The Evolution of Sherlock Holmes:

Adapting Character

Across Time and Text

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to introduce, justify, and apply a better framework for analysing Sherlock Holmes, one of the most adapted characters of all time. The project works to resituate the focus of those involved in studying adaptations of Sherlock Holmes from an examination of the discrete transition of a text from page to screen, to the evolution of the character as it changes across various intertexts and through time. The purpose is to show that it is the character specifically, and not the literary text with its narrative, genric, and aesthetic qualifications, that is being adapted, and that with this in mind, studying adaptations of Sherlock Holmes should involve a study of the various processes, pressures, and mechanisms that shape, change, and define the character throughout its hundreds of screen afterlives.

This thesis then analyses many of these processes with the aim of contributing to our understanding of how a character like Holmes is moulded through remediation. It takes into account how the character's indices shift and accumulate as they are variously performed. It also considers how the mechanisms of selection function to privilege certain incarnations of the character, and how that privileging becomes a part of future readings. Finally, it addresses how reception and perception by audiences influence how the character is read, and thus how it is understood.

By considering all of these aspects of the evolutionary process, and by avoiding a chronological or even a linear organization of the texts under scrutiny, this work seeks to offer a more complete answer to the question of how a single source can support a multitude of varied, even contradictory adaptations and remain relevant and interesting through the years.

Acknowledgements

Irregulars, The Sherlock Holmes Society of London, and many other unaffiliated, but no less supportive Sherlockians for their encyclopaedic knowledge of all things Sherlock and for their eagerness to champion my research.

Finally, the pursuit, much less the completion, of this project would not have been possible without my family. I could not have produced this thesis without the love and support of my partner Paul Hyde, who has never missed an opportunity to encourage and take pride in me. Nor would I have been able to attempt a PhD at all without the unwavering confidence and financial assistance of my mum, dad, brother, and grandmothers. I owe them all more than I can ever articulate or repay.

An earlier edited version of the section titled '"Such Individuals Exist Outside Stories": Constructing Modern Mythology' from the introduction has been published as 'Sherlockian Simulacra: Adaptation and the Postmodern Construction of Reality' in *Literature/Film Quarterly* 40:2 (2012): 191-6. Section Two of Chapter Two of this thesis, titled 'Anti-heroism and Stabilizing Selection: The Post-Millennial Sherlock Holmes', has been published in an earlier form as 'Surveying the Post-Millennial Sherlock Holmes: A Case for the Great Detective as a Man of our Times' in *Adaptation* online (23 Apr. doi: 10.1093) and in *Adaptation* 6.3 (2013): 384-9. An earlier edited version of the section titled 'Sherlockian Practices: Fan Discourse as Extended Phenotype' from Chapter Three has been published as 'Winning the Grand Game: *Sherlock* and the Fragmentation of Fan Discourse' in *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom: Essays on the BBC Series*. Ed. Louisa Ellen Stein and Kristina Busse. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012.

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Theorising Character and Modern Mythology

'I trust that age doth not wither nor custom stale my infinite variety.'

–Sherlock Holmes, 'The Adventure of the Empty House'

'The Scarlet Thread': Unraveling a Tangled Character

In his first appearance, in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* of 1887 in Sir Arthur
Conan Doyle's novella *A Study in Scarlet*, Sherlock Holmes described his task as a
detective this way: 'There's the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless
skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it'
(Conan Doyle, Vol. 3 76) Like the fictional detective who is the subject of this work, as
scholars we also follow threads in order to seek to unravel a tangled skein. In the case of
adaptation studies, and in line with a poststructuralist view, the skein is a complex web
of meanings, derived from innumerable sources, that each contribute to how and why
adaptations are created and consumed. It is our task to find and attempt to unweave the
threads that bring us closer to a systematic understanding of our discipline and the texts
we analyse.

Rather than address the process of translation of novel to film (or, indeed, any
other medium), the aim of this work is to analyse major shifts that the Sherlock Holmes
character has undergone throughout its history in terms of its representation on screen
aesthetically and ideologically. This requires me to draw from several models of
analysis, but demands, particularly, a poststructuralist approach. I will adopt some
useful aspects of structuralism—particularly in the work of Roland Barthes before his
shift to poststructural thought, as his 1957 *Mythologies* and 1966 'An Introduction to

the Structural Analysis of Narrative' provide a valuable foundation for theorising the concept of 'character' as well as for the establishment of and justification for an evolutionary framework for understanding how and why the Sherlock Holmes character has appeared in the guises it has on screen.

In *Mythologies,* Barthes begins to discuss, in different terms, the notion of an evolutionary model for understanding myths. The work's concluding chapter, 'Myth Today', applies Saussure's field of semiology [semiotics] to the process of building mythology. Barthes notes that

> As a total of linguistic signs, the meaning of the myth has its own value, it belongs to history... a signification is already built, and could not very well be self-sufficient if myth did not take hold of it and did not turn it suddenly into an empty, parasitical form. The meaning is *already* complete, it postulates a kind of knowledge, a past, a memory, a comparative order of facts, ideas, decisions. (226-7)

In other words, the meaning of the myth is bound up in its history, and each form of the myth—for the purposes of adaptations, we may understand this to mean particular depictions of the Sherlock Holmes character situated in a variety of narratives—draws on this meaning when it is constructed to signify the myth. When a version of Sherlock Holmes signifies 'Sherlock Holmes' aesthetically, linguistically, narratively, historically, or in any other manner, it becomes privy to all the previous meanings associated with the character's mythology.

This does not mean that each version has the same meaning, as becoming privy to the acquired signified qualities of the myth does not necessitate signifying them, and no form or adaptation has the scope to signify everything Sherlock Holmes has ever

meant. Not only would such an adaptation be impractical in length and construction, the character has been depicted with many conflicting attributes that would render the resulting form unintelligible. Each adaptation must therefore select, through various mechanisms, aspects of the myth's meaning to highlight, restrict, or expand. Barthes goes on to say that

> ...the form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal. One believes that the meaning is going to die, but it is a death with reprieve; the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment. The meaning will be for the form like an instantaneous reserve of history, a timed richness, which it is possible to call and dismiss in a sort of rapid alternation: the form must constantly be able to be rooted again in the meaning and to get there what nature it needs for nutriment.... (227)

Again, in terms of adapting the Sherlock Holmes character, this may be interpreted as meaning that the attributes of the character are merely at the disposal of each adaptation, which will both draw on them and rewrite them.

This process of continual rewriting creates what Barthes calls a 'semiological chain', in which the 'final term...will become the first term of the greater system which it builds and of which it is only a part' (223). This describes the process by which a mythology accumulates meaning through retelling: the final meaning of one form is absorbed into the myth's meaning, which is then the foundation of the next form. In this way, each adaptation may draw on an ever-shifting mythology, in which every adaptation becomes part of the referent for each subsequent adaptation. Although

Barthes was not writing in terms of adaptation, his description of the semiotic construction of mythology helps justify the evolutionary model that this works utilises as its framework.

This application of structuralism to the process of mythmaking is useful when considering how Sherlock Holmes has both maintained a link to its source, but, through repeated 'retelling' though adaptation, accumulated and shifted meaning over time. It is these shifts in meaning, rather than the stability of the narrative from source to adaptation, that this work will investigate. Because my work focuses on the moments of and reasons for change and instability in the character, its larger framework draws on poststructuralism, which in his discussion of the movement as it relates to adaptation, Robert Stam notes focuses on '...slippage and indeterminacy, as unstable signs move ceaselessly outward within a proliferation of allusion spiraling from text to text. If structuralism assume[s] stable, homeostatic structures', Stam adds, 'poststructuralism look[s] for moments of rupture and change' (*Film Theory: An Introduction* 180). A necessary effect of this approach is that I must acknowledge that my interpretations of these 'moments of rupture and change', during which the Holmes character is redefined, are, themselves, unstable, and that the same changes will likely not resist many competing interpretations. It is not possible to include every possible interpretation; however, I feel that those I present are strong and, most importantly, properly illustrate the processes, pressures, and mechanisms of adaptation that I am investigating.[1]

Before explaining these processes, pressures, and mechanisms in detail, it is necessary to justify my choice to consider the character of Sherlock Holmes as the base unit of adaptation for the purposes of my analyses, as that choice is at the heart of this

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[1] I will offer justification for my choices in cases studies as they come under scrutiny throughout this work.

project. The study of character has traditionally been bound to the study of narratology, in which character is understood as a function of narrative. Various scholars of narratology have unpicked this function in different ways, but they are fundamentally in agreement that narrative is the primary device of storytelling, and character is one of several base units that serve to construct it.

Vladímir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* takes this formalist approach to systematizing the analysis of, specifically, the fairy-tale. Propp focuses on the linear construction of the tale,[2] which places emphasis on the functions, or narrative actions, such as 'a prisoner begs for his freedom', 'the hero is approached with a request for mercy', or 'a hostile creature engages the hero in combat' (40; 41; 42). Propp argues that 'functions must be defined independently of the characters who are supposed to fulfill them' (66). This model would make an analysis of Sherlock Holmes, whose function within a linear tale might be defined, loosely, as to operate as a hero, answer a call for help, investigate a mystery, apply inductive reasoning, and restore order, indistinguishable from any crime story with a similar or derivative character. It would also, problematically, preclude placing traditional narrative tales, like television and film adaptations, pastiches, and fan fiction in conversation with uses of the Sherlock Holmes character, as a signifier, in materials such as advertising, toys, and other ephemera.

Barthes concurs with the notion that 'a narrative is never made up of anything other than functions: in differing degrees, everything in it signifies' (qtd. in McFarlane 13). He provides a more useful, if still problematic, model than Propp for examining

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[2] 'Tale' may be understood to mean 'story', defined by Terence Hawkins in *Structuralism and Semiotics* as 'the basic succession of events, the raw material which confronts the artist.' as opposed to "plot", which Hawkins says 'represents the distinctive way in which the "story" is made strange, creatively deformed and defamiliarized' (qtd. in McFarlane 23).

character. Barthes makes a distinction between 'functions proper', which refer to events, much like Propp's functions, and 'indices', which refers 'to a more or less diffuse concept which is nonetheless necessary to the story: personality traits concerning characters, information of "atmosphere", and so on' (Barthes, 'Structural Analysis' 247). In his 1996 *Novel to Film*, Brian McFarlane continues to utilise Barthes' model, and clarifies that indices 'embrace, for instance, psychological information relating to characters, data regarding their identity, notions of atmosphere, and representations of place...[which influence] our reading of narrative in a pervasive rather than a linear way; they do not refer to operations but to a functionality of *being*' (13). Barthes' indices come closer to the understanding of character as it is relevant to multiple interpretations across disparate adaptations. Unfortunately, McFarlane, like Barthes, places his larger focus on 'functions proper', a consequence of work that James Naremore claims 'is obsessively concerned with problems of textual fidelity—and necessarily so, because the major purpose of his book is to demonstrate how the "cardinal features" of narrative...can be transposed intact to movies' (Naremore 9). This project is not concerned with the cardinal features of narrative beyond how they can illuminate shifts in character across texts, and is therefore more in line with Naremore's approach than McFarlane's.

Barthes further divides his indices into 'indices proper', which are general elements of character and atmosphere that are fairly open to interpretation and adaptation, and 'informants', which are specific elements, 'which provide pure, locally relevant data' (Barthes 'Structural Analysis' 249). The latter is employed when a character on screen is named 'Sherlock Holmes' and is employed as a 'consulting detective'—these labels are codified in Conan Doyle's writing, and are used to

immediately distinguish a detective/crime film or television programme from a Sherlock Holmes film or programme. The former is employed when fleshing out the narrative world in which Holmes operates and the manner in which he operates within it, and may be drawn from Conan Doyle (when, for example, Holmes' words or actions suggest a mistrust of women, a trait which corresponds to descriptions of his literary antecedent), may be built on previous adaptations (as, for instance, many films drew on Nigel Bruce's depiction of Watson as a comic sidekick in the 20th Century Fox and later Universal films of 1939-46), or may be original to the adaptation (for example, utilising present-day New York City as the setting for CBS's *Elementary* with the explanation that Holmes' father owns the brownstone in which the detective lives). Character is necessarily a combination of indices proper and informants, as the former provide substance, and the latter structure to generate a recognizable figure. Although Barthes argues for the structural supremacy of functions proper, he nonetheless declares that 'indices can be saturated (completed)... on the level of character' (Barthes 'Structural Analysis' 249).

The vital concern for this work is that though a character will always serve some function within a narrative, it is not necessary that that narrative be consistent for the character to be recognisable. In other words, when an adaptation is a 'Sherlock Holmes adaptation', the story and the plot—the functions proper—may or may not be drawn from Conan Doyle, but some form of indices signifying Sherlock Holmes as a character will be present. Throughout this work, it must be understood that when I describe the character of Sherlock Holmes, I am invoking indices, and a discussion of 'trans-adaptational' character refers to the application of indices signifying Sherlock Holmes beyond the scope of the functions proper of either the literary Holmes or any specific

adaptation, but rather the collection of indices that signify Sherlock Holmes the character in any narrative.

It is at this point that Barthes' definitions and analyses become less applicable to this work; according to Barthes, 'No unit pertaining to a certain level can be endowed with meaning unless it can be integrated into a superior level' ('Structural Analysis' 242). Functionally, this is true: the indices comprising the Sherlock Holmes character only signify that character within the context of a narrative. My argument, however, is that the specific attributes of individual narratives, from the sixty Conan Doyle tales to screen adaptations, proceed from the Holmes character, which, in terms of 'Sherlock Holmes adaptations' is the fundamental unit of information transferred. The character is adapted rather than any particular narrative.

The reason that I have elected to place my focus on character rather than narrative is that my concern is the larger intertextual and cultural conversation at work across the multiplicity of adaptations that fall under the umbrella of 'Sherlock Holmes adaptations'. Using the evolving and accumulating indices representing the Holmes character as the unit under scrutiny provides a framework for examining the conditions under which the highlighted traits shift and mutate, and thus contribute to the breadth and variety of adaptations produced. For example, an adaptation's narrative may include a cardinal function influenced by Holmes' manners. Consider the gentlemanly solicitousness of Jeremy Brett's Sherlock Holmes toward Violet Smith in Granada's episode 'The Solitary Cyclist' (1984) in opposition to Benedict Cumberbatch's rude treatment of Molly Hooper in *Sherlock*'s 'A Scandal in Belgravia' (2012). Both traits— solicitousness and abrupt dismissiveness—are indexed as qualities of the character in Conan Doyle; however, no narrative is bound to reference both competing extremes.

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The narrative may be constructed relying on either; both are 'accurate' depictions of the character, and each results in a different version of the same adapted figure. It is through a consideration of those indices within their narrative frameworks, rather than the narratives alone, which obviously present different circumstances for the behaviours, that we are able to undertake a broad cross-textual approach with a measure of continuity.

Several works have set a precedent for focusing on character as the link between adaptations, notably Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott's *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero*. Bennett and Woollacott summarize their argument by stating that they analyze

> the elements from which the figure of Bond has been constructed so that, in reading the "texts of Bond", some of those elements may be bent back against themselves and Bond emerge[s] as a site around which very different values may be articulated. Popular heroes are public property, not in the sense that anyone can produce a Bond film, but in the sense that their images can be reworked, inflected in different directions and to different ends.' (283)

Their language is significant in that they identify—and utilise throughout their work—the term 'texts of Bond' to refer to a unified, if constantly fluctuating, set of works, including novels, films, fanzines, advertising material, 'that are grouped together under the name of the hero figure which they jointly construct and circulate' (6), rather than by narrative continuity. In *Bond and Beyond*, they develop the concept of the popular hero, a label they also explicitly apply to Sherlock Holmes (14), to denote a character that has achieved a cultural significance beyond his original fictional iteration. Without

directly referencing Barthes' work, Bennett and Woollacott claim that 'Narrative and performance are "flooded"...by the demonstration of the "pure beingness" of Bond' (275), thus linguistically privileging character indices over narrative functions proper.

Bennett and Woollacott also work to undermine the primacy of the 'source', arguing that '...properties [such as "a definite order of narrative progression"] cannot, in themselves, validate certain received meanings above others; they do not provide a point of "truth" in relation to which readings may be normatively and hierarchically ranked, or discounted' (65). This broadly intertextual approach is central to my own work, in which I focus on interrogating instances of flux, rather than quantifying attributes that are stable. To paraphrase Bennett and Woollacott, it is the '*malleability*' of Holmes and 'his ability to be changed and adapted with the times, that has constituted the basis of his continuing...popularity' (19-20).

This focus on character and my aim of interrogating the shifts and changes in that character across a multiplicity of texts demands some method of systematization to organize the many processes, pressures, and mechanisms that drive them. As the modes of categorization inherent in formalist and structuralist approaches are limiting as well as out-dated, I will employ and adapt a more contemporary evolutionary model. This will provide a framework for placing disparate adaptations in conversation and analysing the creative and cultural pressures at work on the Holmes character.

In a 2007 issue of *New Literary History*, Linda Hutcheon and University of Saskatchewan biology professor Gary Bortolotti published an article that they co-wrote called 'On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and "Success"— Biologically'. In their article, they detailed what they call a homology—a biological term indicating similar traits or behaviors that share an origin (as distinct from analogy,

in which the traits or behaviors are simply similar with no common origin). Their homology links evolutionary biology and adaptation studies, which, they claim, share their origin in a common process: 'both kinds of adaptation are understandable as processes of replication' (444). Though they are neither the first nor last to assert the utility of a biological parallel to the discipline of adaptation studies, and particularly to investigating the interrelationship between multiple adaptations of the same source, Bortolotti and Hutcheon offer a compelling model for analyzing narrative adaptation, which draws its strength from presenting a series of specific biological concepts and suggestions for how those concepts may elucidate our understanding of the evolution of cultural ideas.

Like the work of Propp, Barthes, and McFarlane, Bortolotti and Hutcheon's article focuses on broad narrative adaptation, and uses several unrelated examples to illustrate the usefulness of the disciplinary parallel they draw. I want to expand its scope by arguing that it is useful not simply in tracing the evolution of broad ideas, like general folk-tale narrative tropes and character archetypes, but that it may be applied to specific versions of those tropes and archetypes if many versions of those narratives and characters have been adapted from the same source.

Each separate component of their homology can be usefully applied to aspects of the Sherlock Holmes character to create a framework by which we can investigate how the character has evolved through a multiplicity of adaptations. Bortolotti and Hutcheon claim that the basic question to be answered in biology is 'why does life exist in such a dazzling array of forms?' and they transfer that impulse to adaptation studies by asking the question, 'why do the same stories exist in such a startling array of forms?' This work will adopt and refine that question to investigate why, specifically, Sherlock

Holmes exists in such a staggering array of forms. This question should be understood as distinct from the much more examined question of why the character endures, which is, in its essence, a question about the stable and persistent elements of the character that contribute to its popularity. In contrast, my question focuses on the instabilities, and how and why the character changes and evolves. A consideration of those aspects that persist are embedded within this investigation, but they do not constitute its entirety, nor even its majority.

The starting point for this evolutionary framework involves defining a few parallels. In doing so, I will defer to the outline presented by Bortolotti/Hutcheon: In post-Darwinian biology, evolution is understood as a process of mutation and selection, geared toward survival. In biological terms, the unit of information that replicates and is perpetuated is the gene. Organisms function, essentially, as vehicles for genes—the more suited they are to their environments in any number of ways, the more likely they will be to survive and pass on the genes they carry. The cultural parallel to the gene is called a meme—a unit of cultural information. In its original coinage, Richard Dawkins defined it as an 'idea', but Bortolotti and Hutcheon substitute 'narrative' or 'story' for 'idea' in order to avoid the mire of intra-disciplinary battling in the field of memetics. As I noted in my earlier discussion of character, Sherlock Holmes, with the fundamental traits of its literary ancestor, transcends any of the specific stories into which it was first written, the character itself—derived from any recognisable permutations of its indices—is the base unit of cultural information that is shared between adaptations. The Sherlock Holmes character is the meme.

Individual adaptations are, therefore, like bodies—they exist in many environmentally-influenced variations, or, in biological terms, 'phenotypes', with the

purpose of perpetuating the meme. With these definitions in mind, this evolutionary model demands a reassessment of 'success' as it applies to adaptation. Bortolotti and Hutcheon use their article to battle the concept of fidelity discourse, which defines success in relation to specific adaptations as products. An evolutionary definition of success is not concerned with evaluations of individual adaptations—the idea of a biologist evaluating the quality of an animal based on how closely it resembles its ancestors is laughable—instead, success in this model is defined by the meme's ability to change, replicate, and proliferate. The study of this type of success is about 'revealing lineages of descent, not similarities of form alone', which helps us 'understand how a specific narrative changes over time' (445).

Bortolotti and Hutcheon appropriate another term: 'systematist'. 'Systematists', they write, 'study the patterns of variation with regard to the geography and environment that a 'species' occupies and, beyond that, investigate the evolutionary processes that cause the variation; it is in this spirit that we seek to study narrative variation' (446). It is in this spirit also, that I seek to study the patterns and variations of Sherlock Holmes, and what follows are applications of the several biologically-informed mechanisms for both modification and selection that Bortolotti and Hutcheon outline, and a consideration of the methods that they offer for discerning the patterns in and successfulness of those modifications. My establishment of the evolutionary model offers examples, which I hope will both illustrate the model and shed light on the evolution of the Holmes character. Each example is expanded and examined in detail in the chapters of this work. It is necessary to note, once again, that these examples do not represent the only possible illustrations of the model I am presenting, but that I have

selected them as particularly strong candidates, and will further justify my choices in the chapters discussing each.

The first evolutionary mechanism Bortolotti and Hutcheon apply to adaptation studies is the simple notion of the practical inadequacy of physical bodies in the long-term. This inadequacy, in biological terms, may stem from short lifespan, or lack of suitability to a changing environment. In terms of adaptation, this translates into a specific adaptation becoming outdated or irrelevant, with the consequent danger of the death of the meme it perpetuates. The meme will have to mutate and inhabit a newer, more relevant body—the Sherlock Holmes character has done this several hundred times, with varying levels of success. In the more than a century's worth of Sherlock Holmes adaptations there have been several notable attempts to reinvigorate the character. For example, this process may involve embodying Holmes in an actor who reinterprets the role. Countless articles in the mainstream media, comments in interviews with television producers, and discussions with fans have included some permutation of the notion that 'every generation gets its own Sherlock Holmes', and it has become quite clear through the variety in the actors who have portrayed Holmes that the character is more successfully perpetuated through adaptations that are culturally relevant, rather than those that are slavishly faithful. With each new embodiment of the character, and particularly by actors who become, for various reasons, personally associated with the role, the meaning of the indices proper change.[3]

A phenotype is all of the observable characteristics of an organism: it is the result of the genotype, which is all of the information encoded in the DNA, and the environment. In terms of adaptations of Sherlock Holmes, the genotype may be viewed

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[3] For an analysis of the role of actors in the evolution of the Holmes character, see chapter one, section one.

as a collection of all of the indices that could be used to make the character recognisable. Many people have attempted to codify these traits, such as attorney Les Klinger, who listed such things as 'aptitude for disguise', 'erratic eating habits', and 'amateur boxing skills' along with the Conan Doyle stories in which such traits manifest, as part of his filing in the infamous and successful copyright case against the Conan Doyle Estate,[4] and press materials associated with particular adaptations, like the instructions to cinemas promoting 20th Century Fox's 1939 film *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to exploit 'that famous pipe, that famous hat, that famous lens' ('The Hound of the Baskervilles'). Such lists are inevitably inadequate, as those such as Klinger's take only informants, and not indices proper, into account, and press materials will be skewed to emphasise those elements that the products they advertise display. It is possible that a complete list of indices is impossible to create, and, indeed, as the character evolves, the indices shift to incorporate new and/or altered traits, so such a list must always be in flux in any case. The character as it appears in any particular adaptation is a phenotype—some of the traits encompassed in the indices will be observable so that Sherlock Holmes is identifiable as Sherlock Holmes—but they will manifest to varying degrees, and in various ways, and be accompanied by many culturally-informed variants.

The vital aspect of phenotypic variation posited by Bortolotti and Hutcheon is that the variation is, in adaptation as in biology, directly influenced by the environment, so that in our attempt to investigate the patterns of variations in the Sherlock Holmes character, we should be able to detect changes in the character that correspond to changes in the socio-cultural and geographical landscapes it is made to inhabit. This

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[4] For a full list, see Appendix D.

model suggests, therefore, that comparing adaptations from, for example, the early-to-mid 20th century to adaptations from the late 20th century or early 21st, will show shifts in how the Holmes character manifests with regard to, for example, gender and LGBTQIA+ issues.[5] The success of the meme depends on being flexible enough to survive a great deal of phenotypic variation, and Sherlock Holmes has proven to be a highly elastic figure.

