LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

Lily's Route: Cognitive Mapping, Strategic Unmappability, and Disability Studies in Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall on Your Knees*

Neta Gordon

Brock University

Abstract:
Guided by Sara Ahmed's conception of orientation as 'taking points of view as given' (2006: 14), this article considers literary mapping as a methodological reorientation for literary critics, exploring a doubled literary mapping of Lily Piper's route from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia to Manhattan, New York, as narrated in Book Eight of Ann-Marie MacDonald's 1996 novel, *Fall on Your Knees*. Beginning with an overview of the extant critical neglect of these scenes and a discussion of Lily's characterization within a disability studies framework, literary mapping is posited as useful methodology for analysis of her journey, especially in its reorienting capacity to make visible a disabled character's complex embodiment while evading the logic of narrative prosthesis. Focusing on mapping practice as a problem-solving activity, Lily's route is first explored from the perspective of her own wayfinding techniques, which depend on the contingent acceptance of help and use of relational cues; second, by way of a reader-generated digital mapping of location and temporal data, various interruptions to a straightforward, plausible mapping of Lily's route are described and then explored in relation to conceptual and affective readerly anchor-points; to the effects of what I refer to as strategic unmappability; and to the way literary mapping coheres with the principle of complex embodiment in disability studies. The conclusion revisits the idea of the literary critic's methodological turn, cautioning against the repetition of old or constitution of new exclusions.

Keywords: Disability studies; cognitive mapping; digital mapping; strategic unmappability; orientation; Ann-Marie MacDonald.

Author contact: ngordon@brocku.ca

Book Eight of Ann-Marie MacDonald's widely acclaimed novel *Fall on Your Knees* is titled 'Hejira,' a label unpacked by various literary critics over the years. This penultimate section of the novel is focalized mostly as the diary of 18-year-old Kathleen Piper, written in 1918 during her 8-month stay in New York City, where she studies to be an opera singer and falls in love with her accompanist, Rose Lacroix. Within the novel's plot, Kathleen's diary is being read in 1933 by her almost-14-year-old sister/daughter, Lily Piper, while Lily travels to find Rose, mostly on foot, her impaired left leg in a brace, from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia to New York. In one of the earliest essays on the novel, Jennifer Andrews notes that 'Book Eight of *Fall on Your Knees* is called "Hejira" . . . an Arabic word which refers to Mohammed's flight from Mecca but may also describe a journey, escape, or emigration' (1999: 18, n. 24). Both my own and Dina Georgis' essays, published in a special issue of *Canadian Review of American Studies* devoted to *Fall on Your Knees*, build on Andrews' analysis: my note suggests that the word 'is invoked by MacDonald to represent Kathleen's emigration to New York, where she ultimately locates her own "Mecca"' (Gordon 2005: 173, n. 4), while Georgis (2005) argues that when Rose and Kathleen visit 'a Harlem club called Mecca . . . Kathleen's *hejira* from Cape Breton has attained its spiritual goal' (206). Later in her essay, Georgis asserts that 'The diary, entitled *Hejira* – which is Arabic for migration and is evocative of the Hindi word for transgendered / intersexed identity – chronicles Kathleen's coming of age in New York City' (216), a point quoted in a note by Donna McCormack in her study *Queer Postcolonial Narratives and the Ethics of Witnessing* (2014: 172, n. 109). McCormack further writes that 'This section of the novel -- "Hejira" -- traces not so much Lily's difficulty in getting to Rose as Kathleen's development as a singer in New York and her growing, eventual sexual, intimacy with her piano accompanist Rose' (171-2). McCormack's emphasis, not on Lily's journey but on Kathleen's 'development' and 'growing,' while echoing earlier readings of the term *hejira* as linked to Kathleen's 'emigration' and 'coming of age,' is perhaps surprising given the study's important reference to 'crip embodiments, desires and modes of belonging' (142).

On the one hand, the critical tendency to minimize, and in my own case to disregard, 'Hejira' as a representation of Lily's journey from Cape Breton to New York might be understood as following the novel's structural lead: Lily starts her journey at the end of Book Seven (MacDonald 1997: 451); the first narrative reference to Lily as carrier and reader of Kathleen's diary occurs about fifty pages into Book Eight (502), and all references to Lily in this 80+ page section of *Fall on Your Knees* total fewer than ten pages; finally, Lily's arrival at Rose's apartment is depicted in Book Nine (541). On the other hand, while Kathleen's experiences in New York can and have been fruitfully read as a symbolic *hejira*, it is not Kathleen who emigrates to New York, but Lily (Kathleen is forcibly returned by her father James to Cape Breton, where she dies giving birth). And it is not Kathleen's literal travel from Cape Breton to New York that is narrated in *Fall on Your Knees*, but Lily's, complete with references to the dates of her leaving and arrival, and to various locations along her route. My point in surveying the course of responses to the title of Book Eight and drawing attention to a persistent critical blind spot is to pick up on McCormack's description of 'the ethical responsibility for interminable narrative' (141), which includes consideration of that which has previously remained unwitnessed, not necessarily as a

result of suppression, but due to what Sara Ahmed describes in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* as 'taking points of view as given' (2006: 14). Ahmed explains:

> The lines that allow us to find our way, those that are 'in front' of us, also make certain things, and not others, available. What is available is what might reside as a point on this line. When we follow specific lines, some things become reachable and others remain or even become out of reach. Such exclusions – the constitution of a field of unreachable objects – are the indirect consequences of following lines before us: we do not have to consciously exclude those things that are not 'on line.' The direction we take excludes things for us, before we even get there. (14-15)

