

A Tale of Two Cities of Literature: Toponymic Identity and the Promotion of Edinburgh and Melbourne in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network

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Abstract

In October 2004, the Scottish capital city Edinburgh was declared the first UNESCO City of Literature. Melbourne followed suit in August 2008. Since then Iowa City (November 2008), Dublin (2010) and Reykjavík (2011) have also joined the ranks. The *City of Literature* status is one strand of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, which is intended to reward certain cities as major centres of cultural production with a permanently recognisable brand marque. This paper seeks to explore the impetus behind the Creative Cities Network, with particular emphasis on the involvement of Edinburgh and Melbourne in the Literature sphere. These two cities have particular similarities in hosting community and international festivals; they have comparable positions in the political matrix, and well-established rivalries with other national cities (e.g. Glasgow and Sydney).

With Edinburgh having been a City of Literature for seven years, and Melbourne three years, the timing is right to undertake an investigation into the toponymic identity and dependence which are being formed with and by the names Edinburgh and Melbourne in conjunction with the Creative Cities Network initiative. Essentially, the stage is now set to begin asking how Creative Cities Network branding can add to the identity and the toponymicons of Edinburgh and Melbourne and what the place names themselves can add to the city "brand"?

1. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a global platform for creative tourism

Edinburgh and Melbourne were the first two cities to be designated by UNESCO as world cities of literature. The *City of Literature* title is part of UNESCO's relatively new *Creative Cities Network*. This network was set up in October 2004. The intention of the network is "developing international cooperation among cities and encouraging them to drive joint development partnerships in line with UNESCO's global priorities of 'culture and development' and 'sustainable development'", to be achieved through the development of the Creative Cities Network as a "global platform [...] for activities based on the notions of creative economy and creative tourism" (UNESCO, 2011).

The targeted global promotion of creative or cultural tourism to specific cities is certainly not a new idea. In 1851, the *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations* was held at Crystal Palace in London, the precursor of what is now called the "Expo". These great international exhibitions have taken on different forms over the decades, but they currently seem to be more about nation branding than city branding, using a city as a base to show off the cultures of many countries. The importance of nation branding can be seen in the title of the next expo, which is *Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea*. In 1985, Athens was designated as the first *European City of Culture*. This initiative to host a one-year-long cultural festival in one city rapidly became very successful. Currently, two cities, each from a different European country, are chosen every year to act as *European Capitals of Culture*. Non-members of the European Union have also featured in the past few years, for instance with Stavanger in 2008 (Særheim, 2007) and Istanbul in 2010, but the European Commission has now taken full ownership of the project and plans to include only EU member states. This initiative has often been used as a chance to relaunch cities, as with Liverpool in 2008, and there is fierce competition between cities to be selected as their state's cultural capitals. The initiative has been replicated with the UNESCO-supported Arab Capital of Culture running since 1996, and a Capital of Culture initiative also began on the American continent in 2000.

Projects like the European Capitals of Culture may have long-term benefits, but they are in themselves intended to last only one year. Membership of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, on the other hand, is permanent and ongoing, for as long as the cities wish to use the title that membership bestows upon them. Also, the Creative Cities Network enables cities to focus on one of seven creative categories. A city can seek to become a City of Literature (like Edinburgh and Melbourne, and also Iowa City, Dublin and Reykjavík), a City of Film (Bradford and Sydney), Music (Seville, Bologna, Glasgow and Ghent), Crafts and Folk Art (Santa Fe, Aswan, Kanazawa and Icheon), Design (Buenos Aires, Berlin, Montréal, Nagoya, Kobe, Shenzhen, Shanghai, Seoul, Saint-Étienne and Graz), Media Arts (Lyon), or Gastronomy (Popayán, Chengdu and Östersund). In order to be appointed, a city must prepare a bid document outlining its credentials and its plans to develop the relevant sector. This must have the support of local political leaders and must be approved by the city's national UNESCO delegation. UNESCO then appoints a board of sector experts to evaluate the bid. The rationale for classifying cities based on their creative industries is supported, for example, by the work of Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002).