Not every phenotype contributes to the success of the meme. Just as in biological evolution, there is a mechanism of selection that, based on environmental suitability, leads some phenotypic variations to thrive and multiply, and others to fade into obscurity. Bortolotti and Hutcheon identify two relevant modes of selection: directional selection, in which an environmental shift creates fertile ground for the success of a particular phenotype, which then becomes normalized as an integral part of the meme, and stabilizing selection, which is in play 'when an environment is stable', leading to adaptations that 'differ little from the previous generation' (449). In other words, if a certain phenotype is selling to audiences, the conservative impulse of the media will largely discourage radically different versions.

A clear example of directional selection in play in the Sherlock Holmes meme is periodisation. In 1939, a year when the world was on the brink of catastrophe, 20th Century Fox produced the first intentionally periodised Sherlock Holmes. For forty years prior to this film—*The Hound of the Baskervilles*—Holmes was a perennially contemporary character. For various reasons including a resurgence of Victoriana in popular culture, an inclination toward escapism, and a aesthetic crossroads in terms of fashion and technology, Fox elected to make a conspicuously Victorian adaptation.

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[5] For an analysis of the influence of evolving gender politics on the Holmes character, see chapter one, section two.

With this seminal film and its sequel, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, which was released later that year and which was also a period film, the Victorian phenotype became normalized. Holmes-as-Victorian gentleman has been the default ever since, and even when, as is the case in BBC's *Sherlock* and CBS's *Elementary*, the character is re-contemporized, the discourse in press and fan circles offers frequent reminders that these programmes are unique precisely because they are set in the twenty-first century. In addition, both programmes reinforce the Victorian aesthetic of Sherlock Holmes by costuming him to always look like a man out of time—Cumberbatch wears dark suits and a series of dressing gowns, and Jonny Lee Miller is generally seen with his shirt buttoned right to the top, and in a waistcoat—in 1939, cultural and artistic pressures selected for the Victorian phenotype, and the selection defined the meme from that point on.[6]

For an illustration of stabilizing selection, we need look no further than the recent eruption of adaptations, each of which presents a consistent vision of Sherlock Holmes as a socially inept anti-hero. This has been the dominant Sherlock Holmes phenotype since, I would argue, 2004, with the programme *House M.D.*. *House* drew from the Holmes character to create the toxically rude, self-medicating genius doctor, and the popularity of the anti-hero phenotype made Warner Brothers' decision to release a film in 2009 starring a similarly rude and self-destructive Holmes a safe one. The character as it appears in both BBC's *Sherlock* and in *Elementary* are essentially small variations on this theme. Great viewing figures kept *House* on air for eight years, the Warner Brothers films were both box office successes, grossing over a billion dollars worldwide between them, *Sherlock* has a cult following and swept the Emmys in 2014,

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[6] For an analysis of the periodisation of the Holmes character, see chapter two, section one.

and *Elementary* has performed well enough to be renewed for its third season. At the moment, the anti-hero Sherlock Holmes character is selling; there is little impetus to experiment, so the meme is replicated in that form.[7]

Beyond the process of mutation and the mechanisms of selection, there remains the question of how we can quantify evolutionary success. While it is not the purpose of this project to judge the success of the character quantitatively, it is worth noting that by the criteria that Bortolotti and Hutcheon identify, which, in an evolutionary model is not related to fidelity, the Sherlock Holmes character is undoubtedly successful. This success helps justify the need for a great deal more consideration of Sherlock Holmes within adaptation studies. Within the field of memetics, there are three main measures for whether an idea, or, in this case, the Sherlock Holmes character, is thriving: fecundity, longevity, and diversity.

Fecundity relates to the number of copies of the meme in circulation. This might be read as a measure of how many times the character has been adapted—in the case of Sherlock Holmes, this number may be as low as a few hundred if we strictly count only those versions in which Holmes is the star and the purpose of the adaptation, or may range into the thousands or tens of thousands if we count every cameo or on-screen reference to the character. With even the most conservative estimate, Holmes outstrips every other adapted human character in history for number of screen appearances according to the *Guinness Book of World Records* ('Sherlock Holmes Awarded Title'). Copies of the meme in circulation also may be understood, as Bortolotti and Hutcheon define it, as the number of 'people [who are] are aware of the narrative' (450). This is, of course, impossible to quantify, but Sherlock Holmes ranks with Santa Claus, Mickey

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[7] For an analysis of Sherlock Holmes as anti-hero, see chapter two, section two.

Mouse, Ronald McDonald, and Superman as one of the most recognizable fictional characters in the world. The meme certainly meets any reasonable criteria for success in terms of fecundity.

Longevity, or persistence, is measure of a meme's staying power. Persistence is not simply a matter of continued existence; Bortolotti and Hutcheon note that 'libraries contain books with stories in them that are never read, much less adapted' (450). Memetic persistence demands cultural relevance. Although the Sherlock Holmes character has not existed as long as, for example, Lizzy Bennett, Hamlet, or Beowulf, we can make a reasonable case for its longevity based on the elasticity we discussed earlier. I suggest that the evidence presented in this work shows the character to be suited to continual renewal and cultural relevance.

The final measure is diversity. Bortolotti and Hutcheon state that 'if a narrative is adapted into many different media, we might use this proliferation of forms as a measure of success' (450). The more cultural habitats for which the meme becomes suited, the likelier it is to persist and replicate. This includes both diversity of media and diversity of geography. The Sherlock Holmes character is at home in print, and images, on stage, film, radio, and television; however, it has also been replicated in videogames, music, cookery, advertisements, and countless other outlets. Geographically, the character has become a mainstay not only in the US and UK, but also in Germany and Russia among others.

There is one more factor with regard to biological evolution that Bortolotti and Hutcheon claim 'is suggestive in a homologous manner for cultural adaptation' (453). This is called the extended phenotype: in biology, these are qualities that are not physically part of the organism, but that are part of its genetically coded instinct, or

behaviors that it learns to improve its chances of survival—beaver dams and bird nests are extended phenotypes. In adaptation, extended phenotypes constitute anything that functions to help perpetuate the meme—anything that improves its fecundity, longevity, and/or diversity—that is not explicitly part of the fabric of any specific adaptation. Bortolotti and Hutcheon relegate their discussion of the extended phenotype to a few sentences, but it is arguably one of the most valuable aspects of the parallel they draw. Their list of examples includes 'CD soundtracks, posters, advertising, free toys distributed with meals at fast food outlets, magazine articles, and interviews with actors on television' (452), but I would posit that there are two extended phenotypes that function trans-adaptationally to contribute to the success of the Sherlock Holmes character as a meme: fan culture and negotiations of creative authority. The global cult following of BBC's *Sherlock*, for example, has driven the adaptation's popularity even through the years when production has been on hiatus. The *Sherlock* fan community is not officially associated with the programme, but the programme has inspired fan conventions, creative output, and viral campaigns that keep the meme, and the BBC *Sherlock* phenotype in particular, timely and relevant.[8] Debates over whether any party has creative authority—real or perceived—persist in the ongoing battles over copyright and intra-fandom regulatory practices. The ultimate denial of a central creative authority to which interpreters must defer contributes materially to the success of the Holmes character.[9]

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[8] For an analysis of the influence of fan culture on the evolution of the Holmes character, see chapter three, section one.

[9] For an analysis of the processes of creative regulation and assertions of authority over the Holmes character, see chapter three, section two.

Bortolotti and Hutcheon end their article by acknowledging the limits of their homology. The most significant difference between biological evolution and adaptation lies in intentionality. Culture, they admit,

> at least potentially directs change. This fact introduces a level of complexity in identifying causality that clearly has no parallel in biology: in a cultural context, adaptations influence culture and culture influences the nature of adaptation...in other words, it is people who change stories and do so with particular intentions. (453)

I agree with their assessment. Every adaptation is produced by people who have elected to make specific creative and financial decisions. The mutation is therefore non-random. However, this does not change the process of descent: once a change is encoded into a specific adaptation, it will either thrive and contribute to the success of Sherlock Holmes, or not, based on the previously outlined process. And, of course, even intentional creative decisions, like, for example, choices in costume design, are made with knowledge of an adaptation's ancestors, so that, as Barthes points out, the resulting sign, which is 'the associative total of a concept and an image' (*Mythologies* 223), becomes the signifier for the next version.[10] Rob Doherty, the executive producer and writer for *Elementary* admits that 'it isn't possible that you haven't been touched by somebody's take on it at some point in your life. I've always liked Sherlock Holmes: that's why I saw many different interpretations and I feel like those works form a pool in your brain...You cannot forget the things that you've seen. (Doherty interview, Appendix C).

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[10] For an analysis of the accumulated significance of costume on the Holmes character, see chapter one, section three.

This model, and the extended illustrations that follow, opens many additional avenues for investigation that this project cannot pursue, but that are worth mentioning as an additional justification for my work. One is that in biology, 'evolutionary trees' or 'cladograms', are used as a method for mapping patterns of descent. This structure might be employed to attempt to unravel more of the patterns evident in the evolution of the Sherlock Holmes character. Another derives from labeling: species evolve from other species, and are delineated according to reasonable consensus among scientists. There may be a point at which not enough of the indices present in an adaptation are derived from the source to justify labeling the character 'Sherlock Holmes'. It may therefore be possible to build a model to determine the point at which a character is, in biological terms, a new 'species'. These questions and others arise from expanding and testing this model, which will hopefully provide a foundation for many new insights into the complexity of one of the most successful characters in the history of adaptation.

Before moving on, it is necessary to explain a further term that I will utilise throughout this work: 'character franchise'. In her 2011 article in *Adaptation*, 'Franchising/Adaptation', Clare Parody explores the entertainment franchise as a particular type of adaptive practice. She defines 'franchise storytelling' this way:

> [franchising is] the creation of narratives, characters, and settings that can be used both to generate and give identity to vast quantities of interlinked media products and merchandise, resulting in a prolonged, multitextual, multimedia fictional experience. These "aggregate texts"[11] may comprise a co-ordinated act of transmedia storytelling, the systematic branching and extension of a narrative across multiple media

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[11] Robert P. Arnett, '*Casino Royale* and Franchise Remix: James Bond as Superhero,' *Film Criticism* 33 (2009), 3.

outlets, or a palimpsest of a storyworld and its inhabitants built-up over

time from repeated remakes, reimaginings, and remediations of one or

more fictional texts and objects or something in between. (211)

While Parody then goes on to cite several franchises that she considers some of the most

successful (in financial and cultural terms), and each franchise on her list is controlled

and, consequently, licensed by a single creative authority, her definition does not

preclude a more diffuse franchise. Although there is no longer a central creative

authority controlling the Sherlock Holmes character,[12] it meets the criteria that Parody

establishes. I have elected to use the term 'character franchise', therefore, to refer to

complete body of 'remakes, reimaginings, and remediations' surrounding and

perpetuating the Holmes character through a 'prolonged, multitextual, multimedia

fictional experience'.

I am not the only scholar to appropriate the term 'franchise' to this end; Thomas

Leitch labels Sherlock Holmes a 'franchise hero' in 'Adaptations without Sources: The

Adventures of Robin Hood'. In addition, others making similar studies to this one,

albeit of different characters, have essentially defined the same concept with different

terminology. Will Brooker refers to the body of work, objects, and ideas surrounding

Batman as a 'matrix'. Bennett and Woollacott likewise discuss 'texts of Bond' in their

analysis of the James Bond character. Bennett and Woollacott use the term 'texts of

Bond' to refer to the James Bond character franchise. Will Brooker uses the term

'matrix' to refer to the Batman character franchise. Brooker's term is slightly more

effective than Bennett and Woollacott's in not privileging certain modes of engagement

by foregoing the somewhat loaded term 'text'; however, in utilising Bond's name,

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[12] For an extended discussion of ownership and authority, see chapter three, section two.

Bennett and Woollacott do emphasise the importance of character above other units of information that link the elements of the franchise. I believe 'character franchise' gleans the strengths from both Bennett and Woollacott, and from Brooker. In order that my work may be usefully placed in conversation with theirs, 'character franchise' may be understood to function as essentially interchangeable with their language.

The purpose of conducting this research and producing this study now is plain: despite its adaptational history of over a hundred years, dating back to the Mutoscope trick photography short *Sherlock Holmes Baffled* in 1901, Sherlock Holmes has never been more popular or more lucrative as a property. There can be no doubt that like any figure that survives through shifting landscapes of artistic will, cultural pressures, and public desires, Sherlock Holmes has evolved in order to endure.

'You Know My Methods': Focus and Justification

The approach of this project is rooted in the study of the process of adaptation. It is my intention that the project's insights should shine in two directions: It should utilise the study of various processes of adaptation such as production, interpretation, consumption, and remediation to illuminate Sherlock Holmes, a seminal figure in the history of adaptation; it should also use the study of Sherlock Holmes to shed light on how various individual elements of the adaptive process drive the evolution of such a figure, that he may endure indefinitely. In this way, it helps fill the gap in scholarship about Holmes, while setting him up as a model to which other characters that have similarly evolved, from folk heroes like King Arthur and Robin Hood to modern heroes like James Bond and Batman, can be fruitfully compared.

I have chosen to make Sherlock Holmes the focus of my work for several reasons. The first is the character's seminal place in the history and form of literary adaptation on screen. The birth of the cinematic medium and the Conan Doyle's authorship of the original stories were concurrent cultural events, and as a consequence, Sherlock Holmes was among the first literary characters on screen. This concurrence is also a contributing factor to the process by which the Holmes character has superseded its literary source: the character began to be adapted while Conan Doyle was still writing the tales, and as a consequence, several versions of the character were being disseminated and consumed at the same time. This muddied the hierarchy that usually defines such properties, in which the original creation has an authority over derivative works.

The second reason I selected Holmes as the subject of this project is the current relevance of the property. Sherlock Holmes has gone through peaks and valleys of popularity; although the character has made frequent and consistent appearances in popular culture for the past century, there are, unusually, several iterations of the character currently in production. This makes the questions that underpin this study—how and why the Holmes character has changed in order to persist and succeed—particularly topical.

The final reason for undertaking such a detailed analysis of the Sherlock Holmes character is that it fills a rather surprising gap in scholarly literature. While the nature of the literary Sherlock Holmes character is the subject of many books and articles, there has not been similar scrutiny of the character as it appears on screen. Where works addressing Sherlock Holmes adaptations have been produced, they generally focus on

the products—the adaptations themselves—rather than the processes at work on the character.

The extent of material that falls under the umbrella of 'Sherlock Holmes adaptations' is too vast to include in its entirety. Adaptations could conceivably cover not only film and television productions, but written pastiches, radio dramas, stage plays, music, art, toys, advertising, fashion, and any number of other media, but it is beyond the scope of this project to address all of these. I have thus elected to narrow my focus to film and television adaptations for several reasons. The most important reason is that my aim is to put disparate adaptations in conversation with one another, and in order for that conversation to be as fruitful as possible, I have chosen to analyse adaptations that share a particular type of visual language: while I recognize the intrinsic differences between the forms in terms of production and distribution, films and television programmes present similar aesthetics from the perspective of the viewer. My arguments rest on reception and remediation, and I take my cue here from Henry Jenkins who, in his work on convergence culture, moves relatively fluidly between discussions of film franchises such as *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, and *The Matrix*, and television programmes, such as *Survivor* and *American Idol*. An interesting study might be made in comparisons of the cinematic and televisual Holmes, but such a study is not within the scope of this project.

Focusing on film and television demands the exclusion of a great deal of interesting Sherlock Holmes adaptations. My attention to performance, a theme which runs throughout this work, excludes a great deal of material, particularly written material and static material. Likewise, my focus on the visual components of the character's evolution limit the material further, leaving room, practically speaking, for

only stage productions in addition to film and television. I have chosen not to include plays and musicals because, as stated earlier, reception and remediation are central to my purpose. While there are records of plays, extant scripts, and the potential for interrogating audience members who experienced productions in the last several decades, that is beyond my scope here. Stage productions are ephemeral, and thus their contributions to the evolutionary process are limited not only by their unrepeatability, but also by the length of their runs, the size and memory of their audiences, and the limits of their media coverage.

Another aspect of my selection that requires some explanation is my decision to take an Anglo-American approach to the films and television programmes that I discuss. It is certainly true that many scholars elect to focus exclusively on either British or American productions, and a focus on either, or an analysis of the intersection between them would be a valuable contribution to our understanding of the construction of the Holmes character. However, this project addresses both, and, to a large extent, deals with them interchangeably. Like my decision to limit the media that I discuss, I have several reasons for widening my scope to adaptations in the English language, rather than those of one nationality or the other.

The reasons are practical: because the Holmes character is English, but is a bankable property on both sides of the Atlantic, many productions are essentially a collaboration to some degree, and would be labelled differently under different circumstances. For example, in looking at actors' performances, it may be more fruitful to address the actor's nationality than that of the production company, which would make both 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and 2012's *Elementary* British, despite both being produced in America by American companies. In a discussion of place,

filming location might be a pertinent qualifier, but studios have not been bound to their

home studio location for some time. Even a production that appears as clear-cut as

BBC's *Sherlock* is co-produced by the American Public Broadcasting Service member

station WGBH Boston. Finally, the transmedial landscape of distribution and

consumption effectively dissolve national boundaries in the perception of viewers—

audiences are transnational. Films are released, television programmes are aired, and

DVDs are available in both the UK and US, so disentangling an American Holmes

character from an English Holmes character would make little sense for the purposes of

this project.

The pool of adaptations from which my work draws, therefore, is the range of

English language film and television adaptations. Even this is too much material to

cover in its entirety, and I acknowledge the practical necessity of being selective in my

choices. I will draw from this pool to provide illustrations for the several processes I

discuss in this project; it is my intention to offer illustrations that are representative

rather than definitive. Detailed justification for my individual choices will appear within

each chapter. Structurally, this project eschews the traditional encyclopaedic

chronological study; various aspects of this project include a range of chronologically

disparate texts and while seminal works that offer insight into important processes at

work in the construction of our larger understanding of Holmes as a character will be

treated at length, many adaptations, despite their individual quality and interest, may not

be mentioned at all.[13]

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[13] For a fairly recent survey of the breadth of Sherlock Holmes adaptations, consult David Stuart Davies, *Starring Sherlock Holmes: A Century of the Master Detective on Screen*, London: Titan, 2007

'Good Old Index': A Review of Relevant Scholarship

A review of literature written on the subject of Sherlock Holmes on screen seems to reveal three broad approaches: fannish, encyclopaedic, and theory-based. The first two are valuable in covering the scope and magnitude of the franchise, the first for a commercial, the second for a scholarly audience. The third includes works that are focused on clear research questions, and are by far the least common. The need for more theory-based scholarly work on the subject is clear when one compares the vast number and significance of Sherlock Holmes adaptations with the comparatively small amount of scholarly literature representing them in the field of adaptation studies. At least two scholars involved in similar research agree on the necessity of a more comprehensive study of Sherlock Holmes as an adaptational institution.[14] The interest of these scholars and numerous others in the field attests to the frankly shocking gaps in the literature, which exist, largely, because few projects have undertaken an in-depth, theory-based approach to the franchise.

Sherlock Holmes on screen has been dealt with at length by Sherlockians in works such as *Sherlock Holmes on the Screen*, by R. W. Pohl and D. C. Hart, published in 1977; *Holmes of the Movies: the Screen Career of Sherlock Holmes* and *Starring Sherlock Holmes: A Century of the Master Detective on Screen* by David Stuart Davies, published in 1977 and 2007, respectively; *Deerstalker: Holmes and Watson on Screen*, by Ron Haydock, published in 1978; *Sherlock Holmes On Screen*, by Alan Barnes, published in 2004 and updated in 2012; *Eliminate the Impossible: An examination of the world of Sherlock Holmes on page and screen*, by Alistair Duncan and Steve Emecz,

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[14] In direct communications with me, Thomas Leitch, who has published on the subject has said that 'the Holmes parodies, pastiches, plays, films, and television segments comprise the most varied, successful, and definitive franchise in adaptation history'(Leitch personal email), and Will Brooker, noted for his work on the Batman franchise, agreed that 'we need more work on the "Holmes Matrix"'(Brooker tweet)

published in 2010; and numerous others. These works are surveys that offer comments on the hundreds of adaptations that bring Conan Doyle's detective to the screen. They are well-researched in that they make ample use of primary documents and offer a wealth of detail relating to the production of the multitude of adaptations they address. They are not, however, scholarly: they are written and published for a lay audience and have not undergone peer review or academic scrutiny. As each is set up as a survey rather than a work that seeks answers to research questions, they are limited in their academic application. While informative reference guides, these works don't begin to address, much less analyse, the changes that Sherlock Holmes has undergone to ensure that the character remained a mainstay on screen for over a century. In fact, their most salient quality in reference to this work may simply be their very existence, as they prove that fascination with Sherlock Holmes extends to his cinematic and televisual afterlives and thus speak to the relevance of and necessity for a more nuanced academic analysis.

The screen career of Sherlock Holmes has been tackled a few times by scholars of film who take a more sophisticated and systematic approach to their work. In 1996 Scott Allen Nollen published *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema: A Critical Study of the Film Adaptations*. The work is undoubtedly a useful and detailed reference on Holmes adaptations up to that point, but as an analysis of the important space Sherlock Holmes actually occupies within the realm of adaptations and for scholars of adaptation studies, Nollen's work falls far short of the mark. His book is organized chronologically and addresses each adaptation in isolation, focusing on how each is situated in relation to the Conan Doyle texts. This approach leads him into the fruitless and fannish territory of cataloguing the short stories that inspire each adaptation and necessarily results in the

qualification of each production based on its fidelity to Conan Doyle. His language

reflects this pursuit, associating terms like 'perverted', 'blame', and 'guilty' (58, 76,

76) with unfaithful adaptations or elements of adaptations, or even patronizingly

referring to such works as "adaptations" in scare quotes (110). Faithful elements,

meanwhile are noted as being '[of] quality', 'admirable', and 'honorable' (74, 104,

118).

Although when *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema: A Critical Study of the Film Adaptations* was published in 1996 Nollen could not have anticipated BBC's

modern adaptation *Sherlock*, he does spend much of the book discussing periodisation

and modernisation. Unfortunately, this descends into a catalogue of non-Victorian

objects and references that exist in adaptations, but according to Nollen, should not. He

spends a great deal of time with the Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce films made between

1939 and 1946, and, indeed, as these are seminal adaptations in what may be termed the

Holmes franchise and the questions surrounding periodisation and modernisation are

vital to understanding how and why these films matter, Nollen does well to dwell on

them. However, he does not address the more complex and interesting questions: why

were *Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* periodised

against the trend of contemporary Holmes films, how has that affected their role in the

franchise, and how has the franchise been affected by them? Because these films better

conform to Nollen's ideal of Holmes, he merely accepts that the films are 'better' than

their predecessors and successors without pausing to ask these questions, which are

considered at length in chapter two of this work.

Although he doesn't set down a methodology, he seems to have constructed an

idea of the ideal Sherlock Holmes adaptation and spends the whole of the book

comparing each adaptation he includes to that ideal. This leaves no room for the more theory-based approach in my own work, which does not seek to compare adaptations to a cultural ideal, but instead interrogates the process by which such ideals are constructed through the continuing adaptive process.

Several works by Roberta Pearson have offered insight into various aspects of Sherlock Holmes, and even more have addressed critical areas of study considered throughout this work. In particular, Pearson's work on online fan culture, from '"It's Always 1895": Sherlock Holmes in Cyberspace', which, even in 1997, began to establish the paramount importance of transmedial consumption of texts and associated fan activities to the legacy of Sherlock Holmes, through her essay in *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom*, '"Good Old Index"; or, The Mystery of the Infinite Archive' in 2012, in which she uses the online fan communities of BBC's *Sherlock* to further her explorations of the protocols by which fan communities themselves are governed and, of special interest to my own work, how different fan traditions, labelled either 'transformational' or 'affirmational', interact to build and/or complicate meaning. Chapter three of this thesis is devoted to fan discourse; unlike Pearson's work, it focuses less on the mechanics of how fandom operates as a body and more on what the various pressures of fandom accomplish and how. Nevertheless, Pearson's scholarship is an invaluable foundation for the fan studies aspects of this work. Beyond her work on fandom scholarship, Pearson has also focused much of her writing on figures she terms 'cultural icons', including Batman and Sherlock Holmes; throughout this work I hope to expand and further explore the link between these characters as I contend that the diversity of interpretations, particularly those that both contradict and coexist with one

another, of Sherlock Holmes may be best understood in the context of the tradition of comic book adaptations, and lately, of Batman especially.

