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**Sherlock Holmes and James Moriarty:  
Victorian Genius  
in a Millennial World**



Honors Thesis

Allison K. Carey

Department: English

Advisor: John P. McCombe, Ph.D.

April 2015

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## Abstract

In 1887, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle published his first novel regarding the detective Sherlock Holmes. He would go on to publish another three novels and 56 short stories detailing the great detective's endeavors. Today, 128 years later, Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is as popular, as relevant, and as alive as ever. Adaptations continue to be made and achieve success, including the BBC's mini-series, *Sherlock*. This modern adaptation and its interpretation of Conan Doyle's characters, novels, stories, plots, and themes allow for a unique combination of Victorian and Modern England. It highlights the similarities and differences of a Victorian Holmes and a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Sherlock while also commenting on both eras overall. In particular, an increased focus on the relationship between Sherlock Holmes and his arch-nemesis, James Moriarty, generates new interest in these characters' significance to the series' legacy.



# Table of Contents

Abstract	Title Page
Setting the Scene	1
Heads or Tails: The Detective and the Criminal	6
Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective	
Becoming Acquainted	
An Induced Haze	
Every Hero Has a Flaw	
Creating an Image	
Sherlock Holmes, a Sociopath?	
James Moriarty, Criminal Mastermind	
The Professor	
From James to Jim	
An Extended Contract	
Unraveling the Foil: Sherlock vs. Moriarty	43
“F” is for Friend	
One Human, One Cyberman	
Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader?	
Is that Aluminum?	
Falling and Getting Back Up	54
Conan Doyle’s “The Final Problem”	
Holmes Revived	
The BBC’s “The Reichenbach Fall”	
#SherlockLives	
A Great Man Becomes a Good One	71
Works Cited	75

## SETTING THE SCENE

In 1887, Sherlock Holmes first appeared in print. Over a century later, Sherlock Holmes is still a prominent figure in literature and other, newer formats, such as television and film. He is not only a well-known literary detective, but he is *the* detective, the model to which all other fictional (and perhaps real) detectives aspire. No one could have predicted the initial or lasting success of Sherlock Holmes; not even his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, foresaw it. In fact, Conan Doyle became rather irritated with his character's success. Reportedly, Conan Doyle suggested if Sherlock Holmes was his only legacy, then he would be disappointed. Whether or not such a claim was made, Conan Doyle's love-hate relationship with his detective is clear. At one point, Conan Doyle even attempted to end the series, killing off Sherlock Holmes and his archenemy. There. Death is final, yes? No return for the great detective, and Conan Doyle is set free from Sherlock Holmes. Well, not exactly.

In fact, a large majority of his readers went into public mourning at the death of their beloved character. As Balaka Basu notes, many readers were so distraught they "wore black armbands in unprecedented mourning for a fictional character" (208) to express their grief; had Sherlock Holmes been a close family member, the mourning requirements would have been much more stringent. Victorian mourning customs dictated the dress, decorum, and social practices deemed appropriate for various stages of the grieving process. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City featured the exhibit *Death Becomes Her: A Century of Mourning Attire* from October 21, 2014 to February 1, 2015. This exhibit displayed the various, stringent dress requirements of a Victorian woman from 1815 to 1915. In the exhibit description, the Met says the

collection “reveals the impact of high-fashion standards on the sartorial dictates of bereavement rituals as they evolved over a century” and that the “bereavement's evolution and cultural implications is illuminated through women's clothing and accessories, showing the progression of appropriate fabrics from mourning crape to corded silks, and the later introduction of color with shades of gray and mauve” (*Death Becomes Her: A Century of Mourning Attire*). While this collection focused on Victorian women’s mourning dress and not men’s, it exemplifies the importance mourning dress had during the time and how strictly it was observed; additionally, it shows the abundance of guidelines female mourners, typically widows, had to follow. Male dress had fewer mourning requirements, and many men opted for “mourning armbands and crepe drapery for the hat” (Bedikian 42-3). After Holmes’ death, “Doyle was amazed by the massive outcry, which included mourning crepe on hatbands in London and "Let's Keep Holmes Alive" clubs in America” (Wiltse 108), and eventually returned to writing Sherlock Holmes tales. Thus, the detective lived again. And, he never really seemed to ever die again.

Since Conan Doyle resurrected the character over a century ago, Sherlock Holmes has never ceased being popular. Rather, he survives the test of time and seems to only garner new fans. At this point in time, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the number of works related to Sherlock Holmes are far too varied and many to count. The canon<sup>1</sup> has become a sort of literary hydra: more heads and more works relating to Sherlock Holmes keep appearing. There is a 128 years of scholarly articles, pastiches, fan fictions, television adaptations,

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<sup>1</sup> The canon, for the purposes of this essay, will refer to the original Conan Doyle Sherlock Holmes texts. Therefore, any information described as deriving from the canon or canonically true can be said to be drawn from Conan Doyle’s version of Sherlock.

film adaptations, video games, drawings, poetry, and items inspired by or loosely based on the original Conan Doyle Sherlock Holmes. In the last few years alone, he has been adapted into two television series, one American and one British, and a Warner Bros. film franchise, among many written formats. The novels and the short stories are just as well loved and well-read as ever, and the adaptations have been equally embraced. Yet, the times could not be more different. The Modern 21<sup>st</sup> Century is no 19<sup>th</sup> Century Victorian England. There are different values, different practices, different technology, etc. Yet, something about Sherlock Holmes seems to defy all these changes, to defy being lost and forgotten in a dusty library somewhere. He persists.

In large part, Sherlock Holmes' survival is his adaptability to the changing times. As previously indicated, there is something inherently timeless about him that allows Sherlock Holmes to retain his core character, personality, and abilities but still fit seamlessly into whatever new adaptation is produced. Certain elements are always present, but each adaptation makes a specific comment about that audience and/or time. It addresses that society's values, behaviors, and customs as well as how it acts, speaks, etc. Some adaptations address more current issues than others, but all reflect the audience of that time.

Furthermore, one might hold the phrase "No shit, Sherlock" as an example. This sarcastic statement is easily understood and expected as a response to an obvious statement; you do not have to be Sherlock to deduce something entirely obvious, and by calling the other individual "Sherlock" in such a manner, you are very clearly suggesting that. While in jest, this phrase persists and only makes sense because of Sherlock Holmes' longevity. If his legacy had not continued with the duration and popularity in

which it has, the phrase would be obscure and only understood by those that studied or read Victorian literature. Clearly, this is not the case as one could easily claim a majority of the English-speaking population would understand the phrase. It is glib way of continuing Sherlock Holmes' legacy as a brilliant detective and also continuing the influence the detective has on our society.

Given the high volume of material and adaptations of Sherlock Holmes, this study will focus solely on the BBC television mini-series adaptation titled *Sherlock*. This particular adaptation breaks certain expectations that previous Holmesian work—scholarly articles, pastiches, adaptations, etc.—have fostered. Meaning, the series has more freedom than other adaptations in that it does not have to abide by these expectations, whether canonically or fan based. Most obviously, it changes the period setting. Instead of taking place in the Victorian England of the original Conan Doyle works, the show is set in modern-day London. Automatically, any conception of Victorian technology and its limitations or advantages associated with it are thrown out the window in favor of modern ones. Dress is entirely different, social behavior, knowledge, transportation, communication, forms of entertainment, the basis of the murders, etc.—everything has had to be altered, even slightly, to fit the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>2</sup>. While this could have backfired entirely and the audience could have rejected the mini-series outright for breaking so many traditional expectations, *Sherlock* has had immense popularity. Its acceptance allows the audience to enjoy the original plots with some

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Conan Doyle's characters typically refer to one another by their last name only. In stark contrast, the BBC characters tend to use a more informal level of address and use solely the individual's first name; the exception is Moriarty, who is referred as initially as Jim and then solely Moriarty. This paper will keep with those conventions, referring to canon versions by their last name and BBC versions by their first name. Because James Moriarty is referred to as "Moriarty" in both canon and adaptation, addressing him in this paper becomes slightly difficult. Distinctions will be made that indicate when Professor Moriarty or Jim Moriarty is being referenced before using "Moriarty" alone.



modern twists and imagine a modern Sherlock Holmes and company. But, it also allows directors and writers to include commentary and insight on our own modern world.

Such commentary includes the chance for growth and development. Part of what makes *Sherlock* so intriguing and captivating as a show is the way Sherlock Holmes himself is written. The BBC adaptation allows for the detective's clear, gradual growth and development. Sherlock Holmes has been described as mechanical and machine-like. He places pure, cold reason above all else; he is straightforward to the point of being unapologetically blunt and often rude, rational with no care for emotion, and oftentimes unaware of all social cues. The BBC does not disregard this nor stick strictly to it. Instead, he is written as a slowly developing character. Emotion, relationships, and social awareness begin to appear in his characterization, bit by bit. By no means does Sherlock abandon all of his true personality to incorporate these new traits. He is not rewritten as an entirely new person. Simply, the difference is that Sherlock now observes the possibility of adopting slightly new traits or entertaining ideas/behaviors he once scorned. It is this potential for growth that makes this new Sherlock Holmes particularly alluring and gripping.

Additionally, this study will primarily discuss the characters Sherlock Holmes and James Moriarty, and the interactions between the two characters. The rivalry between Holmes and Moriarty was always lauded as the most significant of all the detective's cases and criminals, but the BBC show raises this to a different level. While Conan Doyle only ever introduces Moriarty into the narrative of "The Final Problem" (1893), the BBC introduces him as early as the first episode. Placing Sherlock Holmes in the 21st Century not only adapts Conan Doyle's original stories in a new, modernly relatable way, but

more importantly draws significant conclusions regarding this modern society, its values, faults and compares modern society to the Victorian era in order to highlight the development of one character and the stagnancy of the other.

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### **HEADS OR TAILS: THE DETECTIVE AND THE CRIMINAL**

#### *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective*

Despite Conan Doyle never writing the phrase “It’s elementary, my dear Watson,” the phrase nonetheless conjures the image of one man: the great detective Sherlock Holmes. The actual line is, in fact, a lot less exciting or memorable. In response to Watson’s cry of “Excellence,” Sherlock responded with “Elementary” (“The Crooked Man” 645). Despite the alteration, the phrase has become as integral to Holmes’ image as his trench coat, fox hunter hat, and ever present pipe. Yet, none of these images really describes Sherlock Holmes.

Describing Sherlock Holmes is not such an easy task. There are many versions to take into account, both official and unofficial. Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes and made him a particular sort of person. But with each adaptation—be it pastiche, drawings, television, or cinematic—the character changes ever so slightly. Not only that, but any additional writing—scholarly research and fan-fiction— on the series or character again interprets and alters the character. Each interpretation keeps the core of the character; he would not be Sherlock Holmes, after all, if the interpreter throws away everything the character has always been. The Sherlock Holmes from Conan Doyle’s novels is as much the same detective and as much an entirely different man as the Sherlock Holmes from the BBC series *Sherlock*.

### Becoming Acquainted

In both the adaptation and the Conan Doyle fiction, one of the first conversations between Holmes and Watson focuses on “The Science of Deduction.” The manner of its representation is altered, though Watson’s reaction to it remains similar. Conan Doyle introduces this as an article Holmes authored and had published in the newspaper. Watson reads it and, without realizing Holmes is its author, denounces the article as poppycock. Rather than being offended, Holmes enters interestedly into a debate with Watson. Until he sees this “science” in action, though, Watson remains skeptical. In the BBC series, “The Science of Deduction” is the name of Sherlock’s personal website. There he describes his methods, much like Holmes’ article in Conan Doyle’s novel, and makes the same argument regarding his “science.” John discovers Sherlock’s website while researching his new flatmate online. Instead of blatantly denouncing “The Science of Deduction,” his tone suggests he finds Sherlock’s claims to be unfounded and unrealistic. Sensing this, Sherlock immediately responds by detailing how he was able to immediately surmise that John had a military background from their first meeting. Through this, and subsequent chances to see Sherlock’s deductions in practice, John finds himself warming to and accepting this “science.” His reaction changes from skeptical to praising, calling it “brilliant” (“A Study in Pink”) as Sherlock explains what his observations at the crime scene imply.

### An Induced Haze

Both canon and adaptation feature the detective as a smoker and occasional drug user. Conan Doyle’s Holmes was a smoker and known to use cocaine and morphine; the BBC’s Sherlock is a recovering smoker and drug addict (most likely heroin). The biggest

difference between the two, Holmes and Sherlock, lies in the general acceptance or disapproval of the substance use. Today, cigarette smoking remains legal, but the use of other addictive substances—such as but not limited to cocaine, morphine, or heroin—is highly illegal. Thus, the drug use would be received in very different manners, and this treatment is reflected in the show.

A drug addict during the Victorian era carries a different social implication than it might today. During Conan Doyle's times, cocaine and morphine were entirely legal, as was cigarette smoking. Smoking would have been entirely commonplace during the Victorian era and seen as a gentleman's pastime. Therefore, Victorian society would not disdain a male smoker in the same manner than a modern individual might scoff at a smoker today, given that modern derision comes more from a more informed health standpoint as smoking's detrimental effects is widely understood. As well, occasional use of cocaine, morphine, and laudanum would not alarm anyone. In fact, they were often prescribed medicinally; laudanum was a common sleep aid that could lead to dependence if overused. Additionally, "cocaine never carried either the extreme negative connotations of opium in bourgeois culture or that drug's cachet among the artistic elite, by the late 1880s experiments in treating morphine addicts with cocaine (which, of course, often produced cocaine addicts)" (Wiltse 112) and resulted in underlining connections among cocaine, opiates, and addiction.

Today, societal treatment of drug addicts and drug abuse remains relatively the same. Victorians addicted to other substances, such as laudanum, would be treated more scornfully. The common drug user—an individual whose presence is not widely recognizable or an individual without relative authority, power, or fame at any level—

would affect only those within his or her immediate circle of acquaintances. For Victorian England and today, most likely these addicts would be assumed to be of a lower class or lower middle class standing. As Wiltse points out, the ill-effects of drugs such as cocaine are “continually implicated in the degradations of race and class” (114) in Victorian England, specifically as it relates to the Asia’s (supposed) poor influence and the depravity of the lower classes<sup>3</sup>. Many today might make the same assumption that drug use is reflective of an individual’s low social standing or particular depravity; like many stereotypes, this assumption is not definitively true, but speaks more to particular individual’s views, however valid or invalid. In general, addicts continue to receive a mixture of pity, derision, and indifference from peers.

