarks in the mind provide fixed reference points that then help to confirm the apparently realist fabric of the narratives. More practically, in terms of sales, this also makes the fictional world familiar to *The Strand*'s middle-class readership to whom Conan Doyle was appealing.[7]

At the same time, the author displays a flexible attitude towards geographic fidelity. In a manner strongly at odds with his character's attention to detail, Conan Doyle treats geographical detail as subordinate to narrative effect. In an essay entitled "How I Write My Books" he states:

> In short stories it has always seemed to me that so long as you produce your dramatic effect, accuracy of detail matters little. I have never striven for it and have made some bad mistakes in consequence. What matter if I can hold my readers? I claim that I may make my own conditions, and I do so. I have taken liberties in some of the Sherlock Holmes stories. . .. That does not trouble me in the least when the story is admittedly a fantasy. (Conan Doyle, *Memoirs,* 272)

With this caveat in place, it is still productive to attempt to map Holmes's movements onto the Booth map in order to uncover specific strategies employed by the author, as well as to compare these with those of Dickens.

As Knight points out: "One of crime fiction's most notable achievements is to have reimagined certain cities at crucial times in their development" (42). The sense of an enlarging capital city space, holding within it a footprint of the past but also the planned, imagined and half-built spaces of the future, creates a lack of spatial fixity that is felt even in relation to the central site of Holmes's lodgings at 221B Baker Street. Despite the iconic

FIGURE 6 HERE

importance of this famous location, maps of London for the 1890s reveal that at the time of writing the setting did *not* have a real-world equivalent. On the London Ordnance Survey Sheet for 1895 (Figure 6, right) we can see that the corner building at the bottom of Upper Baker Street (numbered 219 today) is marked as "P.O." – post office. 221B should be the house next door (allowing for odd numbers on one side of the street and even on the other).

However, earlier maps of 1886 (Figure 6, middle) and 1851 (Figure 6, left) show a clear space and walkway through to Dorset Square via New Street. It is not until the streets of Park Lane and Upper Baker Street are cleared and rebuilt (presumably at some time between 1886 and 1895) that this space is filled in. Since the first Holmes story was written in 1887, it seems at least *possible* that Conan Doyle situated Holmes's lodgings quite deliberately in the vacant site above the post office. We should acknowledge however, that the argument is less plausible than at first appears because the street numbering as it existed in the late 1880s did not run as high as 22 – so Conan Doyle gives the house a non-existent number. (In the 1890s there were three roads: Baker Street, York Place and Upper Baker Street, with York Place lying between the other two. Later in the twentieth century York Place was renamed Baker Street and the house numbers were reallocated, creating higher numbers.)[8] That said, this still means Conan Doyle was locating the house in a non-existent place within the city.

We also know from a letter to the editor of *Lippincott's Magazine* (Stoddart) that Conan Doyle had his own working map for the long routes out and back to the suburbs of *The Sign of Four*: "It must amuse you to see the vast and accurate knowledge of London which I display. I worked it all out from a Post Office map" (Conan Doyle, Letter to Stoddart, quoted in Miller, 120). This is the central map shown here in Figure 6 so that perhaps the location close to the post office is not a coincidence. Thus, although Holmes lives on a street with a place name corresponding to the real, the fictional house is located in a part of the city yet to be fully developed, on a non-existent site.

Another distinctive spatial characteristic that emerges in mapping out the stories is that of *slightly changed* place names. These could easily have corresponded to actual place names, but don't quite do so. For example, in "The Red-Headed League", "Farringdon Street" corresponds to the Farringdon Road (62).[9] The office to which Jabez Wilson is sent each day to remove him from his home, is in "Pope's Court, Fleet Street" (48) which seems to

correspond to the real "Poppin's Court" – also off Fleet Street. In *A Study in Scarlet*, the policeman describes a brawl at "The White Hart" on the Brixton Road and, while there is a pub in a corresponding location, it is called "The White Horse". Elsewhere Conan Doyle uses the real-world names of sites that *do* exist within London, but places are not situated in geographic London at the locations described in Holmes's London (see discussion of "The Man with the Twisted Lip", below). Of course, these slight mismatches could just be attributed to Conan Doyle's own carelessness but elsewhere apparent "errors" seem more deliberate.

Sometimes, in an inversion of the normative model of nesting the fictional within a larger framework of the real, Conan Doyle combines a very accurate and place-specific site at the centre of a story with non-specific fictional places around it. An excellent example of this occurs for "The Man with the Twisted Lip". In this narrative Neville St Clair, who travels into town every day to work in the city, discovers that begging is more lucrative than business. What initially appears a disappearance or murder, turns out to be simply a case of one man adopting two identities. A microscopic attention to accurate spatial detail is found in relation to the disfigured beggar's pitch as Holmes describes it to Watson:

> Some little distance down Threadneedle Street, upon the left-hand side, there is, as you may have remarked, a small angle in the wall. Here it is that this creature takes his daily seat, cross-legged with his tiny stock of matches on his lap, and as he is a piteous