Some countries have become particularly keen on the idea, not least the United Kingdom. As well as Edinburgh giving the impetus for the entire network and for the City of Literature designation in particular, the UK also launched the City of Film category with the English city of Bradford, and the Scottish cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow are the two Creative Cities that are situated closest to each other. The Indian city of Kolkata, home to an enormous book fair, has been seeking City of Literature designation for several years, and this has been heavily supported by the British Council's branches in East India and in Scotland (Express India, 2008).

2. Preliminary research aims

The current Cities of Literature are quite distinct and different in their backgrounds, and so to apply the City of Literature soubriquet to their toponym is an interesting exercise worth investigating. The main focus of our preliminary research into this branding project has been on the toponymic impact of the City of Literature branding. We have explored the questions of how can City of Literature branding add to the identity and toponymicon of Edinburgh and Melbourne, and what identities do these cities already have?

The cities of Edinburgh and Melbourne were selected for this study for various reasons. Firstly, these two cities have been Cities of Literature the longest, so more empirical evidence is available of how toponymic identity is being utilised and affected. Secondly, the cities have particular similarities in hosting community and international festivals, and even a history of cultural co-operation between them, with certain cultural and theatrical events having joint-presenter programs enabling artists to travel between festivals in both cities. They also have comparable positions in the political matrix, and well-established rivalries with other national cities, in particular Glasgow and Sydney.

3. Literature

As part of the increasing interest over recent years in the domain of theoretical toponymy, Kostanski has focused on exploring the potential of toponyms to represent and ground emotional and functional attachments (Clark and Kostanski, 2009; Kostanski, 2009a; Kostanski, 2009b; Kostanski, 2011). The theory of toponymic attachment is derived from the field of human geography and the theories of place attachment. Common consensus holds that place attachment is the bonding of people to places (Altman and Low, 1992) and can be both positive or negative in type (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2006, 4). Williams and Vaske (2003, 5) assert that there are two different forms of attachment to place. The first they label "place dependence", describing it as a *functional* attachment to place which "reflects the

importance of a place in providing features and conditions that support specific goals or desired activities” and also “suggests an ongoing relationship with a particular setting”. They label the second form of attachment to place as “place identity”, which they assert is an *emotional* attachment to place. Further, they posit that place identity “generally involves a psychological investment with the place that tends to develop over time”.

Kostanski’s (2009b) research has identified that, in similar ways to which people form attachments to places, attachments are also formed to toponyms. Similarly, these attachments are comprised of toponymic identity and dependence. These attachments are strongly correlated to, but also distinguishable from the attachments formed to the places. Various reasons for these correlations and distinctions exist, and primarily evidence suggests that attachments can be formed with a toponym even when a person has not visited the physical place. Importantly for this study, the theory of toponymic identity proposes that place names can and do hold multiple meanings for various purposes, communities and audiences.

Personal and community identity can be tied to toponyms in a similar way to which it can be linked to places. Toponymic identity can be defined as a construct through which people link to history, allocate their memories, assert cultural ideologies, assist in expressing personal and community emotions and determine what is culturally important (Kostanski, 2009b). As will be explored in the present case studies, the City of Literature initiatives rely heavily on the exploitation of one aspect of toponymic identity. As noted by Jackson (1989), dominant cultures and communities use strongly held beliefs as authority for maintaining their cultural practices. Can the same be stated for the proponents of cities joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network? Are the toponymic identities of Edinburgh and Melbourne being used as a method for supporting sections of their communities involved in literature, perhaps even bringing them into dominance?