In “A Study in Pink,” the show initially implies Sherlock avoids drugs—not because they cloud his mind, but because the cost is too high. He blames the “the high cost of cigarettes in London for his reliance on nicotine patches and laments, “Bad news for brainwork” (Faye 4). One scene shows Sherlock lying on a couch, nicotine patches clearly visible on his forearm. John, not understanding, asks if Sherlock is attempting to quit smoking, to which Sherlock seems surprised and answers that he does not in fact smoke. Instead, he uses nicotine patches to stimulate his mind when mulling through a problem rather than smoking. This case, he informs John, is a “three patch problem” (“A Study in Pink”), by way of explaining the three patches on his arm. From this, the viewer is set up to infer that Sherlock avoids addictive substances. Later in the episode, this assumption is reexamined when John and Sherlock discover Inspector Lestrade and a police unit searching their flat, 221b Baker Street, for drugs. John seems shocked at the

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<sup>3</sup> Addicts of a higher social or authoritative standing might receive a very different treatment/reaction as their addiction may not only affect more individuals but also be a widely discussed, publicly known issue. This will be discussed in more depth later in this section.

insinuation that Sherlock has drugs, and incredulously defends his new flatmate's reputation by insisting Lestrade can search the flat top to bottom and not find any trace of drugs as Sherlock is the last man to have drugs ("A Study in Pink"). Sherlock has been fairly mum until this point and then pointedly tells John to be quiet. This allows the viewer to infer that Sherlock might in fact dabble in drugs, drugs that might get him into legal trouble if found in his possession. Thus, from the very beginning, the BBC establishes Sherlock as an addict that struggles with relapses while typically remaining clean. His identity as an addict continues to appear several times, including a manic moment in "A Scandal in Belgravia" when Sherlock cannot find any cigarettes, not even his hidden stash.

As previously mentioned, Conan Doyle's Holmes was undoubtedly a drug user. His drugs of choice, cocaine and morphine, are "so transcendently stimulating and clarifying to the mind" ("The Sign of Four" 124) that their negative physical effects are portrayed as entirely minimal in comparison. Holmes uses drugs not to, as many do, escape their realities but to enhance his reality and sharpen his cognitive abilities. In "The Sign of Four," Watson describes watching Holmes inject the substances. His description clearly marks Holmes as a habitual drug user, detailing how Holmes observed "thoughtfully upon the sinewy forearm and wrist, all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks" ("The Sign of Four" 123). Additionally, Watson comments that this is not the first time he has witnessed Holmes' drug use, and indicates that this same injection ritual, whether it be cocaine or morphine, has happened three times daily for several months on end ("The Sign of Four 123). Holmes, then, is an open, unabashed drug user. His addiction, however, is seen less like a debilitating disease (such as would

be today) and more of a conscious, daily habit made by some during this time. Medically, there were arguments against it, as Watson points out (“The Sign of Four” 124) that ring similar to modern arguments against smoking; many abstain from smoking due to the adverse medical effects but the choice to smoke cigarettes or tobacco products is still entirely legal. Cocaine and morphine were legal during the Victorian ages and commonly used medicinally. Their use would have been no more questioned than that of tobacco or cigarettes—unless the drug use became such that the individual behaved inappropriately, squandered their fortune, or fell into other forms of ruin. For those reasons, readers see a Watson that sits by and allows Holmes to take drugs instead of intervening and forcing sobriety.

In Conan Doyle’s “The Man with the Twisted Lip,” Watson enters an opium den to drag a friend home to his wife and is shocked also to find Holmes in “complete immersion in the environment of the opium den” (Wiltse 113). Holmes, after dropping his act, declares that he has not, as Watson may rightly suspect, “added opium-smoking to cocaine injections” (“The Man with the Twisted Lip” 355) but is instead investigating a case. While in disguise for his investigation, this further indicates Holmes’ involvement in the world of drugs. However, it does draw an important distinction between him, a drug user, and those considered addicts. Holmes is able to use his drugs and maintain a functioning, normal life with a career intact, finances in fine standing, and reputation untouched (at least by drugs). The people in this opium den are described as the most pitiable of men. They mumble and mutter to themselves in the darkness, lying about in a drugged state, unaware of the time or the day, consumed entirely by their drug use (“The Man with the Twisted Lip” 353). These are the addicts: men fallen to disrepair and ruin,

unable to leave the den or “responsibly” use their drugs of choice. Such a distinction between drug users might be made today if not for the way drug use is viewed in general. Use of illegal substances or inappropriate use of legal substances is viewed as wholly unsuitable, though trust can be regained through recovery.

As in “The Man with the Twisted Lip,” in the BBC’s third series, Sherlock is found in a similar location. John discovers Sherlock ensconced in a dilapidated building full of homeless drug addicts in “His Last Vow.” Again, like in Conan Doyle’s tale, John is sent to find an acquaintance’s loved one and bring him home from the drug den; even the names are similar: Isa Whitney, husband of Kate, becomes Isaac Whitney, son of Kate. The slight twist allows for the high fear, held by many parents today, of a child falling down the wrong path, unable to recover and thus leading a desolate life. While there, he stumbles upon Sherlock.

Forced out of the drug den, Sherlock insists it was a cover for an investigation, nothing more. His appearance— disheveled, pale, slightly hazy look, greasy hair, and prominent scruff while typically shaven—leads to disbelief. John and Sherlock exit the building arguing; John declares that it only took one month after Sherlock’s reappearance to find him in a drug den and asks angrily how that will look to the media; Sherlock shouts back that he was undercover (“His Last Vow”). Upon reaching the car, John declares “We’re not going home. We’re going to Bart’s. I’m calling Molly [...] because Sherlock Holmes needs to pee in a jar” (“His Last Vow”). Sherlock’s expression reads annoyance and guilt. It is clear to anyone that the last thing he wants is a forced drug test—particularly when he has adamantly stated it was only a cover, not a relapse. Molly Hooper, an employee at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital and a friend of the two men,



administers the drug test. When asked if Sherlock is “clean,” Molly is unable to articulate anything other than a sarcastic “Clean?” before soundly slapping Sherlock multiple times (“His Last Vow”). Following, Molly passionately insists that he apologize for daring to “throw away the beautiful gifts [he] was born with” and for betraying “the love of [his] friends” (“His Last Vow”). Thus, viewers have confirmation that while Sherlock may have been undercover, he did in fact relapse into drug use. John insists that Sherlock could have come to him and talked about it, rather than retreat into addiction; Sherlock maintains his story, saying “Oh, please. This was all for a case” (“His Last Vow”).

What is interesting about this incredibly similar scene is the reaction of Sherlock’s friends and Sherlock’s annoyance at his friends’ reaction. Unlike the original Watson, John reacts to Sherlock’s drug use by insisting on his colleague’s sobriety. He views this drug use as a fault, as an addiction or sickness, as something that needs to stop, and something in which he can assist Sherlock. He offers his support, indicating he will stand by Sherlock and help him on the road to recovery, to sobriety. He does not, unlike the original Watson, indicate that any amount of drug use is acceptable. He does not sit by and allow it to continue, but actively works against it. Molly cannot contain her disappointment or anger at Sherlock’s relapse; she uses these emotions to make her admonitions, both verbal and physical, that much more impactful. Both Molly and John reflect the more modern reaction to drug use. They do not accept minimal drug use or drug use as a cover. Instead, they uphold the common belief that drugs are dangerous, disgusting, and debilitating. They push for sobriety. Sherlock, in return, reverts to his observational skills to change the topic. He tells Molly he is glad her engagement is over because her ring would have made the slaps more painful and returns John’s statements

with a question about a new cycling habit. Sherlock changes the topic to avoid discussing his relapse, trying to draw attention away and let the addiction fall the background, to be accepted as part of a cover. Many addicts deflect and excuse their behavior in order to minimize; Sherlock is no different than any other 21st Century addict in this regard.

Additionally, Sherlock's lapse is akin to the discovery that a celebrity is an addict. He is well-known throughout London, particularly after his dramatic death and reappearance. John makes a point of stating that it has only been a month since Sherlock's reappearance and already he has placed himself in a dangerous—physically and socially—position. “‘Sherlock Holmes in a Drug Den’— how's that going to look?” declares John, imagining potential headlines if the media were to catch wind of this indiscretion. What is to follow now? A stint in a rehabilitation clinic? A public announcement? Both would court the same derision and disbelief faced by celebrities whose addiction is no longer hidden. Unlike many celebrities, Sherlock is not forced into rehab, but set on the path to sobriety, cold turkey, under the close and disappointed watch of friends. Regardless, it sidles Sherlock with celebrity status. Celebrities are often viewed as something more than human; they are the better, prettier, shinier version of the average person, or at least the media often paints them as such. Thus, Sherlock's drug use not only disappoints and frightens his immediate friends, but, if revealed, could cause quite a stir in society. It carries much larger consequences than a drug addiction might in a lesser known individual or detective.

Perhaps comparable to the aristocracy of old, many celebrities are household names. People know who they are, what they do, what they like, their relationship status, their interactions, their favorite color—anything and everything that gives the average

person a sense of “knowing” that celebrity more intimately. While perhaps the Victorians did not have access to the same extent of miniscule facts regarding their aristocracy, they knew enough about particular high-standing individuals to form an opinion on their character. The difference is, as far as addiction is concerned, that any transgression, any weakness in the image presented, is instantly reported to the masses. It becomes increasingly difficult to hide an addiction in today’s world when cameras and social media allow for instant information sharing. Perhaps as a result of that, or as a result of the false intimacy garnered by the media connecting celebrities to the average person, celebrities often publically reveal their addictions. Multiple celebrities—in the past few years alone—have publically announced their addictions—everything from cocaine to heroin to sex to alcohol to gambling and more. For example, Demi Lovato, a teen sensation, has continually addressed her cocaine addiction, her alcoholism, and her former eating disorder, as well as her self-mutilation (Puente). These announcements are met with a myriad of responses: pity, disgust, apathy, sad acceptance, disbelief—and admiration, hope, and support if the individual recovers, such as Lovato.

While the celebrity’s reputation may suffer for the revelation, for this immense character flaw that the public cannot quite comprehend, it is often a recoverable blow. That is, the celebrity may drop in public standing, enter a rehabilitation center, and then reemerge and rebuild the career they left. In fact, they may climb to a higher admiration in the public’s eyes if they manage to get their act together. Robert Downey Jr., another actor who has played the role of Sherlock Holmes, is a prime example. On August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1999, Downey Jr. was sentenced to three years in prison for his illegal drug use; Downey Jr. had previously been arrested and had entered rehabilitation facilities for drug use to no

avail (Morin). Again, in 2001, Downey Jr. was arrested for possession of illegal substances and entered a rehabilitation clinic, and has since remained sober (“Actor’s toughest role”). A budding talent that succumbed early to addiction, he has since rebuilt himself as an actor noteworthy for his roles—and his sobriety. When his son, Indio Downey, fell onto the same unfortunate path, Downey Jr. again publically addressed the issue, saying he was “grateful to the Sheriff’s department for their intervention, and believe[s] Indio can be another recovery success story” and that “there is a lot of family support and understanding, and we’re all determined to rally behind him and help him become the man he’s capable of being” (D’Zurilla). Since declaring his support for his son and opening up about his own addiction struggles, Downey Jr. has never been more admired. Downey Jr.’s past drug addiction is now mentioned almost incredulously: how could a man of his talent and his character ever have been the same, sad, lost addict? Addiction becomes a side-note to his history instead of an inescapable, captivating image of his reputation as it might have in Victorian times.

While it is possible that the public would respond favorably and all but forget his drug use if Sherlock received treatment and rebuilt his reputation, it is unlikely that he could ever fully recover professionally. Here, the Victorian sensibility remains. Already ostracized by many for his cold, detached personality, this apparent fault would further demean him in the minds of his doubters. Certain members of Scotland Yard already balk at working with him as is, but allowing a known drug addict to assist in criminal investigations? It would mean the end of his allowed involvement with Scotland Yard, and perhaps, inevitably, the end of his professional career. If Scotland Yard cannot trust him with a case, why would the average person? Why not just turn to a private

investigator or the police? It seems safer, more reliable. Sherlock's near-celebrity status aligns more to Victorian sensibilities of reputation. His drug addiction is dealt with and known only by his family made up of an odd rabble of close friends: a detective, a scientist, an army doctor and his fiancée. If they want to help him and keep his reputation intact, no one else can know. If his reputation was solely that of a modern celebrity, he could probably recover entirely and reappear as a success story: lost, troubled detective finds the truth in his own life and leaves the past behind. But, the BBC's Sherlock is not just a modern celebrity. He is also a Victorian man. And, like the Victorians, public knowledge of his drug use would irrevocably ruin him, never fully recovering in society's eyes.

Besides the implied illegal drug use, Sherlock is addicted to a much more potent activity: adrenaline. While some individuals satisfy their adrenaline rushes by participating in high risk sports, like mountain climbing and sky diving, Sherlock prefers highly intricate and often dangerous criminal cases. "It's how you get your kicks, isn't it? You risk your life to prove you're clever," accuses an incredulous John in "A Study in Pink." Very early on, the BBC series clues the viewers into an important aspect of this Sherlock: he lives for an adrenaline kick. He needs to place himself in a position to not only prove his ability to solve the unsolvable cases, but also prove he can use his intelligence to cheat death. "A Study in Pink" shows Sherlock nearly goaded into playing the villain's, the murderous cabbie, game: pick a pill bottle and take its contents to see if you made the right move and chosen the placebo. Only John's timely arrival saved Sherlock from himself; distracted by the cabbie's fatal gunshot wound, he drops the pill bottle and demands an answer: did he pick correctly? Did he win? Without John's

interference, Sherlock would have surely taken the pill, and who knows if he would have survived the night? It highlights just how far Sherlock is willing to go to not only prove his intelligence but also to get his rush of adrenaline. Throughout the series, it is clear that Sherlock continually puts himself in these highly dangerous situations to achieve this high. When no opportunity arises, we see him resorting to dangerous behavior in his flat. At one point, he even begins firing a handgun into the wall, bored to tears.