In 2007, Thomas Leitch included a chapter titled 'The Hero with a Hundred Faces' in his *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*. The chapter does offer a more useful and interesting approach than Nollen's, but suffers from the strain of trying to cover too much in too small a space. Leitch undertakes the important task of reorganizing our understanding of Holmes adaptations into a complex web of intertexts rather than a series of individual productions, an extremely useful framework that provides a foundation for my work. While Leitch lays a groundwork, however, he does not apply a focused lens to any of the multitude of adaptations he discusses, nor to the processes that a discussion of those adaptations may illuminate. Instead he uses the chapter to marvel at just how many there are and to question the place of Holmes within the field of adaptation studies in general. If anything, Leitch's piece is less a detailed interrogation of the Sherlock Holmes screen franchise than a call to other scholars to undertake such an interrogation in more depth. This work answers that call.

In his 2011 book *Cinema and Radio in Britain and America 1920-60*, Jeffrey Richards includes a chapter on Holmes titled 'The Many Voices and Faces of Sherlock Holmes'. Like Nollen, Richards provides what amounts to a survey with commentary. Like Leitch, he perhaps seeks to cover too much ground. His book only focuses on the 40 year period between 1920 and 1960, but Sherlock Holmes is so pervasive that this encompasses some few dozen films and a bountiful twenty year period during which several hundred radio adventures were broadcast. Richards' chapter does offer some valuable insights into the qualities that Sherlock Holmes embodies. He identifies three archetypes of masculinity: The rational man, the romantic man, and the aesthete.

Richards argues that the written Holmes represents all three in abundance, and interpreters have the flexibility to imbue their versions of the character with whatever combination they like. This notion that the Sherlock Holmes urtext is essentially elastic, allowing for almost limitless variability in adaptations, is central to my own work. Richards also highlights the cross-pollination of American and British cultures that has sustained Sherlock Holmes over the past century.

With the recent surge in popularity of Sherlock Holmes, several new edited collections exploring Holmes adaptations have been published. 2012's *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom* is one such volume that focuses exclusively on BBC's *Sherlock*. The contributors have diverse backgrounds in literature, film and television studies, culture studies, and audience reception studies. The book's specificity—dealing as it does with only one adaptation—results in a detailed narrative of the series and uses a variety of theoretical models to examine that narrative. Its examination of this recent and undeniably transformative adaptation is a step in the right direction. This work will offer a similar theory-based approach, but will consider the larger context of all Holmes adaptations and their intertextual conversation.

Sherlock Holmes for the 21st Century is another volume of essays, published on the heels of *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom*, in July of 2012. It focuses on the Warner Brothers franchise of films starring Robert Downey Jr. and BBC's *Sherlock*. Unfortunately, when it was written, CBS's *Elementary* had not aired yet; the series premiered two months after the collection was published. The essays focus on Holmes' enduring popularity and provide interesting insights into representations of technology, psychology, romance, and space and place, and uses those insights to attempt to get at the larger questions, 'why Sherlock Holmes, why still, why now?' It is useful to have

scholars addressing these issues, and, in fact, these questions could, and likely will, sustain many more volumes in the coming years as Holmes' presence on screens large and small continues to grow. My own work has a different purpose. It focuses not on 'why' questions, but on 'how' questions: how has Sherlock Holmes evolved to survive, and how have different parties, pressures, and processes shaped him?

While serious scholarship on Sherlock Holmes on screen is limited by the relatively recent rise in interest in and legitimacy granted to the study of adaptations, there is, of course, a long history of scholarship on many diverse aspects of the literary Sherlock Holmes. These naturally range in their applicability to this project. Some focus on interrogating character traits, which is certainly both a useful foundation for this project, as well as further validation for my focus on character. Jasmine Hall, in 'Ordering the Sensational: Sherlock Holmes and the Female Gothic,' touches on the presentation of women in the Holmes stories, with a particular focus on the gothic elements of the Holmes canon that reflect on women's roles. Similarly, Joseph Kestner, in '"Real" Men: Construction of Masculinity in the Sherlock Holmes Narrative', draws on several of the Holmes stories to discuss the construction of the masculine in the literary Holmes. Hall and Kestner's articles help justify my choice to select gender as my illustration of the reflection of fluctuations in the socio-cultural environment in various representations of Holmes on screen.

Much of the scholarship on the literary Holmes analyses less useful qualities of the texts for the purposes of this project. It is nonetheless worth noting that the Holmes stories have long been a popular subject for literary analysis that focuses on themes, symbolism, and imagery. A necessarily abbreviated list that draws only from material published in the last two decades includes, for example, commentary on British

history,[15] the psychological effects of war on soldiers,[16] the presentation of race and the politics of interracial marriage in the nineteenth century,[17] the tension between rationalism and the perceived supernatural,[18] and the ethics and colonialist implications of drug use.[19] The Sherlock Holmes stories have also been nominally employed to interrogate issues of a fundamentally non-literary nature such as medicine, biology, and criminal investigation. The variety and longevity of the literary Holmes justifies such a scholarly presence, just as the variety and longevity of the non-literary Holmes justifies at least equal scrutiny.

Beyond literary analyses directed at specific Sherlock Holmes stories, there have been several works that address larger questions related to narrative structure, the deductive process, and both the original and the enduring popularity of the written Holmes. James Krasner's 1997 article 'Watson Falls Asleep: Narrative Frustration and Sherlock Holmes' uses the stories to illuminate the emerging fin de siècle social order and Holmes' role as a representative of that order. Krasner then suggests that this index of Holmes' character contributed in large part to the stories' popularity when they were published. In 'Sensational Adventures: Sherlock Holmes and his Generic Past,' Leslie Haynesworth addresses how, within the tales, Watson as first person narrator characterizes Holmes, as well as Holmes' approaches to his investigations. Perhaps the

[15] Frank Ardolino. "Arthur Conan Doyle's Use of Restoration History in the "Musgrave Ritual"' *ANQ* 24.3 (2011): 154-62. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 12 Aug. 2014.

[16] Catherine Wynne. "Sherlock Holmes and the Problems of War: Traumatic Detections." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 53.1 (2010): 29-53. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 14 Aug. 2014.

[17] Henry Cunningham. "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of Race." *Journal of Popular Culture* 28.2 (1994): 113-25. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 23 July 2014.

[18] Jesse Oak Taylor-Ide. "Ritual and the Liminality of Sherlock Holmes in 'The Sign of Four' and 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 48.1 (2005): 55-70. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 6 June 2014.

[19] Benjamin D. O'Dell. "Performing the Imperial Abject: The Ethics of Cocaine in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Sign of Four." *Journal of Popular Culture* 45.5 (2012): 979-99. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 28 July 2014.

most interesting works for the purpose of this project that interrogate the nature and endurance of the literary Holmes are those of Rosemary Jann and Michael Saler.

As these works take a broader approach, as my own does, they are more pertinent to this project despite their relegation of adaptations of the Holmes tales to passing mention. The framework of this project is an evolutionary model, which, like biological evolution, treats each adaptation as a branch on a tree rather than a rung on a ladder; within this framework, the Sherlock Holmes urtext is intellectually, if not practically, of no more import than adaptations, which renders Jann's and Saler's scholarship of limited applicability; however, they both speak to some of the issues that appear in this work.

Rosemary Jann's 1988 book *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: Detecting Social Order* undertakes a larger discussion of the narrative structure of detective fiction and how the Sherlock Holmes stories embody that structure. Her work is concerned with investigating those qualities of narrative, character, and, to a slightly lesser degree, reader reception, that contribute to the popularity and appeal of the literary Holmes. She begins from a similar premise to my own:

> The power of literature resides in its ability to create places and characters that live beyond the perishable present and can thus become the shared property of generations of readers; preeminent among them is the phenomenon known as Sherlock Holmes. (10)

My analysis of the adapted Holmes is a natural successor to this type of literary criticism.

In addition to promoting the sort of shared ownership necessary to an evolutionary model, Jann comments on the importance of the Sherlock Holmes

character as a unique property. Her work primarily places focus on the structure of detective fiction in general, and the Holmes stories in particular—an approach that is not particularly applicable to my project—but she does not neglect character: 'It is the character of Holmes that offers the most interesting possibilities for the interplay between stereotype and variation,' she notes, 'or, as Martin Priestman[20] called it, reproducibility and singularity' (33). In other words, Jann argues that the Holmes character endures because it represents a balance between stable indices of character and the ability to be read in a variety of ways. My argument refers to this balance and I contend that these qualities are writ large in the adaptational history of the Holmes character, adaptations in which enough indices are present to signify Holmes, but which are nonetheless each unique in their interpretations.

In 2012, Michael Saler published *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality*, which makes the case that Sherlock Holmes should be considered 'the first "virtual reality" character in fiction' (Kindle Loc 128). Saler is making a historical rather than a literary argument that knowing audiences' inhabitation of 'virtual realities', which he defines as 'acknowledged imaginary spaces that are communally inhabited for prolonged periods of time by rational individuals' (Kindle Loc 128), is a means for re-enchanting disenchanted modernity. He describes this as process of reconciling the loss of dependence on the magical thinking associated with a pre-modern understanding of reality and the essential human need to exercise the imagination, a reconciliation that he argues has its origin in the many intersecting elements responsible for the popularity of Sherlock Holmes with contemporary Victorian and Edwardian readers.

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[20] Martin Priestman. *Detective Fiction and Literature*. NY: St. Martin's, 1991. Print. 91.

Jann and Saler both, to varying degrees, are making arguments about the functions proper and indices that contribute to the success of Sherlock Holmes. They are addressing 'why' questions, which limits their utility for my purposes. However, there are several salient aspects of Saler's work worth considering here. The first is that as a historian, he is taking an extra-textual approach to the material. He discusses attributes of the narratives and the characters in order to investigate broader questions relating to historical context, creative endeavour, and audience reaction—all of which are vital to my approach in this work. He also makes the case that 'intense imaginative identification with the textual imaginary world, coupled with the synergistic effects arising from group involvement, effectively reconfigure the world. It [is] no longer confined to a set text brought to temporary life in individual imaginations; it [becomes] a sustained virtual world transcending any particular text or reader' (Kindle Loc 546-8). This transcendence is necessary to understanding Holmes as a unit of cultural information that is in flux, and subject to change based on perception.

Saler concerns himself, in particular, with those characteristics of fin de siècle Britain, particularly the psychological tension between rational secularism and the reinvestment in imagination as a creative property, that paved the way for a hero like Holmes to capture the fancy of the reading public. He also spends a great deal of time discussing the practices of what he calls 'naive believers' and 'ironic believers', ie. those deluded into thinking that Holmes is a real person, and those who, in the parlance of Sherlockian fan tradition 'play the game' of treating Holmes and Watson as real people, while understanding that they are fictional. He also investigates the 'public sphere of imagination', in which these practices are placed in a larger context of media involvement and attempts by Conan Doyle's descendants to reassert control over the

property. Holmes' relationship to historical context, the practices of fan communities, and efforts to restrict the elasticity and acceptable modes of engagement with Holmes are all treated at length in this work.

Because he has restricted his analysis to the literary Holmes, Saler draws some conclusions about the nature and motivations of Sherlockian fan practices that don't stand up to scrutiny when placed in the larger context of Sherlock Holmes adaptations, appropriations, and paratexts. In particular, he puzzles at fans' lack of interest in giving Holmes 'contemporary relevance' (Kindle Loc 2408) throughout the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and 80s, stating that 'most Sherlockian scholarship intentionally kept the virtual world of Holmes autonomous, blissfully free of relevance to any issues that did not impinge directly on the period when he thrived' (Kindle Loc 2414). While this is true of a certain segment of the fan community, and particularly the fan community resolutely focused on the literary Holmes to the exclusion of all else, it does not represent the whole. Contemporary issues were and are being reflected in the evolution of the adapted Sherlock Holmes, and while the character is preserved in print and guarded in its essentials by the segment of the fan community to which Saler refers, the adapted Holmes is always in flux, and the changes are often guided, as I will argue, by the socio-cultural context contemporary to production. Additionally, fans who extend their gaze beyond the literary Holmes, which, based on my own fairly extensive interaction with enthusiasts of all stripes—from online communities to societies such as the Baker Street Irregulars and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London—is most of them, have long included adaptation in their 'scholarship', and thus often discuss issues of cultural relevance.

In addition to studies about Sherlock Holmes specifically, there are many books and articles that have, in different contexts, addressed questions relevant to the goals of this work. As the aim is to unpick the various pressures that drive the character's evolution in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how Sherlock Holmes has endured and evolved, other scholars' exertions on behalf of what I term 'character franchises', particularly Bennett and Wollacott's work on James Bond and Will Brooker's work on Batman, provide a useful precedent for this work. Although they don't approach their character franchises from the same particular angles as this work does, they have helped to establish the scholarly proposition of approaching otherwise unrelated adaptations of a shared source as a single analysable network. They have also set a precedent for treating a character, rather than a narrative, as the primary unit adapted. They have made it possible for this work to move beyond arguing at length for the legitimacy of our shared model and instead progressing to the extensive application of that model. In addition, of course, by their very existence they argue for the necessity of a similar comprehensive study of Sherlock Holmes.

Bennett and Woollacott's 1987 book *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero* sets a valuable precedent for this project in several ways. Their focus on character, and particularly the malleability and endurance of character across texts informs my work. In introducing their book, they state that their 'interest lies in the figure of Bond, in the diverse and changing forms in which it has been produced and circulated, and in the varying cultural business that has been conducted around, by means of and through this figure during the now considerable slice of post-war history in which it has been culturally active' (1). They argue against essentialist readings of character, which, though their book is nearly 30 years old, and suffers from its age in

several regards,[21] is ahead of its time. The intertextual approach, which categorically rejects fidelity discourse in arguing that '"textual shifters" do not act solely upon the reader to produce different readings of "the same text" but also act upon the text, shifting its very signifying potential so that it is no longer what it once was' (248), is a sound foundation for discussing a large franchise like Bond's, and, indeed, Holmes'.

Their interest in is the larger phenomenon that surrounds Bond, and in interrogating that phenomenon, primarily through analysis of the Ian Fleming novels and the Eon films, they discuss the figure of Bond through several lenses. This variety of approaches helps create a larger, more complete picture of the 'career' of this popular hero, just as my project applies a similar variety of approaches to Sherlock Holmes. Among the most applicable critical lenses that *Bond and Beyond* utilises are performance, gender, historical context, and reception studies, all of which appear in this thesis.

My work does diverge from Bennett and Woollacott's in a few key ways. The most important is that *Bond and Beyond* is focused, like much work on Sherlock Holmes, on 'why' questions; they state explicitly that 'The question we shall be centrally concerned with...is, quite simply: why? Why has James Bond been so massively and enduringly popular? Why has he assumed a position of such central and co-ordinating significance within contemporary popular culture?' (15). They acknowledge that their study is not the first to seek an answer to these questions, and nor has it been the last. Likewise, I acknowledge that 'why' questions regarding Sherlock Holmes have been under investigation for nearly as long as the character has

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[21] In practical terms, it is missing nearly 30 years of development of the 'Bond phenomenon', including every adaptation starring Timothy Dalton, Pierce Brosnan, and Daniel Craig as Bond. Much of the theory in the book is also out-of-date, particular the material on gendered readings.

existed. This study is therefore organized to ask not 'why', but 'how' questions, most notably, how has the character evolved in order to endure.

The other important difference between Bennett and Woollacott's study and my own is the diffuse nature of the Sherlock Holmes character franchise, as opposed what Bennett and Woollacott acknowledge as 'the strongly unified production team which has been responsible for most of the Bond films' (276). They claim that is this relative unity means that Bond's 'identity is more positively filled' (276), and this provides necessary limits to generating a structured interrogation of the Bond phenomenon. I do not agree that such unity is a necessary foundation for analysing character across a multiplicity of works, and, in fact, investigating how Holmes has evolved and been successful as an adaptable property for over a century is more fruitful without such limits. As a consequence, although this work contains one extended production study such as the kind that Bennett and Woollacott undertake throughout *Bond and Beyond*, the diverse production teams responsible for bringing Holmes to screen prevents such a study from speaking definitively to the larger intertextual conversation.

More recently, Will Brooker has undertaken several lengthy investigations of Batman, and his interest in addressing the processes of change across disparate texts is a valuable foundation for and justification of the approach of this work. Brooker analyses the authoring of individual texts in a quest to disentangle and identify contributions to the larger palimpsest (56). In his 2012 *Hunting the Dark Knight*, he focuses on the production of Christopher Nolan's Batman films through the complex process of selection and privileging of certain narrative threads from the catalogue of comics and graphic novels, the incorporation of or reaction against previous adaptations, and the intertextual contributions of a vast array of non-narrative Batman ephemera from fast-

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food tie-ins to marketing campaigns in order to explore the contemporary vision of Batman. Instead of working at narrative threads, my work considers the contributions not of various texts, but of various processes that contribute to the evolution of the very idea of Sherlock Holmes as it navigates a constant kaleidoscope of shifting texts and contexts.

Although Brooker's work has been instrumental in providing a framework for an organized and logical analysis of an broad and complicated set of texts, this study of 'the Sherlock Holmes matrix' differs from Brooker's approach in several important ways, some by necessity, and others by choice. The most fundamental divergence from Brooker's approach is dictated by the differences in the Batman franchise and the Sherlock Holmes franchise. The challenge of analysing the Batman matrix and attempting to identify, and, to an extent, redefine how creative production functions in such a diverse set of texts revolves largely around the difficulty of engaging with an overabundance of narratives and attempting to unpick how those narratives, many of which could easily be deemed 'canonical' in the world of Batman, cross pollinate, who is responsible for legitimizing one over another, and how addressing various permutations of those narratives helps construct what readers and viewers believe Batman to be and mean at any given time.[22] This is a valuable and viable approach to take toward a franchise that may simplistically, though rightly, be viewed as a network of competing narratives. Sherlock Holmes offers a different challenge, and in order to make sense of the Holmes matrix, we must consider a different set of questions, which, as previously explained, revolve around complexities of evolving character indices, rather than complexities of competing functions proper.

[22] For a concise explanation of this challenge, see Brooker's *Hunting the Dark Knight: Twenty-First Century Batman* (50).

As a result of Sherlock Holmes' current surge of popularity, several additional works, both scholarly and fannish, are in various stages of writing and publication. Although they are not available at this time, judging by various abstracts, available excerpts, and conversations with contributing authors, many will doubtless contribute valuable insights to our larger understanding of Sherlock Holmes as an ever-evolving character of both cultural and academic importance. None, however, seeks to analyse the complex character of Sherlock Holmes from the unique perspective of this work, by focusing on the mechanisms, pressures, and processes of evolution that drive the changes in the adapted Sherlock Holmes, allowing the character to endure and succeed.

This work seeks to understand how we engage with Sherlock Holmes as a literary, cinematic, and cultural figure and aims to apply this understanding in order to contribute to the emerging field of adaptation studies. While previous books and articles either operate as surveys or else they illuminate particular aspects of selected adaptations, this work presents a study of how the evolution of the character of Sherlock Holmes is the product of the adaptive process itself through the host of pressures that contribute to that process. It is unique in its scope and its aims and will, I hope, answer questions about the endurance of this singularly pervasive character as well as encourage scholars of adaptation studies to apply this fresh and fruitful approach to investigate other networks of intertexts.

'Such Individuals Exist Outside of Stories': Constructing Modern Mythology

In his 2012 book *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality*, Michael Saler claims that '[t]he world... of Sherlock Holmes... epitomize[s] the core components of the literary prehistory of virtual reality' (Kindle

Loc 492). He offers an extended case study of the qualities, creation, and consumption of Holmes' world, exploring, among other attributes, the reasons for and manner in which it lends itself to immersion for a collective community of readers. He offers as a parenthetical aside the comment that '"Mythological" and "legendary" characters have a more ambiguous ontological status [than "fictional characters"]; we are concerned [in this analysis] with those figures unambiguously marked at the outset as "fictional"' (Kindle Loc 122). He further footnotes that aside, adding that 'fictional characters that appeared in works explicitly marked as fiction [are distinct] from earlier heroes of folklore and myth, whose existence was open to question' (Kindle Loc 4080). Saler's distinction is valid and reasonable, yet he goes on to frequently employ the term 'mythology' to the three worlds—those of Holmes, Cthulu, and Middle Earth—that he discusses in his book, muddying this delineation.

Rosemary Jann begins her chapter 'The Holmes Phenomenon' in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: Detecting Social Order* by declaring that 'Sherlock Holmes is one of the very few literary figures who can be said to have attained the status of myth' (7). Unlike Saler, she has no reservations about applying the 'myth' label to Holmes, despite his unambiguously fictional origin. Indeed, her use of the word 'attain' suggests that it is the remediation of the Holmes character—a fact corroborated by her immediate discussion of fan engagement—and not any questionable aspects of its fictionality that earns that label. Jann does not end with the label myth, but goes on to note that qualities of the Holmes stories and character are akin to folklore, in that folklore 'is a means by which culture defines and justifies its identity,' and that by 'repeatedly presenting a hero confronting and vanquishing recognizable psychic and physical threats, the Holmes stories reassure readers about the essential correctness of

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their values and the security of their social order' (42). This justification of identity and assertion of particular constructions of social order is at the heart of the evolution of the adapted Sherlock Holmes. Identity and social order are fluid, unstable constructs, and are served by a hero that is likewise fluid and able to evolve to suit and reinforce contemporary needs and ideals. In addition, my appropriation of some of the terminology of Propp and Barthes, established earlier, is further justified by this study, as Propp's research was grounded in the study of folktales, and Barthes' in mythology.

This project's focus on character and on the process of evolution is served by understanding the status of Sherlock Holmes as a modern myth. However, although scholars like Jann, and, perhaps less willingly, Saler, may grant Holmes the label of 'myth' in passing, I suggest that the process by which the character has reached this position is worth examining in more detail, as the journey from explicit fictionality to a less rigid mythological status is not common. The consumption of the Sherlock Holmes character is, itself, a process of mythmaking. In order to investigate this process, this section utilises the Sherlock Holmes Museum on Baker Street in London as a case study for the application of Jean Beaudrillard's theory of simulation and simulacra, with the aim of illustrating how such a place does not merely draw the character of Sherlock Holmes into reality, but draws over reality and, in the public perception, attempts to render the fiction an indelible part of our shared history. The notion that the blurring of boundaries between reality and fiction is essential to the process of mythmaking is evident in the work of Bennett and Woollacott; they make a similar claim about James Bond—that it is 'in being granted a quasi-real status that a popular hero (or heroine) constitutes a cultural phenomenon of a particular type, quite distinct from the hero (or heroine) whose existence is contained within and limited to a particular and narrowly

circumscribed set of texts' (13-4). In other words, the character supersedes explicit fictionality and is written into popular culture just as a legend is written into the fabric of history. I will go a step further and show how the appropriation of real geography has written Sherlock Holmes into history, rather than popular culture alone.

The body of this work will employ film and television case studies to interrogate the various pressures and mechanisms that contribute to the evolution of the Sherlock Holmes character. This section has a different goal, but one that is no less relevant to a comprehensive investigation of the Sherlock Holmes character. It seeks to understand why, with the hundreds of adaptations, thousands of pastiches and fannish articles, and tens of thousands of works of fan fiction and art, we still perceive Sherlock Holmes to be a single, unified figure. Bennett and Woollacott also investigate this question with regard to Bond, claiming that it is 'in being detached from an earlier incarnation (that of Connery) in order to be reincarnated in Moore, [that] the figure of Bond was thus 'floated' as an identity complete in and of itself. Only James Bond can be James Bond. A mythic figure who transcends his own variable incarnations, Bond is always identified with himself but is never quite the same—an ever mobile signifier' (274). Bond and Holmes share a similar status as modern myths, or, as Bennett and Woollacott would have it, 'popular heroes', who have undeniably fictional origins, but have nonetheless developed identities beyond those origins through adaptation and cultural saturation. Though the Holmes character has undergone innumerable unique readings, there is an underlying perception that there is a 'real' Holmes that is not, as we might assume in adaptation studies, the literary version, but rather a kind of mythical figure or folk hero whose status as a real man, like Robin Hood, is not literal but practical.

While scholarship investigating the modern process of mythmaking at work in Sherlock Holmes is lacking—as with Jann, Holmes' status as myth is often asserted, but rarely unpacked—much has been written on the centuries-long process that has driven the myths of the English folk hero Robin of Locksley. Historians have worked to identify the grain of historical truth at the heart of the legend which has been active in the British public consciousness since at least the ninth century, just as poets, writers, artists, and filmmakers have expanded and explored the legend which, I would argue, is a character franchise itself. Jean Paschke, in a recent article for the periodical *British Heritage*, notes:

> He may never have existed in real life; every census roll, court record or gravestone bearing his name and cited by one scholar is deemed spurious by another. ...Shakespeare mentioned him, Keats composed an ode to him, Tennyson put him on the stage, Mel Brooks made a funny sitcom about him. When you add Douglas Fairbanks, Errol Flynn, Richard Greene, Sean Connery, Russell Crowe and a Disney cartoon fox, the whole becomes a merry mess. (41)

What Paschke notes as a 'mess' from the perspective of one seeking historical truth, is simply the product of creative intertextuality and the evolution of the Robin Hood myth through time and text. But that does not mean that the search for that historical foundation is not essential, whether scholars are successful or not, to the mythmaking process.