4. Edinburgh

To begin exploring the toponymic identity of Edinburgh, the etymology of the name, *Din Eidyn* in Brythonic, points to the city’s most significant landmark, the fortress situated on a volcanic plug in the very centre of the city, now Edinburgh Castle. Modern Scotland has three autochthonous languages (English, Gaelic and Scots); Edinburgh’s name in modern Gaelic is *Dùn Èideann*, and is sometimes rendered in the Scots language as *Embra*, but may also be spelt other ways. Apart from the City of Literature epithet, Edinburgh also goes by the nickname of *Auld Reekie* (Scots for “Old Smoky” or “Old Smelly”), in recent times mainly in reference to the sweet smell from the many breweries that the city once had. It is also known, perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek, as the *Athens of the North*, in relation to the role of Edinburgh philosophers in the Scottish Enlightenment or due to there being many examples of classically-inspired architecture.

Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland, with a population just under half a million, and it currently has a service-based economy. Many jobs are found in the public sector; apart from usual public services, Edinburgh is also home to the Scottish Parliament and is the centre of the Scottish legal system. Banking and education are also big employers, with the headquarters of a number of large financial companies, and four universities. Tourism is a major part of the economy, with many tourists visiting Edinburgh’s world heritage sites in the Old Town and New Town. In June 2011, Edinburgh had the highest hotel occupancy rates in Europe at 92% (Scottish Development International, 2011b).

Cultural or creative tourism is already a significant element of Edinburgh’s identity. For many people in the UK, the name *Edinburgh* is synonymous with the Edinburgh Festivals. After the end of the Second World War, Edinburgh launched what would become an annual arts event held every August, the Edinburgh International Festival, bringing the cream of international “high” culture to Edinburgh. At the same time, an alternative festival was set up,

which would become the much bigger Edinburgh Festival Fringe, now very well known for comedy and theatre in particular. Other festivals began, including the Film Festival and the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Most of these festivals are held in August, so if someone in the UK says they are “going to Edinburgh” in August, it is clear to everyone that they are likely to be attending the festivals. There are smaller festivals going on in Edinburgh all year, so Edinburgh likes to see itself as Scotland’s, and perhaps the world’s, *Festival City*. The August festivals alone give a boost of £261 million pounds to the economy (BOP Consulting, 2011, 71), which is more than golf tourism brings to the whole of Scotland (Scottish Development International, 2011a). On the basis of such figures, it is clear that many in Edinburgh would like to see that August prosperity further extended and consolidated throughout the year, hence Edinburgh’s participation in the Creative Cities Network.

Edinburgh was the world’s first City of Literature, designated in October 2004 at the launch of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. The city launched the idea earlier that year, and presented its case to UNESCO with two exquisite volumes joined in a slipcase, the illustrated *We Cultivate Literature on a Little Oatmeal...* (Edinburgh World City of Literature Trust, 2004a), and the more in-depth report *Chapter and Verse* (Edinburgh World City of Literature Trust, 2004b), which both made much of the city’s literary credentials, starting from Edinburgh’s historical contribution to literature with big-name authors who were born or lived in the city, such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Robert Louis Stevenson, Walter Scott and J. M. Barrie. Much emphasis was also placed on the city’s central status in the Scottish Enlightenment, the Scottish tradition of democratic intellect, and the tradition of publishing in the city, home for example to the first edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Modern authors from Edinburgh were also highlighted, such as crime author Ian Rankin, Alexander McCall Smith, Irvine Welsh and J. K. Rowling. Institutions were also prominent factors in justifying Edinburgh’s credentials. Apart from universities and libraries, which many cities have, we also find in Edinburgh the Scottish Poetry Library – the world’s first purpose-built national poetry library – and the Scottish Storytelling Centre, also the first purpose-built institution of its kind. Literature is very visible in the city, for example in the form of the Scott Monument, which is possibly the tallest monument built to an author anywhere, with its more than 60 m of Gothic extravagance. Most unusually, even the city’s main railway station is named after one of Scott’s best known novels, *Waverley*, published in 1814.