Arguably, the extant critical direction towards the subject of *hejira* in *Fall on Your Knees* has made Kathleen's symbolic journey – towards Rose, towards queer desire – available, and has excluded Lily's physical emigration. Paradoxically, Lily's bodily efforts to reach Rose have been critically constituted as unreachable.[1] In this paper, my goal is to resume the interminable narrative of ethical witnessing, using methods associated with literary mapping to bring to the forefront a reading of Lily along her journey. Ahmed notes that 'Turning toward an object turns "me" in this way or that' (2006: 28) and, likewise, my efforts to comprehend the novel differently are aided by a reorienting methodological turn. Barbara Piatti notes in 'Literary Cartography: Mapping as Method' that 'the use of cartographic instruments' to explore 'the interactions between fictional and real spaces' (2017: 46) has the potential to 'reveal unknown aspects of texts or unexpected patterns of a literary landscape' (49). After surveying both scholarship on literary disability studies and literary mapping as frameworks, I will explore both Lily's procedures in cognitive mapping and the outcomes of a reader-generated digital mapping of her route, arguing that the evocative, if spare, representation of Lily's accomplishment shows her confident and contingent strategies of wayfinding, as well as MacDonald's thematically significant use of strategic unmappability.

Disability Studies and the embodiment of Lily

The post-WWI setting in which Lily experiences her childhood is significant, not only in representing her physical impairment but also as linked with discussions of rehabilitation in literature and disability studies. As Henri-Jacques Stiker argues in *A History of Disability*, 'At the close of what the European nations called the Great War . . . a startling number of men were discharged injured for life. They were called *mutilés de guerre* "maimed war veterans" . . . . Thus, the first image presented by this change in terminology is that of damage. The war has taken away, we must replace' (2019: 123). Lily's impairment results from a bout of infant paralytic poliomyelitis, but she is sometimes linked with war veterans: as described in a chapter of the novel entitled 'Lest We Forget,' Lily feels a 'camaraderie' with the veterans (MacDonald 1997: 240), perhaps because 'Lily's type of walking' is 'ideal' for marching in the Armistice Day parade, 'The sway and lilt of her unevenly matched legs go with the every-second-beat flex and swing of the music' (239). More importantly, this sense of camaraderie extends to care, as when she visits in hospital those veterans 'whose

injuries and lack of family have rendered them permanent residents . . . . Lily is not repelled by the veterans. She feels badly for them, they've been terribly hurt, but pity is a poison unction' (299-300). Key here is a tension between acknowledging, even celebrating, the expanded presence in communities of impaired bodies and the continued social steps taken to hide repellant or pitiable bodies. In a narrative gesture echoing what Alice Hall refers to in *Literature and Disability* as the 'first wave of writing in literary and cultural disability studies,' focused on 'identifying disability' (2016: 32), Lily's care for impaired bodies involves the act of turning towards, of noticing: 'she is conscious of how important it is for people to be seen, so when she looks at [the veterans] -- even the blind one – she also looks *for* them, just in case they too have got lost and need finding' (MacDonald 1997: 300).

Stiker points out that, 'When speaking of the war wounded, we are also speaking of rehabilitation. And, inversely, speaking of rehabilitation envisages disability as a lack to be filled, almost a lack to be overcome' (2019: 124). In *Fall on Your Knees*, the view of disability as 'a lack to be overcome' is held by Lily's sister Mercedes and, as McCormack notes, 'Lily refuses to adhere to Mercedes's Catholic-informed desire to take Lily to Lourdes to cure her "little leg"' (142). McCormack's assertion that the novel 'resists narratives that pathologize difference' (2014: 142) invites elaboration, especially in the light of the distinction Stiker makes between 'cure' and 'rehabilitation.' Stiker suggests that 'Cure is a removal and relates to health,' or, as per Mercedes' plan, to miracle; conversely, Stiker states that 'Rehabilitation is situated in the social sphere and constitutes replacement for a deficit' (2019: 124). In the case of Lily, for example, one shoe is replaced by another 'with the built-up sole that Daddy made specially, [which] is firmly harnessed between the steel supports of her brace' (MacDonald 1997: 240), thereby allowing her to participate in a social event at which the community is 'out in force' (239). Stiker argues that the post-WWI rehabilitation model, which treats 'every impaired person . . . [as] someone for whom a place has to be made . . . will cause the disabled to disappear and with them all that is lacking, in order to assimilate them, drown them, dissolve them in the greater and single social whole' (2019: 128). Stiker's argument is linked with an important debate in disability studies, between – as Tobin Siebers describes in *Disability Theory* -- 'social constructivism' and 'the new realism' (2008: 53). In a social constructivist approach, 'disability [is comprehended] exclusively as the product of a bad match between social design and some human bodies' (57), a situation that can be rectified, for example, via a special shoe and leg brace so that Lily can be assimilated into the social whole. A new realist approach, however, acknowledges 'the difficult physical realities faced by people with disabilities' (63), including chronic pain or the inability to perform certain bodily activities without assistance: Lily develops a painful wound from her built-up shoe, which is treated with carbolic acid and then wrapped, first by Mercedes, and then by Frances because 'Mercedes has wrapped it a little too tightly' (MacDonald 1997: 243).