FIGURE 7 HERE

FIGURE 8 HERE

> spectacle a small rain of charity descends into the greasy leather cap which lies upon the pavement before him. (122)

Using the remarkable detail of the London OS Sheets (five-foot to the mile or 1:1,056) held at the British Library, we find that there is an exact siting for this spot in the correspondent

real world location where an angle in the wall is created by adjoining buildings of different depths on Threadneedle street (see Figure 7).[10] However, despite the high level of mappable place-specificity in relation to the figure at the very *centre* of the tale, many other places and names are entirely fictional. The opium den in which St Clair/ the beggar is glimpsed is described in detail by Watson as lying off: "Upper Swandam Lane . . . a vile alley lurking behind the high wharves which line the north side of the river to the east of London Bridge" (115). Holmes adds to this that: "There is a trap-door at the back of that building, near the corner of Paul's Wharf" (117). Because the text tells us that "Paul's Wharf" can be found "east of London Bridge" (115) it was locatable using Charles E Goad's Insurance map of 1890 (Figure 8) but all the other street names around it turn out to have no direct correspondence to actual places.

Finally, in his account of Mrs St Clair coming across her husband, Holmes describes how she had come to town to collect:

> "a small parcel of considerable value which she had been expecting . . . waiting for her at the offices of the Aberdeen Shipping Company. Now, if you are well up in your London, you will know that the office of the company is in Fresno Street, which branches out of Upper Swandam Lane, where you found me to-night." (119-20)

Here Holmes explicitly draws the reader's attention to his detailed knowledge of London, yet all the street names given in this passage are fictional. Moreover, although there *was* an Aberdeen Shipping Company in 1890 and it *did* have a wharf on the Thames in London, this was situated much higher up the river at Wapping. So, in reconstructing her fictional route it is not possible for Mrs St Clair to visit that office in such a way that she would pass the opium den before returning home from Cannon Street station.

In "The Man with the Twisted Lip" the fictional site of apparent criminality and possible murder – the opium den – is positioned firmly in a region of poverty (not the actual East End

but east of London Bridge and down by the river). The dominant spatial movement of the narrative is thus the inverse of the argument that Moretti makes for Holmes in *Atlas* where he argues for: 'fictional crime in the London of wealth; real crime, in the London of poverty' (136). To Moretti, the East End of Booth's map is the site of actual, historical crime and the West End the site of the criminal world of detective fiction. However, in this story, Watson and Holmes travel from West to East, while the back-story moves between the suburbs and the city: "[Mr St Clair] went into town as a rule in the morning, returning by the 5.14 from Cannon Street every night" (Conan Doyle, *Adventures*, 119). If we look beyond the distracting narrative device of an anticlimactic ending – "If I am Mr. Neville St. Clair, then it is obvious that no crime has been committed" (133) – it becomes clear that the actions of the middle and professional classes which they *bring to* the East, perpetuate and cultivate the fiction of the criminal underworld, to which both Holmes (disguised as an opium addict) and St Clair (disguised as a beggar) pretend to belong.

If the names of exact points and place-names are often not directly correspondent, it is notable that the paths Holmes and Watson take *are* always able to be reconstructed. Thus, it would seem that Conan Doyle's primary concern when he did consult a map was with using it to create accurate *routes across* the city. A good example of this occurs in *The Sign of Four*. As Holmes and his companions are being driven rapidly across London by cab, Holmes tracks their progress:

> "Rochester Row," said he. "Now Vincent Square. Now we come out on the Vauxhall Bridge Road. We are making for the Surrey side, apparently. Yes, I thought so. Now we are on the bridge. You can catch glimpses of the river.
>
> We did indeed get a fleeting view of a stretch of the Thames with the lamps shining upon the broad, silent water; but our cab dashed on, and was soon involved in a labyrinth of streets upon the other side.

> "Wordsworth Road," said my companion. "Priory Road. Lark Hall Lane. Stockwell Place. Robert Street. Cold Harbour Lane. Our quest does not appear to take us to very fashionable regions." (Conan Doyle, *Sign of Four*, 66).

When we map this route onto Victorian London, all the street names on the North side of the river correspond and are easily identifiable. However, those on the South side immediately start to intermingle real-world and fictional names. "Priory Road", "Lark Hall Lane" and "Cold Harbour Lane" are all real road names found in correspondent places on 1890s maps but "Wandsworth Road" is called "Wordsworth Road"; "Stockwell Place" is fictional (although "Stockwell" of course exists) and "Robert Street" seems to correspond to a real "Robsart Street".

There is a plausible fictional explanation for this – Sherlock Holmes knows the North of the river better than the South so his naming is likely to be more accurate. Equally, as he and his companions are being raced through London streets, Holmes is only getting a glimpse of places as he passes, so it would be understandable if he got some street names wrong. This explanation is partly convincing, but no Londoner would mistake the "Wandsworth Road" for the "Wordsworth Road", least of all Holmes. Indeed, as Knight reminds us: "Holmes's urban knowledge is part of his arsenal of crime-solving capabilities . . . implying that his geography and his criminal insights work together" (46). At times, then, Conan Doyle seems to be deliberately playing with issues of geographic and spatial "accuracy", using Holmes's apparent omniscience to sustain verisimilitude even as the underlying spatial details are shaped to narrative ends.