The function of the type of pressures at work on the Holmes character for which my work argues is analogous to the mythmaking of Robin Hood. The interplay between conflicting iterations of the character, and, more importantly, the character's ability to

supersede and reconcile such inconstancies through the strength of its central character

indices, is foundational to the idea of the character franchise. Without utilising the same

language as my work, Thomas Leitch examines this phenomenon in his 2008

Literature/Film Quarterly article 'Adaptations without Sources: The Adventures of

Robin Hood'. Leitch analyses how the Robin Hood story is adapted without recourse to

a recognised source text. He argues that it is equally as valid to argue that there is no

definitive version of the legend as it is to argue that there are multiple definitive

versions. In addition, Leitch notes that the Robin Hood character will continue to evolve

because there is no 'single authoritative form' (25). He even extends his theory of

sourceless adaptation to a list of other 'franchise heroes', among whom he includes

Sherlock Holmes, Dracula, Batman, and King Arthur. Leitch states:

> These figures, most of them as iconographically powerful as Robin
>
> Hood, have by and large floated so free of the literary or sub-literary
>
> sources in which they were once embedded that their allegiance to those
>
> sources is nominal. Instead of providing a single text to which all
>
> adaptations are responsible, stories about King Arthur and Sherlock
>
> Holmes and Batman provide a grammar of narrative possibilities, an
>
> anthology of character and situations, and a wardrobe variously stocked
>
> with costumes, props, and special effects. Instead of establishing a
>
> coercive master text, they establish a set of rules and regulations that
>
> particular adaptations feel increasingly free to adapt until the new rules
>
> become either just as authoritative, more authoritative, or utterly
>
> unrecognizable. (27)

I will argue that as a result of the mechanisms, processes, and pressures associated with the evolution of character through a multiplicity of adaptations, Sherlock Holmes has broken free from what Leitch calls a 'coercive master text' in order to survive. If it is true that this process parallels the mythmaking at work in Robin Hood, a character whose historical foundation and literary beginnings are lost to the mists of time and the fluidity of oral tradition, the issue becomes how such a process is enacted on a character who has no historical foundation and whose literary beginnings are not in question.

Holmes' extrication from his literary roots is addressed in some fashion in every subsequent chapter of this work, but before we discuss that process, it is worth situating Holmes in terms of the interplay between the character's fictionality and (invented) historical foundations that have produced this modern myth. Historical grounding is arguably a necessary quality, however remote and questionable that grounding may be, for the mythmaking at work in Robin Hood—a quality that Thomas Leitch neglects in his article in deference to the character's literary and adaptational roots, but which, of course, was at the heart of Saler's objection to the myth label for Sherlock Holmes. Whether there was a real man on whom the Robin Hood legend is based, when he lived, and what he actually may have done in his lifetime is the subject of debate, but the importance of that debate for my purpose is not the results, which Leitch dismisses as suggesting a 'nonexistent source' (26), but that the debate is legitimate, ongoing, and historically grounded at all. In the case of Sherlock Holmes, there is no debate. There was no historical Sherlock Holmes who inhabited Victorian and Edwardian London. Therefore, in order for the myth to arise, for Holmes to become a folk hero like Robin Hood and not simply a character from popular fiction, he must be written into history. To my knowledge, this is the first time such an argument has been made not only about

Sherlock Holmes, but with regards to the adaptation process itself, and it is founded on the postmodernist theories of Jean Beaudrillard.

Jean Baudrillard begins his *Simulacra and Simulations* by invoking Jorge Luis Borges' fable of the map that was so accurate, it had a one-to-one ratio with the territory it represented. We understand when we look at a referent—a map—that it is not the territory itself. However, if the referent—the signifier—simulates the sign rather than invokes it, the former can no longer reasonably be asserted to be merely a representation of the later. Baudrillard argues that because the sign and signifier are made indistinguishable, when this process of simulation occurs in society, in every realm from politics to television, history to nuclear armament, 'the territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory— *precession of simulacra*—that engenders the territory' (1). The application of this theory can explain how a character whose entirely fictional extraction is not in question, can nonetheless be perceived as historically grounded enough to be elevated beyond fiction into myth.

Within the scope of Baudrillard's work, an adaptation may be viewed as the simulation—the map—which describes and defines the real physical boundaries of a place that was formerly a fictional abstraction. The Sherlock Holmes character and its milieu as imagined by Conan Doyle is embodied on screen through various adaptations. Conan Doyle described certain aspects of the flat, from its disorderliness, to the jack knife that affixes correspondence to the mantel, to the types of chairs in the room, to Holmes' chemical experiments. The stories were also accompanied in print with illustrations that helped define elements of the space. In depicting Holmes and Watson's

flat, adaptations utilise these descriptions and add to them to generate complete visual spaces.

From the visual map of these various on-screen depictions of Holmes' residence at 221B Baker Street, an actual flat has been established and claims to be the original; despite coming later, it claims to be the sign of which the map—the films—are signifiers. This shifts the perception of the Holmes character as it seeks, like 'The Grand Game' of Sherlockian fan discourse,[23] to extricate him from the world of fiction and establish him as a real historical person. The consequence of this shift in perspective is similar to the result of 'The Game' as well—it concretises and narrows the character's infinity of imagination-based audience interpretations into a considerably more monolithic figure. Simply put, creating a physical space and claiming that it was once inhabited by a fictional character affects that character by narrowing it into a single uniform vision that also must conform to reality.

Baudrillard himself spends much time discussing cinema. In particular he accuses the simulation of historical events on screen of obscuring and destroying history itself. In the realm of adaptation, the focus and thus the result is slightly different. Analysing simulation in adaptation must focus on the interplay between a sign and signifier that are both fictional and on how their interplay can lead to the same kind of suspension of the sign and generation of a hyperreality. Adaptation is a necessary part of the process by which the hyperreal is generated, that is to say, adaptation is a process of map making.

At the beginning of 'The Precession of Simulacra', Baudrillard says this:

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[23] The 'Grand Game' is a fan practice wherein readers imagine Holmes and Watson to be real people, and label Conan Doyle 'the literary agent'. For an in-depth analysis of the 'Game', see chapter three, section one.

It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody.

It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real ... Never

again will the real have the chance to produce itself—such is the vital

function of the model in a system of death, or rather of anticipated

resurrection, that no longer even gives the event of death a chance. A

hyperreal henceforth sheltered from the imaginary.... (2)

This calls into the question the place of the source text. Is the written source not the

territory that has been mapped by the adaptation? The answer in this case is no, because

the source, as the written word, is by nature not a physical model. Regardless of how

detailed the author is in defining space, he can never account for the contents of every

cupboard in his fictional world, so to speak. The source, therefore, has infinite capacity

for change and manipulation; this is, of course, one reason why a single source like

Sherlock Holmes can be successfully adapted so many times in so many, and often in

contradictory, ways. Baudrillard's 'sign of the real'—in this case adaptations of

Sherlock Holmes and the visual presence of 221B Baker Street in particular—when they

substitute themselves for the real—in this case Conan Doyle's written text-based model

of 221B Baker Street—freeze that infinite capacity for change into a discrete number of

depictions of the space. As the number of adaptations continues to grow, the number of

depictions of the space will grow, but they can never again be infinite.

The actual physical space of 221B Baker Street in London completes

Baudrillard's model. Creating the space largely from the visual maps presented in

adaptations, it becomes Baudrillard's hyperreal. In its brief virtual tour, the museum's

website notes that 'the famous study overlooking Baker Street that has been portrayed

in so many films over the years is located on the 1st floor above a flight of 17 steps'.

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Because it claims to be the space which Conan Doyle described and which adaptations depict rather than a space based on Conan Doyle's or adaptations' descriptions, it has effectively supplanted the real: the fictional text. It is a single unchanging physical place and thus narrows the already narrowed field from the multitude of depictions in adaptations to one, denying its imaginary roots and therefore denying the legitimacy of conceptualizing Sherlock Holmes in an imaginary way. Baudrillard condemns this, offering that at least a simulated environment, such as depictions of Baker Street on screen, don not fool anyone. An audience has an inherent understanding of fictional space. However, filling an actual space and 'acting as if nothing had happened' (11) is engaging in what Baudrillard calls 'retrospective hallucination' and fundamentally alters our perception of reality.

It could be argued here that the creators and purveyors of the Sherlock Holmes Museum are aware of participating in a fiction and are not in the business of presenting their space as anything more than a recreation—a representation—of the residence of Sherlock Holmes. They are so immersed in presenting the historicity of the flat, however, that they cross the line between representation and simulacrum. 'The official home of Sherlock Holmes at 221B Baker Street is... today known as The Sherlock Holmes Museum', the museum's official website claims; 'the corner shop [on Baker Street] and all the adjacent properties ... were demolished in the 1930s to make way for the Abbey National Headquarters building. ... Sherlock Holmes's house, thankfully still survive[s] today'. Note the weaving of actual historical detail, such as the demolition of several properties for the construction of the Abbey National, with the fictional. The museum's homepage adds that 'the 1st floor study overlooking Baker Street is still faithfully maintained for posterity as it was kept in Victorian Times', suggesting that

even the artefacts and furniture were once the property of Sherlock Holmes himself. The museum thus claims its place not as a recreation or representation, but as an institute of historical preservation.

This simulation followed by establishment of the hyperreal can also be seen as a contributory factor in the longevity of Sherlock Holmes. A written, fictional source is constantly re-imagined by readers and as it can be imagined and re-imagined, it can be unimagined. Baudrillard describes a model in a system of death, cycling through various incarnations and eventually running its course. It has the potential for resurrection, but the system is always in motion. By introducing a hyperreal, the system is brought to a halt; the model becomes static and because it is static, it cannot die. The physical presence of a simulation of the flat at 221B Baker Street cannot have meaning beyond Sherlock Holmes and therefore as long as it exists, the model, Sherlock Holmes, must necessarily also exist.

In order to understand how this process occurs, Baudrillard outlines the difference between representation and simulation. Representation as a process is self-aware; it understands and accepts the coexistence of sign and signifier. A map that has a scale of one inch to one mile is not in danger of being mistaken for the territory it represents. Simulation is a process that claims authenticity for the signifier over the sign; a map with a one-to-one ratio to the territory could be mistaken for the territory, depriving the territory itself of meaning. In adaptation, this tension is constant. Is the film a recreation or representation of the source, which acknowledges itself as a derivative work, or is it a unique work in its own right, claiming primacy?

To plot the journey from representation to simulacrum, Baudrillard describes four 'successive phases of the image'. The first is that a derivative work 'is the

reflection of a profound reality' (6). This is a film that is representational, simply recreating the source text in a different medium. Many adaptations, particularly the first adaptation of a work, may be considered to fall into this category. The films in the Harry Potter franchise are such adaptations; the general audience is familiar with the source and judges the films' success or failure through their fidelity to that source.

The second phase describes a derivative work that 'masks and denatures a profound reality' (6). This phase describes a film that is a simulation. In terms of adaptation, it acts as a primary source for the material. Many adaptations fall into this category; they are films that are often not known by the general viewing public to be adaptations. *The Wizard of Oz*, for example, is such a film; the average viewer has likely never read L. Frank Baum's novel and quite possibly does not even know that the film was based on a book at all. The viewer is therefore totally unconcerned with the film's fidelity or lack thereof to the novel.

Works that are described by phase three are said to 'mask the *absence* of a profound reality' (6). This comes through a rejection of adaptation itself by labelling it as a false representation. Consider a viewer who claims that the story depicted in an on-screen adaptation 'isn't how it really happened' when referring to the events of a fictional source. On a fundamental level viewers understand that the events did not actually happen, but this language creates a confusion of fiction and reality and can only occur if simulation has occurred; without the adaptation, there is nothing to reject. The rejection itself generates a binary: the understanding that film adaptations are fiction and are therefore somehow 'inauthentic' demands that there be an 'authentic' counterpoint. This mirrors the 'Grand Game' and the argument I will elaborate in chapter three: in the context of 'the Game', adaptations can be a form of libel against the characters. They

are thus rejected for presenting a false version of reality, a claim that masks the fact that the source itself does not represent reality, but is itself a fiction.

The fourth and final phase describes a work that 'has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum' (6). On occasion, in the wake of the rejection of an adaptation, an alternative reality is established to complete the perceived binary of 'inauthentic' and 'authentic'. Because the nature of this hyperreality is defined by its contrast with what has been characterised as a faulty representation, it claims an authenticity in the real world that the fictional source it purports to represent never claimed. And it is in this phase that The Sherlock Holmes Museum at 221B Baker Street, London, can be found.

The address 221B Baker Street did not exist when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote the Holmes stories. Fans considered it a pleasant exercise to attempt to discover which building on Baker Street was most likely to have been the residence of Holmes and Watson under a different address. Candidates included 111, for which one Sherlockian claimed proof existed within the short story 'The Adventure of the Empty House', and the Abbey House Building Society, which was built on a block that was incorporated with the upper part of Baker Street in the 1930s, after the publication of the final Holmes story, and was granted the real postal address 221 (Lancelyn Green 9). This is useful background information because it provides a contrast with the process of the production of the building that most passersby now note as 221B Baker Street. It is the light-hearted exercise of fans to pretend their heroes are real while acknowledging that they are not. It is the product of chance that a city planning event should generate a particular address on a particular street. It is a deliberate conflation of fact and fiction to simulate a flat that never existed and declare it to be historically authentic. Saler would

term this a failed exercise of the 'ironic imagination', in which we should be able to enjoy 'a form of double consciousness...[that] enable[s] individuals to embrace alternative worlds and to experience alternative truths' (Kindle Loc 318) and, as he repeatedly notes, be delighted without being deluded.

The Sherlock Holmes Museum at 221B Baker Street offers a detailed recreation of the rooms of Sherlock Holmes' flat. If the recreation of rooms existed outside the real context of Baker Street, London, there would be no conflation of the real and simulated. Several such recreations do exist, in Los Angeles, in Switzerland, and in other areas of London. These function in the same manner as *Star Trek* fans' recreations of various locations on the starship Enterprise: they are far enough removed from reality that they are not in danger of being mistaken for it. Baudrillard declares that even if your desire is to recognise your surroundings as a simulation rather than as reality, 'the network of artificial signs will become inextricably mixed up with the real elements... you will immediately find yourself once again... in the real' (20): Stepping out of a simulation of the bridge of the Enterprise necessitates returning to reality and recognising the simulation as a simulation. With that mix of the simulated and the real in mind, it is worth focusing in some detail on perhaps the most interesting element of 221B Baker Street: the building's Blue Plaque.

The English Heritage affixes Blue Plaques to buildings of historical significance around England and in London particularly. Requirements for authentic Blue Plaques include that the person being honoured must have been a real person and that the location must be the actual original building where that person lived ('Stage 1'). So specific is this tenet that genuine Blue Plaques are not even placed on buildings that have been faithfully reconstructed on the same site. A side-by-side comparison of

authentic Blue Plaques with the Blue Plaque affixed to The Sherlock Holmes Museum

at 221B Baker Street reveals that the format is slightly different [fig. 1]. Authentic Blue

Plaques include the name of the official and legitimate sponsoring organization,

generally English Heritage or a city or town council; this detail is missing from the

Holmes Blue Plaque. The Holmes Blue Plaque also shows the address, 221B (or 221b),

which is not included on genuine Blue Plaques. Despite the fact that The Sherlock

Holmes Museum erected the plaque itself, it claims on its website that it is an 'Official

Blue Heritage Plaque'; it is not. Of course, visitors glancing at the Holmes plaque do

not have the advantage of a side-by-side comparison with another; they would only see

a plaque that commemorates 'Sherlock Holmes, consulting detective', and offers

specific years for his residence at the location of this flat. Thus the place, this hyperreal

place, is legitimized as a historical London landmark.

Fig. 1. From left to right: Ashley D. Polasek, *221b Blue Plaque*, 2010, Photograph;

Jamie Barras, *P G Wodehouse*, 2008, Photograph, *Jamie Barras: London Plaques*,

Flickr, n.d., Web, 12 Jan. 2011.

The establishment of this hyperreality operates as the missing link in the

mythmaking process for Sherlock Holmes. Baudrillard considers that in the generation

of a simulacrum, the antecedent which it may not resemble, but which it has nonetheless displaced, must necessarily be destroyed. 221B Baker Street has experienced a narrowing of the infinite capacity of imagination to interpret Conan Doyle through the written world into first a discrete number of representations in the form of screen adaptations and finally to the retrospective hallucination that is the generation of The Sherlock Holmes Museum, a single simulacrum that has overwritten the historical reality in which Sherlock Holmes does not figure with one in which he does. This is not to say that the simulacrum impedes the evolution of the Sherlock Holmes character. The remaining chapters of this work will argue that that is not the case. Instead, it simply operates on our perception of the character: like Robin Hood we could consider that Sherlock Holmes exists beyond purely creative endeavour. He has been written into history and as a result, has evolved as a modern myth.

CHAPTER ONE: MECHANISMS OF EVOLUTION

Performing Inheritance, Environment, and Mutation

Introduction

Examining the ruptures and changes that drive the evolution of the Sherlock Holmes character through time and text is primarily an investigation of environment. 'Changes in the environment often bring about changes in the phenotype, whether that environment be biological or cultural' (448), Bortolotti and Hutcheon remind us, so that 'what we then end up with is the product of cultural selection; what have survived are mutations that allow the story to better fit (adapt to) its culture or environment' (449). It is the purpose of this section to investigate the relationship between those environmental changes and the phenotypic variations of Sherlock Holmes in order to move closer to an understanding of the processes that contribute to the success of the character.

The thread that connects the three sections of this chapter is performance. Character is mediated through performance in several ways, and it is through performance that character adapts to various environments. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler addresses a tension associated with common understandings of 'being' and 'substance'. She objects to the assumption that being necessitates substance (Kindle Loc. 920), offering instead a grammatical reading of the transitive concept of 'being', which precludes prior substance: if one thing is being another thing, it is, by definition, not that thing, but performing that thing. As Barthes describes character indices as those qualities which are 'being' character,[1]

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[1] Refer to page 6

Applying Butler's reading suggests that the substance of character is generated through performance.

The three evolutionary mechanisms that this chapter interrogates are inheritance, environmental pressure, and mutation. Section one considers how inheritance influences the Sherlock Holmes character by considering the role and functions of actors who have portrayed Sherlock Holmes on screen. Although their performances may be viewed and analysed in isolation, it is more revealing to consider how, as successive rungs on a ladder, they have each added or altered qualities of the character that was 'bequeathed' to them, building, step-by-step, Sherlock Holmes as he exists today. There are numerous qualities ascribed to Holmes, taken for granted by modern audiences, that are nowhere to be found in Conan Doyle. Far from being any sort of corruption of the original author's intent or will, these qualities represent the evolution necessary for the survival of Holmes and his popularity. Actors, by the nature of their close association— their embodiment—of the role, carry much of the responsibility for not simply playing Holmes a particular way, but for becoming so indelibly linked with playing him a particular way, that it becomes nearly impossible to play him otherwise. This section traces this pattern of descent through inherited performances.

Although a comparison of adaptations of Sherlock Holmes seems at first glance to reveal a host of wildly different interpretations of the character, there are some indices that have survived from portrayal to portrayal. However, a main contention of this project is that indices accumulate as the character evolves, so that many indices of the Sherlock Holmes character are not drawn from Conan Doyle. Several important indices have been infused into the character by the actors who have played him. I will be focusing on the actors whose contributions are not merely a matter of bringing the

vision of directors and screenwriters to life, but are a consequence of their own natures and their own often unwanted extra-textual links with the character.[2]

Section two uses gender as a case study to analyse how pressure on the character from shifts in the socio-cultural environment over time drive its evolution. Gender is also a matter of performance: 'As a shifting and contextual phenomenon, gender does not denote a substantive being, but a relative point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations (Butler Kindle Loc. 700), according to Butler's theorisation of gender construction. The indices that denote Sherlock Holmes' gender identity shift as they are performed in different contexts, and by an examination and comparison of several of those contexts, a picture of how such environmental pressures act on and reform the character emerges. I have selected Holmes' gender identity as the subject of this examination because it is among the most frequently explored and debated attributes of the literary Holmes, which allows me to situate my analyses in a larger critical conversation. This larger conversation informs my work, and it may also be enlarged and enriched by the addition of a discussion of the adapted Holmes' gender identity.

Finally, the third section of this chapter addresses mutations in the character's aesthetic. Again, we refer to Bortolotti and Hutcheon: 'Mutation is the raw material of evolution. Despite some of its nonscientific connotations, mutation is not a negative term in biology where it is judged as beneficial, neutral, or deleterious in the context of its environment' (449). Beneficial mutations contribute to the success of the character, neutral mutations are transient and have essentially no symbolic or narrative value, while deleterious mutations impede the character's success in some way. Beneficial

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[2] Specific justification for my selection of actors will appear in section one.

mutations persist, neutral mutations are ignored, and deleterious mutations are 'failed attempts', which 'are eliminated in both biology and culture' (449). The visual image of the Sherlock Holmes character, which much necessarily be intentionally generated for every screen adaptation, thus undergoes mutations, which accumulate currency through repetition and replication.

Sherlock Holmes is a character who is so firmly linked to his aesthetic that it forms the exclusive basis of a great portion of the speculation and conversation surrounding an adaptation. This section will interrogate how beneficial and deleterious mutations have influenced the image of Sherlock Holmes, and, by comparing Holmes' aesthetic to the visual language of superheroes, offer an argument for how costume functions as a signifier for the character. Because designers, in researching for their task, cannot escape the image of Holmes that already exists from previous adaptations, they have to make a choice of whether to build on the existing aesthetic or create a look in opposition to it. Regardless, their work is inevitably a reaction of some kind. In this way, the visual qualities of Sherlock Holmes evolve from production to production, helping to establish a uniform vision. This vision is more than an answer to the simple question, 'what does Sherlock Holmes look like?' Instead, the visual politics of costume design operate as indices of the character.

There are admittedly many more aspects of inheritance, environmental pressures, and mutations that a project like this might examine. I have been selective, and have focused on those attributes that are directly involved in the performance of the Sherlock Holmes character on screen. Through this investigation of the pressures that act on the character across time and texts, I hope to shed light on the process and trajectory of the evolution of Sherlock Holmes.

Becoming Sherlock Holmes: Inheriting Character

In terms of adaptation, the practical bridge between the indices of character and the audience is the actor. Each actor who has performed the role of Sherlock Holmes has become the physical embodiment of the myth. Bennett and Woollacott devote a considerable amount of analysis to the role of actors in mediating popular heroes. They concur with the argument of this section, namely, that the drawing of fiction into reality, as analysed in the introduction, is not the only process involved in this modern myth-building: The inverse process is also at work. This process, they claim, is 'best exemplified in the star system, whereby "real lives" become fictionalised and blended with screen images to result in the construction of a mythic figure poised midway between the two' (45). Bennett and Woollacott go on to interrogate the cross pollination of Bond and the three actors who, at the point their work was published, had embodied the role in the series of films produced by Eon. This section interrogates the process by which particular actors have added to the accumulated meaning of the Holmes character through their lives and performances.

In their 'On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and "Success"—Biologically', which provides the framework for this project, Gary Bortolotti and Linda Hutcheon note that the first homological link between biological evolution and adaptation is the transience of physical bodies. While an adaptation may continue to be consumed indefinitely, it is, itself, a finite product, and the version of Sherlock Holmes it depicts is tied to a specific, limited performance. That performance, whether it takes place in a single film, or across many films or episodes of a television programme, is inevitably tied to its cultural moment. This necessity of the evolutionary drive toward perpetuation manifests as a pressure to continually re-embody the

character in living and relevant performance. However, the purpose of this project is not to consider how often Sherlock Holmes has been embodied, but rather to examine how the process of continual renewal in performance has reflected back on and affected the evolution of the character's indices.

Utilising actors as a major delineator of specific adaptational 'bodies', understanding that actors are in practical terms responsible for performing the myth of character, and recognising that, within our evolutionary framework, bodies will 'wear out', it is worth turning to the influence of a series of specific actors on the evolution of the Holmes character in order to investigate how the myth is performed and re-performed, and how those performances act on the Holmes character. As noted in the introduction, with each new embodiment of the character, and particularly by actors who become, for various reasons, personally associated with the role, the meaning of the indices proper change.