Sieber thus advocates for attention to 'complex embodiment' (2008: 22), noting that for 'People with disabilities . . . [t]he challenge is not to adapt their disability into an extraordinary power or an alternative image of ability. The challenge is to function' (68). The reference here to 'extraordinary power' recalls another relevant area of discussion in literature and disability studies, which Hall describes as 'debates about the ethics of using

disability as a metaphor'; as she notes, 'Many "first wave" scholars highlight the tendency for disability to be invoked in literature as an easy metaphorical shortcut: a marker of pity, vulnerability or, less frequently, the heroic "supercrip"' (2016: 36), as when – for example – a character with impaired vision is represented with a hyper-developed sense of hearing or an exceptional capacity to provide insight. As with the trope of viewing disability as 'a lack to be overcome' (Stiker 2019: 124), MacDonald confronts the trope of disability as 'extraordinary power' (Sieber 2008: 68) via the characterization of Mercedes, whose attitude towards Lily often involves scrutinizing her for signs of saintliness, such as 'Lily's particular gift with veterans' (MacDonald 1997: 299) or Lily's way of 'being guided' to the cave where Frances has apparently been taken (380).[2]

David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Sydor further argue in *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* that the use of disability as metaphor can extend to a narrative's structure, whereby stories are built around a logic of first identifying deviance from the norm and then rehabilitating that deviance (2000: 53). Important in this logic is that narrative conflict and resolution are not sited in the figuration of deviance but rather in figurations of so-called normal social bodies *that are dealing with* deviance, whether through cure, extermination, acceptance, or some other plot mechanism. For Mercedes, the interest in a miraculous curing of Lily's 'little leg' (MacDonald 1997: 377) emerges from her own pain, shame, and rage, which then manifests as a desire for Lily to be cured and thereby resolve the dilemma of how the Piper family is perceived in New Waterford: 'Mercedes requires that Lily's goodness – the essential goodness of this family – be revealed for all to see' (445). In turning towards literary mapping, then, my aim is to consider Lily's complex embodiment via methods suited to resist a metaphorical reading of her body's movements, including within a narrative of the social body's metaphorical rehabilitation. Rather, my focus is the representation of Lily's body as it *functions* (Sieber 2008: 68), in her acts of physically carrying Kathleen's diary from Cape Breton to New York and of reaching Rose.

Literary mapping as problem-solving

My attention to the functioning of Lily's body is linked with critical cartography, especially innovations offered by Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge in their influential essay 'Rethinking Maps'. As Kitchin and Dodge note, the scholarship of Brian Harley (1989), Jeremy Crampton (2003), John Pickles (2004) and others critiqued the work of "'scientific" cartographers' (Kitchin and Dodge 2007: 332), using poststructuralist and social constructivist frameworks to argue, respectively, that 'maps are the products of power and they produce power' (332); that maps are historically and socially situated in their creation and use (333); and that maps should be understood 'not as mirrors of nature, but as producers of nature' (334). In Andrew Thacker's essay 'Critical Literary Geography,' published in *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space*, he outlines a similar development in literary criticism focused on geography, from early-20th-century works 'offer[ing] illustrated guides to the places represented in their texts' (2017: 32), to 'a more self-reflexively theorized criticism revolving around a triumvirate of materiality, history, and power' (33).[3] For Kitchin and Dodge, however, critical questions about maps should

transcend sorting through the material dynamics among creators or users and representations, as such dynamics still depend on the idea of the map itself as 'a coherent, stable product – *a* map' (2007: 334). Crucially, Kitchin and Dodge argue that '*Maps are practices* – they are always *mappings*; spatial practices enacted to solve relational problems' (335). For the purposes of my reading of Lily's body as it functions, Kitchin and Dodge's emphasis on problem-solving is pivotal, offering a framework for exploring, first, the significance of Lily's experiences and agency in wayfinding and, second, what 'unknown aspects' (Piatti 2017: 49) or 'unreachable objects' (Ahmed 2006: 15) of/in the novel emerge from using the novel's direct and indirect references to Lily's route for a reader-generated mapping.

Towards the end of Tania Rossetto's essay 'Theorizing maps with literature,' she points out that 'in literary texts we encounter literary *representations* of maps and map use' (2014: 524), going on to pursue an analysis of the 'living cartographic practice' (526) represented in Cormac McCarthy's 2006 novel *The Road*. As Rossetto argues with respect to this literary text, 'Maps . . . are narrated not as fixed cultural representations but as objects bodily and emotionally performed and as relational practices caught in their spatial and temporal contingency' (525). Rossetto's reading of mapping in *The Road* recalls Kitchin and Dodge's second example in 'Rethinking Maps' of an everyday mapping practice ('Vignette 2'). In this example, a lost traveler must regain her sense of correct location and orientation by seeking out correspondences between findable landmarks and a map, thus performing an individual mapping that solves the problem of being lost, a mapping that 'is not determinate and teleological but is contingent and relational, embedded with the context of the moment . . . and as an aspect of other tasks' (Kitchin and Dodge 2007: 339). In *Fall on Your Knees*, the representation of Lily's wayfinding from Cape Breton to New York is somewhat distinct from the examples given by Rossetto and Kitchin and Dodge, in that Lily does not have a map; rather, in her everyday mapping practice Lily depends on (1) her knowledge of her destination (Rose's apartment, the address for which is noted in her mother's diary [MacDonald 1997: 480]), (2) her understanding that to arrive 'it is only necessary to keep to the coast' (518), and (3) her willingness to ask for help. Lily's bodily, emotional, contingent, relational, and task-oriented activities are, thus, a product of cognitive mapping, described in the glossary section of Sheila Hones' *Literary Geography* as 'a process "by which an individual acquires, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attributes of the phenomena in [their] everyday spatial environment"' (2022: 142, quoting Downs and Stea 1973: 7). My close reading of representations of Lily's mapping practices will focus on the significance of her contingent acceptance of help with her wayfinding, and of her confident use of relational cues.