Probably one of the most significant factors in giving Edinburgh the epithet *City of Literature* are the extensive literary events staged in the city, such as the Edinburgh International Book Festival. While big book fairs are held in Frankfurt, London and Kolkata, those are mainly industry events for the publishing trade. The Book Festival in Edinburgh, on the other hand, is intended to celebrate the written word publicly. It takes over the gardens in the city’s Charlotte Square and lasts for more than two weeks every year. The August 2011 edition had almost 800 participants and attracted 190,000 visitors (Edinburgh International Book Festival, 2011).

As a project promoting the city as a cultural place and destination, the promotion of Edinburgh’s place identity is fundamental to the City of Literature brand. The initiative’s logo, designed by the Redpath agency, demonstrates that the city’s name is a key element of that place identity that can be readily mobilised, with the logo featuring International Phonetic Alphabet notation approximating the most common pronunciation of the city’s name. To date, City of Literature logos and branding have not been particularly visible in the cityscape itself, with one major exception when excerpts of poetic lines about the city were displayed in the windows of two six-storey disused office building façades near the above-mentioned Scott Monument (BBC News, 2009). More typically, the UNESCO soubriquet may be broadcast in a more restrained fashion, such as the small metal sign above the

opening hours of the city's Central Library, which reads "Central Library is proud to be at the heart of // Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature // www.cityofliterature.com".

Place branding or nation branding is often much in evidence at airports, borders and other points of entry. One challenge for branding a place like Edinburgh at an international airport is that the city's roles as a city in its own right and as the capital city of Scotland can potentially conflict with each other. As Lesley Hinds, the then Lord Provost of Edinburgh, wrote in a foreword to Edinburgh's project presentation, "Edinburgh is a city which wears many hats" (Edinburgh World City of Literature Trust, 2004a, viii). The latest version of the hoardings in the international arrivals area at Edinburgh Airport do, however, manage to highlight Edinburgh City of Literature while also welcoming travellers to Scotland as a whole. The first of a long series of messages that bags might pass by on the luggage belt reads "Welcome to Scotland // Welcome to the world's first UNESCO City of Literature", not even saying which city that is. Bags would then pass a welcome in Gaelic, "Fàilte gu Alba", a language that is now an increasingly visible part of the national identity of Scotland (Puzey, 2012).

Apart from potential conflicts between nation and city branding, the City of Literature identity also has to sit alongside other identity projects. The city's main marketing slogan, which is shown on road signs at the boundaries of the City of Edinburgh Council's local authority area, is "Edinburgh Inspiring Capital". Inspiration is certainly compatible with literature, but "capital" may seem disjointed. Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland, but this slogan also suggests that the city inspires the creation of capital. Capital can come in many guises, including cultural capital, but the possibility of reading into this slogan a greed for financial capital makes it seem distant from the more romantic portrayal of Edinburgh as a City of Literature. Perhaps it befits a City of Literature to employ such a play on words, but it is nonetheless a significant indication of the extent to which names can be commodified in occasionally subtle ways.

5. Melbourne

Melbourne is a blossoming city in the State of Victoria, in the southern section of the Australian mainland. With a population of 3.8 million, it is the second-largest city in Australia, and with the recent population and economic boom it is predicted to overtake Sydney in population size by 2030. Melbourne was named in honour of William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne, British Prime Minister at the time of the city's founding in 1835. Melbourne became the major urban centre of Australia during the gold-rush era of the mid-1850s, and the Federation ceremony and first parliament of Australia were convened at Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Centre in 1901. After years of competitive bickering between Sydney and Melbourne as to where the national capital should be located, both cities agreed to build a purpose-designed city half-way between them, today's Canberra.

According to a speech by Victoria's Minister for the Arts at the time of the bid being developed for Melbourne to join the City of Literature network, the Hon. Mary Delahunty (2005, 12) proposed that:

When people from interstate and overseas comment about Melbourne and Victoria, there's usually a set of recurring themes:

- Great food, wine and style.
- We had the highest vote for the Republic – just as we had the highest vote for Federation.
- The lowest vote for Pauline Hanson.
- The most harmonious multicultural relations.