In evolutionary terms, the actors who portray Sherlock Holmes do not merely interpret the single isolated text in which they are cast; they are necessarily part of a larger intertextual conversation, as the character is interpreted by one actor and then bequeathed to the next with the previous actor's stamp etched upon it. This collaboration across time and text between actors becomes stronger and more significant in light of the iron-gripped and often fraught relationship that many actors have had with the role. Bennett and Woollacott argue that readers of a source text are 'profoundly affected by [their] specific preorientation to the novels produced by [their] insertion in the orders of inter-textuality,' and that 'the process of reading is not one in which reader and text meet as abstractions but one in which the inter-textually organised reader meets the intertextually organised text' (56). They note this in order to

illustrate how an actors' performance becomes a virtually unavoidable element of the process of consuming any version of the text, even those in which the actor does not figure, and/or which contradict the actor's interpretation of the character. This is true, particularly in the case of a performance that saturates the culture surrounding the character; reading character is inevitably an intertextual exercise. What Bennett and Woollacott leave unsaid, however, is that given this process, actors themselves cannot approach the role tabula rasa once it has been previously performed, and thus, if the character is performed in multiple defining adaptations, as Sherlock Holmes has been, there is a perpetual accumulation of meaning.

This section offers a fresh look at the contributions that actors have made to the Sherlock Holmes franchise. There is not yet any comprehensive study on how the portrayals of various actors interpreting the role have influenced one another. What has been researched at length is the influence of the Holmes character on specific actors, and their individual contributions to Holmes' legacy. This information is available through biographies, such as Henry Zecher's *America's Sherlock Holmes*, which is an exhaustively researched, if poorly organized and badly presented, work on William Gillette, and David Stuart Davies' *Bending the Willow*, which offers a fair and nuanced look at Jeremy Brett. Several actors have chosen to tell their own stories and offer views on playing Sherlock Holmes in their own words. Such autobiographies include Basil Rathbone's *In and Out of Character*, Christopher Lee's *Lord of Misrule*, and Peter Cushing's *Peter Cushing: An Autobiography* and *Past Forgetting*. Additional information on various actors' relationships to and opinions of the Holmes character is

scattered throughout various published Sherlock Holmes filmographies[3] as well as in

interviews archived at the British Film Institute in London and the Margaret Herrick

Library in Los Angeles. One of the aims of this section is to put all of these works in

conversation with one another for the first time.

The deep connections that actors have with their roles through the construction

of their characters has been explored through application of the theory of the embodied

mind. Acting is not merely a physical exercise: it requires the engagement of actors'

minds, both in their perceptions of their role and their perceptions of themselves. In his

Acting in the Cinema, James Naremore states simply that 'at its most sophisticated,

acting in theatre or movies is an art devoted to the systematic ostentatious depiction of

character' (23). He goes on to claim that to be an actor, one must be 'embedded in a

story' (23). In the case of Sherlock Holmes, that story is not the plot of the adaptation,

but the story of the Holmes character itself, as it is the character indices, not the

functions proper of narrative that are carried across the boundaries between adaptations.

In embedding himself consciously in the ongoing story of constructing Holmes, each

actor who plays him embodies him; he thus lends a portion of himself and his own

personality and perceptions about Holmes to that continuing story.

There are the only two instances in which the actor portraying Holmes was

replaced within the same programme or franchise. The first is the BBC's *The*

Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, which starred Douglas Wilmer in 13 episodes between

1964 and 65, and later Peter Cushing in 16 episodes in 1968. The second is the pair of

films co-produced by the BBC and Tiger Aspect in the early 2000s: *The Hound of the*

Baskervilles starred Richard Roxburgh, and *The Case of the Silk Stocking* starred Rupert

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[3] For a list of such filmographies, see the beginning of the section 'Good Old Index' in the introduction of
this work.

Everett. In both cases, the actors portraying Watson—Nigel Stock and Ian Hart, respectively—provided continuity across the adaptations. Despite the continuity provided by the production companies and supporting actors, as well as consistency in writing—the project of directly adapting Conan Doyle's narratives in the case of the *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and the expedient of having the same screenwriter, Allan Cubitt, in the case of the films—both projects are generally divided and interpreted as discrete works based on their lead actors.

As Sherlock Holmes is a character franchise,[4] and as the primary purpose of this project is a to take a trans-adaptation approach to the character, investigation of the embodied Sherlock Holmes becomes a question of the interconnectedness of actors' performances of the same 'inherited' character. Though current Holmes adaptations are linked with their directors and screenwriters, auteur director Guy Ritchie and maverick screenwriters Stephen Moffat and Mark Gatiss, particularly, the question of myth-performance leads us naturally to actors, who are stewards of the Sherlock Holmes character. The concept of stewardship is vital to understanding how a character evolves through the hands of actors over the course of successive adaptations. Stewardship is a product of inheritance, in which contributions of specific actors to the larger Holmes myth are bequeathed to future actors. Sherlock Holmes as a character is never a finished work, but rather always a work in progress. A monarch is the steward to the crown that he inherits from his ancestors and bequeaths to his descendants. He may make changes to the country during his reign, some of which alter the fabric of the nation, others of which do not. Some monarchs' legacies are writ large on their nations' histories, others fade into obscurity. Regardless, a nation's laws, history, and culture are not begun anew

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[4] In contrast with a narrative franchise, see introduction for a more thorough discussion of the concept of 'character franchise'.

with each monarch who rules it, and the character of Sherlock Holmes is not begun

anew with each actor who plays it.   Actors who play Sherlock Holmes are stewards of

character. They inherit the character from their predecessors; some make indelible

changes to it, particularly in the indices they elect to highlight versus those they choose

to de-emphasise or ignore, and in the qualities within themselves that they either

willingly or unintentionally allow to become entangled with the Holmes character. In

several cases, actors have become so entwined with the role of Holmes beyond the

bounds of the adaptation that they have, themselves, become part of the myth.

To trace this stewardship and how it has influenced the evolution of Sherlock

Holmes on screen, I will focus particularly on those actors who have become part of the

Holmes myth. These actors and their contributions are identifiable because their

relationships with the character of Sherlock Holmes are Gordian Knots of influence:

Although this section is titled 'Becoming Sherlock Holmes', it is not only about actors

becoming Holmes, but also about Holmes becoming the actors who play him. Instead of

focusing entirely on the actors themselves, I wish to consider the qualities that they

infused into the character, which, since their association with it, have become part of the

role as it was bequeathed to subsequent actors who undertook to play it. The focus here

on a few select actors should not be taken to suggest that the multitudes of unnamed

players did not leave their marks on the character. In some cases these unnamed players

were the first to play Holmes with some of the characteristics with which we now

associate him. However, it is the intense bond between a few actors and the character

that seared those qualities indelibly into the public consciousness. The actors whose

contributions to the evolution of the Holmes character are discussed here are

particularly those who followed in the footsteps of Arthur Conan Doyle when they

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found their careers and their prospects consumed by Sherlock Holmes. These are the actors whose association with the role extended a long reach beyond the film or television set, and into their personal lives.

In order to justify my specific selections, I return again to Bennett and Woollacott, who faced a less taxing range of actors to discuss, but nonetheless worked to highlight the blurred line between actors, and Sean Connery in particular, and the character of James Bond. 'The identity of Bond has proved dominant', they note, 'in that the star images of the actors who have played the part are relatively undeveloped except in terms of their incarnations of Bond. The public space in which such images might have been developed successfully has already been usurped by the figure of Bond' (273). The character of Sherlock Holmes casts a long shadow. Not every actor who has played him has had his identity entangled with that of Holmes in the public consciousness, nor has every actor who has played him had the rest of his legacy overshadowed by his performance as Holmes, but several have. A discussion of those several, whose identities were dominated by the Holmes character, and the qualities of themselves that they thus infused into the character, is what follows.

William Gillette was not the first to play Holmes, but he was the first to become truly identified with the role. Gillette penned his play *Sherlock Holmes* so that he, himself, could take the starring role. Public opinion from the very first staging was that Gillette was Holmes—that he was the character made flesh. Though many actors would take up the role and seem as convincing, Gillette directly contributed to the rewriting of Conan Doyle's character in several ways. First, he divorced the physical features of Sherlock Holmes from those related by Conan Doyle, who described Holmes as a man whose

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very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the

most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so

excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were

sharp and piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have

alluded; and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of

alertness and decision. (Conan Doyle, Vol. 3 29)

The first two collections of stories—*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The

Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*—were accompanied by illustrations by Sidney Paget that

solidified this description. However, a different illustrator produced the images that

accompanied the stories published in America after Gillette began embodying Holmes

on stage. That illustrator, Frederic Dorr Steele, described Gillette as a man 'blessed by

nature with the lean, sinewy figure and keen visage required [of an actor playing

Holmes], and his quiet but incisive histrionic method exactly fitted such a part as

Sherlock. I can think of no more perfect realisation of a fictional character on the stage'

(qtd. in Zecher 307). Although a comparison shows that Gillette did not really resemble

Paget's drawings and lacked the features outlined by Conan Doyle, Steele so associated

Gillette with Holmes as a result, it must be assumed, of Gillette's embodiment of the

role, that he used Gillette as his model in his illustrations [fig. 2]. Thus Gillette not only

became Holmes on stage, but Holmes the fictional character actually became Gillette

the actor in print. When he finally committed his play to celluloid in 1916—a film long

thought lost to history, but recently rediscovered and currently under restoration[5]—

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[5] A nitrate dupe negative of Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes* was discovered at the Cinémathèque Française, and after restoration will premier in January 2015 in Paris as part of the archive's Toute la Mémoire du Monde festival, and in San Francisco in May 2015 (Noonan).

viewers would have seen not Gillette playing Sherlock Holmes, but Sherlock Holmes himself on the screen.

Fig. 2. From left to right: Sidney Paget, *Sherlock Holmes*, 1904, *Art in the Blood*, N.p., n.d., Web, 27 Sept. 2012; *William Gillette*, Photograph, *The Life and Times of Joseph Haworth*, N.p., n.d., Web, 27 Sept. 2012; Frederic Dorr Steele, *The Priory School*, 1904, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, N.p., 1998, Web. 27 Sept. 2012.

This phenomenon of Holmes becoming Gillette was an important early contribution to the evolution of the Holmes character. On the surface, and in simple terms, it set a precedent for actors to undertake the role regardless of their own appearance. If Sherlock Holmes could, in a literal sense, physically become William Gillette even though the actor did not match the written description, it suggests a privileging of the performed adapted text over the written text. William Gillette, simply by becoming intrinsically linked to the character, influenced Holmes' appearance in the long term—long beyond his own temporary embodiment of the character—and paved the way for any future actors to do likewise.

That link, which I earlier described as a Gordian Knot of influence, is the essential component in what distinguishes the actors I am electing to discuss. I describe it as a Gordian Knot because it is a fool's errand to attempt to disentangle the qualities brought to the character by the actors alone. However, it is not taking too much of a liberty or a leap of logic to identify the actors who became close enough to the character to cause Holmes to, in some way, become them. Gillette did so literally, and his link with the character was the inevitable result of sheer market saturation. William Gillette played Sherlock Holmes well over a thousand times over the course of his career and in his wake, the image of Sherlock Holmes was reshaped to match his own.

The conflation of actor and character, the indelible link, was not unique to Gillette. In 1920, prolific director Maurice Elvey began to cast for a series of Sherlock Holmes silent films. He invited Eille Norwood to test for the title role and described the experience this way:

> I suggested that Mr. Norwood should try to make himself as much like the Great Detective as possible for the purpose of a rough test. Though the suggestion was thus sprung on him, and no special facilities were available, Mr. Norwood went off to his dressing room, and within the space of a very few minutes came back to my room and astonished me. He had done very little in the way of makeup and he had no accessories, but the transformation was remarkable—it *was* Sherlock Holmes who came in that door. (Pohle and Hart 73)

It is important to note that while Gillette became Holmes by playing him, here Norwood became Holmes without any reference to any narrative at all. There is nothing of Conan Doyle in this moment save Norwood's decisive claim on the role. If William Gillette

marked the fork in the road between fidelity to the static literary Holmes and the dynamic adapted Holmes, and declared through the text of his play and the use of his image that the character of Sherlock Holmes need not be Conan Doyle's version, Eille Norwood was the actor who took the first crucial steps down the new, uncharted path. He would cement his connection with Holmes in forty seven films over three years, and so complete was his association with the character that after his final Holmes picture in 1923, Norwood never appeared on screen again.

These two actors imbued Holmes with mannerism. Contemporary reviews of the day[6] praise Gillette's portrayal, and the surviving Norwood silents attest to his keen and pointed interpretation of the character. Conan Doyle himself was reportedly fond of both, acknowledging in a speech in 1921 that any longevity that Holmes achieved could largely be credited to Gillette (Pointer 18), and that Norwood, in his portrayal of the character 'has that rare quality which can only be described as glamour, which compels you to watch an actor eagerly even when he is doing nothing. He has a the brooding eye which excites expectation' (Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* 126). Note that it is those qualities inherent in Norwood himself, not in his interpretation of the text, that Conan Doyle admired.

Eille Norwood gave Sherlock Holmes a sharpness and, as Conan Doyle would have it, a glamour, a kind of mysterious magnetism, that is simply part and parcel to the modern vision of Sherlock Holmes. This visually conveyed intense intellectual energy, which became the standard for future interpretations, and which is clearly evident in interpretations ranging from Arthur Wontner in the 1930s to Benedict Cumberbatch nearly a century later, may best be understood as the legacy of Eille Norwood.

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[6] See Henry Zecher's *William Gillette, America's Sherlock Holmes*, pages 304-21 for a large sample of contemporary reviews of Gillette as Sherlock Holmes.

Though there would be several more actors to assume the role of Holmes between 1923 and 1939, including Wontner, it is in that year that the next actor who would be overtaken by the Sherlock Holmes character off-screen, and who would therefore become part of the Holmes myth, first undertook to play the character. Basil Rathbone ultimately played Holmes in fourteen films and over two hundred radio plays. With such saturation, it is no wonder that the role overtook the actor's career. He ruefully described his relationship with Holmes by opining in his autobiography thus: 'My fifty-two roles in twenty-three plays of Shakespeare, my years in the London and New York theatre, my scores of motion pictures, including two Academy Award nominations, were slowly but surely sinking into oblivion' (180). Because he so firmly became Holmes, what Rathbone put into the character was destined to stick; Holmes was bound to become, for future stewards, what Rathbone made him. He projected the same visual intensity that Norwood had written into the character, but added to it the pointedness of speech for which he was famous, and more importantly, an affectionate relationship with Dr. Watson, which had, until then, been absent from the screen.

Audiences today view Holmes and Watson as two sides of the same coin. The language of scholars, fans, and critics suggests that they are incomplete parts of a single whole. There is ample evidence within the literary source to support this reading: Holmes' affection and respect for Watson is part of the indices—the raw genetic material—of the character. The finest illustration of this attribute of the literary Holmes is an oft-cited passage from the 1924 short story 'The Adventure of the Three Garridebs', in which Watson is shot and the episode plays out thus:

"You're not hurt, Watson? For God's sake, say that you are not hurt!"

It was worth a wound–it was worth many wounds–to know the depth of loyalty and love which lay behind that cold mask. The clear, hard eyes were dimmed for a moment, and the firm lips were shaking. For the one and only time I caught a glimpse of a great heart as well as of a great brain. All my years of humble but single-minded service culminated in that moment of revelation.

"It's nothing, Holmes. It's a mere scratch."

He had ripped up my trousers with his pocket-knife.

"You are right," he cried with an immense sigh of relief. "It is quite superficial." His face set like flint as he glared at our prisoner, who was sitting up with a dazed face. "By the Lord, it is as well for you. If you had killed Watson, you would not have got out of this room alive. Now, sir, what have you to say for yourself?" (Conan Doyle, Vol. 2 1598)

This synergy was not an element of the many Holmes adaptations before 1939, however, and, arguably, Conan Doyle did not even conceive of his creations this way despite this textual evidence, famously dismissing Watson as Holmes' 'rather stupid friend' in a surviving newsreel from 1927 ('Arthur Conan Doyle (1927)') While 'The Three Garridebs' is hardly the only example of the intensity of the friendship between the written Holmes and Watson, it is certainly the most explicit, and is interesting to note that this story was published a year after Norwood completed his final turn as Holmes on screen, and was therefore not available as an index to the character for him.

Nigel Bruce, who played Watson opposite Rathbone in all of the latter's outings as the Great Detective, was the first actor in the role to receive top billing alongside the actor who played his Holmes. There is no doubt that this is in large part due to both

Bruce's relative fame and to the screenwriters who decided to give Watson more to do and more to say. However, these qualities are transient: they could have come and gone with these particular films, yet Watson's vital importance to Holmes persists and endures. There are, it seems, two reasons for this: the first is Rathbone's genuine friendship with Nigel Bruce, which bled into their acting, and the second is Rathbone's persistent identification with the role, which led that on-screen friendship to become an intrinsic element of Holmes' character in subsequent adaptations.

The Rathbone/Bruce films present a Holmes and a Watson with a vast chasm between them in their relative intelligences and capabilities. Although this could easily have rendered their friendship absurd, on screen it is natural and organic because it is founded on genuine affection, and it grew from Rathbone's own close friendship with Bruce. By playing his own feelings, Rathbone effectively wrote them into all future adaptations, even claiming in his memoir *In and Out of Character*, that that very affection is the crux of their adaptations' success: 'It has always seemed to me', says Rathbone, 'to be more than possible that our "adventures" might have met with a less kindly public acceptance had they been recorded by a less lovable companion to Holmes than was Nigel's Dr. Watson, and a less engaging friend to me than was "Willy" Bruce' (Rathbone 181). Note that Rathbone does not simply credit the way the characters were written, but rather his personal friendship with Bruce.

Conan Doyle's written relationship between Holmes and Watson, which, despite the author's dismissal of Watson, is a compelling portrait of close male friendship; however, this index of the character had been neglected by forty years' worth of adaptations. As essentially every adaptation made after the Rathbone/Bruce films privileges it, it is logical to trace its depiction in subsequent adaptations to the

Rathbone/Bruce films rather than to Conan Doyle. Today's audiences could not conceive of Sherlock Holmes without Dr. Watson because they have internalized the changes made by Basil Rathbone, re-enforced by every subsequent adaptation, which, unable to escape the long shadow cast by Rathbone's performance, incorporate, and thus further entrench them.

The next man for whom Holmes genuinely became a blessing and a curse took on the role forty years after Basil Rathbone. Jeremy Brett played Sherlock Holmes in thirty six episodes and five features for Granada television between 1984 and 1994 and on stage for over two years. The character overtook him perhaps even more than it had previous actors as it not only overtook his career, but, by all accounts, overtook his personal life as well. Brett became Holmes not only for a new generation of viewers, but unwillingly began to become Holmes to himself. The nature of his acting style accounts in part for this. Brett described himself as a 'becomer'; he viewed himself as a sponge, saying, 'I squeeze out the liquid of myself and draw in the liquid of the character I am playing' (Gunner 54). Brett saw Holmes as a deeply isolated and a quite unpleasant man whom he famously declared he 'wouldn't cross the street to meet' (averyfineloafer, "Jeremy Brett Interview: National Public Radio"). Becoming such a man took its toll on the psychologically fragile Brett, and after two series of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and a severe upswing in his bipolar disorder, Brett announced a hatred for the character in the press, declaring that he needed to let Holmes go because he 'must learn to live again' after becoming so entangled with the character (Davies, *Bending the Willow* 97). Despite this declaration, Brett continued to play Holmes for another seven years, nearly until his death in 1995.

Although it would seem in a direct comparison that Brett's approach to Holmes was wildly different than Rathbone's, the former offering a highly mannered, waspish portrayal, the latter a pointed but by no means tortured version, Brett's portrayal assimilated much of the character as he was bequeathed by previous actors. The alert mannerisms, the crisp speech, and, of course, the clear affection between Holmes and Watson were vital indices of Sherlock Holmes that Brett, if he wished the character to be recognisable, did not have the power to alter. As it happens, he did not want to alter them, and, in fact, considered the screen friendship, established so completely by Rathbone and Bruce, to be the central focus of any Sherlock Holmes adaptation. When asked in a 1990 interview with HELLO! Magazine about the most memorable and vital component of Sherlock Holmes stories, his answer was that 'they are a great essay in male friendship' (averyfineloafer, "Jeremy Brett: The Ultimate Sherlock Holmes"). To these qualities, Brett added some attributes of his own. He noted that he considered Holmes to be 'puckish', and his performance eroded the stiffness and stuffiness of the character. The sly humour that permeates more recent versions are part of the Sherlock Holmes Brett bequeathed to all interpreters that came after him.

Brett's other major contribution was making Holmes a sexual being. As David Stuart Davies notes in his biography of Brett, 'Men were fascinated by Brett's Holmes, a fascination which stirred uncertain emotions within the modern man's breast. Women were less troubled: they admired and lusted after him' (*Bending the Willow* 27). This is not to say that previous actors who played Holmes were unattractive, nor that Brett played Holmes as overtly sexual, but audiences did and do react to his Holmes as a sexual being. Like humour, subsequent adaptations have taken this sexual magnetism for granted; Robert Downey Jr., Benedict Cumberbatch, and Jonny Lee Miller—the

three major interpreters of Holmes since Brett—all imbue the character with a latent sexual energy, incorporating and privileging this index bequeathed to them by Brett. Jeremy Brett's embodiment of the Holmes character is why the 'ripped' nude and partially clothed versions of the character, who are obviously displayed for voyeuristic enjoyment, portrayed by Robert Downey Jr., Benedict Cumberbatch, and Jonny Lee Miller, are as much Sherlock Holmes as any man in a deerstalker with a pipe clenched between his teeth [fig. 3].

Fig. 3. From left to right: Robert Downey Jr. from *Sherlock Holmes,* Dir. Guy Ritchie, Warner Brothers, 2009, Film; Benedict Cumberbatch from 'A Scandal in Belgravia,' *Sherlock*, Dir. Paul McGuigan, BBC, 2012, Television; Jonny Lee Miller from 'Pilot,' *Elementary*, Dir. Michael Cuesta, CBS, 2012, Television.

If the old writer's axiom is true, that there is no good writing, only good rewriting, then the intense fascination of the character of Sherlock Holmes is attributable not simply to the man who wrote him, but to the actors who became him. They rewrote him by inducing him to, in various ways, become them. The process of the performer embodying not only the character within his own text, but embodying the larger extra-textual character that exists outside his text is a process of reception. The

actors may or may not seek to alter the character beyond their own productions, but the stand-out characteristics of performers who became indelibly linked to Sherlock Holmes have nonetheless become important elements of the intertextual conversation. William Gillette represents and evolution of Conan Doyle by effectively erasing the character's physical features and, by earning the right to 'marry or murder or do what [he liked] with him', rendered the Holmes character largely a tabula rasa for future actors. Eille Norwood revised Gillette and gave Holmes glamour. Rathbone likewise revised Norwood and utilised his own personal friendship with Nigel Bruce to privilege the indices of love and respect for Watson into the character, paving the way not only for these qualities to be essential to future versions, but also opened the door for future interpretations of the characters to display absolute interdependence. Rathbone's changes were incorporated by Brett, who extended the character by giving him humour and sex appeal. Though it is early yet for much speculation, the popularity and cult status of BBC's *Sherlock* suggest that the indices added by Benedict Cumberbatch in his interpretation of the character may be lastingly etched onto Sherlock Holmes. Cumberbatch is working hard to keep his career broad and varied, as though he's been warned not to allow Holmes to overtake him as he overtook Conan Doyle and the careers and sometimes the lives of numerous actors. It will be some time before we're able to tell whether he's escaped the character becoming his legacy and whether future interpreters of Sherlock Holmes will take for granted qualities that he is embedding into the character.

In order to reflect back on the importance of actors' performances in the evolution of Sherlock Holmes, I will turn briefly to a case study: CBS's *Elementary* (2012), the most recently created Sherlock Holmes adaptation, has been criticised by

fans who have been locked in debates over whether the programme should be granted that label at all. *Elementary* is a financially successful piece in a cut-throat production climate where only a fraction of programmes, particularly fiction programmes, make it from pitch to screen, and an even smaller fragment of those that are given a pilot are picked up. Of those that are, the holy grail of second-series renewal is often still elusive. It is a testament to the mainstream acceptability of *Elementary*, then, that it endured all of these hurdles and is currently airing its third series, as well as earning popular acclaim, evidenced by its nomination as 'best new TV drama' at the People's Choice Awards.