The second type of mapping-as-problem-solving this essay undertakes is described by Hones as a 'literal' instance of literary cartography, in which 'the scholar . . . creates and uses maps to analyse literary material and its extra-textual geographies' (2022: 87); relatedly, Rossetto refers to 'digitalized reader-generated cartography . . . [as] the use of cartographic tools to produce "literary criticism"' (2014: 517). In turning towards what Peta Mitchell refers to as 'neogeography' (2017: 88) -- that is, the non-specialist use of cartographic tools such as GIS -- I am mindful of the question posed by the editors of *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age*: 'why might it be helpful to geovisualize texts?' (Cooper et al. 2016: 10). In her

discussion of literary cartography, Piatti acknowledges that 'a different choice of texts and/or different parameters of analysis would . . . [yield] different maps' (2017: 48), whereby -- as with all forms of literary analysis -- literary cartography as a critical process involves 'selections, omissions, and interpretations' (49). In mapping Lily's body's journey, my parameters of analysis include references in the novel, first, to geographical markers, input into a GIS to produce a set of geovisualizations primarily focused on distance travelled[4] and, second, to temporal markers, so as to explore the timeframe of her journey.

The description of parameters of analysis, however, is not sufficient to answer questions about the helpfulness or problem-solving capacity of a reader-generated mapping. Piatti responds to the question of helpfulness thus:

> the functions of literary maps range from pure *illustration* (to present something that could also be explained in the text), to *inspiration* (the process of mapping or in some cases the impossibility may lead to a new train of thought), and finally to *instrument* (in the best-case scenario something will be visible on the maps that could not be seen without them). In this latter function, maps become hermeneutic tools. (58)

Such guidance is broadly useful, and I offer as a supplement a negative reading of Robert Stockhammer's essay 'The (Un)Mappability of Literature,' which expresses doubts about 'referential mappability,' or the idea that 'geographic features in a given fictional text correspond to features included on maps that are, at a given time, accepted as being useful for purposes other than mapping literature' (2017: 79). As I will explore via the notion of strategic unmappability, there is interpretive potential in reading literature *for* the gaps between findable reference points and literary representation. In his contribution to the *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, entitled 'Literature,' Marc Brosseau notes that, during the 1970s, radical geographers focusing on 'literature as a reflection of the social and spatial conditions of existence' considered literary texts 'as a form of departure from established reality,' a departure to be 'criticized or celebrated' (2020: 186). Within a conceptual framework of critical cartography/geography *and* critical literary analysis, both sides of the comparative equation – established reality/reference and literary text – can be understood as complex representations. Reader-generated mappings making use of these comparisons should, like Lily's mapping, proceed as bodily, emotional, contingent, relational, and task-oriented activities, sensitive to the significance of overlaps and/or gaps, or the significance of what is seemingly reachable and/or out of reach.

'Don't worry': Lily's mapping confidence

Lily sets out on her journey at the direction of Frances, who asserts, 'I can't look after you anymore . . . You have to go, Lily. Don't worry, I'll tell you where' (MacDonald 1997: 450). One immediate emotional context for Frances' directive is Mercedes' increasingly threatening behaviour: she and Frances have just returned from a convent infirmary where Frances has given birth to a child, who is reported to have succumbed to crib death. Subsequently, Mercedes tells Lily of her plan to visit Lourdes so that Lily's leg can be cured, a plan Lily rejects. Mercedes soon after decides that Lily is not a saint but is rather

possessed by the Devil, in part because 'What kind of creature prefers to be crippled?' (448). A second emotional context is Frances' new knowledge of what happened to Kathleen in New York, including Kathleen's love affair with Rose and James' rape of his daughter. Thus, the fundamental emotional backdrop determining Lily's journey as a problem-solving task is Frances' desire that Lily leave Cape Breton for New York to find a new home space defined by the activity of 'look[ing] after' (450), an objective Lily takes on.

The use of the phrase 'look after' as a synonym for care resonates both with Lily's abiding insistence that impaired, hurt, or otherwise vulnerable bodies be seen, as well as with a key technique in Lily's cognitive mapping of asking for and being receptive to help. At various points in the description of Lily's journey, the narrative notes reactions to Lily's young, impaired, lone, and increasingly begrimed body, as when on the ferry across the Strait of Canso, the ferry-man asks where her father is (502), or when a railway signalman 'is remorseful' after he kicks her out of a boxcar (526), or when a volunteer at an East Village mission refers to her as 'Poor little thing' (533). Lily's most common response to concerned reactions to her body is to echo Frances with a version of 'Don't worry' (526, 527, 533, 540), though this is not to suggest she refuses help. As the narrator notes, 'Many people are kind so Lily is only a bit hungry' (502); even the signalman who kicks her off a train gives her a sandwich, which Lily gratefully accepts (527). Still, Lily's acceptance of help is contingent on that help being of use to her and not interfering with her task. While she accepts the signalman's offer of a sandwich, she firmly refutes his declaration that she is unable to walk to New York, responding 'Yes I can, don't worry' (526). Even more pointedly: though Lily asks several people in New York for directions to Central Park, only to be ignored, one woman goes so far as to override Lily's desire and instead take her to 'a mission in the East Village where a volunteer lady tried to get her into a bath and a new dress' (533). Lily consents to a partial cleaning of her body and to a cleaning of the green dress, though she interrupts that when the dress 'began to disintegrate at the first hint of water' (533). Lily then bites the volunteer and escapes the mission to resume her journey to Rose.