The major characteristic of fictional mapping that emerges, once we are alert to it, then, is the way in which *Conan Doyle draws attention to his own spatial trickery*.[11] In "The Adventure of The Engineer's Thumb" the engineer (Victor Hatherley) takes a train out to Eyford near Reading and is then whisked away to a house in the country where he is meant to

fix a complex mechanism before being murdered by a gang of forgers. He manages to escape this fate and share his tale back in London before returning with Holmes, Watson and Inspector Bradstreet to try and locate the house. The police inspector, Bradstreet, makes use of modern cartographic knowledge (withheld from the reader) combined with eyewitness evidence:[12]

> Bradstreet had spread an ordnance map of the county out upon the seat and was busy with his compasses drawing a circle with Eyford for its centre.
>
> 'There you are,' said he. 'That circle is drawn at a radius of ten miles from the village. The place we want must be somewhere near that line. You said ten miles, I think, sir?'
>
> 'It was an hour's good drive.' (200)

Each character then offers their own conjecture as to the location of the house using the map. However, as it turns out, all this cartographic speculation proves entirely needless, twice over. First, in escaping the engineer has unwittingly set the house on fire so that it is not at all hard to find:

> As we rolled into Eyford Station we saw a gigantic column of smoke which streamed up from behind a small clump of trees in the neighbourhood and hung like an immense ostrich feather over the landscape. (202)

Second, the criminals have already fled – meaning that the entire journey proves redundant and the case is left unresolved. The fact that the house literally reveals its own location by the simple indexical sign of smoke seems to be set off here against the complexities of reading the map or making conclusions based on knowledge of the criminal mind so that, in the end, the story mocks all of the characters, even Holmes himself to some degree. Bradstreet's use of the Ordnance Survey map is performative: he spreads out the map, he draws the circle, he enacts the ritual of empirical method but this only serves to draw attention to the way in which the Holmes stories repeatedly *undermine* such performances, revealing maps as

rhetorical props rather than genuine sources of epistemic power/knowledge. In Holmes, the police perform authority but rarely possess it and, as in this case, performance doesn't lead to insight. The gap between an imposed rhetoric of cartographic authority and the reality of how knowledge is produced can be extended to digital literary mapping as well. We need to be alert to the illusions created by transparency, to what the maps are for and what they actually reveal.

In other examples from *Adventures,* spatial play is actively performed in quite a knowing way. In *A Study in Scarlet* there is a pertinent exchange with an old woman who comes to collect a ring (dropped by the murderer) from Holmes, supposedly on behalf of her daughter. In response to Watson's enquiries she gives an address that is nowhere near the place the ring was lost and Holmes reacts strongly:

> 'And what may your address be?' I inquired, taking up a pencil.
>
> '13, Duncan Street, Houndsditch. A weary way from here.'
>
> 'The Brixton Road does not lie between any circus and Houndsditch,' said Sherlock Holmes sharply.
>
> The old woman faced round and looked keenly at him from her little red-rimmed eyes.
>
> 'The gentleman asked me for *my* address,' she said. 'Sally lives in lodgings at 3, Mayfield Place, Peckham.' (48).

At such moments the text seems to draw attention to its own cartographic duplicity as *both* characters play knowingly with the truth. Holmes has lured the woman to his house in order to trail her home but she tricks him in turn when he tries to follow her:

> I managed to be close to her so as to hear the address, but I need not have been so anxious, for she sang it out loud enough to be heard at the other side of the street,
>
> "Drive to 13, Duncan Street, Houndsditch," she cried. (50)

On arrival at its destination, however, the cab is found to be empty and the old woman to have been the criminal in disguise – playing Holmes at his own game. At the same time, at a metanarrative level the false address she gives in the narrative *does* actually have a corresponding place in the world, while many other key sites in the story – including Sally's address and the house in which the murder occurs – are entirely fictional.

A similar knowingness occurs in "The Red-Headed League". In this story Holmes goes to visit the house of a pawnbroker being unwittingly manipulated by his servant (a criminal in disguise) who needs his master out of the house every day so that he can tunnel through from the basement into an adjoining bank. Holmes visits the establishment:

> Finally he returned to the pawnbroker's, and, having thumped vigorously upon the pavement with his stick two or three times, he went up to the door and knocked. It was instantly opened by a bright-looking, clean-shaven young fellow, who asked him to step in.
>
> 'Thank you,' said Holmes, 'I only wished to ask you how you would go from here to the Strand.'
>
> 'Third right, fourth left,' answered the assistant promptly, closing the door. (58)

As with the example above, this social exchange is entirely false on both sides. That is, Holmes does *not* need to know how to go from the pawnbroker's to the Strand at all, he simply wants to meet the pawnbroker's assistant (the criminal in disguise). Equally, the assistant's instructions are given so rapidly and unthinkingly it is as if he knows Holmes's intentions. So the exchange seems to function primarily to draw attention to the impossibility of accurate mapping for fictional space.