This natural high surpasses his drug use as a danger to Sherlock's safety. With drugs, he seems to be able to kick the habit from time to time and temporarily maintain sobriety. However, it is much harder for him to ignore a challenge that offers the chance of an adrenaline rush and ego boost. Conan Doyle's Holmes was as affected by this dangerous rush as Sherlock, only he would not have identified it as an addiction to adrenaline. Instead, as Harrington states, Holmes or Watson would have identified it as an "addiction to his work" which "trump[ed] any other passion" or drug addiction (74). Both Holmes and Sherlock pick the hardest cases, the unsolvable ones that boast the greatest danger and difficulty. The cases are an intellectual challenge as well as an intoxicating hit of a drug. Canon or adaptation, the detective is unarguably an addict, but the adaptation depicts an addict that struggles in an attempt to grow.

In turn, this aspect of the BBC adaptation makes an interesting reflection on society by revealing restlessness in individuals that causes them to search out high risk activities to achieve a certain kind of high, an adrenaline high. It reveals a prevalence of addiction in our society and individuals—from adrenaline to drugs to something new and unprecedented. It shows how boredom can both be quickly eradicated and quickly returned. Such as when finishing a case, there is a period of restlessness and boredom

after some new item. When viewed through a modern lens, this can be compared to the initial excitement of a new gadget until it has been explored to its extent and is no longer the next “hot” thing. This modern society, then, can be inferred as one always looking to the next great item or task, something new to hold attention and provide a new challenge. In comparison, Sherlock will be entirely immersed in one case only to be incredibly bored and restless the minute it is solved. He needs a new case, a new activity to occupy him. However, as shown in “The Hounds of Baskerville,” Sherlock only pursues the best case available; the hardest cases are the most diverting ones. Lesser cases are not only dull in comparison, but he finds them nearly insulting to his intelligence. Sherlock’s superiority complex is very involved in his work and in selecting a case. The unsolvable cases, the most difficult ones to understand, the ones that baffle the police and all those involved—these are the cases fit for his intellect and only him.

#### Every Hero Has a Flaw

As already established, Sherlock is not without flaws. However, his flaws combined hint towards what Aristotle called a “fatal flaw.” Sherlock’s particular fatal flaw is hubris, or pride. His immense pride shows in Sherlock’s need for intellectual superiority, dangerous pursuits, and in his arrogant attitude. For example, his drug use, his nonchalant attitude regarding it, and his denial of being an addict implies Sherlock does not see his drug use as a dangerous pursuit. Others who might not be able to control their drug use and their lives would be worthy of being deemed an addict and pursuing a dangerous path. Sherlock, however, treats his drug use in a way that indicates, for him, it is safe, monitored, and controlled because he is superiorly intelligent and much more capable than the common man. In turn, his drug addiction and denial make Sherlock

much more human and relatable to the common man. He is, in other words, not the machine many see him as, but a human, albeit a very capable and intelligent one, with vices and flaws.

If asked, Sherlock would assuredly proclaim his own talents without a hint of modesty. Humility seems to be an entirely foreign concept to him; he flaunts his genius as if it were a particularly expensive coat that he wanted to show off to lesser dressed colleagues. It is his pride that nearly brings about his demise several times over. As previously discussed, Sherlock would have played the cabbie's dangerous suicide game if not for John's intervention. The cabbie used Sherlock's smugness against him, goading him into selecting a pill after Sherlock had abandoned the game by taunting that he would never know if he had beaten the cabbie or not. Sherlock could not resist knowing, could not walk away without discovering if he would have beaten the cabbie at his own murderous chess game.

In the same episode, "A Study in Pink," Sherlock says, "That's the frailty of genius, John. It needs a witness." Interestingly enough, this comment was used to describe the "truly brilliant" serial killers. These particular killers wait for someone to discover their patterns and plans because they, according to Sherlock, need their genius to be recognized and appreciated. While describing someone else, Sherlock unwittingly describes himself. He needs his genius to be appreciated. It is partially why he helps solve these cases. Not only does he want to help, but Sherlock needs someone to see how truly intelligent he is. No one else can solve the case, no one else can see what he sees and understand how all of the pieces come together. But what is the fun in fitting the puzzle back together and having no one to show it to? He seeks out that audience while



also providing assistance that will (however grudgingly, by some) be appreciated by the police and the individuals involved in the case. However much Sherlock claims to be annoyed by both John's blog and the media's increased attention to his work, Sherlock enjoys the audience. With every blog reader, every article written, it only increases the audience for his genius. He thrives under their attention because it gives him a stage to present his intelligence.

### Creating an Image

Physically, we can definitively say how Conan Doyle imagined his detective to appear. By Watson's descriptions, we know Sherlock stood over six feet tall, was lean, and had sharply defined features—including piercing eyes, a “hawk-like nose that gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision” and a chin that “had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination” (“A Study in Scarlet” 11). The rest—his manner of dress, his hair or eye color—is of less concern, at least to Conan Doyle. More important is Holmes' character. Watson informs us that the detective “was quiet in his ways, and his habits were regular” (“A Study in Scarlet” 11). Holmes enjoyed long walks, spent much of his days at the laboratory, studying one thing or another, and rose and retired early. He seemed dedicated to his studies, and his hands showed the results of this, covered more often than not in ink or chemical stains.

Over more than a century, multiple people have been cast as Sherlock Holmes, each as different as they come and each attempting to be as similar as they can to continue the lasting image. Trench coats, with the collars turned up, a fox hunter hat, and a pipe of some sort seems to be required. However, for the actors, fitting the canonical description is less an issue of keeping with canon and more an actor's ability to

understand and portray the way Sherlock has been interpreted by writers. The BBC's Sherlock Holmes is portrayed by Benedict Cumberbatch. One could argue that he fits very well into Conan Doyle's depiction of the detective; he cuts a striking figure as Sherlock Holmes. At six feet tall, he certainly fulfills the height description. Additionally, his features are distinctive, with high, cutting cheekbones and gripping—perhaps even piercing—eyes. Canon also describes several distinctive mannerisms attributed to Holmes that Cumberbatch masterfully captures. Faye insists Sherlockians would catch certain “canonical flourishes” such as “When Benedict Cumberbatch steepled his fingers before his lips in thought, or blithely assures Mrs. Hudson that the game is on, or sits quietly monastic and aloof while Martin Freeman as his John Watson indulges in a hasty meal” (5). Including such small details shows not only an appreciation for the canon and the enduring, passionate fan base, but also an appreciation for the smaller, integral elements of the detective's personality. Cumberbatch's embodiment of these “flourishes” further creates the legitimacy of his Sherlock and understanding of the character.

Most impressively, however, is the way Cumberbatch is able to convey the slightest change in Sherlock's appearance. It is incredibly evident when Sherlock is playing a persona to further his means. Typically, Cumberbatch maintains an air of severity and detachment that is akin to an icy coldness—his eyes calculating and observant. His movements are precise and planned. His bright blue eyes are expressive: lighting up when Sherlock makes an important connection or excitedly pursues a new lead; darkening in anger when his few friends are threatened or he feels insulted; falling blank and empty while under the influence of drugs; manic when he is backed into a corner and his options continue to dwindle. Such small changes mean a world of

difference to Sherlock's depiction. It reveals how reserved this Sherlock is typically. Most important reactions are contained and nearly imperceptible as Sherlock struggles to hide them entirely and maintain his air of continued indifference. It hints at deeper emotional connections than he would ever admit, at relationships and the fear he associates with relying on them, at the possibility that he might be even slightly similar to the average person.

Such control hints at a much larger issue—Cumberbatch's Sherlock has a tight rein on his emotions and his public expression of them. The man is an enigma. His thoughts are often hidden, and then, in rare, fleeting moments, you see something flash across his face. The mask drops and Sherlock's emotions are entirely visible. This could be partially a societal pressure Cumberbatch or the writers have chosen to portray in Sherlock. It draws an interesting comment on both modern times and Victorian ones. Victorian England maintained an attitude that women were to appear pleasant, masking any other emotions. Askin Haluk Yildirim quotes Reverend E. J. Hardy's *Manners Makyth Man* as he claims, "Sweetness is to woman what sugar is to fruit. It is first her business to be happy—a sunbeam in the house, making others happy. True, she will often have 'a tear in her eye', but [...] it must be accompanied with a 'smile on her lips'" (46). This quote captures the feeling that women were meant to control and hide their emotions in favor of a happy façade. While men might have liberty of emotional range—Yildirim also uses *Jane Eyre* to depict the men's unpunished, emotional acts in comparison to Jane (48-9)—Holmes and Sherlock seem to ascribe to the Victorian attitude of masking emotion. Holmes may have originally done so to maintain professionalism, for many of the same reasons discussed below. For Sherlock, it might also indicate a relatively

modern pressure for men to contain or hide their own emotions and remain the calm, rational one in any given situation. This speaks more to modern gender roles than perhaps to Victorian ones. For Sherlock, when the situation becomes too hard to handle, control slips and his emotions are now unintentionally visible to all. It is not a chosen reveal, but a forced one.

Hiding or controlling his emotions reveals another important observation regarding Sherlock's professionalism and his acceptance as a professional. In many fields, the professional is expected to maintain a sense of calm and rationality. Additionally, there should be a sense of control over one's tasks, and losing any of this—calm, control, logic—might easily be seen as a lapse in professionalism. If one cannot complete a job because of overwhelming emotions, then perhaps one is not as suited to the task or as professional as previously thought. Perhaps they cannot handle the pressure of that career. It adds doubt, it adds worry—if this individual is so consumed by other things, things that cause high emotions, that they cannot be fully devoted to their professional task; they must be distracted. In Sherlock's line of work, rationality, calmness and control is vital. He needs to be able to approach the cases and the subjects without bias, with logic, with purpose. He cannot be distracted, or the entire case might fall through. Or, in a legal standpoint, any evidence might be compromised if it could be argued that he acted in anyway impartially or illegally in his investigation, driven by some uncontrolled emotional impulse. Thus, revealing his emotions often might suggest an air of uncertainty regarding him and affect his professional reputation. He cannot afford to hamper his reputation, as he is well aware he is not accepted by many already—such as Detectives Anderson and Donovan of Scotland Yard.

Despite this tight control, as the mini-series progresses, it becomes clear that Sherlock begins to allow himself more emotional lapses. This is not to say the man suddenly indulges in heart-to-heart sessions or cries or even displays large amounts of emotion. Rather, viewers see Sherlock dropping his façade more and more often in small bouts of expressiveness. It indicates the growth of the character in this adaptation. In the very first episode, “A Study in Pink,” Sherlock is mechanically cold and methodical. Both his comments and those of others make it clear he has no friends—at least, no friends as understood by others. He has acquaintances, contacts, and “arch-nemeses,” as his brother Mycroft indicates. Yet, in the second episode of the third series, “The Sign of Three,” Sherlock is standing as John’s best man at his wedding. Of course, the duties as best man are carried out in extremely Sherlock ways: rather awkwardly, bluntly, and mechanically. The speech, for example, begins very scientifically and as a reiteration of being asked to be best man. Sherlock literally says this speech, this wedding, and “all emotions, and in particular love, stand opposed to the pure cold reason I hold above all things” (“The Sign of Three”). It appears that he will bungle the whole speech in favor of his continual separation of emotion from reality.

And then, Sherlock surprises everyone. Just as everyone is tuning him out, ignoring his cold, rational words, he turns the speech around. His words are still purely rational, still blunt and scientifically straightforward, but they reveal his affection for John. Sherlock is not like other people. He is not comfortable with emotion or being openly affectionate. No speech of his will ever be extremely effusive, and he knows that. Sherlock makes the utmost effort to deliver the best speech, to deliver the type of affectionate, emotional speech he knows people will expect at weddings. And so, he says:

The point I'm trying to make is that I am the most unpleasant, rude, ignorant and all-round obnoxious arsehole that anyone could possibly have the misfortune to meet. [...] I never expected to be anybody's best friend. And certainly not the best friend of the bravest and kindest and wisest human being I have ever had the good fortune of knowing. John, I am a ridiculous man. Redeemed only by the warmth and constancy of your friendship. [...] Mary, when I say you deserve this man, it is the highest compliment of which I am capable. John [...] Today you sit between the woman you have made your wife and the man you have saved. In short, the two people who love you most in all this world. And I know I speak for Mary as well when I say we will never let you down and we have a lifetime ahead to prove that. ("The Sign of Three")

At this point, people are tearing up—especially those close to Sherlock, like John and Mary, Molly, Mrs. Hudson, and Lestrade, who all understand how difficult this is for Sherlock. Everyone is touched by Sherlock's message: I might not be the nicest person in the world, but I am proud to be your best friend and I shall always do my best to retain that honor. This is the most emotionally open Sherlock has allowed himself to be on the show. Subtle pauses, half-smiles, and glances at John reveal Sherlock's affection for his partner and the memories they have together. Not only that, but that Sherlock is making a concentrated effort to have a visible, emotional response to describing his best friend and being happy for him on his wedding day. Words might convey his affection, but sometimes an expression is what truly drives a message home and Sherlock clearly does not want his words to contrast with a blank, bored expression.

As if that were not enough, Sherlock openly reveals his fear at getting something wrong. After being heartfelt, he attempts to move the speech on to some funny stories involving John. This pause and shuffling of his notecards is when Sherlock first notices the audience crying. He openly panics, stopping mid-sentence to ask, “What’s wrong? What happened? Why are you all doing that? John? Did I do it wrong?” (“The Sign of Three”). The crowd laughs and cries some more, neither relieving Sherlock nor answering his questions. He is still thoroughly confused and worried that he messed up this speech, this incredibly important social moment. Sherlock’s fear also reveals his affection for John; he would not be nearly as concerned about botching a purely social moment if it was not for John’s benefit or at John’s request. He knows how much it means to John that he stand up there as best man and make a speech so Sherlock wants to do it properly. Additionally, fear can be more of an embarrassing emotion and something most people attempt to hide at all costs. In all, Sherlock’s emotional range develops gradually throughout the show. It does not appear all at once or for large amounts of time. However, as Sherlock grows, viewers see more and more fleeting emotional responses in him. These responses highlight the way his friendship with John is causing him to grow and change into a slightly more personable, social individual while maintaining his pure, cold logic.