Lily's contingent responses to those she meets during her wayfinding activity show a distinction between the activities of worrying and of helping. When Lily advises folks not to worry, it is a caution that they not to divert her from her task. After years of carefully negotiating Mercedes' overdetermined speculations about her impaired body's purpose in a familial redemption plot, Lily adamantly refuses to take part in any other such scheme, especially one that impedes her body's functioning or that designates her as an object of pity. When told that she cannot walk to New York, she replies 'Yes I can' (526); when referred to as a 'Poor little thing,' she states, 'I'm not poor' (533). [5] In contrast to acts of worrying, acts of helping allow bodies to avoid disappearing through rehabilitation, to retain agency, and to continue functioning. The most complex scene in the episodic narrative of Lily's wayfinding shows her encounter with 'a slow thin man from Oklahoma,' whose home 'blew away' (518-19), recalling drought in the 1930s as an important historical context for Lily's journey. As with earlier scenes describing encounters between Lily and WWI veterans, this meeting shows the delicate maneuvers of mutual help. Lily and the man share a meal, and then their stories and 'precious remembrances' (519). At night,

> Lily is awakened by his bad chest. She watches him sleep and his wheezing stops, but when she nods off his torment resumes. So she stays awake. At dawn he sits up and forgets to cough. He scoops her up by the waist and pelts, years younger, towards the line of prehistoric boxcars lumbering by. (519)

This scene can certainly be critiqued as an instance of the 'supercrip' trope, in which Lily, through her activity of seeing pain, is able to heal. However, Lily's determination to see pain – to know 'how important it is for people to be seen' (300), to 'stay awake' (519) – is in no way enabled by her body's impairment, except insofar as she too 'has experienced pity . . . [and] it made her terribly afraid. As if she had disappeared and become a ghost' (300). When Lily helps through seeing, she does so without attempting to turn the recipient into 'a ghost' or some other mechanism within a prosthetic logic of identifying and rehabilitating deviance from the norm. Also, as linked with the sharing of remembrances, the encounter between Lily and the man from Oklahoma displays mutual support, as his race toward the boxcars carrying Lily is contingently useful, helping her stay on task.

The encounter with the man from Oklahoma also highlights Lily's attention to both relationality and bodily experience as aspects of her cognitive mapping. In the scenes leading up to this encounter, the narrative includes several indications of Lily's awareness of her body's relation to her surroundings: when crossing the Strait of Canso, she 'looks behind her at Cape Breton because she will never see it again' (502); crossing the Bay of Fundy, she notes that the 'Nova Scotia mainland is behind her, New Brunswick is in front' (510); upon crossing into the United States at Calais, Maine, she reasons that 'If she can see the ocean on her left she can't get lost' (518). Lily further combines the practices of asking for help and paying attention to relational cues, periodically 'stopping to enquire, "Where's the water?"' (518). Significantly, while the man from Oklahoma aids Lily with her spatial task, he himself does not have one: 'he's not going anywhere in particular' (518-19). Thus, as the brief narrative scenes describing her journey make clear, a crucial aspect of Lily's functioning is that she *is* going somewhere *in particular*. Even in moments of becoming lost, for example 'after Boston . . . [when] she noticed water on both sides' (529), or when folks ignore or mock her requests for assistance, Lily retains absolute confidence in her relational strategy and efforts, a confidence linked to the layered emotional problems she works to solve via her movement towards a specific destination and person. Lily's only real concern along the way is the state of her boots, made for her by James just before he dies (451). However, while Lily periodically frets over the disintegration of her boot soles (502, 517), she does not fret over the state of her body, her confidence extending to its capacities. When she finally reaches Rose, she can hold up Rose's grieving body, as 'she is in good shape from her walk' (541).

Thus, in the representation of Lily's wayfinding and cognitive mapping – of Lily's *hejira* – MacDonald explores shades of difference between the terms of various binaries associated with disability studies, prioritizing attempts to see over attempts to rehabilitate; exploring complex embodiment more so than constructivism; celebrating instances of helping to function over efforts to engage in a prosthetic logic of managing deviance. As the novel frequently notes, Lily is conscious of the harm produced to an impaired body

that is not seen, and is rather turned into 'a ghost' (300), and – arguably – in the scene of Lily's arrival in New York, MacDonald tests her readers' willingness to see Lily as Lily; even Rose's neighbours mark her as a revenant, declaring 'That red-haired devil who ruined our Miss Rose has come back to life as a shrunk-down raggedy cripple' (540). As I have argued here, however, the methodology of literary mapping, which pays close attention to 'the spatial practices enacted to solve relational problems' (Kitchin and Dodge 2007: 335) and to the representation of 'living cartographic practice' (Rossetto 2014: 526), strengthens a reading of Lily's appearance at Rose's apartment not as a metaphorical act of haunting or even resurrection, but as the result of intelligent problem-solving, of more or less helpful encounters with other people, and of real bodily effort. As Lily herself responds to Rose when they discuss Rose's broken-hearted and then abandoned efforts to rescue Kathleen after James takes her back to Cape Breton, 'You could've walked' (MacDonald 1997: 543).