Hyper-Correspondent: Dickens's Oliver Twist

The analysis of Conan Doyle has begun to show that mapping fiction does not simply visualise narrative space or ground it historically and geographically, but exposes the interpretive assumptions we bring to it. This becomes even clearer when we turn to Dickens. Some sixty years earlier, Dickens was meeting similar scepticism in relation to his depiction of extreme urban poverty in *Oliver Twist* to that initially displayed by Charles Booth himself. His second novel, *Oliver Twist* (1837–38), renders London's moral and material geographies for a readership that extended well beyond the metropolis, shaping how the city was imagined by those who knew it only through print. Dickens' purpose, like that of Booth, was to use detailed knowledge of social conditions and areas of London to tell a story about hidden lives and living conditions, but to do so verbally rather than visually.

Mapping Dickens onto Booth serves two purposes. First, Dickens' strong social conscience provides a different motivation in relation to both geographic representation of poverty and in terms of correspondence from that of Conan Doyle and is more aligned to Booth's own aims. Distinctive spatial strategies thus emerge that are concerned with deliberately drawing attention to areas of poverty and the effect of this on crime. Second, because *Oliver Twist* is written much earlier in the nineteenth century and thus relates to a smaller London before it became a major capital, it draws attention to how *fixed* pockets of poverty are within the city, despite its later growth.

In 1839 Thackeray attacked the authenticity of *Oliver Twist* by claiming that, much like the Newgate novel, Dickens' narrative "lacked realism" and romanticised criminals.[13] Dickens responded to this in his introduction to the third edition (1841), a defence which stands as a "manifesto . . . [that] both is and is not one of the birthplaces of Victorian realism" (Meckier, 123). He argued for the importance of showing the wretchedness and "squalid poverty" of criminal lives as "a something which was greatly needed and which would be a service to society" (457). In his "Preface" to the Cheap Edition of *Oliver Twist* (1851)

Dickens went even further in response to the comments of alderman Sir Peter Laurie, who had suggested that the depiction of Jacob's Island (the filthy slum in which Bill Sikes meets his end) was entirely fictitious:

> The Bishop of London, poor soul, in his simplicity, thought there really was such a place . . . whereas it turned out that it ONLY existed in a work of fiction written by Mr Charles Dickens ten years ago. (Dickens [1837-8], Horne 2002, 462)

Dickens first quoted and then mocked Laurie for implying that the real and the fictional are mutually exclusive and that fiction could not expose truths about extreme poverty and terrible living conditions to initiate social change.

Dicken's nascent realist principles as expressed in the 1841 Preface have spatial implications. It is unsurprising, then, that plotting *Oliver Twist* onto a map of Victorian London uncovers Dickens's high-level knowledge of poverty and crime and their accurate spatial locations. Despite a gap of over half a century, the use of Booth (1898-99) as a base map for *Oliver Twist* (1838) reveals striking parallels between Dickens' verbal and Booth's visual representations of poverty. As previously noted, comparable locations show that areas of extreme poverty within the city have a long history. In *Oliver Twist,* Field Lane, at the bottom of Saffron Hill, first appears as Oliver and Jack Dawkins' (The Artful Dodger's) destination on the detailed account of their route into London (Figure 9):

> They crossed from the Angel into St. John's road, struck down the small street which terminates at Sadler's Wells theatre; through Exmouth-street and Coppice-row; down the little court by the side of the workhouse; across the classic ground which once bore the name of Hockley-in-the-hole; thence into Little Saffron-hill, and so into Saffron-hill the Great . . . . Oliver was just considering whether he hadn't better run away when . . . his conductor, catching him by the arm, pushed open the door of a house near Field-lane . . .(Dickens [1837-8], Horne 2002, 63)

The "classic ground of Hockley-in-the-Hole", passed *en route*, is itself a site of ancient bear and dog-baiting and the known haunt of highway men and thieves since the sixteenth century. Fagin's first den is located below this in the Saffron Hill area, "in a

FIGURE 9 HERE

FIGURE 10 HERE

FIGURE 11 HERE

FIGURE 12 HERE

FIGURE 13 HERE

house near Field-lane" – a notorious street known for its destitution and delinquency and containing shops that resold pickpocketed handkerchiefs.[14] When we jump ahead sixty years to the Booth map we find that a black square (colour code = "semi-criminal") is still marked at just this point on the map (see Figure 10). Core sites of extreme poverty resist spatial relocation over time.

A second characteristic in the example quoted above is the street-by-street detail and accuracy of Dickens's narrative account in comparison with areas marked black on the Booth map. Within the Booth notebooks, as he updates the second version of the map, George Duckworth records comments by the police concerning Nottingham slums in Covent Garden: "Black in map and still black. '3 or 4 police had their heads cut open here last January.'" (Booth/B/354, District 2, 111). Dickens describes Saffron Hill in terms of:

> Covered ways and yards, which here and there diverged from the main street, disclosed little knots of houses, where drunken men and women were positively wallowing in filth (Dickens [1837-8], Horne 2002, 63).