### Sherlock Holmes, a Sociopath?

Far from making things easier, the BBC’s Sherlock himself complicates the description. Early on, Sherlock makes it very clear that he can assume a different persona. That is, he can act like a “normal” human being and interact as such with others as long as it furthers his goal. He can drop the cold, detached, scientific personality in

exchange for an interactive, friendlier version of himself as easily as one might exchange loafers for sneakers. For example, in series one, episode two, “The Blind Baker,” Sherlock adopts the geniality of a neighbor to gain access to a suspected victim’s flat. Additionally, he acts like a grieving friend in “A Scandal in Belgravia” in order to get information from a murder victim’s widow. Sherlock can act the part, but he only chooses to when it is rewarding to him. If it serves him no purpose, then he does not even consider it. Thus, viewers are left with an undefinable character.

Here, Sherlock provides us with another potential explanation for his apparent detachedness: sociopathy. Detective Anderson of Scotland Yard derisively names Sherlock a “psychopath” upon Sherlock’s arrival at a crime scene in “A Study in Pink.” While many would take extreme offense at such a comment, Sherlock instead corrects him. Sherlock shoots back “I’m a high functioning sociopath, Anderson. Do your research” (“A Study in Pink”). According to the *Oxford Dictionaries*, a sociopath is someone “with a personality disorder manifesting itself in extreme antisocial attitudes and behavior and a lack of conscience.” This description certainly seems to fit Sherlock. He is often utterly detached from the world around him, has trouble understanding emotional tendencies or connections of those around him, and acts in a manner that is seen as rude, cold, and arrogant. Sherlock appears to lack any personal connection or affection to anyone, including his own brother, Mycroft. All’s well, except for one little fact: Sherlock does indeed have a conscience. In most cases, he defers to logic, science, and disregards emotion or the “right” thing. But, when certain individuals, particularly John, are involved, Sherlock has a higher tendency to act more morally. For example, if John is threatened, Sherlock acts to save John first and catch the criminal second, like in



“The Empty Hearse.” That being said, Sherlock’s conscience is no Jiminy Cricket whispering into his ear and pointing him down the right and good path; in many cases, such as “The Great Game,” the victims are of secondary importance to solving the overall puzzle.

Additionally, the self-diagnosis<sup>4</sup> of sociopath provides an explanation for Sherlock’s extreme control on his emotions and his emotional expression. Moments when his emotional reaction is evident, Sherlock always appears out of his element. He is either utterly uncomfortable or panicking. Emotion is not his forte and he does not know how to handle it. This could derive from nothing more than being a sociopath and physically being unable to process, recognize, or handle his emotional reactions in a healthy manner. His inability to embrace his own emotions, however, does not indicate that he cannot recognize accepted social behavior or emotions. As previously mentioned, Sherlock can adopt a persona that lacks any sociopathic behaviors. He can act friendly, polite, social, etc. if, and only if, he will gain something from it. Again, as indicated, he adopts the persona of a friendly neighbor in “The Blind Baker” to gain access to an apartment building. In this particular episode, he also becomes visibly irritated when his former schoolmate, the man who drew his attention to the case initially, jokes that Sherlock knew he had been abroad from some mustard stain on his tie that could only be found in one country, or some other barely discernable fact. Annoyed, Sherlock says he discovered the fact when he had been chatting with the man’s secretary, implying that he was capable of polite social interaction. In “A Scandal in Belgravia,” Sherlock also

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<sup>4</sup> Even the simple concept of “self-diagnosis” speaks to modern sensibilities. With the extreme ease and availability of information in a matter of seconds, thanks to technology, any individual has the ability to research ailments, diseases, or disorders and decide (however correctly or incorrectly) what exactly their diagnosis is.

attempts to adopt the persona of a scared and slightly injured mugging victim in order to gain entrance to Irene Adler's house. When it becomes readily apparent that Ms. Adler not only knows exactly who he is, but that she was also expecting him, he immediately drops the act. These personas, these little acts, only last so long as Sherlock profits from them. He has no interest in pretending to be more personable than he is in order to interact or to appear socially polite, instead of offending those around him.

Preferring the term "sociopath" to "psychopath" does little to further endear him to his doubters. Detectives Anderson and Donovan openly dislike Sherlock, treating him with disdain and distrust. Donovan greets him with "Hello, freak" ("A Study in Pink"); her derisive tone and facial expressions do as much to communicate her dislike as do her curt responses and pointed words, such as "Yeah, well you know what I think, don't you?" ("A Study in Pink") implying that in the past as well as present she has been perfectly clear regarding her lack of trust or affection for him. His inability to be personable, to act in a socially expected, polite and friendly manner, and his overall arrogance breeds nothing but distrust. Many people, like Donovan and Anderson, doubt his actual abilities as a detective because they cannot trust or like him as a person. Sherlock's arrogance is off-putting and creates angry responses; he makes intelligent and capable people feel stupid for not seeing the significance that he does or putting the pieces together in a way that only he is able. Donovan goes so far as to suggest to John in "A Study in Pink" that one day Sherlock will be the guilty party.

For a self-described sociopath, Sherlock appears to grow emotionally and cultivate relationships in the series' progression. John Watson seems to wiggle his way into Sherlock's life, first as an impersonal acquaintance splitting the cost of a flat. But, as

John's own affection and loyalty to Sherlock grows, so does Sherlock's reliance and friendship with Watson. When John is threatened, we see Sherlock grow frantic. It may be the only time Sherlock truly loses his emotional composure. In "The Great Game," victims of all sorts are strapped to a bomb unless Sherlock can save them in time. He is rather indifferent to each of the victims; he cares more about finding information about the bomber, the elusive Moriarty. That is, until John is the one with a bomb strapped to his chest and has a sniper's red tracing mark illuminated on it, ready to shoot and detonate at any moment. The minute the sniper's pointer disappears and Moriarty leaves, Sherlock rushes over to check his friend's wellbeing. It reveals an affection that would not have been guessed, seen, or suspected by many who were acquainted with Sherlock previously.

As the series progresses, this connection to and affection for Watson on Sherlock's part becomes more and more apparent. In the third series, as discussed, Sherlock is shocked by John's request to be his best man at the wedding and delivers an affectionate, thoughtful—albeit a little awkward—best man speech. His relationships with John, Molly Hooper, Mrs. Hudson, Lestrade, Mary Watson, and a handful of others (including his connections with minor criminals and his homeless network) will never be obvious, openly affectionate friendships. But that is not who Sherlock is. He is not the type to be effusive; he never developed those types of social niceties. Those relationships are quieter, less obvious, but still highly important. At any rate, Sherlock has few friends or acquaintances that readily trust or like him, but those that do, do so greatly. It is a sad sort of scale: it appears that either an individual feels strong affection and trust for him, or none at all, with no middle ground apparent.

*James Moriarty, Criminal Mastermind*

Professor James Moriarty is a name that raises no suspicions. In fact, he sounds like a lovely academic man devoted to teaching the students of the next generation. One would hardly suspect such an innocuous name of belonging to a man with an insidious nature. Sherlock announces to Watson, saying “Ay, there’s the genius and wonder of the thing! [...] The man pervades London, and no one has heard of him. That’s what puts him on a pinnacle in the records of crime” (“The Final Problem” 739). This is his strength: his anonymity. It is the type of name that sounds interesting, but does not stand out so much as to be retained by a stranger hearing it in passing. His crimes go by untraced to him, and no one seems to know who he is. Moriarty is a living ghost, haunting London unseen and unknown.

The Professor

Professor James Moriarty should have been a renowned professor, acclaimed for his intelligence, particularly in the field of mathematics and his teaching. And yet, he is not. Conan Doyle’s Sherlock says “a criminal strain ran in his blood, which, [...], was increased and rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental powers” (“The Final Problem” 739). Unlike Sherlock, who uses his genius to help others and solve crimes, Moriarty uses his genius for less noble pursuits. Undisclosed rumors marred the professor’s reputation and while nothing was ever definitively proven, these dark whisperings eventually “compelled [Moriarty] to resign his chair” (“The Final Problem” 739). Forced out of the university, he moved to London.

In London, it seemed that Moriarty’s rumors were done; his actions appeared less than noteworthy. Only the great Sherlock Holmes saw a malicious motive underlying

Moriarty's movements. Sherlock had felt "some deep organizing power" ("The Final Problem" 739) behind London's seemingly unrelated crimes. As Sherlock worked his way through the web of the crimes, he found hints that all might lead to a spider sitting at its center: former professor, James Moriarty. Pursuing his leads and getting closer to dismantling Moriarty's criminal regime places Sherlock in more danger than ever before. In fact, the last lead he follows culminates in a meeting with Moriarty, and then, after a scuffle at the edge of the Reichenbach Falls, Sherlock Holmes' death.

Moriarty is one of the characters that cannot be removed or replaced from these stories—unless, of course, the aim is to stop before Moriarty becomes relevant. He is as important to the series as anyone; he is Sherlock's equal, his evil twin, if you will, and the hero's ultimate destruction. You cannot end Sherlock Holmes without James Moriarty. And so the BBC kept him, but with a slight twist that highlights Sherlock's ability to grow.

#### From James to Jim

Jim Moriarty is not a professor in this adaptation. Employed by St. Bartholomew's Hospital's IT Department, he is first introduced as Molly Hooper's boyfriend in the "The Great Game." This alias allows Moriarty certain liberties. First, working in IT allows him to access various pieces of technological equipment. Such access indicates a certain amount of power; since so much of the modern world relies on technology to function, having control over that functionality gives the technician power to enable or disable it. Admittedly, his control is tempered by his place of employment and his technological control is seemingly limited to St. Bart's; later episodes would display his far-reaching power, both authoritatively and technologically. However, this

limit does not diminish the importance of his small circle of power within the hospital; the technology in St. Bart's supports, continues, and saves lives. Thus, tampering with its technology threatens any and all patients in the hospital as well as the employees' reputations, consciences, and employment if something were to happen to the patients under their specific care that they could not adequately assist due to malfunctioning technology.

Additionally, his ability to gain and retain a position in IT subtly informs viewers that Jim Moriarty is technologically adept, a skill highly valued and often linked to intelligence in today's society. This also implies the possibility of technology playing a major part in his crime: hacking, disabling, falsifying—any type of technological manipulation is entirely possible. Modern society both admires and fears technology, particularly the huge reliance on technology. Moriarty adeptly handling technology, in combination with his infamous history, plays on one of society's biggest fears: technology turning on them and pulling their carefully constructed worlds down one megabyte at a time.

Second, choosing this particular hospital immediately brings Moriarty closer to Sherlock. St. Bart's is where Sherlock conducts many of his experiments, utilizing their labs. Choosing this particular hospital would allow Moriarty to perhaps cross paths with Sherlock without ever raising suspicion. Thus, he could perhaps glean information about Sherlock by observing him work, overhearing other hospital employees discuss Sherlock, or examining Sherlock's work after he has quit the building. It also gives Moriarty time to determine which hospital employees are on good terms with Sherlock and which are

not. Such a distinction would reveal who Moriarty could use to get close to Sherlock or who might be useful in bringing down the detective.

Third, Moriarty makes the most important alliance: Molly Hooper, specialist registrar. Molly Hooper—quiet, mousey, brilliant, determined Molly Hooper—is the key to his alias. As a medical student at St. Bart’s, Molly is able to give Sherlock access to the morgue, both for his investigations and unrelated science experiments. It also provides the basis for an unlikely, but strong friendship between the two. Moriarty uses this friendship to gain information on Sherlock from his close friend, and as a way of meeting the detective without revealing his identity. He creates a double bluff. We first see Moriarty as Molly’s boyfriend. Then, immediately after the introduction we see him establish the second layer to the alias: a gay man. Upon meeting Sherlock, Moriarty attempts to badly flirt with the detective and even slides Sherlock his mobile number. This further buries his identity and creates an innocuous persona as Sherlock assuredly informs Molly that her boyfriend is gay.

Faking a relationship with Molly gives Moriarty entirely new ways to view Sherlock. Molly would certainly talk about Sherlock, or would be easy to prompt into discussing him. Knowing Molly’s loyalty, she would never intentionally reveal anything damaging or important about Sherlock. But even her slightest commentary on the way he acts towards friends or conducts himself in an investigation might reveal extremely important tidbits to Moriarty regarding his overall character and personality. This information would help Moriarty plan how to destroy Sherlock. It also eventually allows Jim to approach Sherlock inconspicuously. Molly introducing her new boyfriend to her friends is nothing strange. Jim could meet him, and test Sherlock. Would he see through

Moriarty's act? Would he see the mastermind behind the IT Jim facade? Or would Sherlock only see geeky (probably gay) IT Jim, Molly's boyfriend unworthy of more than his fleeting attention? In fact, Sherlock buys the act. The only commentary he makes after meeting Jim is an argument that Jim is, in fact, gay. He supports this argument by citing the way Jim dressed and the fact that he surreptitiously placed his mobile phone number under a tray for Sherlock to find ("The Great Game").

The relationship quickly dissolves, and we see no more of IT Jim<sup>5</sup>. No matter; Moriarty has the information he needs about Sherlock. He has gathered the data that newspapers and reports could not. He has seen the detective at work and he has most likely heard one of his closest friends, Molly, talk about him. Moriarty is free to end his connections with Molly and the hospital. The next time we see Jim again, we see him as he truly is: Jim Moriarty, genius and resident crime king of London. Jim Moriarty is in the position of power. One word from him and a) the bomb strapped to John's chest detonates; or b) the hidden gunmen with laser pointers focused on Sherlock and John fire. Either way, Moriarty has complete control over them, and their lives. He boasts his need to get close to Sherlock, his need to be recognized for his work and his ability to dupe Sherlock before ultimately killing the detective.

In reality, Moriarty is so much more than a professor or IT employee. He, in both the canon and adaptation, is the lynch pin of most villainy, the organizing power behind the crimes and criminals, the king of London's crime world. Moriarty is "a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker" and Sherlock calls him the "Napoleon of crime" ("The

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<sup>5</sup> From this point on, the BBC's adaptation of Moriarty will be the focus of the discussion and will be referred to primarily as "Moriarty;" occasionally "Jim Moriarty" or perhaps "Jim" will appear. Any reference made to Conan Doyle's Moriarty will be differentiated as "Professor Moriarty" to avoid confusion. Additionally, some elements apply to both versions of Moriarty and may include quotations from both Conan Doyle and the BBC.