Reader-generated mapping and strategic unmappability

As Sara Ahmed notes: 'Turning toward an object turns "me" in this way or that' (2006: 28); indeed, this essay's doubling of methods, exploring Lily's wayfinding alongside a reader-generated digital mapping of her route, has given me a turn. Perhaps ironically, in coming to ascertain through the close reading of Lily's mapping practices the representation of her confidence in her own ability to reach Rose, I must confront critically my own lack of confidence in that same ability, at least insofar as that confidence depends on digitally georeferencing the spatial and temporal data gleaned from MacDonald's narrative. As I will explore in more detail below, my own neogeographical efforts have indicated several instances of what Robert Stockhammer refers to as the 'interruption of mappability' (2017: 84), leading to a conclusion that Lily's journey is, at best, unmappable and, at worst, implausible, especially with respect to how quickly the journey is completed. But is this a useful conclusion? Surely the answer to the question 'why might it be helpful to geovisualize texts?' (Cooper et al. 2016: 10) must extend beyond a referendum on accuracy or plausibility, considerations that, as Stockhammer might point out, ignore the 'specific features of literary texts *as* literary texts' (2017: 85). In prioritizing the critical goal of helpfulness (as opposed to worrying), then, I will follow up a description of key interruptions of the mappability of Lily's route with an analysis of those interruptions proceeding within three guiding frameworks, the first of which is Barbara Piatti's acknowledgement that 'every literary-cartographic study considerably reduces the complexity of a fictional text. For this reason, maps should be seen as signposts toward further exploration rather than conclusive evidence' (2017: 60). Second, I continue to keep in mind principles of literary disability studies, in particular complex embodiment and its relation to the basic goal of paying attention to a body's functioning. Third, as per Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge's note that '*Maps are practices* – they are always *mappings*; spatial practices enacted to solve relational problems' (2007: 335), I conclude by acknowledging that the literature scholar's own activity in digital mapping is not neutral or self-explanatory, but rather contingent, intended to solve a relational problem or research question.

Stockhammer draws attention to various ways a literary text might comprise an 'interruption of mappability,' two of which are relevant to producing a reader-generated

mapping of Lily's route. First, Stockhammer refers to instances in which 'mappability fails . . . [due to an] enigmatic claim' (2017: 85). Unsurprisingly, given the relative spareness of the narrative of Lily's journey, several such enigmatic – or least imprecise -- claims emerge, for example the location of the ferry docks on either side of the Strait of Canso or Bay of Fundy, or the specific walking routes Lily takes between various locations, such as from Lebanon, Maine to Portland, Maine or from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Manhattan, New York. While imprecise narrative claims may not entirely impede a reader-generated mapping, they do produce a certain amount of scholarly guesswork; a greater degree of such guesswork is required when location cues are truly enigmatic as is the case for the scene in which Lily meets the man from Oklahoma. While the narrator notes that it has been 'days' (MacDonald 1997: 518) since she crossed the border at Calais, Maine and refers to his guiding her toward 'railway tracks that swing south-east until the ocean comes into view' (519), the location of the encounter between Lily and the man from Oklahoma, and thus of her boarding the train, is not straightforwardly mappable.

Stockhammer also refers to 'unmappability result[ing] from the incompatibility of various referential data given within one and the same text' (2017: 84). For example: when the railway signalman kicks Lily off the train, 'The sign says Lebanon' (MacDonald 1997: 526). According to a 1901 map published by the Rand Avery Supply Company, however, any railway line south of Calais and north of Portland that the man from Oklahoma might plausibly have sprinted towards carrying Lily would have belonged to the Maine Central Railroad Company, while the station near Lebanon, Maine (renamed Eastwood Station in 1900) was run by the Boston & Maine Railroad ('Boston & Maine'). Thus, whereas the narrative suggests Lily sleeps while on the train (526), for her to arrive in Lebanon, Maine she likely would have had to switch trains at the Portland junction. Even more incompatible than the railway lines are the combination of location and temporal data associated with her journey, analysis of which shows how difficult it would have been for Lily to complete it within the narrated time frame. Lily leaves her home in New Waterford on May 2, 1933, the morning after Frances arrives home from the convent infirmary (441); after 'Eleven days of gravel on Highway 4' (502), Lily boards a ferry to cross the Strait of Canso, traveling over ninety miles or about eight miles a day in that time frame. She crosses the Bay of Fundy 'Twenty-eight days' (510) after leaving home, having walked close to 380 miles or about seventeen miles a day for that part of the journey. There are no further narrative references to how long Lily has been on the road until the date of her arrival at Rose's apartment on June 20, 1933, which is Lily's birthday (543), meaning that her journey takes a total of forty-nine days. While Lily's pace between home and boarding the ferry across the Bay of Fundy seems reasonable if increasingly arduous, the remainder of her journey – including at minimum the walk from the ferry dock in New Brunswick to the border crossing near Calais, Maine, from Calais to wherever she meets the man from Oklahoma, from Lebanon, Maine to Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and from Cape Cod to Manhattan, New York – is well over 500 miles, which she would need to complete in the remaining twenty-one days at a pace of at least twenty-four miles a day or faster if she spent any of those twenty-one days lost or resting. Even at her most efficient and resolute, then, the narrative presents Lily – not quite 14-years-old, with her left leg in a brace -- completing almost a marathon's worth of travel every day for three solid weeks.

Piatti encourages approaching the outcomes of literary-cartographic work as 'signposts' (2017: 60), a term that might be linked to non-literal conceptions of cognitive mapping, such as those explored in Sally Bushell's *Reading and Mapping Fiction: Spatialising the Literary Text*. In her study's chapter on 'The Cognitive Mapping of Literature,' Bushell considers links between the use of a 'geometric locale map' in a literal cognitive mapping and the non-literal 'cognitive experience of mapping a literary text' (2020: 290). Bushell introduces the idea of the 'anchor-point' as an aspect of literal cognitive mapping noting that 'anchor-points function in a similar way to landmarks, [though] they are understood to be more subjectively determined' (2020: 291), as when a location – for example, a childhood home - might serve as a wayfinding marker for an individual primarily because its personal significance. She then argues that a dependence in literal cognitive mapping on anchor-points or subjective wayfinding markers coheres with the reader's layered, non-literal 'internal mapping' (291) of a literary text:

> The reader might be mapping *conceptually*, so that what stands out are the core ideas, or the relations between them . . . Alternatively, readers may be mapping *affectively* recalling most strongly the sections of text that elicited from them the strongest emotion from a previous reading. (292)