Duckworth describes the slum area just above this ("the E side of the Little Saffron Hill") as "very rough. constable kicked and knocked about here last Saturday – 'a mixed lot'" (Booth/B/353 District 4, 243) The visual darkness of these areas of poverty on Booth's map

are matched by literally and morally dark areas both out in the streets – "a dirtier and more wretched place Oliver had never seen" – and inside Fagin's den: "The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt" (Dickens [1837-8], Horne 2002, 63-64). Thus, when Dickens locates Fagin's den beneath the 'classic ground of Hockley-in-the-Hole', he is not inventing a locus of crime. Instead, he is translating a pre-existing urban reputation into narrative. Booth's later colour-coding makes that reputation legible in a visual medium. Criminal geography – real or fictional – is shaped and enhanced by urban form.

As with Conan Doyle, the movement of characters across the city and between pockets of poverty works to uncover authorial spatial strategies. The way in which Oliver and Dodger's route is mapped by the text is symptomatic of three key strategies deployed by Dickens. The first, in direct contrast with Conan Doyle, is his remarkably high level of accuracy in relation to real-world place names and locations. Place names are *always* correspondent in *Oliver Twist*. Fictional London is tightly plotted and movement can be traced directly across the visual representation. Second, the movement of characters is along one of two axes in the text – N/S and E/W – that can be seen to dominate very clearly on the full map (Figure 11). Finally, the narrative frequently alternates between the referentially universal and subjective experiences of place. This is embodied in a shift between two narrative viewpoints, one positioned "from above" along a route, the other focalised immersively, usually through Oliver as the newcomer.[15] Mapping out the movements of characters draws attention to these two distinct forms of placemaking: wayfinding versus cognitive mapping. Characters tend to enter and leave London the same way because of Dickens' apparent fondness for the Great North Road, an ancient highway linking England and Scotland and, in the nineteenth century, a major stagecoach route. The traditional starting point for the Great North Road was Smithfield Market from which it led up to Angel, Islington (a key staging post) with the exit point from the city to the East of Highgate then out to Barnet and Hatfield. Although the road

itself is only mentioned directly once in the text, this is the route taken *into* London by Oliver, Dodger and others; by Mr Brownlow when he rescues Oliver and returns to Islington; and *out* of London by Bill Sikes after murdering Nancy. Dickens thus seems to deliberately enact repeated travel, in different subjective states, by different characters over the same route.

Bill Sikes' northern journey out of London after killing Nancy follows a reverse trajectory to that of Oliver and the Dodger (South to North) and spatialises the inverted purpose of travel: flight (see Figure 12). The mapping of his movements reveals that the further he travels from London, the further the distance between the waypoints. His route, described in great detail within the text, appears as a long, northerly course but with numerous looped offshoots. This neatly visualises the spatial enactment of Sikes's indecision that the narrative is at pains to describe. Compared to other journeys, the focus has shifted from the *where* and *direction* of movement to the pattern of movement itself. Sikes's journeying without purpose is a physical enactment of inner turmoil. The surroundings are characterised not as a series of locations, but as interior space transposed onto the physical environment:

> He went on doggedly; but as he left the town behind him, and plunged further and further into the solitude and darkness of the road, he felt a dread and awe creeping upon him which shook him to the core. Every object before him, substance or shadow, still or moving, took the semblance of some fearful thing . . .
>
> (Dickens [1837-8], Horne 2002, 402)

When Sikes finally resolves to return to the City his decision is given as follows:

> He acted upon this impulse without delay, and choosing the least frequented roads began his journey back, resolved to lie concealed within a short distance of the metropolis, and, entering it at dusk by a circuitous route, to proceed straight to that part of it which he had fixed on for his destination. (406)

Here, although we are given an extremely detailed account of the route *out*, the character's route *back into* London is left largely unnarrated and combines actual movement with projected and imagined ("began his journey back"; "resolved to") in a way that oddly mingles the character's intentions with what the reader later must assume to have happened, but without it having actually being narrated: "entering it at dusk . . to proceed".

The novel's second axis of movement is East/West. This is the trajectory of Nancy's route from Sikes's second lodgings in Bethnal Green to meet Rose Maylie at a West-End hotel (Figure 11, pink line). It is also the trajectory of Sikes and Oliver's route to rob a house in Chertsey (Figure 12, Oliver in yellow, Sikes in black). This journey begins at a fictional site (Sikes's lodgings) in the unspecified area of Bethnal Green. At a metanarrative level Sikes's base is never named in a specific way within the text and cannot be pinpointed. Thus it remains spatially and textually hidden by the author deictically, even when the text is mapped out.