Final Problem” 740). His crimes are not simple and petty, but well developed, painstakingly planned and executed events. No element goes unnoticed and unexamined; he sees all facets in his plans. Not only are his plans ingenious, but he has thousands of agents to do his bidding, and his reach in London’s is underworld incomparable. Like a spider on its web, “he knows very well the quiver of each of [its thousand radiations]” (“The Final Problem” 740). His agents might get caught, but he does not. There is no trace back to him and any failed plan reflects on the captured individual, not Moriarty.

Even his name is modernized. James becomes Jim. Such a small change might not seem significant, but even altering the name reveals something slightly different about the character. “James” is formal, mature, and professional while “Jim” is more relaxed, familiar, and hints at a long-lasting nickname, perhaps given by a family member. It speaks to the character’s personality. In the BBC series, Moriarty maintains his criminality, intimidation, and intelligence. However, the way this is conveyed is entirely different and entirely modern. Jim is modernly terrifying. He is quirky, sharp-witted, intelligent, and adept. Think popularly geeky: odd enough to stand out, but not (seemingly) strange enough to be ostracized. Dressed sharply in tailored suits, he appears like every other successful man. He blends. Altogether, he is not that scary or intimidating. Until that is, you see the shift in him that hints at the distinguishing factor: Jim Moriarty is dangerous, maybe unbalanced.

His extreme intelligence is used to further his own desires and mind games—and he does not care who gets caught in the crosshairs. “The Great Game” exemplifies this. Moriarty places random, average people in danger in order to use them as a voice-piece and keep his identity secret. In the process, he has created a nearly impossible task for

Sherlock: solve his riddled message, read aloud by the victim but constructed by Moriarty. If he fails to solve the riddle, the bombs attached to each person detonate, and a death is on Sherlock's hands. With each victim, the time limit decreases. The pressure mounts. None of this matters, though, at least not to Moriarty. The game, the test— that's what truly matters. It is a matter of mind games between an unknown Moriarty and Sherlock Holmes. Can Sherlock solve the puzzle in the time allotted? Can he figure out the game, in which the hostages are just pawns, obstacles in the game to reach the mastermind?

Moriarty's attitude can change in the blink of an eye— and actor Andrew Scott mastered this change perfectly. Calm and cool, suddenly his eyes are suddenly alight with some manic anger, his face tightening almost imperceptibly, head tilting ever so slightly—all part of the genius that is Andrew Scott and revealing the dangerous switch. Moriarty himself recognizes this instability— though he might not call it that—and mockingly apologizes for altering his decision to let Sherlock and John escape the pool unscathed in “The Great Game,” saying, “Sorry, boys! I'm so changeable! It is a weakness for me—but to be fair, it is my only weakness.” Perhaps even a better example of his continual changes is seen in his earlier response to Sherlock's statement that people have died because of Moriarty's games. Moriarty says “That's what people DO” (“The Great Game”), beginning with the casual, soft cadence he has had and ending with an almost screeching, enraged shout, eyes dark and bulging. As Ariana Scott-Zechlin writes, “Moriarty is unpredictable, swinging back and forth between incredibly rational behavior and inexplicable eccentricities” (63). In this state, Moriarty's cruelty is readily apparent. If you cross him, it will be the last thing you do because his revenge will come, and you

will not see it coming. It will come with the smallest of traces: enough that the police will recognize foul play, but not enough to definitively prove anything or link it back to him. And then, just as suddenly as it appears, it is gone. Back is the facade of Jim Moriarty. Back is the slightly dorky, well-dressed, intelligent adult. He may play at friendliness and cordiality, but his eyes reveal the truth. He never quite manages to bring any false warmth to his eyes; they remain cold and calculating, revealing the truth. As some say, eyes are the windows to the soul, and Moriarty's eyes are as dark as his intentions.

### An Extended Contract

Perhaps the most obvious adaptation is Moriarty's extended role in the BBC series. Originally, Professor Moriarty appears only in Holmes' (intended) final story, "The Final Problem." He is introduced as the final opponent, the last villain to be discovered and defeated. As the case progresses, it becomes clear that this man is the most nefarious of all that Holmes has previously opposed. Professor Moriarty is a master puppeteer, pulling the strings and orchestrating a number of criminal activities in London. But his presence, while felt, had not been identified until the end of Holmes' career. Additionally, his influence was not necessarily involved in Holmes' cases. Despite his limited appearances in the Conan Doyle stories, Professor Moriarty was quickly elevated to "most important villain" status in the Sherlock Holmes canon. This most likely resulted from his hand in the detective's highly lamented death. No one but the best (and by best, I mean worst) criminal could defeat the great detective Sherlock Holmes, the brilliant hero beloved by all his readers. Thus, Professor Moriarty must be the most important—he killed the detective and no other criminal had had any kind of impact past their individual case; Professor Moriarty's impact would carry on past this case, past

Holmes' death, and would affect anyone involved with Sherlock Holmes (Watson, Scotland Yard, the readers, etc.).

Indisputably the grand nemesis of the detective, Moriarty's presence in the BBC series was extended to emphasize his criminal genius. Viewers officially meet him in the final episode of the first series, much earlier than the Conan Doyle canon would allow. Before even this, hints at his character were made, such as in the scene with the Chinese gang leader and her backer at the end of "The Blind Banker." From the very beginning, Moriarty has been structured as the mastermind behind all of the cases we see in *Sherlock*. Ellen Burton Harrington calls Moriarty "the author of a series of compelling cases that lure Sherlock at his own peril [...] a kind of sensational writer" who takes the "role as a puppet master for so many lesser criminals and ultimately for Sherlock" (72). In this way, it is as if Moriarty has not only constructed the crimes, but also the detective. All of Sherlock's cases, in both series one and series two, are a direct result of Moriarty's crime web. Even the first death that sparked Sherlock's interest, the death of a young boy when he himself was young ("The Great Game") was Moriarty's doing. Sherlock always thought the death was suspicious, but no one else did and he had no proof. Now, all these years later, it seems to once again have relevance. Sherlock even uses this case, the place of the boy's death, as the rendezvous spot with Moriarty. Without Moriarty's influence, who is to say these crimes would have happened? And without those crimes, who is to say that Sherlock's success would have grown? This then begs the question: have any of Sherlock's cases, depicted or simply alluded to, been crimes free of Moriarty's plotting? If not, then Moriarty has helped Sherlock build his career. He has provided Sherlock with the tests, if you will, to pass onto the next level, the next case. The culmination of the

cases eventually leads to meeting Moriarty, a culmination that occurs in the final moments of series one.

The BBC has chosen to make Moriarty not only the most important villain, but really the only one. Any other criminal is just Moriarty's pawn. In the scheme of things, those criminals mean little. He almost "has the appearance of a mysterious, all-powerful God" (Scott-Zechlin 62) in that Moriarty appears to be all-knowing and all-powerful in the crime world, pulling the strings and orchestrating it all. Catching and stopping Moriarty means halting all of London's crime, even just temporarily. All of series two is dedicated to tracking down and stopping Moriarty. He has become Sherlock's obsession: the one person who truly presents a challenge. Likewise, Sherlock has become Moriarty's obsession as the only true competition for mind games, which lie at the heart of every single crime Moriarty arranges. Everything revolves around the other. It has become a game like no other, a game neither is willing to lose. Structuring Jim Moriarty as the criminal mastermind, the kingpin of London crime, draws a distinct comparison to the champion of the people, the great detective Sherlock Holmes. As the BBC "enhances Moriarty's role, emphasizing the doubling of Holmes and Moriarty in the original series" (Stein 19) it draws attention to Conan Doyle's allusion "to Victorian concerns about degeneracy as manifest in the detective as well as the criminal" (Harrington 74). Such a concern is hardly relevant only to Victorian times; clear demarcations between good and bad continue to be sought, and blurred lines only lend to the fear inspired by the crimes. Both canon and adaptation versions of Sherlock Holmes and James Moriarty contain many of the same qualities: high intellect, cold sort of rationality and scientific approach to life, an air of superiority, etc. The similarity cannot be missed, and draws the unsettling

question of just how different is the lauded detective Sherlock Holmes from the despised terror that is James Moriarty? Where does the criminal end and the detective begin? Perhaps just as unsettling is their apparent equality: no one tops Moriarty, and none have yet to top Sherlock. They alone in the world occupy their fields: a consulting detective and a consulting criminal.

One aspect that remains unwaveringly true in both Conan Doyle's tales and the BBC series is Moriarty's careful, methodical ways. He is extremely thorough. No parts of his plots go unexamined. Nothing can be traced back to him—something he works very hard to ensure. Rumors may surface, as they did in "The Final Problem," but nothing can be definitively proven, except perhaps by Sherlock. And even the modern Sherlock cannot gather enough evidence without Moriarty revealing it to him directly and of his own choice. In his final note for Watson in "The Final Problem," Holmes instructs Watson where he might find the evidence needed to prove Professor Moriarty's guilt. But he only discovered this evidence's location through Professor Moriarty's admission, not his own detective work. This admission only comes with the certainty that neither man will have won or lost their battles of wits. Instead, they have a draw that ends in death for both.

Moriarty's careful planning is visible in the BBC series as well. In "A Scandal of Belgravia," Moriarty realizes his plans have gone slightly off-kilter. Something has changed, and as such he must adjust. He had been planning on killing Sherlock Holmes, and John Watson as a witness, the night he revealed himself. Really, he also would have killed himself. Moriarty seems to seek out mutual destruction—both here and at the Reichenbach Falls—because, backed into a corner with sniper's targets on his and John's

chests, Sherlock makes the only move he can: he aims his gun at the bomb. Firing into the bomb would kill everyone in the building, effectively ending their lives but also stopping Moriarty. But, instead Moriarty announces “Sorry... wrong day to die” (“A Scandal in Belgravia”) and it is clear that he is mentally rescheduling this deadly appointment. His methodologies extend to every aspect of his plots, and when something goes slightly awry, Moriarty rights it at once. Nothing can go wrong, no loose ends left untied, nothing to trace the crime back to the illusive, unassuming James Moriarty, consulting criminal.

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### **UNRAVELING THE FOIL: SHERLOCK VS. MORIARTY**

One interesting result of the BBC series adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes* is the expansion of two foils: Sherlock Holmes and Jim Moriarty. Often, the argument is made that Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are foils; the *Encyclopædia Britannica* even uses this as an example in their definition of a “foil.” While this example makes some strong claims in it—Watson’s relative dim intelligence in comparison to Holmes’ brilliance—the example nevertheless supports the common foil seen in Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes tales. Yet, the BBC adaptation draws more to a foil in Moriarty, and makes a more compelling comparison than dimness to brilliance. Their focus relies more on character development and the emerging (or diverging) relationship to “normal” society.

To backtrack slightly, *Literary Devices* defines a foil as “a character that shows qualities that are in contrast with the qualities of another character with the objective to highlight the traits of the other character” (“Foil”). The *Purdue Writing OWL* would also add that a foil “helps readers better understand another character, usually the protagonist”

(“Fiction Writing Basics”). Thus, a foil is used to draw distinct, important insights to a character through the use of comparison with another, opposite (often drastically so) character. One can see how Watson might be a foil to Holmes, as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* reminds us. In comparison to Holmes, Watson’s own intelligence pales to Holmes’ seeming genius. However, *Literary Devices* cautions that while “foil” is often used to describe contrasting characters, it “may also be used for any comparison that is drawn to portray a difference in two things” (“Foil”). This qualifier supports the idea that Moriarty is a foil to Sherlock in the BBC series. Moriarty is strikingly similar to Sherlock. He is Sherlock’s evil twin: equally genius, equally detached, equally rational. The difference lies in how the characters continue to develop on-screen, as if both arrived at a fork in the road, Moriarty follows one path while Sherlock strolls down the opposite. The paths have similar routes, but diverge just enough to end in unique locations.

#### “F” is for Friend

Sherlock and Moriarty appear to be very similar, two sides of one coin. They are both highly rational, extremely intelligent, and have an apparent disregard for the benefits of personally relating to another individual. The main difference, the head to the tails of the coin, seems to be that Sherlock exercises his skills for the betterment of society and Moriarty for the downfall of it. Yet, as the series further develops and the characters’ experiences increase, it becomes clear that the foil holds and the two split into different coins altogether, head separating from tail. Sherlock becomes more human while Moriarty becomes less so.

*Sherlock* creates a Sherlock Holmes that is utterly detached from society. He is cold, calculating, and logical in every aspect of life. His self-description as a sociopath



seems entirely supported and true given his general detachedness and lack of personal relationships. Any relationships he seems to have are built not on mutual friendship, interest, or history. Instead, they are built—at least initially—on usefulness to Sherlock. Inspector Lestrade can provide Sherlock with cases to solve; Molly Hooper can provide entry to St. Bart’s morgue (for cases or his own experiments) and act as the occasional sounding-board for his thoughts; John Watson is useful to split the flat fees, as a medical doctor for cases, and then as a publicist through his blogging. Mrs. Hudson provides a convenient living space, but she might also be the only character for whom Sherlock initially has any kind of affection; as a favor to her, he secured her abusive and criminal husband’s sentencing and in return, she lowers the price of the flat. Over time, these relationships do develop genuine affection; keep in mind, though, that Sherlock’s ability to express affection is still severely limited, but growing. In general, though, Sherlock makes no effort to relate to the people he encounters or create any mutual affability with them.

While John is not the first person to consistently interact with Sherlock, he is perhaps the first to seriously attempt at understanding Sherlock. In “A Study in Pink,” John comments to Lestrade that surely the inspector knows Sherlock better than he because John only met Sherlock a few days ago. But to John’s surprise, Lestrade responds that no, no he does not know Sherlock any better than John, even after working with him for five years. Lestrade and Sherlock have a work relationship that does develop into a certain amount of affection for one another; this affection is probably more obviously so on Lestrade’s part than Sherlock’s, but equally shared. It indicates both that

John takes an avid, determined interest in knowing and understanding Sherlock as well as Sherlock beginning to allow someone (John) into his life in a more personal manner.

Molly Hooper, additionally, is one of Sherlock's few friends and there is a certain amount of unspoken affection and loyalty in the relationship. She begins the series with an undeniable crush on Sherlock, which he clearly notices, though he never directly addresses it; instead, he treats her no differently than anyone else (with a detached and rather superior air) and one might argue even manipulates her affection for him for his own gain (entry to the morgue, her assistance, etc.). Mrs. Hudson, however, Sherlock does genuinely care for, in his own way. She is rather like a batty, favorite aunt for Sherlock. At times, such as when Mycroft raises his voice to Mrs. Hudson or when Sherlock discovers she has been threatened, Sherlock reacts strongly in her defense.