Narratively speaking, *Elementary* owes almost nothing to Conan Doyle. Where it makes references—Holmes' beekeeping, violin-playing, occasional snatches of dialogue, and character names and occupations—it does so in a way that generally does not relate to the written Holmes. The programme's setting is different in both time and location, taking place, as it does, in contemporary New York City. Sherlock's background is freshly invented, as he came to New York after working for Scotland Yard in England, and arrives with a substance abuse problem. The supporting characters whose names are drawn from the stories, as well as their relationships, are likewise created afresh: Watson is an ex-surgeon, though not an army surgeon, working as a sober companion. She is hired by Sherlock's overbearing father, an entirely original character, and as the first series progresses, dedicates herself to becoming a consulting detective, like Holmes; Mrs. Hudson, the written Holmes' landlady, is, in *Elementary*, a transgender woman who makes her living as a modern-day courtesan or mistress, whose obsessive-compulsive tidying leads to her being hired as the pair's cleaning lady; Irene Adler, the canonical character often adapted as a female foil and potential romantic

interest for Holmes, is Sherlock's former lover, who turns out, in actuality, to be criminal mastermind Moriarty. Although some of the episodes approach similar problems as the Conan Doyle stories—for example, the canonical blackmailer Charles Milverton appears as a blackmailer in the episode 'Dead Man's Switch'—none of the episodes are reinterpretations of Conan Doyle's tales. 'Dead Man's Switch' owed essentially nothing to the short story 'Charles Augustus Milverton', and executive producer and series writer Rob Doherty declared before the programme premiered that he had no intention of drawing any of its plots from canonical tales at any point in the future. Taken as a complete work, the programme hardly resembles the literary Sherlock Holmes at all. In fact, if the characters all had different names and the creators a different intention, it may arguably be no more a direct Sherlock Holmes adaptation than *House M.D.*. The character of Sherlock Holmes is what tethers *Elementary* to Conan Doyle and, perhaps more clearly and vitally, to other Holmes adaptations. With every significant aspect of functions proper excised, *Elementary* is nonetheless a Sherlock Holmes adaptation.

A character franchise is its own type of adaptation, and though there is always the risk of allowing the term 'adaptation' to become too broad and loosely defined, it is the appropriate one in this case. To support this, we turn to Linda Hutcheon's definition of an adaptation as 'an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works' (7). The definition of 'work' in the context of Sherlock Holmes does not mean a story; what Conan Doyle provided as a legacy to fans, critics, and adaptors is not the series of sixty Sherlock Holmes mysteries that he penned. Instead, the character of Holmes himself is the 'work' that he created and bequeathed as that legacy. Sherlock Holmes films are not simply appropriations of aspects of the stories, but full extensive

transpositions, to use Hutcheon's word, of the character of Sherlock Holmes. *Elementary* is not a Sherlock Holmes adaptation because the protagonist plays the violin and keeps bees, in other words, it is a Sherlock Holmes adaptation because Jonny Lee Miller's version of the character can stand in line with Basil Rathbone's, Jeremy Brett's, and Benedict Cumberbatch's versions and, though they each have some unique qualities, he is recognisably the same man, drawing on a recognisable combination of the indices infused into the character not by Conan Doyle, but by the actors who have previously embodied the character.

As an adaptation of Sherlock Holmes directly from Conan Doyle, this series fails. The characters are hardly recognisable as those in the urtext. The genre is a shift from adventure to procedural. The aesthetic is totally different—present day New York rather than Victorian and Edwardian London—and according to writer and executive producer Rob Doherty, the narratives of future episodes will, like those already aired, owe almost nothing whatever to the sixty stories that Conan Doyle penned. It is Holmes because it is an adaptation of the character as he existed when Jonny Lee Miller stepped in front of the camera to become him. He is the product of passing through the hands of previous actors: he has an intellectual energy, pointed speech, a clear bond with Watson, a spark of humour, a sexual presence, and, a quality of anti-heroism consistent with Cumberbatch's performance.[7] *Elementary* can be defined as an adaptation of Sherlock Holmes because only the character of Sherlock Holmes, recognisable as belonging directly to the lineage of versions portrayed by previous actors, is necessary to earn that title. Without being tied to a specific original narrative, Sherlock Holmes is able to evolve from interpretation to interpretation, continually adopting attributes

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[7] See chapter two, section two for a more in-depth discussion of the trend of anti-heroism present in Holmes adaptations of the twenty-first century.

contributed by actors who, for better or worse, often cannot escape him, and as a product of their stewardship, endure indefinitely.

Gendering Sherlock Holmes: Environment and Character

In introducing the concept of ideology as a critical construct in the study of film, Timothy Corrigan states that 'any cultural product or creation carries, implicitly or explicitly, ideas about how the world is or should be seen... these movies are never innocent visions of the world' (*Writing about Film* 88). The purpose of this project is to identify and analyse pressures that drive the evolution of the Sherlock Holmes character trans-adaptationally; the direct embodiment of the 'myth' of Sherlock Holmes—the actors who portray the character—is not the only means by which the performance of character is enacted. In line with the continued focus of this project on moments of rupture and change, this section will address the shifts in Holmes' gender identity through several adaptations, and place those shifts in a larger cultural context.

Gender is among the most frequently analysed aspects of the literary Holmes, with scholars divided in their readings of Holmes as either a representative of patriarchal order or a Bohemian figure who complicates strict gender binaries. This debate is, perhaps, epitomized by Joseph Kestner in *Sherlock's Men: Masculinity, Conan Doyle, and Cultural History* (1997) and critical responses to his arguments by Rosemary Jann in her review of Kestner's work in *Victorian Studies* (1999) and Tom Bragg's 'Becoming a "Mere Appendix": The Rehabilitated Masculinity of Sherlock Holmes', published in *Victorian Newsletter* (2009). Kestner's book catalogues depictions of masculinity throughout the Sherlock Holmes canon, arguing that although Conan Doyle's work interacts with fin de siècle anxieties regarding normative gender,

Sherlock Holmes, through his representation of reason, application of the scientific method, and restoration of social order, is ultimately a totem of masculinity. Jann offers a lukewarm response to Kestner's reading, and Bragg contests his conclusion outright: 'Sherlock Holmes had not been conceived as a masculine role model or hero, but as a marginal, sexually problematic figure', he argues. 'Only through a series of deft and deliberate moves had Doyle managed to "rehabilitate" Holmes, recruit him for masculine causes, and distance himself from his shadowy original manifestation; but the recovery was never complete' (4). Bragg focuses on the first three Holmes tales—*A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, and 'A Scandal in Bohemia'—and how Holmes is constructed in each with gender-transgressive qualities that Conan Doyle later worked to overwrite with limited success. Such conflicting indices lay the groundwork for multiple, potentially conflicting variations of Holmes on screen.

This debate on Holmes' gender also ranges into queer readings of the character, particularly with reference to his relationship with Watson. Gay readings of Holmes have been both popular and hotly disavowed for many decades, and, though much of this discussion happens in non-scholarly forums such as online fan communities, media outlets, and the pages of publications such as *The Baker Street Journal*—the official publication of America's oldest and most exclusive Sherlock Holmes society, the Baker Street Irregulars, it is worthy of consideration. The discourse on this subject has noticeably expanded as it seeks to include the adaptations made in the last decade, each of which addresses Holmes' sexuality in different ways.

These competing readings of Holmes' gendered function within a narrative provide the raw material for long-term evolution with respect to the cultural environment which influences adaptations. Gender itself is a primed canvas for the

analysis of environmental pressure on character evolution, because it is particularly tethered to the idea of performance. In her 1990 *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler formalised her argument about 'gender performativity'. She reaffirmed her argument in the preface to the 1999 edition of the book, and defined the concept this way:

> [T]he performativity of gender revolves around... the way in which the anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits as outside itself. ...[P]erformativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration. (Kindle Loc 201)

Identity, in this model, is not intrinsic to a subject, or, at least, not entirely intrinsic. Instead, it is constructed by its conformity to the environment it claims to precede. This is especially relevant to a fictional character, which has no internal identity, but exists only insofar as it has external dimensions that are perceived by those consuming a narrative in which it figures.

Repetition is an essential component of Butler's performativity model. A literary character in a static text may be subjected to a limited form of this repetition as it is read and reread throughout different times, in different places, and by people with different experiences; insofar as there are ambiguities in the character, as with Holmes' gender function, the character may be, and, indeed, has been grafted with different 'identities' by scholars and readers. However, in repeating the character through adaptation, a much more complex illustration of this performativity is played out, as the socio-cultural context of the time and place in which the source was written intersects with the socio-

cultural contexts of the time and place in which the adaptation is set, the time and place in which the adaptation was produced, and the time and place in which the adaptation is being consumed. This indicates that the identity of the character, such as it is, and his gender identity in particular, is never complete, but rather always in flux, and may be in radical flux as the character continues to be iterated in new adaptations. Butler notes that

> gender is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time. An open coalition, then, will affirm identities that are alternately instituted and relinquished according to the purposes at hand; it will be an open assemblage that permits of multiple convergences and divergences without obedience to a normative telos of definitional closure. (22)

She argues here not only for the elasticity of culturally-constructed gender, but also for a poststructural process in which gender is never complete and definable in itself; as the intersection of cultural moments and readings shifts, gender also shifts, and therefore identity itself becomes open to concurrent, conflicting readings. This helps explain how evolution without the destruction of character is possible. Rather than the character losing coherence as it is subjected to these moments of rupture and change, it is undergoing a natural process by which meaning accumulates through repetition.

In order to interrogate this process of change as a consequence of environmental pressures acting on fundamental instabilities and contradictions in the indices of Holmes' character, this section will approach the performance of gender from three directions. The first examination will focus on the shifting aesthetic of female ancillary characters, and the inverse shift enacted in the Holmes character as a result. Utilising

the comparative gender analysis of women in James Bond films of the 60s and 70s

conducted by Bennett and Woollacott as an analogue, this will involve close reading of

two Holmes films—1965's *A Study in Terror* and 1979's *Murder by Decree*—and an

analysis of how these films function as products of their socio-cultural environments.

Any selection of texts is necessarily representative rather than definitive; however, I

have chosen these films for five distinct reasons: Firstly, they are original screenplays

rather than films adapted from Conan Doyle stories; they are thus more likely to

represent the contexts of their productions, as they are not under pressure to preserve

the integrity of a single, cohesive written text. Secondly, and unusually for two original

screenplays, they both address the same mystery—the Jack the Ripper murders—and

therefore include essentially the same cast of ancillary characters. This marks them as

prime material for direct aesthetic comparison. With any other pair of films, these two

points would be mutually exclusive. Next, they illustrate a broader trend of Sherlock

Holmes vs. Jack the Ripper tales. While these two films are the only explicit screen

adaptations of this pairing,[8] it has turned up frequently in pastiche,[9] on stage,[10] and even

in video games.[11] The long fascination that has sustained this trend make these two

films a particularly compelling study. In addition, the nature of the crime—a serial

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[8] The 1979 film *Time after Time*, directed by Nicholas Meyer, the author of the Holmes pastiche *The Seven Per-Cent Solution* and the screenplay for the novel's adaptation, had H.G. Welles utilise the pseudonym 'Sherlock Holmes' as he investigated the Ripper murders. The 2002 film *Case Closed: The Phantom of Baker Street* is an anime film in which the character Detective Conan gets trapped in a virtual reality simulation of Victorian London and has to solve the Ripper murders along with a virtual representation of Holmes.

[9] Holmes was pitted against Jack the Ripper in print as early as 1908 in an anonymous short story for the French pulp series "The Secret Files of the King of Detectives". It has continued to be a popular trope, operating as the basis for dozens of published works since then, perhaps most notably in Michael Dibden's controversial *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story* (1978).

[10] In his translated anthology *Sherlock Holmes vs. Jack the Ripper*, Frank Morlock makes a case for the 1889 play "Jack l'Éventreur" by Gaston Marot and Louis Péricaud as the first play to pair Sherlock Holmes (under a different name) with Jack the Ripper. Like written fiction, stage plays depicting Holmes solving the Ripper murders have continued to be penned and performed regularly for the last century.

[11] The adventure game *Sherlock Holmes: Nemesis* (2009) allows players to control Holmes as he investigates the scenes of the Ripper murders and interacts with suspects, police, and the residents of Whitechapel.

killer targeting women—necessitates ample screen time for female characters and discussion of women, which provides a better opportunity than the average Holmes adaptation to note patterns in representations of gender. Finally, the years in which the films were made—1965 and 1979 respectively—helpfully bracket a period of change in the perception of women's roles in society, coming, as they do, on opposite ends of the second wave feminist movement, and represent quite different aesthetics for women in media. Their comparison is thus fertile ground for investigating changes in the Holmes character as a response to shifts in the socio-cultural environment.

The second examination will focus on the use of females as foils for Holmes, and, as the women themselves are sexualized and/or presented as romantic interests, a means to sexualize him. This examination will fall on those women who are presented, in some manner, as equals to Holmes. This function is primarily associated with the recurring canonical character Irene Adler, and thus I will focus on representations of Adler as adaptations depict her as an increasingly cunning and formidable figure. Recently, this function has also fallen to Watson, as *Elementary* (2012) gender-swapped the character, providing the most recent Holmes with a female partner; I will therefore also offer a consideration of the motivation behind creating Lucy Liu's Joan Watson as well as the actress's portrayal of the character.

The final examination will focus on the shifting gender construction of the viewing audience for Holmes adaptations, and how an increasingly gender-diverse audience may be drawn by and reflected in the evolution of Holmes into a more complexly-gendered figure on screen, particularly recently. Once again, Bennett and Woollacott provide a foundation for addressing how differently gendered viewers read the same character, James Bond in their case, in different ways, deriving a variety of

pleasures from their various readings, and reflecting those readings and their pleasures back into the character. They note that 'the way the figure of Bond has functioned in relation to ideologies of gender and sexuality...[have been] differently constructed according to whether the envisaged readership has been male, female or mixed. Throughout all periods, the position of an implied male reader has predominated' (241). In the case of Sherlock Holmes, I will argue that the gender and sexual functions of Holmes, like Bond, are differently constructed according to the assumed viewer, and, in the case of Holmes, that the assumption of an implied male viewer is less and less accurate. I will contend that there is therefore a correlation between the rise of queer readings of Holmes on screen and increasingly female and LGBTQIA+ viewership.

The goal of this section is to consider competing readings of the changes in the gender functions of Holmes on screen to examine how different performances of gender alter the character. It is not the purpose of this project to make a larger contribution to the field of gender theory, rather, I will place the Holmes character as it is represented in several adaptations under the lens of existing theoretical models to illustrate how socio-cultural contexts function as environmental pressures driving the evolution of character over time.

As the 1960s approached, contemporary gender aesthetics intruded, for the first time in any considerable way, into period adaptations of Sherlock Holmes, so that the competing cultural conceptions of women—those of the contexts of setting and production—were stamped onto Holmes adaptations. Arguably, the first film in which this contemporary aesthetic measurably appears in the context of a nineteenth century Holmes tale is Hammer's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, released in 1959. In the most recent adaptation of *Hound* until that point—20th Century Fox's 1939 film starring

Basil Rathbone—Henry Baskerville's love interest Beryl Stapleton had been made less complicit in the crime than her literary antecedent. Played by Wendy Barrie, she was presented as a demure and delicate Victorian lady. By the time Hammer Films released *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in May of 1959, audiences were already familiar with the tone of 'Hammer Horror' films that partnered Peter Cushing with Christopher Lee under the direction of Terence Fisher. Before appearing as Holmes and Henry Baskerville respectively, they had already played opposite one another in 1957's *The Curse of Frankenstein* and 1958's *[The Horror of] Dracula*, two of the three films[12] credited with establishing the brand of gothic horror that would mark Hammer films through the 1970s. A distinguishing characteristic of Hammer's brand is the inclusion of beautiful and erotically presented women, and although *The Hound of the Baskervilles* earned an 'A' certificate rather than the 'X' certificate of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*,[13] it fit the Hammer brand. Peter Cushing was reportedly uncomfortable with producer James Carreras selling him as a 'sexy Sherlock' (Hearn and Barnes 38), but Cushing himself was not the focus of the film's sensuous and lurid appeal; that fell to actress Marla Landi. Landi was cast as Cecile Stapleton, a fiery and villainous re-imagining of the literary Beryl Stapleton. Appearing bare-legged and barefoot, Cecile represents something of an intrusion into the period setting of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959) [fig. 4]. She is revealed, in the denouement, as the villain of the piece, and while casting a woman as the villain was not original—the crimes in 1944's *The Spider Women* were perpetrated by the eponymous character whom Holmes calls 'a female Moriarty'—Cecile's agency is explicitly linked to her sexuality, as she kisses Sir

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[12] The third is *The Mummy*, which was released in September of 1959, seven months after *Hound*.

[13] In the system utilised in Britain in the 1950s and 60s, an 'A' certificate indicated that a film contained adult content that may be unsuitable for children; an 'X' certificate indicated that the film was unsuitable for those under 16, and only those 16 and older would be admitted to the cinema.

Henry upon their first meeting and, after fueling his lust, uses herself and the promise of being alone with her to attempt to lure him to his death.

Fig. 4. Marla Landi as Cecile Stapleton from *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Dir. Terence Fisher, Hammer Films, 1959, Film.

While it can only be speculative to claim a direct causal relationship, the door for sexualized, 'liberated' modern women to appear in the context of Victorian Sherlock Holmes adaptations was opened with Hammer's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The next Anglo-American Sherlock Holmes motion picture was *A Study in Terror*, released in 1965.[14] The film was partly the brainchild of independent producers Michael Klinger and Tony Tenser, whose Compton-Cameo Films had, since 1960, produced a series of popular exploitation films including *Naked—As Nature Intended*, *That Kind of Girl*, and

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[14] I am not including 1962's *Sherlock Holmes und das Halsband des Todes*, which, although it was a Hammer Films production and did star Christopher Lee in the title role, was produced in Germany as a primarily German production. It was shot without sound, and overdubbed in German before it was eventually overdubbed in English, though not by Lee.

The Yellow Teddybears (Barnes 281). For further context, the third highest grossing film of 1965 was another in Eon's series of James Bond films: *Thunderball*. Like *A Study in Terror*, *Thunderball* was a UK-made film, produced for and released in both the UK and US. With Bond and Holmes sharing a similar trajectory as popular heroes, it is useful to consider some of the aesthetic similarities between these films, which, taken in conjunction with the political climate of the mid-1960s, are suggestive of the environmental pressure at work on the Holmes character at this time.

According to Bennett and Woollacott, for the better part of the 1960s, 'the figure of Bond supplied an established point of reference to which a wide range of cultural practices referred themselves in order to establish their own cultural identity' (36). Although the figure of Sherlock Holmes already held its own cultural currency, *A Study in Terror* represents a moment in which the tone and aesthetic of Bond subsumed Holmes. In the trade press, while trailing *A Study in Terror* in 1965, Tony Tenser described it as an effort to 'give the James Bond treatment to Holmes for the first time' (qtd. in Spicer and McKenna 30). This intention is evident in the promotional materials for the film. The cinema poster, showing a dashing Holmes leveling a pistol, with a half-clothed woman at his feet, evokes both Bond and Batman[15] [Fig. 5].

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[15] A discussion of the appropriation of the visual discourse of comic books and their adaptations follows in the next section.

Fig. 5. "A Study in Terror." *Movie Poster Shop*. Movie Poster Shop, n.d. Web. 28 June 2014; "Thunderball." *Movie Poster Shop*. Movie Poster Shop, n.d. Web. 28 June 2014.

Unlike James Bond and the women of *Thunderball*, Sherlock Holmes is not involved in sexual relationships with the women in *A Study in Terror*. Much of Bond's gender identity is established through his sexual exploits, but promiscuity is not an index of Holmes' character. The 'Bondising' of Sherlock Holmes is nonetheless largely a consequence of being situated in a film that exploits the victims of Jack the Ripper for voyeuristic pleasure in a manner analogous to 'Bond girls', who, themselves, are not only exploited sexually, but like the Ripper's victims often meet violent ends. The ways in which the Holmes character is made to negotiate this milieu engage and highlight his masculinity.

In Betty Friedan's groundbreaking feminist work *The Feminine Mystique*, which sparked the second wave feminist movement in 1963, she identified the 'feminine mystique' as a major hurdle toward equality for women: it 'says that the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfillment of their own femininity…the root of women's troubles in the past is that women envied men, women tried to be like men, instead of accepting their own nature, which can find fulfillment only in sexual passivity, male domination, and nurturing maternal love' (43). This subordination of women's identities, and utilisation of them on screen as markers to define the male characters, is evident in *A Study in Terror*, just as it is evident in *Thunderball*. This subordination is articulated through the presentation of women as passive and erotic objects where 'the determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly' (Mulvey 19).

The first avenue for exploring the way women are imagined on screen in *A Study in Terror* is how they compare to realistic expectations for women of their period and social class. In 1888, Whitechapel—the location of the Ripper murders—was a den of vice. More importantly, it was a gritty, filthy home to destitute men and women who lived in squalor, or worse, on the streets. When the opening credits to the film have finished rolling, viewers are introduced to the Angel and Crown, a local Whitechapel public house that is the centre for much of the film's action. The diagetic sound is a rousing chorus of 'Ta-Rah-Rah-Boom-De-Ay' sung by a cheeky and beautiful female singer. As the camera moves through the room, dozens of women, clearly prostitutes, are attempting to find and win customers for the night. They are clean women, magnificently made up in an attractive, understated manner. Their dresses appear expensive and new, their hair looks washed and artfully arranged, and none look ill or

terribly old or bitter. In fact, they all seem to be having a splendid time. In reality, Whitechapel had the worst slums in London and 1,200 prostitutes are estimated to have been operating there in 1888. Doubtless, a wide selection of young, healthy, clean, and well-appointed ladies of the evening would not have been giddily plying their trade at a local pub in such a notorious rookery.

To offer an illustration, consider Annie Chapman, Jack the Ripper's second victim. Chapman was 48 at the time of her murder and had been living on the streets and in common lodging houses in Whitechapel for at least two years. The lodging houses, of which there were over two hundred in the district at the time, were atrocious places, where a double bed for the night could be purchased for eight pence, a single for four, and for tuppence, one could stand along the wall and sleep perched against a rope strung across the room for the purpose. Finding herself without even the price of this meagre shelter, Chapman was on the street the night of her murder. An illustration in the *Police News* from September of 1888 shows Chapman to be chubby and homely [fig. 6]. In *A Study in Terror*, Annie Chapman is played by a flouncing 28-year-old Barbara Windsor [fig. 7], an actress known at the time for her sassy sex appeal through the *Carry On* franchise. This is a strong and revealing intertextual comment on the conception of Chapman's character on screen.

Fig. 24. British Library/Robana, *Whitechapel Murders*, 1888, Houlton Fine Art

Collection, London, *Getty Images*, n.d., Web, 28 July, 2012.

Fig. 25. Barbara Windsor as Annie Chapman from *A Study in Terror*, Dir. James Hill,

Compton Films, 1965, Film.

The prostitutes in *A Study in Terror* defy historical expectation; they are more akin to 'Bond girls' in their aesthetic than they are to their historical antecedents. Part of the conceptualisation of emancipated women on screen in the 1960s involved presenting them as controlling their own sexuality, and pursuing their own pleasure. This is certainly true of 'Bond girls' of the 1960s. Actress Claudine Auger, in discussing her character Domino—the primary 'Bond girl' in *Thunderball*—claims that the women of Bond films 'can live without a man doing everything for them because they are independent. They like to decide their future destinies for themselves. They are highly sexual—but only with men worth their loving. They are free.' (qtd. in Bennett and Woollacott 231). However, this is problematic in *A Study in Terror*, as there is necessarily a tension between the historical realities of nineteenth century prostitution in Whitechapel and presenting the characters as free, happy, and in control of their own sexual destinies.

In *A Study in Terror*, the Ripper's victims are both objectified by the male gaze through the camera lens and eroticised, in precisely the manner identified by Mulvey in 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'. Before the credits even begin, a mere twenty seconds into the film, the camera pauses on a beautiful, appealing woman and spends fifteen seconds, a relatively lengthy shot,[16] panning from her feet up her body, finally coming to rest on a medium close-up including her face and bust. Mulvey points out that 'the presence of woman is an indispensable element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation' (19). The impetus of the entire story is the murders of the five women: Polly Nichols, Annie Chapman,

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[16] For context, the average shot length for the 69 films released in 1965 listed on Barry Salt's Cinemetrics database is under ten seconds.

Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Kelly. The murders themselves, however, receive little or no screen time. Instead, viewers are treated to each woman in turn attempting to secure the Ripper as a customer. The camera never lights on him, leaving him out of shot, but instead pauses the narrative for what Mulvey rightly calls 'erotic contemplation' of the women as objects of sexual interest.

There are two competing ideological processes at work. The film's aesthetic is conforming to popular presentations of sexually precocious women, and in this way there is an atmosphere of liberation in play. However, the voyeuristic presentation of the Whitechapel prostitutes translates into a loss of victimhood for the women. As the focus is not on their murders but on the exercise of their profession, viewers are subtly encouraged to judge the women rather than their killer. Prostitution certainly falls far outside the acceptable domestic realm for women that Friedan set out to combat, and, in fact, literally completes the Victorian housewife/harlot binary. If Friedan's cultural perception is accepted, it is unsurprising that a film made in 1965 should present the murder of prostitutes in a manner that suggests that, to the degree that the women were neglecting their proper sphere, they deserved their fates. In the case of Mary Kelly, she wantonly leans out of her window and tosses her house key down to her murderer, at which point the viewer is treated to what amounts to a nearly two minute long strip tease [fig. 8] before being denied any real glimpse of the horror of the woman's fate. The implicit meaning is not subtle: she was asking for it. The brutality of Kelly's murder is preserved for history in a police photograph of the scene [fig. 9], but viewers of *A Study in Terror* are insulated from this brutality as neither the camera, nor even Holmes himself enters the scene of the murder. Only a short exchange hints at the truth: Holmes spots Inspector Lestrade exiting the chamber and asks, 'Lestrade, are you not

well?' Lestrade answers, 'You've never seen anything like it this side of hell'. Indeed, Holmes does not see it at all as he leaves immediately, telling Watson that 'there is a more important examination [he] must make'. Mary Kelly's fate is thus robbed of any significance.