The walk to the first mappable location, Bethnal Green Road, is marked in terms of time as well as place. As Oliver and Sikes leave the dawn is a "faint glimmering", and day has "fairly begun to break" by the time they reach Bethnal Green Road (170). At a level of representation, the characters move from minor unseen streets into the centripetal flow of traffic on a major thoroughfare and thus from private into public (visible, shared) spaces. Mapping thus reveals two ways in which Oliver and Sikes emerge from the indistinct into the known within the text.

As Sikes and Oliver join the main road, the description of their route becomes tightly and unambiguously narrated on a street by street basis: "Turning down Sun-street and Crown-street, and crossing Finsbury-square, Mr. Sikes struck, by way of Chiswell-street, into Barbican, thence into Long Lane, and so into Smithfield" (171). Smithfield (the final destination of the Great North Road) is effectively the centre point of the two axes and the

locus toward which everything in the preceding paragraphs has been working. Here it acts as a beacon to help ground the route in the reader's imagination. Then, once again, as the two move from Smithfield into Holborn, time as well as place is specified: "Now, young 'un!' said Sikes surlily, looking up at the clock of St. Andrew's Church, 'hard upon seven! you must step out" (172). This helps with the illusion of totality: the text is at its most fixed and most accurate when the characters reach the most recognisable points.

As the journey extends beyond busy central London, the waypoints (place-names within the text) become far more spaced out. There are no named points between St Andrew's Church and Hyde Park Corner and after this Dickens uses literal markers along the route to mark their progress:

> As they passed the different mile-stones, Oliver wondered, more and more, where his companion meant to take him. Kensington, Hammersmith, Chiswick, Kew Bridge, Brentford, were all passed . . . (172)

As a result, any attempt to map the route digitally becomes increasingly more speculative, based only on the assumption that Sikes would continue in as straight a line as possible along the main road.

Mapping out the spatial movement described within *Oliver Twist* in this detailed way captures how Dickens's use of correspondent placenames contributes to a sense of spatial and geographic verisimilitude. It draws out and visualises the spatial patterns implicit in the text – such as the axes – that, for reasons of scale, are not fully realised by reading alone. Mapping onto an historical map also visualises how characters move through the real but often come to rest in the (fictionally) indistinct. This is key to Dickens's spatial strategy and, despite such recourse into the fictional, *Oliver Twist*'s London is no less realistic for it. Indeed, it is perhaps this very switching *between* the site-specific and the non-specific that enables Dickens's realist vision to be actualised. At the same time – as we have argued elsewhere – a

surprising amount of time in the novel is actually spent in internal (hidden) places and the text itself deliberately resists providing identifiable locations for master criminals (Fagin; Bill).[16]

The Problem of Correspondence: Accurate to What?

It is to be hoped that the previous sections of the paper have shown that mapping fictional place and space onto a historical map of the time can be of use to Literary Studies, helping us to understand the relationship between the two more fully, and uncovering the foundations of realist geography. At the same time, we have to conclude that such critical activity also poses a central question for literary mapping: to what extent does the fictional world *need* to be "accurate"? What does "accuracy" even mean for a work of fiction? Equally, if this is *not* a central concern how are we using digital mapping tools designed to achieve this, and to what ends?

This question is particularly pertinent in the context of the Digital and Spatial Humanities because attempts to map literature onto the real – as we have been doing in the paper so far – have been the focus of many digital literary mapping projects.[17] Such projects rapidly hit a number of problems: how to use geometric tools to map places that are not directly named; how to deal with the text jumping from one location to the next; whether or not to visualise routes that are mentioned, but not narrated; or, indeed, the fundamental one of how to map a literary text that has no correspondence to real-world geography.

Correspondence issues are often addressed under the category of "fuzzy geography" or "uncertainty" within a text, with the commonest approach being to use polygons to symbolise that a location is somewhere within an area.[18] In their work on the *Literary Atlas of Europe* project, Reuschel and others discuss the challenge in relation to the mapping of routes, opting

for a structure of explicit "waypoints" taken directly from the text and then anchored by means of "plausible points" and "interpreted points" – that is to say, "the most probable way according to the scholar's analysis" (153). Does this solution fit the problem? A final story from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* can help us to explore such ideas further.

"The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle" is a Christmas tale. A stolen jewel has been hidden in a goose, accidentally discovered and brought to Holmes. The criminal is on a literal "wild goose chase" to relocate it amongst many geese for sale and Holmes and Watson are after him. The narrative describes their route on foot from Baker Street to a pub in Bloomsbury with a high level of spatial detail signalled by real world place names:

> Our footfalls rang out crisply and loudly as we swung through the doctors' quarter, Wimpole Street, Harley Street, and so through Wigmore Street into Oxford Street. In a quarter of an hour we were in Bloomsbury at the Alpha Inn, which is a small public-house at the corner of one of the streets which runs down into Holborn. (147-8)

Having spoken to the landlord, the two are then redirected to Breckinridge's stall in Covent Garden from which he bought his geese. An explicit connection between tracing the goose's origins and the evidential chain that will solve the crime is made by Holmes:

> 'Remember, Watson, that though we have so homely a thing as a goose at one end of this chain, we have at the other a man who will certainly get seven years' penal servitude unless we can establish his innocence. It is possible that our inquiry may but confirm his guilt; but, in any case, we have a line of investigation which has been missed by the police, and which a singular chance has placed in our hands. Let us follow it out to the bitter end. Faces to the south, then, and quick march!' (148)

Here, spatial reconstruction becomes part of Holmes's method. He predicts that the accuracy of their reconstructed route will inevitably bring about a successful outcome for the solving of the crime – which it does.