Sherlock is a relatively anti-social individual and does not relate to others well or retain many friends. Any friendship he manages to create is therefore important. His immediate circle can be summed up thusly: John Watson, Inspector Greg Lestrade, Molly Hooper, and Mrs. Hudson; his brother Mycroft and parents might also be included, except these relationships are maintained out of familial obligation rather than apparent affection or desire. Out of these four, it is made incredibly clear that John, the newest of his friends, is the most important. Sherlock reacts the strongest when it is John threatened, he trusts John the most, he spends the most time with John, etc. Everyone knows this, everyone knows that Sherlock has the closest attachment to John. Even London's criminals note this, and use it against the detective. John is the key to getting to Sherlock.

A prime example lies in “The Great Game.” As discussed, Moriarty has arranged a great puzzle for Sherlock that endangers random civilians. In this episode, it is clear that while Sherlock wants to save the victims and stop Moriarty, his real goal is to understand Moriarty’s plans and regain the upper hand; the victims are secondary. But when John is made a victim, everything else halts. It causes a shift in Sherlock’s motivation, from debunking the plot and catching the criminal first, saving the victim second to saving the individual first, catching the criminal second. John is the one person Sherlock cannot stand to lose. A calmer example of Sherlock’s affection for John is seen in “The Empty Hearse.” John asks Sherlock to be his best man, and it is obvious Sherlock is shocked. Never did he expect to stand as someone’s best man, or even foresee wanting that honor. He takes pause when John states Sherlock is his best friend (“The Empty Hearse”). In this pause, you can see how much Sherlock values this simple declaration; he can barely form a response. Sherlock is very nearly emotional to the point of inaction—he is overwhelmed, honored, happy, nervous and everything in-between.

Moriarty, on the other hand, is not depicted as cultivating any relationship. As far as viewers are aware, he has no friends, no family, no one personally important to him. His acquaintances all serve some purpose and exist solely because of that purpose. Moriarty would see no reason to maintain a relationship after its usefulness depletes; affection and attachment mean nothing to him, and these concepts are, to him, entirely illogical. Instead, Moriarty values any relationship on a usefulness/need spectrum, much like Sherlock often does.

For example, it is revealed at the end of “The Blind Banker” that Moriarty has financially supported and (at least partially) orchestrated the Chinese gang’s, the Tong,

criminal activity in London. The Tong leader, Shan, is a highly powerful, intimidating and ruthless criminal with a tight control over her gang. Despite this, it is clear in her interaction with Moriarty that Shan is terrified of him and that he ranks even above her. Shan knows allying herself and her gang with Moriarty is risky; she knows he only maintains useful, beneficial business relationships. If she fails, if their alliance is discovered or any information can be traced to Moriarty, or she is no longer useful to him, their relationship is over. Shan pleads with Moriarty, tries to prove her importance and loyalty, at the end of “The Blind Banker” to no avail. Moriarty feels this business relationship is compromised and acts accordingly. He severs the connection with Shan’s death.

Later, “The Great Game” places Moriarty in a short-lived romance with Molly. This relationship is a smokescreen “for information and access to Sherlock” (Harrington 75), a manipulation of Molly’s friendship with Sherlock for Moriarty’s purposes. The relationship ends shortly after Moriarty interacts with Sherlock and obtains the information he sought. Additionally, in “The Great Game,” Moriarty is commanding at least several shooters. They wait for his orders, and his orders alone, to fire. All in all, his relationships—if one can call them that—are depicted within a strict hierarchy, of which he is at the top. All others treat him with a sort of fearful reverence and bend their knee to his wishes. He shows no apparent affection to anyone, and has no clear ties to anything, no loyalty to anyone but himself. One might argue that his closest friend is also his greatest enemy: Sherlock Holmes himself. But even Sherlock holds a certain amount of usefulness for Moriarty in the form of entertainment.

As the series progresses, it becomes clear that this similar view of relationships becomes less similar. Sherlock begins to value relationships beyond their usefulness and Moriarty conducts all interactions as business and nothing else. The two characters even circle this issue in their bantering. At one point, they discuss Sherlock's heart, or lack thereof, in a metaphorical sense. Neither disputes Sherlock's biological need for a functioning heart; they are too scientific of men to entertain the notion, even as a joke. Instead, they hint at Sherlock's affections. Moriarty begins the conversation with a threat and it ends with a hint at a weakness: emotion. The dialogue from the end of "The Great Game" is as follows:

Moriarty: "I'll burn the *heart* out of you."

Sherlock: "I have been reliably informed that I don't have one."

Moriarty: "But we both know that's not quite true."

Sherlock becomes more human. He begins to cultivate, however awkwardly, unintentionally or unknowingly, relationships. The affection Sherlock holds for certain people becomes increasingly apparent—though continually sporadic—as the series develops.

Thus, the issue of the heart and of relationships is an undisputed diverging point for Sherlock and Moriarty. One finds strength and stability in fostering close relationships (or, as close as Sherlock can appear to openly be) and the other sees weakness in this emotional reliance or connection. Scott-Zechlin describes it as, "Sherlock may appear to be the weaker of the two, brought down by human failing in his concern for John, but he is also now clearly the "good man" which Lestrade envisions, rather than just the "great man" which Moriarty still remains" (64). Lestrade's

comment—Sherlock becoming a good man instead of just a great man—refers to way Lestrade has always viewed Sherlock: as a man with the potential to be more than cold intellect and stunning brilliance. He has always seen the possibility of a man who cares about the people and not just the end resolution. It draws the idea that relationships and concern for others trumps a fitting, scientific conclusion and highlights the way relationship, loyalty, and affection are accepted more readily than detached, slightly robotic results.

### One Human, One Cyberman

As previously mentioned, Moriarty and Sherlock differ immensely in their apparent or unapparent humanity. Both begin their narratives as coldly scientific, rational, unemotional people with few (if any) notable relationships. Sherlock slowly begins to cultivate friendships that hold a high importance in his life, such as his friendship with John or his affection for Mrs. Hudson. Moriarty, on the other hand, sees relationships as frivolous items which may be used against an individual as emotional manipulation.

Scott-Zechlin explores this difference in terms of science and religion in “But It’s the Solar System!” Reconciling Science and Faith Through Astronomy.” She discusses the way the Victorian era often saw these two fields as conflicting studies with vastly opposite opinions and beliefs. Scott-Zechlin argues that Sherlock signifies “the postmodern harmonious combination of science and faith [and] Moriarty represents the incompatible relationship of the past, which BBC’s Sherlock now suggests should be left behind” (63). Sherlock embodies a “gradual, humanizing and positive combination of these two opposite approaches” while “science and faith in Moriarty’s case seem to be almost tearing him apart, separating him from humanity rather than bringing him closer

(Scott-Zechlin 63). In other words, Sherlock's ability to value friendships allows him to combine faith and logic. It strengthens him, supplies him with support, trust, and an emotional outlet as well as providing focus, admiration for his talents and himself, and motivation. He has faith in his friends and can rely on their faith in him; they balance each other in a give-and-take support. John and their other friends became his anchor to humanity—without them, Sherlock risks becoming Moriarty, “inhuman and indifferent, caring only about puzzles” (Scott-Zechlin 64). Moriarty, however, views relationships only as a hindrance or a tool to use against his victims. He cannot balance faith—genuine trust, loyalty, or belief—in others with the facts he knows and can prove to be true. The human factor, faith, is also unknown, too immeasurable for him to deem important. Denying himself friendship drives Moriarty mad, robotic, and into a state of utter isolation.

In this manner, it is clear that while Sherlock matures, Moriarty deteriorates. Moriarty continues to spiral into instability, over-reliant on puzzles, schemes, and rationality. He does not progress, does not grow or learn. Sherlock, meanwhile, slowly steps out of his comfort zone and begins to truly welcome certain individuals. John had burst into the detective's life and practically forced Sherlock to accept him, yet Sherlock could have easily cast him out or ignored him entirely. Instead, perhaps initially driven by curiosity, Sherlock allowed John not only to remain in his life but to continually influence him. John keeps him in check, guides him towards humanity and away from the machine some might like to make him out to be. Sherlock is not made up of numbers, facts, and hardware; he is human, albeit a socially selective, awkward, and often cold individual. He is nowhere near perfect and not everyone will like or tolerate him. Despite

this, despite the many logical reasons he has to distance himself from others, Sherlock continues to persist in attempting relations with others.

### Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader?

Sherlock and Moriarty's interactions are charged conversations, a battle of wits with every word. Neither wants to surrender or lose to the other yet neither ever really beats the other, either. They have a tension that extends beyond rivalry. Look at it this way: Mycroft and Sherlock may be brothers, but there is no lost affection between the two. They might even consider themselves intellectual rivals, and their interactions always contain some argumentative element, purely to be difficult and/or frustrating. The same tension exists in Moriarty and Sherlock's conversations. They are purposefully goading one another, seeing how much they can poke the bear before it wakes up and takes a bite. However, there is also an underlying respect for one another. Sherlock, for all that he despises Moriarty, has a grudging respect for him and his plots. He never once states Moriarty is less than clever; in fact, he almost seems to promote that fact. Moriarty, on the other hand, pushes Sherlock to find the answers, to figure out the plot, and his "sometime hostility toward Sherlock is tempered by his need for Sherlock's admiration" (Harrington 80-1). It is not that Moriarty wants to be stopped, but more that he wants to test Sherlock and knows that Sherlock is the only person who might figure it out. They create a weird balance, an odd respect for their comparable intelligence in contrast to their disgust of the others' pursuits; Sherlock purposefully sets out to correct wrongs; Moriarty takes delight in creating havoc.

The two even describe their careers similarly. Sherlock tells John in "A Study in Pink" that he is a "consulting detective, only one in the world." He distinctly avoids using



the phrase “private detective,” indicating that he feels his profession is altogether different and better than the common PI. He is, in a way, a unique specialist in the detecting field. The police do not consult PIs, but they do consult Sherlock. They need him. Without his expertise, they could never solve some of their most puzzling crimes. It elevates his position above that of the police. Sherlock does not help on every case, just the most challenging ones, the unsolvable ones. It is only when the police are stumped that they need him; it is like turning to a teacher for help: you can handle the majority of the problems, but there is always that one you cannot quite get and that requires you to look to someone more skilled than you for help. In “The Great Game,” Moriarty states that he, like Sherlock, is a specialist, a “consulting criminal.” This confirms what we already know: Moriarty is a criminal, but not an ordinary one.

Moriarty commits no crimes directly; he orchestrates them. He simply devises, guides the ones committing the crime, and profits from afar. The similarity in language is readily apparent. Both are “consulting” specialists, one a detective and one a criminal. What makes them unique is the demand their skills make. Like the police and Sherlock, the criminals consult Moriarty when they cannot hope to accomplish their crimes without him. Sure, the other criminals could pull off a different scheme by themselves, but could never manage the intricacy and subtlety of Moriarty’s crimes alone—the crimes that risk the most, but also stand to gain the most. His ability to orchestrate these crimes elevates him above all other criminals. He has the ability to make or break a criminal organization, all with one crime. And with that comes the loyalty of many lower criminals—why align yourself to a lower level boss if you can align yourself with the

kingpin, the one calling the shots? Thus, through consulting careers, Sherlock and Moriarty both have built their own empires, one for justice and one for crime.

### Is that Aluminum?

Sherlock Holmes and James Moriarty are not the same individual, but they are eerily similar. Both possess incredible intellect, an inflated self-importance, and a deep appreciation for puzzles and rationality. Their similarities draw attention to the small, important details that highlight their radical differences. Moriarty stagnantly refuses to engage in relationships and thus fosters an unstable, warring personality that cannot understand both faith and science. Sherlock allows for gradual growth, cautiously exploring and developing individual relationships he deems important, which in turn supplies him with support, focus, and motivation in his work. Finally, Moriarty utilizes his skill set for destruction and chaos while Sherlock channels his talents into undoing that chaos and enabling justice. Placed side by side, Moriarty and Sherlock foster a fascinating discussion regarding their similarities and incredible differences, drawing attention to an important foil in both Conan Doyle's work and the BBC's adaptation.

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### **FALLING AND GETTING BACK UP**

The Fall: once a shocking development and ending, is now an expected plot twist. In the short story "The Final Problem," part of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, Conan Doyle stunned and utterly dismayed his readers by doing the unthinkable. He killed Sherlock Holmes. He struck down his genius creation, the man that, despite any faults, solved the most challenging of cases and kept the villainous off the streets of England. Close friends were less surprised; Henry Lunn reports that Conan Doyle told him, "I have

made up my mind to kill Sherlock Holmes; he is becoming such a burden to me that he makes my life unbearable” (qtd. in Lycett 2007, 203)” (Harrington 76). And what death has he given his unlikely hero? A battle of sorts? A fit of illness? Poison? No. A fall into watery depths.

### Conan Doyle’s “The Final Problem”

The short story “The Final Problem” delineates yet another case undertaken by Sherlock. This case involves, for the first time, Professor James Moriarty. As previously discussed, Moriarty is Holmes’ evil double. The case culminates in Meiringen, Switzerland, and Holmes and Watson have travelled to confront and stop Moriarty once and for all. While hiking along the Reichenbach Falls, a messenger arrives, calling Watson back to the hotel to treat an English woman’s sudden illness. He leaves Holmes sitting on a rock, watching the falls. This is the last visual, the last definite moment, we have of Sherlock Holmes. All else is speculation and imagination.

Watson arrives at the village, only to discover the emergency medical issue was fraudulent. The note, while bearing the hotel’s crest, was not written by the hotel owner, but by a man who can only be assumed to be Moriarty himself, luring Watson away from Holmes. Having pieced this together, Watson rushes to the spot where he had left Holmes. Footprints leading to the location but not away, signs of a scuffle, Holmes’ Alpine-stock walking stick sitting against a rock, his silver cigarette case lying on the ground, and a note under the case: all foreboding signs. The note pieces together what Watson, and we as readers through him, would not have otherwise known.