Fig. 8. Edina Ronay as Mary Kelly from *A Study in Terror*, Dir. James Hill, Compton Films, 1965, Film.

Fig. 9. *Mary Kelly in Room*, Photograph, 'Jack the Ripper Photos,' *Jack the Ripper: 1888*, N.p., 2013, Web, 26 July, 2012.

When Holmes chooses to ignore the scene of Mary Kelly's death, he is illustrating the manner in which the film constructs Holmes' character to privilege the solution of the case over the women involved. This was even clearer in his reaction to an earlier murder—Holmes hears screaming and runs to the scene. When given the option of rushing in to see whether the victim can be helped or chasing the killer, Holmes chooses the latter. Throughout the film he is largely aloof and maintains a professional distance from the case. The emotion he shows most readily is a pleasure at having work to occupy his mind, which is certainly not inconsistent with Holmes as Conan Doyle wrote him. He is unconcerned with the cruelty inherent in the sex trade, commenting at one point to the owner of a pub-come-bawdy house, 'The way you make your money is of no interest to me'. Once the case has been solved, Holmes' interest in it ends. At the conclusion of the film, in order to cement Holmes' lack of concern, a parcel is delivered containing a hat and Holmes gleefully jumps into a string of deductions drawn from the short story 'The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle'.

Holmes' disinterest in the human element of the case, and of both the sexual interest and the violent fates of the women involved points back to Joseph Kestner's reading of the literary Holmes, which, he claims, operates according to a 'masculine script', which endorses 'qualities which were radically gendered as masculine in Victorian culture: observation, rationalism, facticity, logic, comradeship, pluck, and daring' (77). The Sherlock Holmes of *A Study in Terror* clearly indexes this version of Holmes' gender identity.

A Study in Terror appropriates and then offers an antiseptic view of historical events, relying on the character of Sherlock Holmes to anesthetize the sexism inherent

in the film. In *Feminism, Femininity, and Popular Culture*, Joanne Hollows points out

that 'as a projection of male values, films of the 1960s responded to women's demands

for equality with a backlash: cinema became both more violent towards women and

"truly monolithic in its sexism"' (41). This violence is what marks *A Study in Terror* as

a re-establishment of a masculine social order. Like the 'Bond girls' of the 1960s, the

women of *A Study in Terror* can only be read in their relationships with and availability

to men: 'Although sexually liberated', Bennett and Woollacott argue, their 'sexuality, in

being represented as merely the female equivalent of a promiscuous male genital

sexuality, was devoid of any disturbing threat of Otherness' (242). In appearing for the

voyeuristic pleasure of the gaze of both viewers and the male characters within the

narrative, and meeting violent ends, the women of *A Study in Terror* serve to highlight

Holmes' rational masculinity.

 Murder by Decree represents a significant shift in the presentation of Jack the

Ripper's victims and of the Sherlock Holmes character. By 1979, when the film was

released, second-wave feminism had largely run its course. While it had not succeeded

in earning gender equality for women, it had at least foregrounded gender

discrimination and publically challenged the image of women as passive, submissive,

and domestically-bound. *Murder by Decree*, like *A Study in Terror*, negotiates the

tension between the presentation of women on screen and the historical grounding of

the subject matter; however, *Murder by Decree* presents a much different manifestation

of that tension. Aesthetically, *Murder by Decree* is grittier and the women correspond

much more closely to realistic expectations for East End prostitutes. The first victim,

Polly Nichols, is seen only briefly. In contrast to the long, lingering pre-credit shot of

the character in *A Study in Terror*, here Nichols is visible for a mere two seconds before

her murder. She is strangled in close-up on camera and she appears entirely unglamorous: she wears tawdry clothes, no make-up, and has poor teeth and visible sores on her mouth [fig. 10]. Other women in the film are similarly appointed.

Fig. 10. *Murder by Decree*, Dir. Bob Clark, Studio Canal, 1979, Film.

Just as with *A Study in Terror*, the Bond franchise offers an analogue to *Murder by Decree*. In 1979, Roger Moore's fourth outing as James Bond, *Moonraker*, was released. According to Bennett and Woollacott, one of the most notable shifts in the ideological currency of Bond films from the 60s to the 70s was the change in the nature and presentation of the 'Bond girls'. In the 70s, they argue, 'the emphasis moved away from the construction of new and relatively more independent forms of gender identity and sexuality…towards the placing of women—already "too greatly emancipated"— back into a "properly subalterned" position in relation to men' (232). As the women of *A Study in Terror* only functioned to serve men sexually, meet violent deaths, and thus instigate the mystery, they were arguably already in a subalterned position; they had no choice in their professions, no way to escape violence at the hands of masculine sexual dominance, and, as Holmes gives them little or no thought once the mystery is solved,

their deaths did not affect the patriarchal power structure. Although *Murder by Decree* does restrict what might be read as the victims' 'emancipated' sexuality, it also utilises several methods to give them a voice, including a revision and feminisation of the Holmes character. This feminisation occurs as Holmes, through the course of the film, becomes aligned with, and a voice for, the abject victims.

One method that the film utilises to give a voice to the Ripper's victims is imagining a bond of sisterhood between the prostitutes of Whitechapel. According to Joanne Hollows, 'the concept of sisterhood…is still influential in many forms of popular feminism. The emphasis on a "familial" bond between women acting collectively to support each other is one feature of the ways in which feminist concerns have entered into "mainstream" popular forms' (8). While *A Study in Terror* foregrounds the relationship between the Ripper and his victims, *Murder by Decree* foregrounds the relationship that the victims have with one another. As Holmes recounts the course of events leading to the Ripper murders, the camera flashes back to a shot of the women huddled together in mutual fear, concern, and solidarity [fig. 11]. Second-wave feminism encouraged depictions of sisterhood, which represented the growing awareness of a common sense of powerlessness among women. It slots effortlessly into *Murder by Decree* because, as Hollow pointed out, the idea became a part of the conversation about women thanks to the feminist discourse of the previous decade and a half.

Fig. 11. *Murder by Decree*, Dir. Bob Clark, Studio Canal, 1979, Film.

Murder by Decree also resists the temptation to eroticise the sex trade. Instead, it focuses on the abject nature of the women driven to their profession. This is best illustrated through an exchange that Watson has with a prostitute who is eager to secure him as a customer:

> [The others are] cheap tarts. They're jealous, 'cause I'm young and I get all the blokes. Got all me own teeth, that's why. What'd you want with Mary Kelly anyway? Her teeth's fallin' out too. Not like mine. Have a feel. Oh God. Oh bloody hell. Just one loose. Bloody hell.

She adjusts herself into what she imagines is a provocative pose, but her concern for her loose tooth renders her wretched and grotesque [fig. 12]. By layering the language of sexual provocation over a grotesque visual, the prostitute is marked as abject—existing as a liminal figure that both compels and repels desire. This abjection stands in contrast to the objectification of the same set of women in *A Study in Terror*.

Fig. 12. *Murder by Decree*, Dir. Bob Clark, Studio Canal, 1979, Film.

The objectification of the women in *Murder by Decree* is further disrupted by

two visual techniques. The first is the interruption of the camera's natural tendency

toward objectification through barriers and shadows. While shots are composed in such

a way as to expose and well-light the women in *A Study in Terror*, in *Murder by*

Decree, the women are often shot through windows and bars, inside enclosed spaces,

and in dim lighting [fig. 13]. This has a distancing effect and disrupts the pleasure of

looking that is foundational to Mulvey's criticisms in 'Narrative Pleasure and Visual

Cinema' (1975).

Fig. 13. *Murder by Decree*, Dir. Bob Clark, Studio Canal, 1979, Film.

The second technique evident in *Murder by Decree* that undermines the male gaze is the reversal of the camera's perspective. Mulvey identifies three looks associated with cinema: the camera's, the audience's, and those between characters onscreen. She argues that 'the conventions of narrative film deny the first two and subordinate them to the third, the conscious aim being always to eliminate intrusive camera presence and prevent a distancing awareness in the audience' (25). *Murder by Decree* does not follow this traditional model throughout. In those moments in which the only look that exists within the film is the Ripper searching for a victim, the camera turns its look back onto an extreme close-up of his eyes [fig. 14]. This is decidedly the camera's look rather than any character's and therefore undermines the passive receptive pleasure that Mulvey notes as a culprit in the traditional patriarchal art of cinema, which is one reason it is such a jarring moment for viewers. It also visually links the act of looking at women with Jack the Ripper and therefore identifies the male gaze as dangerous.
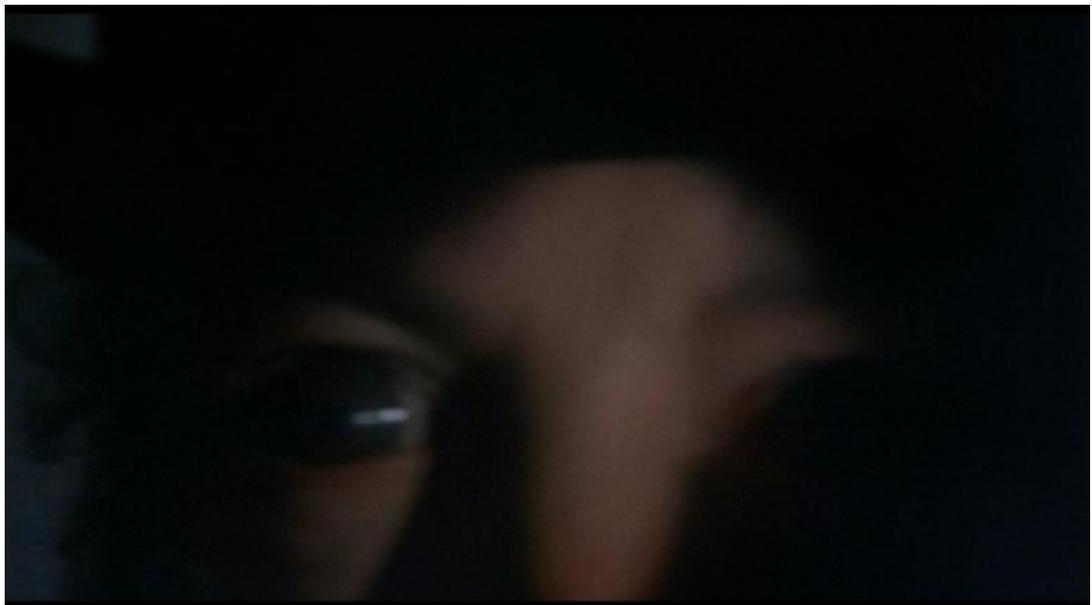
Fig. 14. *Murder by Decree*, Dir. Bob Clark, Studio Canal, 1979, Film.

Unlike in *A Study in Terror*, the Sherlock Holmes of *Murder by Decree* defies expectations. He is highly expressive and deeply receptive to the emotions of women; he has been fundamentally re-imagined. His behaviour is consistently emotionally driven throughout, but it is best illustrated by two scenes. The first is his visit with the character Annie Crook. He finds her in an asylum and through gentle, tender behaviour he induces her to speak for the first time in six months. He tells Watson that 'we must take this woman from this hellish place', but is denied. Rather than make an argument based on evidence, this Holmes savagely attacks the attending physician [fig. 15], conforming to Bragg's assessment of the sexually-problematized Holmes from *A Study in Scarlet* as occasionally 'approaching hysteria' (9). Holmes later passionately decries the same physician for prescribing 'eternal incarceration simply because [Crook] was seduced, made pregnant, and delivered of a child'. When his assault fails, he turns helplessly to the woman and the camera lingers on his haunted face as he weeps openly [fig. 16]. This is not the Holmes of Conan Doyle, nor is it the Holmes who would not even enter the scene of Mary Kelly's murder in *A Study in Terror*. This Holmes is drawn out of the Victorian masculine sphere of the rational to confront the repulsive abjection of the Whitechapel prostitutes, and, in becoming emotionally aligned with them, is feminized.

Fig. 15. *Murder by Decree*, Dir. Bob Clark, Studio Canal, 1979, Film.

Fig. 16. *Murder by Decree*, Dir. Bob Clark, Studio Canal, 1979, Film.

The other, and perhaps most revealing scene in the film for this feminized

Holmes, is his confrontation with the Prime Minister, Home Secretary, and ex-Chief of

Police. In an impassioned speech, he takes them to task for their callous preference of

the reputation of the Duke of Clarence over the lives of the disenfranchised prostitutes

of Whitechapel, and dejectedly finishes by stating 'I will always have the death of Mary Kelly on my conscience. And you, Prime Minister, will have the deaths of Annie, and all those tragic women and their agony on yours'. He agrees, in exchange for the safety of Annie Crook's child, not to publically implicate the government, to which the Prime Minister—the representative of the patriarchal order—replies, 'You know what you risk, Mr Holmes: The ruin of your own society'. Holmes responds, 'I care nothing about that'. Holmes operates as the voice of the women against the social order, rather than a representative of that order, and the film ends by illustrating Holmes' laden conscience through a melancholy tune, scratched out on his violin. This is a Sherlock Holmes drawing from indices noted by Bragg, who argues that his 'sexual ambiguity' is largely what makes Holmes a 'character so fundamentally marked as Other' (19).

The different negotiations of the tension between the historical truth of the Ripper murders and the drive to create films suitable to their respective contemporary environments result in a significant change to the Sherlock Holmes character between 1965 and 1979. It is a testament to the continuity and elasticity of Sherlock Holmes that two such similarly plotted films can present such disparate notions of the same character's gender.

The presentation of female characters in Sherlock Holmes adaptations has received more thoughtful treatment in recent productions. One notable example is the use of Irene Adler, a character that has grown far beyond its single appearance in the Sherlock Holmes canon, and is itself an index of Holmes' character. As a prominent figure in the Warner Brother films, BBC's *Sherlock*, and CBS's *Elementary*, Adler has been utilised, like Holmes, outside the context of the original narrative in which she appears. A character from the first Sherlock Holmes short story 'A Scandal in

Bohemia', Alder is a favourite among both adaptors and fans alike. In Conan Doyle's story, she is an 'adventuress'—a woman of opportunity, utilising unscrupulous methods to move in high social circles. In 'Scandal', she is not a criminal, but rather a wronged, if cunning, woman using her wits to protect herself from a powerful former lover. Because she succeeds in outwitting Holmes, who is hired by her ex-lover, she earns the detective's respect.

The notion of an unscrupulous female foil for Holmes has proved irresistible to twenty-first century adaptors; Alder appears as some version of a criminal mastermind in every recent version. In each, she becomes progressively more powerful and, more tellingly, more independent. In addition to operating as a criminal in each twenty-first century adaptation, Alder negotiates a sexual space with Holmes. Holmes' gender and sexual function in each adaptation thus becomes defined by Adler's behaviour and Holmes' response to her.

In the Warner Brothers films, Adler is an unwilling pawn of the evil Professor Moriarty. Although the film suggests that she and Holmes share a past in which she did, in fact, get the better of him, her independence and capability are ultimately undermined as she is under the power of a man with a stronger intellect than her own. She is apparently killed at Moriarty's command in the film's sequel, *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011). Although their past relationship is never explicitly explained, Adler sexually humiliates Holmes by forcing him to strip naked, and handcuffing him to a bed in order to make her escape. While Adler does not better Holmes intellectually, she is marked as the more sexually dominant partner, which supports a reading of Holmes' character in which his masculinity is undermined.

In *Sherlock*, Adler appears even more capable, and is revealed to be not one of Moriarty's minions, but rather one of his business associates. The episode in which she figures, 'A Scandal in Belgravia', gives her several scenes in which she challenges and triumphs over Sherlock. However, this independence and will is undermined by her romantic feelings for the detective, and although he clearly respects her, he defeats her intellectually. However, like the dynamic in *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), Sherlock and Adler play a game of sexual cat and mouse. Adler, conceived as a dominatrix in the adaptation, quite literally represents sexual dominance. She notes that she and Moriarty refer to Sherlock as 'the virgin', further highlighting his sexually subordinate position.

In *Elementary*, Adler is revealed to actually be Moriarty. After manipulating Jonny Lee Miller's Sherlock to fall in love with her years earlier, faking her own murder, and purposefully causing his spiral into addiction, she returns and nearly defeats him a second time. In this case, she is not subservient to anyone else, and as the backstory of the characters unfolds, it is clear that even though she ultimately fails, she did genuinely trump Sherlock in the past. Like the previous versions, this iteration of Adler uses her sexuality as a weapon. Here, however, Holmes and Adler do share a sexual relationship. Through the manipulation of Sherlock's attraction, Adler derails his life.

This impulse to create a female equal for Holmes is indicative of a trend in his character in recent years. However, although the Irene Adler of Conan Doyle escapes, transforming the character into a criminal mastermind ensures that Holmes will defeat her. While Holmes must therefore demonstrate ultimate intellectual superiority, each contemporary adaptation balances this with the inverse power dynamic in their sexual relationship.

While the integrity of each adaptation necessitates Adler's defeat, the impetus to provide Sherlock Holmes with a female equal has culminated in the decision to gender-swap the Watson character in *Elementary*, transforming the literary John into Joan. The history of Watson on screen has been marked by a long, slow trend of making the character more capable, and thus more of an equal partner to the Holmes character.[17] As Holmes becomes more human, more fallible, and less likeable, Watson's character has had the inverse journey, and, by the turn of the twenty-first century has begun to be presented in such a way as to have indispensable skills and personality traits that Holmes both lacked and needed in order to function. The result is that the current Watsons of Jude Law in the Warner Brothers franchise, Martin Freeman in *Sherlock*, and Lucy Liu in *Elementary* are not sidekicks, but partners who complement their respective Holmeses.

Deconstructing Lucy Liu's Watson and situating her as evidence of a shift in the character of Sherlock Holmes requires a discussion of the motivations behind gender-swapping Watson, the presentation of her character on screen, and the relationship she shares with Jonny Lee Miller's Holmes. Unpicking the motivation behind the gender-swap is most efficiently accomplished by allowing executive producer and writer Rob Doherty, who generated and developed the concept, to explain it in his own words:

> Initially when I was doing my research...one of the things I came upon were [*sic*] several psychological assessments of Sherlock Holmes, real doctors who had analysed the character. One of the characteristics that somebody noted was that he was a gynophobe: he struggled with women. He had an unusual fear of or difficulty with women and I

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[17] For an analysis of the trajectories of Holmes and Watson as hero-figures, see chapter two, section two.

laughed, just because my first thought was 'Oh! Then Watson should be

a woman.' What would be more trying for Sherlock if that's really in his

head? ...Our Holmes is not a misogynist, he does not have problems

with women the way the original Holmes did. So that's where it started. I

read it, it made me laugh, it started me on my list of ideas: you know,

maybe Watson should be a woman. The more I got into it, the more fun I

had writing Holmes. It just shouldn't matter at the end of the day. A

professional man can live with a professional woman and can do great

work. (Doherty)

There are several important points embedded in Doherty's explanation. The first is that

his female Watson was a starting point in his entire concept for *Elementary*. It is part of

the fabric of the programme, not an afterthought and not an attempt to make a grand

statement. The next point is that he chose Watson's gender specifically for how it would

affect Holmes. He notes that this is not because Holmes is a misogynist, but because it

would unbalance him and give Watson a kind of empowerment that specifically derives

from her gender.

The final and most important aspect of Doherty's motivation is his focus on

maintaining Holmes and Watson as a professional team. When, in the same interview, I

asked him about whether the relationship would become romantic, Doherty went on to

state that for him, 'it's completely off the table' and that his intention is to 'honour the

spirit of the original partnership and the original relationship. The original Holmes

never slept with the original Watson' (Doherty). The female stereotypes identified

across media by early feminist film scholars and examined by more recent works are

challenged by this representation. According to Marjorie Rosen, in her argument for the

failure of feminism to manifest in mainstream cinema, female characters on screen tend to be defined by the motivation to find or win someone else's love (105). Female characters are most frequently situated to illuminate attributes of male characters on screen—particularly in the context of traditionally male-centric genres like crime drama and adventure. A slightly more nuanced view would allow for not just a search for love, but also a search for respect. Either way, however, it denies the character motivations that are self-prescribed and self-determined, relegating the character to defining herself by her relation to others. In order to escape these stereotypes, female characters must be defined by independent successes and independent choices. In purposefully removing the potential for Jonny Lee Miller's Holmes and Lucy Liu's Watson to enter into a romantic partnership, Doherty ensures that the value of Watson's character in *Elementary* derives from the same qualities as the value of male Watsons in *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *Sherlock* (2010). Conceptually, then, Watson is strengthened rather than weakened by being a woman.

In practice, Lucy Liu's Watson is characterised by an emancipation from the limited representations of women in other Holmes adaptations. She is personally and professionally driven, she often contributes materially to the solution of cases, and she makes independent and self-motivated decisions. Unlike in other recent adaptations, Liu's Watson decides to train with Holmes and learn his methods of deduction, raising the character again, from sidekick to partner. At the outset of the programme's third season, Holmes is absent and Watson is ably serving his function with the NYPD; in the season's premiere episode, Holmes returns to find that he is not needed, and must get Watson's reluctant permission to return to his consulting position alongside her. The culmination of this representation happens in the final episode of the first series, in

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which Watson, not Holmes, discovers Moriarty/Adler's weakness and, though Holmes is ready to give up, Watson conceives of the trap that defeats her: 'She solved you', Holmes tells his adversary at the denouement, 'Watson. She diagnosed your "condition"... You said there was only one person in the world who could surprise you. Turns out, there's two'.

The evolution in the character of Sherlock Holmes evidenced by this strong female Watson derives from the normalisation of their professional partnership. Previous versions of the Holmes character, based on the female characters that were written to interact with them, were some combination of pitying, dismissive, and contemptuous toward women. Female ancillary characters were either clients, victims, or villains, which made them either helpless or wicked. Even Irene Adler, a woman that essentially every incarnation of Holmes from the written version forward respects, is never his equal because in criminalising her, adaptations must also have Holmes overcome and defeat her. The one character that Holmes needs, respects, and maintains as an equal is Watson. Gender-swapping Watson forces Holmes to direct these friendly, respectful, even admiring, feelings toward a woman and thus represents an important and fundamental shift in his character.

Society's changing views of women, drives of feminist discourse, and the aesthetic and ideological function of women on screen are not the only pressures acting on the gender identity of the Holmes character. It is worth briefly noting that shifts in the demographic construction of the viewing audience for Holmes adaptations, and particularly recent adaptations, have a cyclical effect on the gender functions of the Holmes character. Lynette Porter, a professor in the Humanities and Communication Department at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, conducted a voluntary survey

about viewing habits and viewers of *Sherlock* (2010) in July 2012. She advertised the survey through social media, and eventually collated the results from 565 respondents around the world. While Porter acknowledges that her results may be skewed by the size of her sample as well as by not undertaking a mixed-methods survey in order to include casual viewers, her results are interesting: 91.3% of respondents were female.

In addition to the popularity of the programme with women, I have noted during my own involvement with the Sherlockian community over many years that a disproportionately active section of the fan base identifies as LGBTQIA+; both straight women and the LGBTQIA+ community have indicated an interest in gay readings of the Holmes character. The homosocial relationship between the literary Holmes and Watson has long been a topic of interest, from Rex Stout's infamous 1941 essay declaring the Watson was a woman, to Christopher Redmond's *In Bed with Sherlock Holmes: Sexual Elements in Arthur Conan Doyle's Stories of the Great Detective* (1984). The topic is also not new to the screen: Robert Stephens' portrayal of Sherlock Holmes in 1970's *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* explicitly interacts with the possibility that Holmes is gay, and that Watson is his lover; however, the film does reassert hetero-normativity.

The extent to which viewers and fans of *Sherlock* have shown an interest in seeing a gay relationship between Holmes and Watson is illustrated in the responses from those involved with the programme. Stephen Moffat, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Martin Freeman have all made explicit statements to the press declaring that their versions of Holmes and Watson are not, and never will be lovers. This denial does not erase the programme's gay subtext, however. When I asked him about the programme's gay subtext, Stephen Moffat explained his choices this way:

People just would ask if Sherlock Holmes and John Watson living together in the same   flat—were they a couple or not? ...I mean, it's interesting. What's really going on there is interesting; particularly when you go back to Doyle and see that all the things that people say about Sherlock Holmes aren't in the original. (Moffat Personal Interview)

His answer reveals first is that his decision is directly influenced by his audience's perception of the characters—that addressing the issue is about modern audiences and not about the original text. Although not realized in *Sherlock*, the potential for a gay Sherlock Holmes is evident in the trajectory of the character as an increasingly more complexly-gendered figure on screen.