We can consider the options in terms of digital visualisation by comparing four alternatives given here. Figure 14 locates only named sites in the text so is superficially the most "accurate", but none of these can be given real-world co-ordinates (not even 221B Baker Street, as we now know). A point-based map, such as this, is subject to the same problem as Moretti's – it distorts the dynamic nature of the textual account which involves active movement along a route ("we swung through the doctor's quarters . . . through Wigmore Street . . ."). Figure 15 selects the most logical route in terms of directness – but there is no way of confirming this in

FIGURE 14 HERE

FIGURE 15 HERE

FIGURE 16 HERE

FIGURE 17 HERE

FIGURE 18 HERE

the text. Moreover, Conan Doyle intermingles accurate correspondence with non-specificity in his writing in an almost wilfully resistant way, so that a degree of optionality remains. For example, the Alpha Inn is described as (our italics): "a small public-house *at the corner of one of the streets* which runs down into Holborn" (148) – referential but not pinpointable. The same is true for slum areas – easily tallied with the Booth map, marked in dark blue and black above Covent Garden, but described in the text in a way that resists absolute mapping (our italics): "We passed across Holborn, down Endell Street, and so *through a zigzag of slums* to Covent Garden Market" (148).

It would seem then, that Figures 16 and 17 provide the best solutions since both must logically contain the "correct" route – albeit with no way of determining this. It could be argued that what is really at stake is *multiplicity* or *optionality* rather than indeterminacy (i.e. there are multiple possible routes between point A and B, but the text does not specify which

one). In this case an "accurate" map of the text ought to represent all possible options, as Figure 16 does. But this is unsatisfactory in relation to the importance of reconstructing a single route in the narrative and extremely problematic when enlarged to the back story, which extends much further (see Figure 18). By contrast, in Figure 17 the use of polygons effectively communicates uncertainty and multiplicity but this map loses the sense of a route taken through a pattern of streets (which the text strongly emphasises).

Realism is only "mappable" when we falsify it by treating literary place as if it were a continuous totality and as if the fictional world were *capable* of corresponding directly to the geographical. It is crucial to remember (and Conan Doyle constantly reminds us) that this is not the case. Not only that, but the authority of a real-world map is in danger of blinding us to other spatial aspects of meaning held within the text. Should we simply accept, then, that one of the main findings achieved from mapping fiction onto the world is the degree to which it illuminates the impossibility of such a task?

Conclusion

The challenges of mapping fiction onto the real are not a reason *not* to do it – as we hope we have shown. For one thing, spatial patterns of movement only clearly emerge through the act of mapping them out. As a realist novelist, Dickens is internally consistent because his underlying social ambitions require that the fictional representation does correspond to actual places in the world. Despite this, *Oliver Twist* does not allow for a complete mapping of the text because of unspecified fictional pockets which remain unmappable with any degree of certainty. A doubled London (seen and unseen) becomes a vital element of Dickens' spatial realism. Conan Doyle, on the other hand, uses a constellation of correspondent and invented (but plausible) place names to create an illusion of verisimilitude that appears to be accurate,

even if it is not. It is also notable that both Dickens and Conan Doyle are most explicitly accurate when on the move.

In her article on Sherlock Holmes and realism, Catherine Belsey states that: "The classic realist text instils itself in the space between fact and illusion through the presentation of a simulated reality which is plausible but not real" (Belsey, 672). In the light of this we might see verisimilitude as functioning on a sliding scale. Conan Doyle's detective fiction always aims towards verisimilitude rather than seeking to achieve realism. His stories are plausible, but patterned, "symmetrical" (677) and self-consciously literary. Thus, his use of London placenames does not require him to be entirely accurate at all times, he just needs to create the *illusion* of accuracy. In contrast, Dickens, as a major writer of the social novel, aims to create a realist spatial totality with maximum verisimilitude.

At the same time, however, Belsey also points out that "the success with which the Sherlock Holmes stories achieve an illusion of reality is repeatedly demonstrated" (670). This is evidenced in the confusion that the Victorian public made between the fictional and the real – such as in seeking to visit 221B Baker Street, or in the many letters written to Sherlock Holmes to ask him for help that assumed he was an actual person. In this way, then, verisimilitude of character (Conan Doyle) appears to trump accurate correspondence in relation to geographic place (Dickens).[19] At any rate, for *both* writers as we have seen, the employment of all kinds of spatial tricks and elisions generates the illusional fabric. Despite using different strategies, the effect is the same: reading without mapping gives a *sense* of geographical totality and it is only through mapping the text point by point that this totality is exposed as an illusion.