Even within the relatively brief scenes tracing Lily's journey, there are instances of potentially conceptual and affective reader anchor-points, for example the various evocative references to the complicated issue of Lily's parentage, such as the ferry-man's query, 'Who's your father?' (MacDonald 1997: 502) or Lily's own assertion to the man from Oklahoma that her mother is dead (519).[6] Also, the representation of Lily's care for this man conceptually and affectively recalls Lily's care for the veterans she visits (299-300). With respect to locations mentioned in the narrative, the most striking is Lebanon, Maine, recalling a profusion of earlier scenes about Materia's family origins (10-14) and the imaginative and emotional connotations to those origins enacted by Materia and the Piper children (86-90, 295, 430-31). Finally, with respect to temporal data, the date of Lily's arrival – though perhaps incompatible with data linked to distance travelled – is a crucial readerly anchor-point, recalling the chapter in Book Two entitled 'O Holy Night,' which describes Kathleen's death and Lily's birth (135-39).

Thus, 'further exploration' of such 'signposts' (Piatti 2017:60) shows what might be referred to as narrative occasions of strategic unmappability, in which interruptions to a reader-generated digital mapping emerge and are made available for critical analysis. Interruptions to the digital mapping of Lily's route are helpful, for example, in revealing the importance of the alliances Lily depends on in her negotiation of space, not only with those she meets during her journey but with those she carries with her in story and memory. The very imprecision or incompatibility of certain data, including the lack of reference to the locations of ferry docks or sites of encounters, as well as to the impossible arrival in Lebanon, all draw extra attention to conceptual and affective anchor-points, especially those concerning Lily's understanding of her own family. Alongside a geovisualization of Lily's physical route, the practice of digital mapping reveals Lily's subjective journey as she reads Kathleen's diary and increasingly comes to understand her

parental origins. Similarly, reader-generated evidence for the implausibility of Lily's pace ironically serves to underscore instead the significance of timing, whereby the arrival at Rose's apartment is, for Lily, an affirmation of newly acquired knowledge of her mother's experiences of love, a birthday gift. Also, perhaps paradoxically, the very instrumentalism of using a GIS tool to track – or fail at tracking – Lily's route coheres with calls by disability studies scholars to prioritize complex embodiment over constructivism. As occasions of strategic unmappability interrupt or override any mere attempt to worry about whether Lily is physically able to complete her journey, they redirect attention to what Lily is accomplishing, both intellectually and emotionally. The redoubled focus on her own layered accomplishments help Lily evade being positioned within a prosthetic logic, in which her body becomes someone else's problem to solve or make meaning out of; rather, identifying occasions of strategic unmappability in the literary representation of Lily directs careful attention to her own approaches to problem-solving and making meaning out of the movement through space.

Scholarly practice and performativity

As noted in my introductory section, one goal of this paper is to continue what Donna McCormack refers to as 'the ethical responsibility for interminable narrative' (2014: 141), revisiting a section of Ann-Marie MacDonald's widely read 1996 novel to find another story, one that has mostly escaped critical notice and yet calls forth a reading of Lily's confidence, competence, and perceptual growth as she completes her *hejira*. As I have explored, methodologies associated with literary mapping – both the analysis of a fictional character's mapping practices and the production and use of a reader-generated digital mapping – prove helpful as scaffolding for the exploration of Lily's complex embodiment as a disabled body, concentrating on her body's physical movements, her subjective journey, and her agency within her own plot. At first glance, the use of such tools by literature scholars as a digital GIS platform might be thought to prompt reductive readings, mere descriptions or what I have referred to as referendums on plausibility. I have argued, however, that practices of literary mapping – necessarily instrumentalist, painstaking, defamiliarizing, and at times impeded by a literary text's strategic imprecision or the creative incompatibility of data – have the potential to make available new, necessary readings, for example as such practices intersect with calls from disability scholars to refuse reading certain bodies as metaphorical. For the case of Lily Piper in MacDonald's *Fall on Your Knees*, paying attention to her methods of wayfinding, along with mapping her route, reveals how she functions with intelligence and physical stamina, and as contingently hospitable and both objectively and subjectively task-oriented. As this case study shows, literary mapping conceived as a set of problem-solving practices can help orient the literary scholar towards new lines of inquiry, such as seeing in representations of disability instances of complex embodiment.

As a last consideration, I would like to explore the matter of my own mapping practices, which include the choice to read for the details of Lily's wayfinding, to produce a digital, georeferenced visualization of her route, and to consider the significance of readerly anchor-points in the narrative. As per Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge, such

choices are not self-explanatory but rather emerge for the scholar as 'contingent and relational, embedded with the context of the moment . . . and as an aspect of other tasks' (339). In this case, the context for my turn towards Lily's route was a return to teaching MacDonald's novel in a first-year literary studies course after a break of twenty years; further, I was engaged in the specific task of teaching students how to integrate literary criticism into an essay, forming the occasion for me – cheekily, but also with vulnerability – to use an old paper I'd written on *Fall on Your Knees* as an example of incomplete scholarship that called for new interventions (Gordon 2005). Arguably, one relational problem I have worked towards solving is sorting through my own interactions with this text as what Sheila Hones would refer to as 'geographical events' (2022: 163), located in the specific spaces and times of teaching.