Moriarty approached Holmes and had quite the discussion with him. He revealed to Holmes his methods of evading capture or discovery, confirming Holmes’ assumptions

regarding his intelligence. Like civilized gentlemen, they reach an agreement to end their rivalry. But not until Holmes has had the chance to leave Watson one last note, courtesy of Moriarty's patience. The note further reveals that Holmes suspected Watson's call was fake, and let him leave knowing that. Holmes' note says goodbye to his old friend, and details where Watson might find Holmes' will and the evidence confirming Moriarty's criminality. Afterwards, it can be deduced that the two men engaged in a physical bout, and, at some point, toppled off the cliff face, plunging down into the Reichenbach Falls' watery depths.

There is some beauty to this scene. How poetic a death—one chosen most logically by both men. Given their high level of intelligence, they would have both been highly aware of the most probable outcome: both die due to a slip or mishap near the cliff face. They were too equally matched, both physically and mentally, to have a clear winner. And yet, they still engaged the other, choosing mutual destruction rather than allow the other to persist in the world. The largest sacrifice. Holmes, we know, would have been entirely at peace. Watson records that Holmes continually mentioned “that if I could beat that man, if I could free society of him, [...] I should be prepared to turn to some more placid line in life” (“The Final Problem” 739). Additionally, his note includes the line “I am pleased to think that I shall be able to free society from any further effects of his presence” (“The Final Problem” 754). Sherlock Holmes has dedicated his entire career to ridding London of criminals, how fitting is it that he ends his life continuing that work. Not only that, but his final action is removing, in his opinion, the most dangerous man in Europe and destroying his insidious effect.

## Holmes Revived

This should have been the end of it, of the books, of the mysteries, of the great consulting detective Sherlock Holmes. But, it was not. After most of Conan Doyle's readership launched themselves into full-fledged mourning—sporting black armbands to publically proclaim their grief—Conan Doyle made a decision he supposedly regretted wholeheartedly. He brought back our favorite detective, highlighting, “perhaps for the first time, the power readers can exert over a narrative in which they are invested” (Basu 208). He resurrected Sherlock Holmes, dragging him up from those watery depths and returning him to his readers like a parent diving for a toy outside of a child's reach and handing it back to the child's undisguised delight.

In a way, it was only the beginning. The Sherlock Holmes mysteries have always been popular—in fact, immensely popular. People have been writing about Sherlock Holmes, continuing the stories themselves, or creating their own tales featuring the detective for years. But, if Sherlock Holmes had truly died that night in Meiringen, all of these writings would be severely limited. Sure, there is still plenty of material to work with and more than enough to urge someone to write. However, resurrecting the detective allows for so many more opportunities. It begins Sherlock Holmes—both as a character and as a franchise—afew.

Conan Doyle opens the door that closed with the death of Holmes by writing more stories, beginning with “The Adventures of the Empty House<sup>6</sup>.” Not only did people rush through that door for his stories—his versions and visions of Holmes— but they ran right through with their pens and papers clutched tightly in hand. Now there was

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<sup>6</sup> Note that Conan Doyle's *The Hound of Baskervilles* was the first work published after his eight year hiatus, but is set prior to Holmes' death. “The Adventures of the Empty House” is the first story to occur after Holmes' death and contains the detective's explanation of his faked demise.

more unimagined material. How would the characters be affected by Sherlock Holmes' death and reappearance? How would clients react? What kind of cases would lie ahead for the detective now that his nemesis, Moriarty, was apparently lost forevermore? Conan Doyle could supply some answers, some advanced characterization, some new plot, some new characters. But, scholars could fill analyses. Writing enthusiasts could run with any new tidbit and turn it into their own side story, their own mystery now shaped by his reappearance. The possibilities were endless. How long might he continue to rid Europe of criminals? Why, as long as interest held and someone somewhere was armed not only with an idea but a pen and paper.

#### The BBC's "The Reichenbach Fall"

*Sherlock* pays homage to Conan Doyle's picturesque setting for "The Final Problem" in the episode's title, "Reichenbach Fall," as well as first moments after the opening credits. Sherlock has just recovered a J.M.W. Turner painting, *The Great Falls of the Reichenbach*, which depicts the same waterfalls in which Holmes and Professor Moriarty originally disappeared. However, this painting is the only glimpse of the waterfalls in the episode; the episode's case takes place solely in London instead of abroad. In accordance with Conan Doyle's original work, the episode continues the idea of mutual shared destruction, and both Sherlock and Moriarty die. Additionally, Sherlock's death is addressed directly in the first moment of the episode and is announced by John, much like in "The Final Problem" Watson announces Holmes' death immediately. The detective's final case is then recounted in both versions.

"Mutual shared destruction" might be an unconventional description for Sherlock and Moriarty's death for two reasons. First, Sherlock bears significantly more destruction

in the episode than Moriarty does. His destruction is two-fold and begins months before his death. Moriarty's destruction lies solely in his death. Second, the phrase implies a previously agreed upon sense of shared destruction, yet Conan Doyle's depiction creates an image of an accidental dual-death. Yes, both Holmes and Professor Moriarty fell in the falls and presumably died, but evidence at the scene suggested a scuffle and subsequent fall. The scuffle suggests an initial fight where one was trying to beat the other. They either accidentally fell into the falls, or the waterfall became the only accessible option to defeat the other at the cost of their own lives; their deaths are not the result of an accord of mutual death. In contrast, the BBC portrays a sort of pact reached between Moriarty and Sherlock that ends in dual-suicide. Either scenario contains the same outcome: the death of Sherlock/Holmes and Moriarty. The slight alteration to their dual-death, however, reflects modern senses of destruction and death.

Moriarty facilitates a great game of destruction that places Sherlock into a rapid downward spiral. Sherlock's destruction starts as the slow decay, a slow unravelling of public image, and with each action Sherlock takes, the decay quickens and hurtles him headlong to a crushing end. Decay, death, destruction: Moriarty has again laid his plot so that every assumption is incorrect upon the discovery of the next twist. He uses Sherlock's successes and critics to bring about the detective's downward spiral in a way that, to the unsuspecting eye, appears to be a natural progression of inevitable events. The connections between the events are buried deep, deeper than most would care or see reason to investigate.

As previously noted, the episode depicts a successful recovery of Turner's painting and a public lauding of Sherlock's skill. It is implied that Sherlock's work is

gaining increasing recognition and John even states that Sherlock is very nearly famous (“The Reichenbach Fall”); he is becoming a recognizable public figure<sup>7</sup>. All is well at this moment and Sherlock appears to be at the height of his career. Enter Moriarty, stage left. In a beautifully, intricately constructed plan, Moriarty simultaneously enacts three high-profile break-ins across London. He targets the Tower of London and its Crown Jewels, the Bank of England’s vault, and Pentonville Prison. Three major locations with immense value in London are putty in Moriarty’s hands. Putty, indeed; Moriarty views the entire debacle as a game, texting Sherlock to “Come and play” (“The Reichenbach Fall”). Police arrest a non-resistant Moriarty draped in the Crown Jewels and seated upon the throne.

Sherlock is called as an expert witness, but—despite John’s warnings regarding polite behavior and language—is found in contempt, removed from the courtroom, and placed in a holding cell. Here begins the downfall of his public image: his behavior at the trial is the first blemish on his reputation. Moriarty mounts no defense, and is surprisingly acquitted of all charges after just six minutes of jury deliberation; later, it is revealed that Moriarty threatened the jury’s loved ones in order to be acquitted. Immediately after hearing the verdict, Sherlock waits for Moriarty to arrive. The two banter back and forth, circling one another like predatory animals testing each other’s territorial boundaries, as seen in the following dialogue:

Sherlock: “So how’re you going to do it? Burn me?”

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<sup>7</sup> This image includes the deerstalker hat, a gag gift from Lestrade and the police force. The hat becomes as recognizable as the man. Additionally, it is interesting that the hat is a gift instead of a personal purchase. It perhaps indicates a nod to the fact that Conan Doyle did not originally imagine Holmes with the iconic deerstalker, but was a “gift” given by an artist’s interpretation of and addition to the character.



Moriarty: “Well, that’s the problem. The Final Problem<sup>8</sup>: have you worked out what it is yet? I told you, but were you listening?” (“The Reichenbach Fall”).

The circling continues, one proving to the other just how smart he is, how each sees the connections and reasons no one else does. The tension mounts and Moriarty returns to this final problem. He promises it, the fall, will start soon, and that, “Falling’s just like flying, except there’s a more permanent destination. [...] I owe you a fall<sup>9</sup>, Sherlock. I. Owe. You” (“The Reichenbach Fall”). Thus, with a riddle, he leaves. It is clear Moriarty’s intentions are destructive, as indicated by the “permanent destination” and repeated emphasis on “fall.” Additionally, the mention of a “fall” foreshadows the future destruction—something is about to come crashing down, but what or who, exactly? When will it happen? How? Riddles are piling up, and this is the Moriarty’s message: destruction is coming, but can you prevent it, can you solve the puzzle in time?

Two months pass. Life continues as if Moriarty had never miraculously avoided conviction for successfully pulling off the biggest public con to hit London. A news article declares Sherlock a fraud, but even this is hardly important; the police continue to consult Sherlock, and he is brought into the highly important case involving the kidnapping of the ambassador’s two children. In typical Sherlock fashion, he deduces the children’s location from a miniscule clue. Once found, the children are whisked to safety; the boy is taken to the hospital while the girl is well enough to talk to the police. A short glimpse at Sherlock is enough to send the little girl into an uncontrollable panic, screaming and crying until he is removed. This reaction, coupled with the ease with

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<sup>8</sup> Additionally, here the writers acknowledge Conan Doyle’s original story featuring Holmes, “The Final Problem.” It is a subtle nod to the author, his intended demise for Holmes, and having Moriarty himself speak the words indicates he is the cause of the demise, the final problem.

<sup>9</sup> Again, the repeated use of “fall” indicates not only an important outcome for Sherlock, but also refers to Conan Doyle’s text and the literal fall his characters take into the Reichenbach Falls.

which Sherlock solved the case and the lack of substantial evidence, raises suspicions. In particular, Sergeant Donovan and Detective Anderson are suspicious of Sherlock and declare him the prime suspect in the kidnapping.

Lestrade protests the idea that Sherlock has orchestrated everything so that he might be the hero and disprove the fraud claims. Donovan and Anderson, however, convince the Chief Superintendent of the police to arrest Sherlock. John is also arrested, but only after punching the Chief Superintendent. The pair are handcuffed, but Sherlock steals a gun, makes John his “hostage,” and does “What Moriarty wants: [become] a fugitive” (“The Reichenbach Fall”). This escape further compromises Sherlock’s image. No innocent man would need to run off and evade police questioning; only a guilty man would have something to gain by running away. And yet, innocent they are. Now they just need to prove it.

Sherlock and John visit the reporter who declared Sherlock a fraud, hoping to discover her source. Instead, they find Moriarty posing as Rich Brook, an actor supposedly hired by Sherlock to be Moriarty and stage all of his cases. Shocked and confused, they separate; Sherlock heads to St. Bart’s to recruit Molly Hooper’s assistance for, as he explains to her, he believes he is going to die (“The Reichenbach Fall”). Whatever they plot, the viewers are not privy to it. No indication is given, no amount of reassurance offered. At some point, John arrives to help contemplate how they might prove their innocence and Moriarty’s guilt. Sherlock comes to some realization, and contacts Moriarty, taunting him to “Come and play. Bart’s Hospital rooftop” (“The Reichenbach Fall”). Much like “The Final Problem,” John receives a message that calls him away and leaves the detective alone. In this case, someone calls John and informs

him that Mrs. Hudson has been gravely injured. John rushes off, disgusted that Sherlock is not coming too. Not even a moment later, Sherlock receives a response from Moriarty, “I’m waiting” (“The Reichenbach Fall”). And so, Sherlock climbs to the rooftop, to Moriarty and the final problem.

The final problem is neither a case nor a code to crack. It is not even a puzzle, really. It is, quite simply, staying alive. Moriarty calls it boring, and declares his best distraction was Sherlock, but even that is dull now because beating Sherlock was easy. Sherlock attempts to disprove him by revealing he’s discovered the key code that facilitated Moriarty’s break-ins. Moriarty scoffs. There is no code, he reveals. A daylight robbery—even a triple daylight robbery—does not require an all access pass, just a few willing participants to ease the way. But both Sherlock and the authorities’ belief that such a code exists and their fear of it reveals a very modern fear: a key code that accesses all computer databases and has the ability to tear down our technologically-based world. He knew this ruse would fool Sherlock, assuring, “That’s your weakness; you always want everything to be clever” (“The Reichenbach Fall”) even when it is something simple, like bribing individuals. Moriarty used Sherlock’s pride and his intelligence against him by using such a simple element that it would be overlooked.

But now, it is time to finish the game with one final act: Sherlock’s suicide. Moriarty rambles about the newspapers and their claims that the genius detective is a fraud—his death will be framed as a shamed fraud’s escape. Then, Moriarty provides incentive. Only Sherlock’s suicide will save the three most important people to him: John, Mrs. Hudson, and Lestrade. Sherlock appears to be in shock, backed into a corner

he cannot leave. And then, he laughs. As long as he has Moriarty, he controls the killers.

Moriarty insists Sherlock will not, cannot break him; Sherlock just smiles and asserts:

Sherlock: "I am you."

Moriarty: "Nah, you're ordinary. You're on the side of the angels."

Sherlock: "I might be on their side but don't for one second believe that I am one of them."

Moriarty: "No, you're not. I see. You're not ordinary. You're me. You're me.

Thank you. As long as I'm alive you can save your friends. You've got a way out.

Well, good luck with that." ("The Reichenbach Fall")

Then, in a shocking swift motion, Moriarty places a gun in his mouth and pulls the trigger. Now there is no one to call off the killers, no one to prevent John, Mrs. Hudson, and Lestrade's deaths. The only solution is for Sherlock to play his part and commit suicide.

Sherlock calls John, who has just returned to St. Bart's after finding Mrs. Hudson perfectly healthy. John stays in the street, watching Sherlock on the precipice of the hospital, mere centimeters from jumping. Sherlock apologizes, admits to being a giant fraud and orchestrating everything. John argues, unconvinced. Finally, Sherlock asks John for one last thing, saying "This phone call, it's my note. That's what people do, isn't it? Leave a note?" and ignores John's protests, uttering a "Goodbye, John" ("The Reichenbach Fall") before stepping off of the rooftop and plummeting down, down, down to the street below.