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[1] In a recent AHRC funded project we mapped *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* onto Booth's (1899) map of Victorian London and the findings from this project inform our readings here. The research we draw on relates to "working maps" made within Memory Mapper which were created to inform an interactive Minecraft build of Victorian London in partnership with Blockworks and LSE. This work was funded by LSE Library and an AHRC Follow on Funding Award 2023: Reference: XXXX.

[2] First came Booth's East End survey of 1886, which covered East London and Hackney. This led to the four-map series "Descriptive Map of London Poverty 1889", which derived data from the social testimonies of School Board officials. Finally, "Maps Descriptive of London Poverty 1898-9" updated and expanded the earlier series into 12 map sheets. See LSE: https://booth.lse.ac.uk/map/14/-0.1174/51.5064/100/0

[3] This was undertaken as part of the Knowledge Exchange project funded by the AHRC Follow on Fund in partnership with Blockworks. The map can be downloaded at no cost from the Minecraft Marketplace.

[4] See the second Minecraft map made for LSE Library: https://booth.lse.ac.uk/learn-more/minecraft

[5] The website is not publicly available but was made using the Memory Mapper Tool created by Duncan Hay at UCL. https://memorymapper.github.io Our thanks to LSE Library for providing the map data for the Booth base map.

[6] Colour Key to the routes on the map: *A Study in Scarlet* = bright red (main narrative) /dark red (secondary narrative). *The Sign of Four* = bright yellow/ dirty yellow. *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*: "A Scandal in Bohemia" = bright red/ pinkish red; "The Red-Headed League" = bright orange/dark orange; "A Case of Identity" = gold; "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" = turquoise; "The Five Orange Pips" = pale pink/dark pink; "The Man with the Twisted Lip" = light green/dark green; "The Blue Carbuncle"; light blue/dark blue; "The Speckled Band" = grey; "The Engineer's Thumb" = light grey/dark grey; "The Noble Bachelor" = light purple/ dark purple; "The Beryl Coronet" = bright purple/dark purple; "The Copper Beeches"= white.

[7] See for example Charles Press, "Sherlock Holmes Meets the Strand Magazine," *The Baker Street Journal* 59 (2009) 11-17; Jonathan Cranfield. *Twentieth Century Victorian: Arthur Conan Doyle and the "Strand" Magazine, 1891–1930* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

[8] See: https://www.sherlockian.net/investigating/location221b/

[9] A note in the Penguin edition states: "It is strange that Farringdon street is mentioned, given that it would not be a significant landmark on the journey from Baker Street" (515). It is even stranger that Farringdon Street doesn't exist.

[10] The detailed maps discussed here are all held in the British Library Map Collection. These (and many other historic map layers) can be accessed through the free online tool: Old Maps Online: https://www.oldmapsonline.org

[11] See also Vranken, "Look at this Map".

[12] Conan Doyle quite often has Holmes read a map in great detail, but without allowing the reader also to do so. A famous example occurs for *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in which the reading of the map by Holmes and Watson is illustrated without being given to the reader, as if to draw attention to this act of withholding. See Bushell, 2020, 80-81.

[13] See Charles Mauskopf, 1966: 22-3.

[14] See Dickens [1837-8], Horne 2002: note 8: "Dickens, complaining in a letter about literary piracy, declared that 'it is very little consolation to me to know, when my handkerchief is gone, that I may see it flaunting with renovated beauty in Field-lane'" (495-6).

[15] This distinction corresponds to that of Michel de Certeau between two contrasting spatial experiences: the map and the tour. See de Certeau,1980: 119.

[16] See Bushell and Hutcheon, 2025: Chapter 2.

[17] For examples see: Bodenhamer, David J., 'Making the Invisible Visible: Place, Spatial Stories and Deep Maps' in *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age*, eds. David Cooper, Chris Donaldson and Paty Murrieta-Flores, (London and New York, Routledge, 2016); Cooper, D, et al 'Introduction: Rethinking Literary Mapping', *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age* eds. David Cooper, Chris Donaldson, and Paty Murrieta-Flores (London and New York, Routledge, 2016); Reuschel and Hurni, "Mapping Literature: Visualization of Spatial Uncertainty in Fiction" 293-308. Also the *Literary Atlas of Europe* project: https://www.literaturatlas.eu/en/ and *Chronotopic Cartographies*: https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/chronotopic-cartographies/

[18] E.g. Reuschel et al. "Modelling Uncertain Geodata," 135-157; Murietta-Flores and Naomi Howell, "Towards the Spatial Analysis of Vague and Imaginary Place and Space," 29-57.

[19] This point is further supported by Thackeray's criticism of Dickens as a realist author on the grounds of characterisation: "Micawber appears to me an exaggeration of a man, as his name is of a name. It is delightful and makes me laugh: but it is no more a real man than my friend Punch is" (*Letters* II, 772-3).