In consciously marking the context and tasks associated with the scholar's turn toward literary mapping – here, in discerning my pedagogical and then ethical interest in re-reading Book Eight of *Fall on Your Knees* to see more clearly the representation of a disabled body – I again recall Sara Ahmed. In her introduction of orientation as an aspect of phenomenology, she notes that phenomenology highlights

> the importance of lived experience, the intentionality of consciousness, the significance of nearness or what is ready-to-hand, and the role of repeated and habitual actions in shaping bodies and the world. (2006: 2)

Much in this evocative language helpfully describes the sense of my own positionality as a later career literary critic and instructor newly oriented towards literary mapping, making use of freshly accessible methodological vocabulary and digital tools to reshape scholarly activity and pedagogical range. However, as Ahmed notes, 'The lines that direct us, as lines of thought as well as lines of motion, are . . . performative . . . we find our way and we know which direction we face only as an effect of work, which is often hidden from view' (16). Hones notes in *Literary Geography* that 'Before the turn of the 21st century, the question of what literary geography was and what it did was mainly a matter for geographers' (2022: 2). As literary critics are increasingly inclined to reorient themselves towards the field, it is incumbent on us – helpful for us -- to remain self-conscious about our performative work and the lines of thought and action we follow. It is helpful to make sure not to retrace those lines of, especially, Western literary criticism that are so full of exclusions; as Ahmed reminds us, 'The direction we take excludes things for us, before we even get there' (2006: 14-15).

Notes

[1] The exception to the extant critical neglect of representations of disability in *Fall on Your Knees* is a chapter in Adam Pottle's dissertation *The Fluidity of Normalcy: Disability in English-Canadian Novels, 1984-2007* (2016). While Pottle does not focus on Lily's journey from Cape Breton to Manhattan, he offers important analysis of Lily as the novel's narrator, linking MacDonald's subversion of Gothic tropes with Lily's empathy.

[2] While Mercedes believes that it is through miraculous means that Lily is able to find her way to Frances, Lily is simply following marks that Frances has left on trees.
[3] As Sheila Hones notes in *Literary Geography*, 'Although what [Thacker] proposed sounds quite similar to work being done at the time in the literary geography practised by human geographers' (2022: 7-8), Thacker remains focused on how geography and geographical concepts are treated in literature and by literary critics.
[4] The GIS platform used to map Lily's Route is Google Maps. After determining locations along her route, as noted in MacDonald's text, I queried directions via walking, making note of the distance between location points while taking into account the parts of her journey completed via ferry or train.
[5] Lily's response here is quite literal, as – far from being poor – she carries the thousands of dollars given to her by Frances, having wrapped the bank notes around her ankles.
[6] The declaration is complicated, as Lily has been raised to believe that -- like the rest of the Piper children, Kathleen, Mercedes, and Frances – Materia is her mother, and that she died in the days following Lily's birth. As the reader knows, however, Lily's mother is Kathleen, who died giving birth.

Works Cited

Ahmed, S. (2006) *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Andrews, J. (1999) 'Rethinking the Relevance of Magic Realism for English-Canadian Literature: Reading Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall on Your Knees*.' *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 24 (1), pp. 1-19.

'Boston & Maine Railroad & Connections.' (1901) Boston: The Rand Avery Supply Company. [Online] [Accessed 16 July 2023] https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/69/Boston_and_Maine_Railroad_1901_system_map.png

Brosseau, M. (2020) 'Literature.' *Encyclopedia of Human Geography*. Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd, pp. 185-191.

Bushell, S. (2020) *Reading and Mapping Fiction: Spatialising the Literary Text*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, D., Donaldson, C. and Murrieta-Flores, P. (eds) (2016) *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age*. London & New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Crampton, J.W. (2003) *The Political Mapping of Cyberspace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Downs, R.M. and Stea, D. (1973) *Image and Environment; Cognitive Mapping and Spatial Behavior*. Chicago: Aldine.

Georgis, D. (2005) '"Falling" for Jazz: Desire, Dissonance, and Racial Collaboration.' *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 35 (2), pp. 215-229.

Gordon, N. (2005) 'Twin Tales: Narrative Profusion and Genealogy in *Fall on Your Knees*.' *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 35 (2), pp. 159-176.

Hall, A. (2016) *Literature and Disability*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Harley, J.B. (1989) 'Deconstructing the map.' *Cartographica*, 26, pp. 1-20.

Hones, S. (2022) *Literary Geography*. London: Routledge.

Kitchin, R. and Dodge, M. (2007) 'Rethinking Maps.' *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(3), pp. 331-344.

MacDonald, A. (1997) *Fall on Your Knees*. Vintage Canada Edition.

McCormack, D. (2014) *Queer Postcolonial Narratives and the Ethics of Witnessing*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Mitchell, D. T. and Snyder, S. L. (2000) *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Mitchell, P. (2017) 'Literary Geography and the Digital: The emergence of neogeography', *In* Tally, R. (ed) *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space*. London: Routledge, pp. 85–94.

Piatti, B. (2017) 'Literary Cartography: Mapping as Method.' *In* Engberg-Pederson, A. (ed) *Literature and Cartography: theories, histories, genres*. Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, pp. 45-72.

Pickles, J. (2004) *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-Coded World*. London: Routledge.

Pottle, A. (2016) *The Fluidity of Normalcy: Disability in English-Canadian Novels, 1984-2007*. University of Saskatchewan. [Online] [Accessed 16 July 2023] https://harvest.usask.ca/handle/10388/12597

Rossetto, T. (2014) 'Theorizing Maps with Literature.' *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(4), pp. 513-530.

Siebers, T. (2008) *Disability Theory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Stiker, H.-J. (2019) *A History of Disability*. New edition. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Stockhammer, R. (2017) 'The (Un)Mappability of Literature.' *In* Engberg-Pederson, A. (ed) *Literature and Cartography: theories, histories, genres*. Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, pp. 73-97.

Thacker, A. (2017) 'Critical Literary Geography.' *In* Tally, R.T. (ed) *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space*. London: Routledge, pp. 28-38.