The scene is as disturbing and unfortunate as it sounds. Sherlock lays sprawled on the sidewalk, a crowd gathering around his prone figure. Blood pools by his head and

eyes stare blankly out at nothing. John pushes through, trying to reach him but he is disoriented from a collision with a biker and shock is taking over. He is sluggish, he is dazed and confused—all captured beautifully by the cinematography and sound, with its slowed images and muffled noises. The only clear elements are John's grief-stricken, disbelieving expression and his repeated words, "Jesus, no. God, no" ("The Reichenbach Fall"). Unlike Conan Doyle's Watson, John witnesses Sherlock's death firsthand and can attest to not only seeing him jump but also seeing his body lying in the street. In the midst of this confusion, viewers see the assassins pack up their weapons and leave their targets unscathed. The pact has been sealed, the final element slid into place. Sherlock is dead, and, their contracts are thus terminated.

With his jump, Sherlock has completed his part and the mutual shared destruction is fulfilled. Both detective and criminal are dead. Making their deaths suicides rather than accidental fatalities in an evenly matched fight reflects entirely modern sensibilities. Suicide is, unfortunately, a rather common and often publicized occurrence. Moriarty kills himself out of boredom with the world and a sense of having accomplished everything possible. Also, he sees it as the only option for beating Sherlock and forcing that death. Therefore, suicide is the rational option for Moriarty. For Sherlock, the suicide is less of a choice and more of a decision made for him. It is also a decision that would have been easily made earlier in his life.

Rationally, he should have saved himself and let the other three individuals die—self-preservation and all that. Previously, saving himself would have been the quick, easy and clear-cut decision. However, Sherlock is not the same man in this episode as he was in "A Study in Pink." He has changed since then. The growth this adaptation depicts in

Sherlock is readily apparent. He will not allow his friends to die for him, not when he can save them. As he considers his options—to survive at the cost of others or to die and save his friends—viewers are privy to a moment of pure panic, confusion, grief, and affection. This is not a man devoid of emotion or attachment, a man who only acts logically. He is acting out of emotion, out of affection and in lieu of rationality. Sherlock makes the decision based in emotion, and saves his friends. An earlier Sherlock would have chosen to save himself without a second's doubt, making the growth and his progress throughout the series that much more noticeable.

Additionally, Sherlock's suicide fits into his damaged image. His suicide would practically be an admission of his fraudulence; a man wrongfully accused would feel no overwhelming shame or guilt at being called a fraud, but a man rightfully revealed as a fake might be so consumed with guilt and shame that he sees no way to regain a respectable reputation or living, and thus choose death. It also reveals the way the media and mass opinion may greatly influence an individual. In recent years, there have been several suicides due to overwhelming negative (often social) media or shaming talk amongst individuals. Sherlock would then be one of many to break under this pressure and scrutiny, and take his life because of it. At the very least, his suicide would have been extensively discussed given his relative fame and former importance to London. Again, such attention to a suicide would not be irregular in our society. Various individuals' suicides have become high-profile cases that are discussed and highly reported in the media over the past few years. Any media coverage regarding Sherlock's suicide in the show would also reflect the general public's way of keeping Sherlock alive, much like Victorian England tried to deny his death and keep their favorite detective alive.

Yet, modern fans of Sherlock Holmes know his death is not the end of the story. It is well known that Sherlock survives. “The Reichenbach Fall” confirms this in the final moments of the episode. John visits Sherlock’s grave, accompanied by Mrs. Hudson. Left alone with the headstone, John makes a short, heartfelt speech that sums up his relationship and his faith in the detective, his greatest friend. John walks away without ever glancing back, and misses what the viewers see. Sherlock Holmes stands off to the side, watching the entire time. The great detective is not dead, but very much alive. And yet, he stays hidden, holds back and deigns to reveal himself to his closest friend.

Making Sherlock’s death a very public suicide in busy London caused many viewers to speculate how exactly the show planned to resurrect the detective. Conan Doyle’s Holmes bested Moriarty and watched his nemesis fall into the watery depths before hiding himself from view. But how could a person fake a jump off of a roof in broad daylight in one of the world’s busiest cities? Some fans suspected that this depiction of Sherlock’s death indicated the end of the series, and that this fake suicide would be too difficult to explain. Regardless, co-creators Moffat and Gattis sought “to revive [Sherlock], celebrating, rather than disparaging, his popular appeal” (Harrington 76) rather than attempt to end the series with his death. Their intention was always to create a return for Sherlock, and to celebrate that return.

### #SherlockLives<sup>10</sup>

Two years after his death, “The Empty Hearse” offers viewers a myriad of explanations for Sherlock’s survival. Some are entirely implausible and others fairly believable, creating an air of mystery and uncertainty. Viewers are given three possible

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<sup>10</sup> The BBC utilized the hashtag “#SherlockLives” to help publicize the third series of *Sherlock* on various social media platforms and other promotional methods, such as posters. Use of this hashtag on social media platforms allowed fans to interact with and find other fans, discussions, and updates regarding the series.

explanations in detail, but it is implied that many other theories exist. Two of the theories are offered by the group The Empty Hearse that fervently believes Sherlock Holmes has survived. Oddly enough, this group is spearheaded by Detective Anderson, who had always been suspicious of and held animosity towards Sherlock, his methods, and his ability.

In fact, the first survival theory is one of Anderson's as he attempts to convince Lestrade that Sherlock survived. Anderson theorizes that Sherlock jumped off of St. Bart's while attached to a bungee cord that stopped him short of hitting the pavement. The detective was then yanked him back up, sending him crashing through one of the hospital windows and to safety. Meanwhile, accomplices arranged for John to become disoriented, missing the last few seconds of everything, and allowing them to place Moriarty's body, complete with a false face and wig to resemble Sherlock, on the pavement. Thus, Sherlock's death is faked and he escapes. Lestrade insists Sherlock is dead and tells Anderson, "Two years and the theories keep getting more stupid. [...] Guilt! That's all this is. You pushed us into thinking that Sherlock was a fraud, you and Donovan. You did this and it killed him and he's staying dead" ("The Empty Hearse"). This theory is followed by news reports rehashing Sherlock's death, detailing the too-late discovered truth in Moriarty's guilt, and Sherlock's actual innocence and post-mortem vindication by the court.

The next theory is offered by a member of Anderson's group. The Sherlock John saw at the top of St. Bart's was nothing more than a dummy. Sherlock himself was sat safely on the roof, keeping the dummy erect with a rope and then sending the dummy tumbling to its death by releasing the rope. Sitting next to him was Moriarty, the



detective and the criminal lean in to kiss and—Anderson interrupts the woman speaking. This is the least plausible of all the theories. Just then, it is announced that Sherlock Holmes has returned.

Sherlock himself offers a final survival explanation to Detective Anderson. Moriarty's crime world was so vast and so deeply entrenched in the world that Sherlock and Mycroft hatched a plan. Sherlock had to die in order to disappear and then dismantle this crime world. He explained that there were 13 scenarios that could have happened at the top of St. Bart's, each with its own code name and plan. The only thing unplanned for was Moriarty's own suicide. Sherlock enacted plan "Lazarus" by texting his brother, stepped up to the ledge, and let the plan play out. Sherlock likened it to a scene from a play: between his homeless network, Mycroft's men, and Molly Hooper, the entire plot went off without a hitch. An inflatable was placed on the pavement to dull his fall, and actors moved into place: casual by-passers, doctors, a biker that knocked him, a corpse to stage the scene until Sherlock himself could replace it. The inflatable was quickly packed up and carried away. Actors added blood to the streets and to Sherlock's face to make it look more real. Sherlock placed a small squash ball under his armpit to make it appear he had no pulse, knowing John would check.

Anderson appears to accept the theory, but he then starts to voice question after question. Finally, he asks, "Why are you telling me this? If you'd pulled that off, I'm the last person you'd tell the truth..." ("The Empty Hearse"). Sherlock seems confused by the question, but Anderson has a point. Anderson openly disliked Sherlock before his disappearance, so why choose him of all people—why not John or Mrs. Hudson or even Lestrade—to confide his secret in, why tell him? It leaves viewers with uncertainty; they

want to believe Sherlock's story and finally understand his secret, but Anderson's disbelief leaves them wondering themselves if Sherlock was less than honest. And then, the end of the episode reveals that John himself has no idea how Sherlock survived. He asks, "Sherlock, you are going to tell me how you did it? How you jumped off that building and survived?" only to have Sherlock dodge the question and answer, "You know my methods, John. I am known to be indestructible" ("The Empty Hearse"). No answer is given, no clarity seen. All is left is a cloud of mystery and uncertainty surrounding Sherlock's survival. The last explanation, Sherlock's to Anderson, is the most plausible and seems to come from the most credible source. At the same time, though, there is just enough doubt and disbelief remaining. What is the truth?

Moriarty's resurrection is, as of yet, undiscussed. His return was briefly alluded to in the final scenes of "His Last Vow." One may hope that more information will be shed on this development in the highly anticipated fourth series. Much like Sherlock's death and resurrection, the explanation behind Moriarty's false suicide will be highly speculated. An injury like that, a death like that, is hard to fake—so how did he do it? How did he fool everyone? According to Sherlock, Molly Hooper and his homeless network helped him, but who helped Moriarty? A task like faking a violent suicide in front of a direct witness and then being declared dead would have required help.

In all, this modern rendition of Sherlock and Moriarty's death serves to depict Moriarty's equal intelligence and capabilities, however malicious, and to highlight Sherlock's growth. Their deaths keep to the canonical requirement that both die, and provide a potential end to the series. It also maintains the canonical truth that Moriarty is Sherlock's equal. Neither Sherlock nor Moriarty can win in any dispute or challenge;

they are too evenly matched and the only way to defeat the one is at the other's downfall as well. Unlike Conan Doyle's work, though, "The Reichenbach Fall" also allows viewers a chance to see Sherlock's growth. His death is more or less a choice, and the decision hinges on his affection and attachment to his friends. If Sherlock had not changed, he would have chosen to save himself and sacrifice his friends without hesitation; it is the most logical decision. And yet, he made his decision based on emotion, not logic, and saved his friends, placing their lives above his despite their relative unimportance, lack of talent and lower intelligence in comparison to him. Moriarty forces Sherlock into the situation, but no one forces him to make this choice. He could have lived, he could have saved his reputation, he could have continued to solve cases. Instead, Sherlock chose an option that is only possible because of his development and saves his friends, revealing the growth of his relationships.

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### **A GREAT MAN BECOMES A GOOD ONE**

In 1887, Sir Anthony Conan Doyle published his first Sherlock Holmes story. By doing so, he unwittingly unleashed the "great detective" unto the world. London scooped him up and held him close to its heart, its people treating him like an extraordinary friend in their affections. They were enthralled by Holmes, loved him, lost and mourned him, and then regained him. They started decades of scholarly discussion, pastiche, fan fiction, adaptations, and an avid following of the detective's work. Today, Sherlock Holmes continues to be a highly recognizable, widely known, and well-loved character. Not only does he persist, but his influence is clear in other detective characters or detective-driven plots. One can only imagine Conan Doyle's abject horror to discover his lasting legacy is

Sherlock Holmes. In his opinion, his other works were much more worthy of a legacy, and the detective was nothing more than a thorn in his side.

Would Conan Doyle recognize his detective today? Would he see his Holmes in the BBC's Sherlock? Or would he see a resemblance of a man he once penned?

Unarguably—in this adaptation and in others—Sherlock Holmes retains his core features. His mannerisms, personality, and brilliance are untouched, unchanged. And yet, within these canonical confines, the BBC delivers an incredibly unique take on the character. Sherlock is not Holmes, but a fraternal twin. They are incredibly alike, visually related and clearly raised in the same ways with the same experiences, beliefs, education, and approach to life. But there remains an element that separates the two, and that makes them fraternal rather than identical. The 21st century setting allows for a subtle, significant inclusion: emotional growth.

Throughout the series, Sherlock exhibits character growth and expansion. By no means does he grow substantially; he experiences no huge change in personality or action. Rather, he experiences slight alterations in behavior that appear and seemingly disappear, fleeting moments of growth. These moments might be slight and the changes small, but even the slightest change is significant in a character that has been confined to particular, prescribed development as dictated by Conan Doyle's work. The BBC is careful to balance their alterations with large doses of canonical familiarity. They lose no fans by disregarding Conan Doyle's characterization or by ignoring the loved aspects of the detective. These elements are kept and safeguarded, but slight tweaks and allowances for modernity result in a nearly new character. Doing so keeps a delicate balance between giving viewers something new and maintaining a beloved character.

This precarious balance of new and old captivates both brand-new and veteran Sherlockians. Sherlock's brilliance and immense ability coupled with his pure rationality and machine-like personality draw viewers in, much like in Conan Doyle's work. We still want to know the answer to these "unsolvable" cases, we want to see how Sherlock solves them, discover what we missed in the clues. However, we stay and continue to tune in because we see the potential this character has to grow. We want to see what Sherlock will become, what choices he might make and what is motivating those decisions—it might even be emotion instead of logic. What might this growth mean for the series, for the stories, characters like John or Moriarty, and Sherlock himself? We do not know, but as viewers and fans, we cannot wait to find out and eagerly await the next episode, the next development.

This growth is thrown into sharp contrast by comparison to Moriarty. Moriarty is relatively stagnant in both the canon and adaptation. He is mechanical, a walking machine of evil. His character does not develop relationships or experience the value of connections and emotions. Instead, Moriarty continues to rely solely on logic and rationality. He remains, still and untouched like a pond's surface. Sherlock, however, is the pond after a stone has been skipped, a foot dipped, or a passing breeze: it has ripples that grow, expand, and duplicate.

Inspector Lestrade may have said it the best: "Sherlock Holmes is a great man. And I think one day, if we're very, very lucky, he might even be a good one" ("A Study in Pink"). A great man that might become a good one: the BBC is telling viewers that growth is the key to this adaptation and to this particular Sherlock Holmes. It strives to show that Sherlock Holmes, this wonderfully beloved and fiercely protected character,

can still develop in new ways, even over 100 years after his creation. It is this hope for development—cultivated, cherished, and guided development—that makes Sherlock so different from Holmes. One is stuck in a Victorian novel and the other is emerging as a 21st Century man that values logic and reason above all else, that holds onto his past but allows for an unknown future. Sherlock Holmes has always been a great man and the great detective, but now, perhaps for the first time, he might be more than that.

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