- We can't get a footy team in the AFL Grand Final, or a batsman in the Australian Test Team.
- We're a pack of beret-wearing, over-educated, dangerous intellectuals, addicted to good coffee and cake shops.

So, according to the former minister, the toponymic identity of Melbourne is predicated on intellectual and sporting pursuits. It can be argued, however, that not all members of the Melbourne community would necessarily identify with all of the items raised by Minister Delahunty, instead perhaps identifying with one or two components which they consider to be particularly important. In this way, as previously argued, toponymic identity is multifaceted for different components of the community and varied audiences. It can be seen from the final statement regarding “beret-wearing” members of the community that literature is considered to be a key component of Melbourne's toponymic identity.

For the government, joining the City of Literature network was perceived as an opportunity to tie Melbourne's intellectual capacity tangibly to a globally-recognised brand promoted by UNESCO. As the theory on toponymic identity provides, this linking inevitably involved only focusing on one aspect of Melbourne's cultural and historical identity for the purposes of ensuring its ongoing role within the community. There is evidence here of Melbourne's toponymic identity being used to promote the literary pedigree of the city and thereby simultaneously reinforcing the notion to the community that this is an important aspect of their collective identity.

The bid for Melbourne to join the City of Literature network argued that “Securing City of Literature status [...] would allow writers, readers and the literary industry to better interface with their counterparts overseas, it would provide an economic stimulus to the creative industries and would ensure the development of a shared understanding across cultures” (Arts Victoria, 2008, 115). Can it be argued that this has been, or is, attainable and worthwhile?

The State Government announced and opened the *Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas* in February 2010. The Premier of Victoria at the time, the Hon. John Brumby, announced that the centre “will focus on Victoria's widespread literary activity in one central location and promote the world of books, writing and ideas for the enjoyment of all Victorians” (Premier of Victoria, 2010). Importantly, he indicated that the centre would be “a place for writers and literary organisations to come together, network, collaborate and develop projects that help raise the profile of literature across the Victoria and the country”. His words indicated that while the City of Literature branding was an opportunity to promote Melbourne to the world, at the same time the government were recognising the importance of gathering local recognition of the literature scene and building toponymic attachment between the City of Literature concept and the Melbourne toponymicon.

In this sense, it can be argued that, while the original bid for joining the City of Literature network referenced Melbourne's strong literary toponymic identity, the purpose of joining the City of Literature network was to enhance this component of the identity and utilise it for supporting the literary industry.

For Melbourne it can be found that there are many place brands utilised and marketed by the government and by tourism industries. Melbourne's official website aimed at tourists lists three key identities which reportedly link to the toponym Melbourne: “Laneways and byways”, “Cheer on your heroes” and “Festival fever” (Visit Melbourne, 2011). References to the City of Literature status are not made obvious, indeed they are relatively non-existent and only discovered if a focused search is undertaken of the site. The logo used on the Visit Melbourne website is officially known as *Brand Victoria*, although it actually gives much more prominence to the name of *Melbourne*, with the names of *Victoria* and *Australia* in

much smaller lettering below the city's name. The brandmark is at least intended to resemble the pages of a book, as the official marketing custodians of Brand Victoria (2011) explain: "As is the case with a good book, where depth and complexity are experienced with the turn of every page, the more you become engaged with the city or the State the more it reveals itself to you."

6. Conclusions

6.1. Exporting place identity (and toponymic identity?)

In terms of institutions, Melbourne favours a single-space approach with the establishment of the Wheeler Centre, whereas Edinburgh would prefer to see its *City of Literature* brand shared between a number of institutions and organisations. Things could even go beyond that, however. At an event at the Edinburgh International Book Festival on 15 August 2011, architect Malcolm Fraser and Andrew Dixon, Chief Executive of Creative Scotland, discussed the potential for Book Festival events to travel around the world but still under the banner of the Edinburgh International Book Festival. Cities with cultural capital can clearly be marketed around the world. The city itself is not moving, but part of its identity is on the move, and the place-name is the key to this.

Further evidence of how a city's brand can be exported can be found with reference to the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, an iconic musical event held on Edinburgh Castle's esplanade (since 2010 it has been known as the *Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo*, the only one of the Edinburgh Festivals to have been conferred a royal title by the Queen). The concept of military tattoos did not start in Edinburgh, but through television, Edinburgh's became famous worldwide and has led to considerable replication of the format. In September 2007, for example, Moscow's Red Square hosted the first *Кремлёвская зоря (Kremlin Zoria)*, now known as the *Международный военно-музыкальный фестиваль «Спасская башня» (Spasskaya Tower International Military Music Festival)*. Red Square is no stranger to military spectacles, but these recently conceived newly styled festivals have imported the dramatic combination of bagpipe and drums and military band music that made Edinburgh's tattoo so famous. The festival in Moscow has not gone so far, however, as to import the name of the Edinburgh Tattoo. In 2000, the Westpac Trust Stadium in Wellington, New Zealand, hosted that city's own tattoo, which was not named after the host city, but rather the *Edinburgh Military Tattoo*. Similar "Edinburgh Military Tattoos" have also been hosted in Sydney in 2005 and 2010, which necessitated the construction of a replica of Edinburgh Castle in Sydney Football Stadium.

6.2. The role of minority and indigenous languages

The appearance of Gaelic text alongside English in the hoardings at Edinburgh Airport mentioned above – although the Gaelic welcome is frequently less visible – raises a significant issue with regard to the City of Literature initiatives in Edinburgh and Melbourne, namely the use of minority or indigenous languages. Edinburgh's City of Literature documentation does make some references to Gaelic authors, and to quite a few Scots authors, as could perhaps be expected with Edinburgh's location in the central belt of Scotland, where Scots is widely spoken. These languages are afforded their own chapter, entitled "Scotland's unique languages" in both bid documents (Edinburgh World City of Literature Trust, 2004a, 49-55; 2004b, 109-122). Edinburgh's City of Literature website, www.cityofliterature.com, features a welcome banner that rotates between messages in this order: "Fàilte gu Dùn Èideann // Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature // Welcome to Edinburgh // Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature // Welcome tae Auld Reekie // Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature". Nonetheless, the profile of Scots and Gaelic in City

of Literature branding is generally not as great as that of English, and the use of the nickname *Auld Reekie* in the Scots welcome message instead of other Scots alternatives such as *Embra* could reflect the widespread tendency in Scotland to view Scots as a lower-status colloquial variety (sometimes seen as a variety of English) instead of a language in its own right.

Melbourne's documentation appears to make very few references to Australian aboriginal culture, which is surprising considering the deeply rooted aboriginal oral storytelling traditions. Greater use of the Scots and Gaelic place-names of Edinburgh in branding, and perhaps of aboriginal languages in Melbourne, could help to combat linguistic intolerance by affording greater space for these other languages in the toponymic identity of these two cities.

6.3. Future research possibilities

This paper marks only an exploratory investigation to delve into the City of Literature projects and study their inner workings to determine what could be of interest for place-name research. We would very much like to deepen our analysis of the toponymic attachment structures of these cities, and perhaps others, and how the City of Literature designation and other branding projects relate to these existing structures. For example, it would be extremely valuable to interview tourists as well as residents about their own reactions to such projects. Other methods and approaches could include linguistic landscape studies, surveying how different linguistic cultures are represented in branding and made part of the official and unofficial toponymic identification of these cities. It seems to us that for city branders, their greatest assets are the place-name stocks of their cities, in this case especially the names *Edinburgh* (and *Dùn Èideann* and *Embra*) and *Melbourne* themselves. They offer great opportunities for promotion as they already implicitly carry so many instant or more reflected associations for so many people, with much of their identities influenced through literature. These place-names are the most essential parts of the two cities' identities and need to be protected.

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