Over the course of a century's worth of adaptations, Holmes' gender identity has been shaped according to contemporary pressures. In the 1960s, Holmes was a clear masculine figure, as the character was made to conform to function within popular aesthetics of sexualized women on screen. In contrast, Holmes was feminized in the 1970s through his alignment with women in a position of abjection. The character's sexual identity has been constructed, particularly recently, through his relationship with shifting iterations of Irene Adler, and, ultimately, a female Watson. Finally, readings of the character's gender have been influenced by an increase in the gender diversity of the viewing audience. Through these various pressures, which are indicative of moments of rupture and change, the Holmes character has evolved to suit and find success in ever-changing socio-cultural environments.

Sartorial Sherlock Holmes: Mutations in Character

The previous two sections have investigated two processes through which the Sherlock Holmes character has evolved based on how it is performed by different people and in different environments. This section addresses a third performative process that has exerted pressure on the character on screen: aesthetic. As a popular hero, Sherlock Holmes has a particular aesthetic that operates as a signifier for the character. Over the course of hundreds of appearances on screen, Sherlock Holmes has been visually incarnated in many ways, but the mutations in the character's phenotype have trended toward a fairly uniform visual language. This visual language evokes the character's national identity, as well as his exceptionalism, by borrowing from the visual language of comic book superheroes.

The visual distillation of Holmes' character, which has occurred gradually over hundreds of adaptations, operates on him the same way costume operates for comic-book superheroes: it sets him apart from other characters on screen and helps focus the audiences' understanding of his nature and the ideology he represents. Sherlock Holmes is immediately identifiable visually, presenting one of the most familiar silhouettes in the world—possibly outstripped only by Mickey Mouse and Santa Claus as a cultural referent. Even when, as is the case with the three major sets of adaptations of the twenty-first century, the Warner Brother's film franchise, the BBC's miniseries, and CBS's procedural, costume designers do not strictly adhere to the recognisable visual tropes of Sherlock Holmes, they costume him in a distinct way and inject enough that is recognisable to invoke the character that exists in the public's collective consciousness. As a testament to the importance of the Holmes silhouette as a cultural referent,

consider the appropriation of the same visual language by BBC's *Sherlock* despite its

contemporary aesthetic [fig. 17].

Fig. 17: *The Return of Sherlock*, Photograph. *Radio Times*, Radio Times, 3 Aug. 2013,

Web, 4 Aug. 2013; *Sherlock Holmes Silhouette*, n.d., 'Publicity Photographs,' *The*

Sherlock Holmes Museum, The Sherlock Holmes Museum, n.d., Web, 4 Aug. 2013.

A critical investigation of the importance of costume to the essence of the

Sherlock Holmes character has been a long time in coming. Although Holmes is often

described with reference to his signature clothing, a scholarly examination of that

clothing as it pertains to how Holmes is read has not been attempted. This reading of

costume as pressure at work has a great deal of precedent in the work of theorists in the

field of fashion and cinema. In *Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the*

Movies, Stella Bruzzi addresses many films through many contexts, and although her

focus on gender constructions are not wholly applicable to this work, her fundamental

thesis is also my own: Costumes, says Bruzzi, are not 'functionaries of the narrative,

rather they are spectacular interventions that interfere with the scenes in which they

appear and impose themselves onto the characters they adorn. [A character is]

constructed through his costume' (xv). For a character that must be identifiable any

narrative in which it is placed, costume therefore becomes a crucial link between various depictions. Pamela Church Gibson has made similar claims for the narrative independence of costume, as has Deborah Nadoolman Landis. Gibson has also explored the connection between cinema and the fashion industry in *Fashion and Celebrity Culture*, a connection which is relevant, but has not yet been applied to Sherlock Holmes beyond mass market periodicals.

The analysis of Sherlock Holmes as, aesthetically, a comic book character, is also new. While he has been linked to superheroes in much of the popular discourse about him,[18] a detailed critical discussion about how this link functions visually on screen through conscious and unconscious choices by costume designers is a fresh way to address this link.

There are both complications to navigate and insights to glean from linking adaptations of Sherlock Holmes to adaptations of comic books. There are certainly major differences; foremost, of course, is that though the Conan Doyle stories were published with illustrations, they were written stories accompanying images rather than the reverse—narrative images with accompanying text—that define comic book and graphic novel media. The second is that one of the primary challenges of adapting comic books, as Will Brooker explores in his work on Batman adaptations, is the issue of competing narratives. As a character franchise, this is not the challenge that faces adaptors of Sherlock Holmes. There are, however, many analogous issues. Through the sheer volume of Sherlock Holmes adaptations, it has, to a large degree, evolved into a text that, like comics, is inseparable from images. The extensive variety of incarnations

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[18] In particular, in the discourse surrounding the Warner Brothers film franchise. For examples, see McNeil, 'Is Sherlock Holmes the Last Superhero Movie of 2009?' *overthinkingit.com*, Overthinking It, 24 Dec. 2009, Web, and Elizabeth D. Samet, 'Sherlock Holmes, the Superhero,' *newrepublic.com*, New Republic, 8 Nov. 2010, Web.

of the Holmes character, like the narratives that compete for primacy in comic books, present a challenge to adaptors who seek to both situate their work in the context of the larger franchise while simultaneously setting it apart as a unique product. Finally, the network of dedicated fans of Sherlock Holmes has a closer parallel in those of comic books than those of other franchises.[19]

In his chapter 'Will the Real Wolverine Please Stand Up?: Marvel's Mutation from Monthlies to Movies' in *Film and Comic Books*, one of the adaptational phenomena that Derek Johnson investigates is how the aesthetic of an adaptation, despite being itself derivative, can achieve primacy and become 'a template for the construction of brand identity' (79). This is particularly applicable to adaptations of comic books as there is an established visual history to address and, potentially, overwrite. For Sherlock Holmes adaptations, that visual history is an amalgamation of the aesthetics of hundreds of adaptations and millions of illustrations—both commercial and fan-generated. Though Johnson was addressing the effects of a single popular adaptation on a franchise, the template that constructs brand identity for Sherlock Holmes is the result of a process of visual distillation as what might be considered a 'definitive', though nonetheless constantly evolving, aesthetic model for the character develops through the adoption and rejection of various mutations of the character's image. Although the process differs, the strength and importance of the template itself and how the Sherlock Holmes brand, like the Wolverine brand, is visually grounded, is a valuable method for understanding how the image of Holmes has helped to define the idea of who the character is and why.

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[19] For an analysis of Sherlock Holmes fan culture, see chapter three, section one.

In addition to establishing the importance of image as a defining attribute of character, using the lens of comic book adaptations to view Holmes on screen offers a model to investigate the nature of a character with many competing incarnations. Ian Gordon, Mark Jancovich, and Matthew McAllister identify this challenge of comic book adaptations as a challenge of defining character as fans of the same character, for example, 'have different views and... competing expectations' (xi). In his prologue to *Hunting the Dark Knight*, Will Brooker identifies the same issue as a problem for adaptors who must navigate an overabundance of source material, much of it contradictory. 'On one level', Brooker argues, 'Batman is everything he has ever been—a combination of a thousand variations, an overlapping of alternates. But at the same time, those countless variants are policed, reduced, controlled, and contained' (xi). With hundreds upon hundreds of filmed variations, Sherlock Holmes faces the same challenge: as a character that does not derive its meaning from single source narrative, and which is so elastic that it could be moulded to suit essentially any project, what tools exist to ground the character and prevent it from losing all meaning? The answer, just as it is for Batman, is to ground Holmes visually, so that regardless of the genre, the medium, the narrative, the location, or any other myriad referents, there are some qualities that Sherlock Holmes always represents.

In a lecture at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, enshrined as the location of the first meeting of the characters Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John H. Watson, Sherlock Holmes authority Alistair Duncan called Holmes 'Britain's own superhero' (qtd. in Manente "Special #3"). It is fairly easy to make an argument for reading Holmes as a superhero figure: he is unique, he fights crime, and he possess powers outside the realm of normal human endeavour. The focus here will not be on arguing that he can and should be read

as a superhero, but rather that he is visually constructed on screen as a superhero, and a particularly English hero. In a study of reviews of films in the X-Men franchise published in British broadsheets such as the *Times*, *Telegraph*, *Independent*, and *Guardian* among others, scholar Mel Gibson unpacks an intriguing British anxiety. She noted that the response of the press across media 'articulated concerns, indeed fears, about comics' and in doing so, 'demonstrate a history of middle-class fears about the popular' and 'represent a culturally specific British perspective on comics' (101). Though the definition of comic books has expanded and other nations have developed their own rich comic book traditions—Japanese manga, for instance—the medium was originally an American art form and the U.S. has produced the most titles. This national anxiety about fully embracing what Gibson's studies suggest is commonly considered American low-culture is answered in Sherlock Holmes.

In her surveys of the press, Gibson compared the relatively sparse treatment granted to the X-Men films with the more extensive coverage afforded to reviews of *Bridget Jones's Diary*. She explains this by speculating that while the source text of the *Bridget Jones* adaptation—*Pride and Prejudice*—is considered '"respectable" literature', because the novel is a traditional literary form, the comic books that inspired the X-Men films were viewed as somehow 'disreputable' (102). Although the character of Sherlock Holmes was born into a serial format in pop-lit and presented as essentially a super-human crime fighter like the X-Men of the comics, the character's literary beginnings and perceived 'high-brow' period grounding allows it to supersede this middle-class anxiety and achieve respectability. More importantly, though, as Duncan notes, Sherlock Holmes is not just a superhero, he is a British—or, I would argue, English—superhero. He is not only English in nationality, he is the superhero avatar of

England itself and that status has been achieved through the cumulative distillation of his on-screen aesthetic.

Before attempting to dissect this notion of Englishness and how it is embodied in the Sherlock Holmes that has evolved on screen, it must first be noted that there are, of course, distinct differences between Britishness and Englishness; I am choosing the latter to signify the narrower core of the wider British Empire to avoid confusing it with the cultures of Victorian Britain's many foreign colonies in period adaptations and English as opposed to other British identities in contemporary adaptations. Keeping in mind that Holmes' character and image are products of a diffuse Anglo-American process, Englishness in this case means representing the perceived, if not actual, qualities of the English national character, which, according to a brief and amusing *London Evening Standard* article from 2009, involves proper dress—formal but not too formal—discerning tastes, easy erudition, and a talent for downplaying your own assets (Foulkes). Bennett and Woollacott unpick how English nationalism is interwoven with the Bond character when they note that the conspiracies that Bond unravels are 'often enveloped within and overshadowed by a set of disequilibrating/equilibrating tendencies which centre specifically on England and the ideology of Englishness' (101). As with the tendencies in Bond adaptations, Sherlock Holmes is frequently cast not simply as a hero who is English, but rather as a hero who exists to protect and preserve Englishness. Both within many of Conan Doyle's tales,[20] as well as within adaptations, Holmes operates as an agent of imperialism, restoring order after the chaos of foreign dangers. In addition to films or television programmes adapted directly from Conan Doyle, including, perhaps, his most imperialist text, *The Sign of Four*, which is also the second most

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[20] At least 24 of the 60 stories written by Conan Doyle include some kind of foreign danger, either in the form of a person, disease, or other outré intrusion.

frequently adapted tale, with eight direct adaptations made, respectively, in 1913, 1923, 1932, 1983, 1983, 1984, 1987, 2001, there are many original Sherlock Holmes screenplays which utilise Eastern villains and Orientalist stereotypes. An exaggerated aesthetic of 'Otherness' in the mis en scène is frequently utilised to signify these foreign threats, and Holmes' opposition to them.

Cinema costume designer, two-term president of the American Costume Designers Guild, and academic professor Deborah Nadoolman Landis maintains that the average viewer fundamentally misunderstands the function of costume on screen. The average viewer, she argues, believes that costume serves to ground a film's time and place in absolute reality. According to Landis, it is not a costume designer's purpose or responsibility to mimic reality on screen. Instead, she argues, costume design is a story-telling tool and it exists to establish not where and when characters live, but who they are. In 'Costume Design, or, What is Fashion in Film?' Drake Stutesman builds on Landis' assessment, adding that 'the costume is an object, a literal building that the actor enters, "wears", or inhabits in order to perform' (21). Many cinema characters are 'types', and their costumes help actors embody them. Adapted characters are more than types; they exist and have context before they are embodied. Sherlock Holmes is more than an adapted character: he exists outside of a single, specific narrative context; the character is marked with indices that precede a given rendering on screen. In order to be recognisably the same figure from adaptation to adaptation without necessarily having the benefit of a specific narrative or genre to apply meaning to him, he must index qualities that can migrate with him across time and text. The visual language that signifies 'Sherlock Holmes' to viewers ensures the successful establishment of that meaning; as Landis and Stutesman rightly assert, the meaning derived from costume applies directly to character.

The sartorial image of Sherlock Holmes has been bound up with readers' and audiences' understanding of the character since the stories were first published, accompanied, as they were, by illustrations from Sidney Paget and Frederic Dorr Steele. Costume designers have both benefited from and been hindered by this visual history: they are able to do their work without the creative strain of inventing the character from scratch, but they are also hobbled by the expectations of those who have developed an idea of what the character ought to look like from the illustrations and, with every adaptation produced, from each subsequent depiction on screen. Designers have the option, then, of justifying their vision of Holmes in one of several ways: they can appeal to the character's cinematic history, drawing from the image of Holmes that reaches back to Paget and Steele, adding strength to that image, or they can attempt to make a break from it, as Jenny Beavan, the costume designer for 2009's *Sherlock Holmes* did. She justified her designs stating that 'Conan Doyle published his stories weekly in a magazine, they were illustrated, and then Basil Rathbone adopted the deerstalker and the pipe and all that. It's never in the Conan Doyle. So, in fact, we weren't taking any liberates at all—we were simply doing our version. The other was never Conan Doyle's version; he never described any of that clothing' (Ryan). The former choice contributes to the narrowing of the concept of Holmes because it further focuses his sartorial image and restricts the possible visual interpretations of the character. The latter appeals to a kind of creative fidelity and ought to open the door to increased interpretations, but ironically the creative license applied to *Sherlock Holmes* opened the film to criticism for being untrue to the spirit—firmly linked to the strong, narrow vision of the image— of the character.

Although Beavan's version of Sherlock Holmes is intentionally in opposition to Paget's (Ryan), she still follows the trend of providing visual incarnations of Sherlock Holmes with a specific and identifiable costume, in the tradition of comic book superheroes. Among Holmes adaptations this costume, despite Beavan's deviation, is often the deerstalker hat and Ulster cape that have come to symbolise the character and make the hero identifiable amongst the cast of characters that surround him. The costume functions on several levels, just as does the costume of a comic book hero such as Superman or Batman.

Costume designers for other incarnations of Sherlock Holmes on screen have been attempting to navigate the fraught issue of Sherlockian 'iconography' for decades. In 1942's *Sherlock Holmes and The Voice of Terror* starring Basil Rathbone, costume designer Vera West gave Holmes an updated look to match the new contemporary WWII-era setting of the film. In order to induce audiences who associated the character with the deerstalker to accept this visually divergent Holmes, a brief but telling exchange was written in to the film. Fifteen minutes in, Holmes changes out of his dressing gown and into a suit jacket. As he leaves his Baker Street flat, he grabs his overcoat and reaches for his deerstalker hat, which hangs, anachronistically, on the coat rack. He has it nearly upon his head before Watson admonishes, 'No, no, no, no, Holmes, you promised', and with a slightly despondent 'oh', Holmes returns the cap to the rack and walks out of the door with a fedora instead; Rathbone is never seen wearing the deerstalker again. The costume is such a vital aspect of how audiences understand Holmes' character that the deerstalker itself was a sufficient narrative device to create continuity between the Victorian Holmes of the two previous Rathbone-

Holmes films, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, and the subsequent twelve contemporary features.

Facing a similar challenge of maintaining the fundamental nature of the Sherlock Holmes character in a contemporary context, Sarah Arthur and the showrunners for BBC's *Sherlock* also chose to use the deerstalker as a device to create continuity. Just as in *Voice of Terror*, they utilised humour to integrate the anachronistic cap into their production. In the second series, Sherlock attempts to hide his face from paparazzi when leaving the backstage of a theatre. He puts on the first prop within reach—a deerstalker—and as a consequence, the photographs of the detective used by the press in the episode are all of him wearing it. It becomes a running joke throughout the episode as Scotland Yard detectives gift Sherlock a deerstalker as a gag, and he resists association with it, disparagingly calling it an 'ear hat' and a 'death frisbee'. Despite the character's resistance to this definition of his image, the wide exposure of images of the detective wearing the cap compels John Watson to quip, 'It's not a deerstalker anymore, it's a Sherlock Holmes hat' [fig. 18]. Thus in a decidedly metatextual commentary on the indelible link between costume and the character of Sherlock Holmes, the series includes a self-fulfilling prophecy: Within the programme's reality, just as outside it, Sherlock Holmes, like every costumed superhero, is largely a construct of that costume.

Fig. 18. 'The Reichenbach Fall,' *Sherlock*, Dir. Toby Haynes, BBC, 2012, Television.

The costume itself operates on several levels. First and most obviously, Holmes'
costume sets him apart within the visual text. We can see the same process at work with
Superman. The iconic blue unitard, red cape, and artistic emblem are woven into the
Anglo-American cultural context and thus does not seem as odd and as ostentatious as
they are in actuality. If it were unrelated to the cultural touchstone of Superman, the
costume would seem wildly out of place in the everyday world of Americana. We
accept it on Superman as a matter of course, however, because it represents his
exceptionalism; 'to stand out from the competition', Scott McCloud reminds us,
'costumed heroes were clad in bright primary colours' (Cohen 14). Sherlock Holmes is
much the same. Because he is not dressed in bright primary colours, the costume may
seem more subtle to a modern audience; however, filmmakers often use it in historical
and social contexts that make it as bizarre a dress choice as that of Superman and thus
sharpen its meaning to a representation of Holmes' exceptionalism, rather than as a
simple periodised character. Drawn from the Paget illustrations, Holmes' hat and cape

were not exceptional when they accompanied Conan Doyle's stories. Through their employment in adaptation, they have since become representative of Holmes' difference from those surrounding him on screen.

To illustrate how the deerstalker and Ulster function as a signifier, consider the 1979 film *Murder by Decree* starring Christopher Plummer and James Mason. The film had an average budget for a Hollywood film of the era, approximately $5 million, and starred big-name actors; one would have trouble making a case that the film was under-researched. Despite the high production values of the piece, the film costumes Holmes in a manner that appears at first to be a startling oversight. It opens with Holmes and Watson in a box at the opera. In their box, both men are dressed appropriately in white tie; however, as they exit the theatre, every gentleman present has donned a white-tie-appropriate black formal evening cape and silk top hat. Holmes is costumed in his deerstalker hat and checked Ulster cape, clothes that a Victorian audience would have immediately noted as inappropriate for wear in town and utterly unthinkable as dress for a formal occasion.

The camera begins at the bottom of a staircase filled with formally attired ladies and gentlemen, revealing Holmes in the top right corner in his jarring outerwear [fig. 19]. The camera tracks forward through the crowd, eventually coming to rest upon Holmes and Watson, highlighting their contrasting ensembles [fig. 20]. Even to a modern audience, Holmes is easily the focal point of the scene, commanding attention through his unique aesthetic. As it is unlikely that the filmmakers simply had no knowledge of this historical incongruity considering the standards of research evident in the rest of the production, it is fair to assume that in Holmes' costume, a specific

decision was made to contravene the use of an historically pure representation in favour of the pure representation of the concept of Sherlock Holmes.

Fig. 19. *Murder by Decree*, Dir. Bob Clark, Studio Canal, 1979, Film.

Fig. 20. *Murder by Decree*, Dir. Bob Clark, Studio Canal, 1979, Film.

It is not only the hat and cape that cloak Sherlock Holmes in a status of exceptionalism to highlight him as a superhero-figure. In adaptations that choose to generally eschew these rather tired expressions of Holmes' character, such as the recent Warner Brothers films *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of*

Shadows (2011) the BBC series *Sherlock* (2010), and CBS's *Elementary* (2012), Holmes is nonetheless clothed carefully in a manner that is representative of his Englishness. The link between costume, fashion, and national identity was considered at length through the varied essays of Adrienne Munich's *Fashion in Film*. According to Munich, the history of the global fashion industry illustrates the power that film costume has to influence trends and construct identity by addressing, through many films from various countries and across decades, how 'films include fashion as part of their portrayal of a national character', and she even argues that 'such a weighty concept as "nation" could be dependent for its very definition on [fashion and costume]' (6). It is not a stretch to suggest, then, that costume itself can function as a symbol of national identity, and in no genre is this more true than that of comic book adaptations.

Superman, the quintessential American hero, is given a costume that visually represents the American mentality: bright and showy, with a cape that flaps in the wind like the star spangled banner, and only the subtle shift from white to yellow in the colour scheme preventing the character from being robed in the patriotic red, white, and blue of the American flag. Keith Booker gives a similar interpretation of the Man of Steel's costume in his chapter 'The *Superman* Film Franchise' from *'May Contain Graphic Material': Comic Books, Graphic Novels, and Film*. If a character can be made to embody such qualities, which are then visually concretized in costume, then surely the BBC's Sherlock, for example, is the quintessential English hero. Though young, he does not dress too casually; he is never seen without a smart and decidedly un-gaudy black suit and crisp button-down shirt. Here is a man who stands for organized thinking, for practical, ambitious serious-mindedness.

His costume also includes a dark knee-length wool coat, a costume element which acts very much like a superhero's cape: its silhouette defines the character's movements with a kind of unique purpose, but unlike on the American hero, it does not flap flamboyantly in the wind, it swirls darkly, providing a slightly mysterious air to the character. This aesthetic was clearly very much in the mind of Sarah Arthur, the costume designer for *Sherlock*. 'Holmes wouldn't have any interest in fashion so I went for classic suits with a modern twist: narrow-leg trousers and a two-button, slim-cut jacket. I also went for slim-cut shirts and a sweeping coat for all the action scenes—it looks great against the London skyline' (Bignell and Shields) [fig. 21]. The 'sweeping' nature of the coat, which was chosen in part for how it silhouettes the character against a metropolitan skyline, is in perfect concert with the visual trope of Superman or Batman, capes billowing, silhouetted against the skylines of Metropolis and Gotham City (Kidd and Spear 25) [fig. 22].

Fig. 21. 'The Reichenbach Fall,' *Sherlock*, Dir. Toby Haynes, BBC, 2012, Television.

Fig. 22. Marko Manev, 'Caped Crusader,' *Noir Series*, Behance.net, 2 Feb., 2013, Web, 29 Apr. 2013.

The second series episode 'The Hounds of Baskerville' adds fodder to this reading. Mark Gatiss has written exchanges between Sherlock and John into the episode in which the doctor chides the detective for turning up the collar of his coat to be 'mysterious' and 'cool'. The character is given this particular habit as a direct response to learning revealing evidence that will put him on the scent of the criminal; narratively, it mirrors the switch from plain clothes secret identity to costumed hero, ready to fight evil. In the DVD commentary for the episode, the programme's creators refer to this vital element of the character's costume as Sherlock's 'hero coat'.

It would, of course, be reductionist to suggest that the relationship between costume and character is purely teleological. A costume is not simply assembled based on the specific symbolic elements or, indeed, visual clichés that it is meant to convey to viewers. Symbolism is present and important, but it is not itself enough to justify

costume design; practical considerations and creative impetus often precede the intellectual process of meaning-making.

Costume design is cyclical: a designer's hand may be forced or at least directed by the audience's preconceptions about a character like Holmes, so that, as Piers Britton argues:

> The sartorial image of a character has come to 'stand in' for a television series [or film] itself in popular consciousness: the best example of this phenomenon is the hero of *The Avengers*, John Steed. The bowler hat, furled umbrella and subtly tailored suits sported by Patrick Macnee over nearly a decade in the role of Steed (1960-9) have come to constitute such a powerful media 'icon' that the producers of the 1998 Warner Brothers movie of *The Avengers* felt obligated to impose this image on the actor who took over the role of Steed in the film, Ralph Fiennes. (347)

However, when that pressure is absorbed and translated into a specific vision, that vision, or elements of it, can become incorporated into future audiences' preconceptions for future adaptations. Interestingly, this does not necessarily translate into a broadening of interpretations of the character.

Costume design for Sherlock Holmes is not bound to individual scripts because Holmes is embedded in popular culture. Holmes the popular hero is not a shapeless phantom; he is clad in a particular visual aesthetic that is drawn from elements present in his many abundant incarnations. Although Holmes is associated with a particular costume, namely the deerstalker and Ulster cape, new costume elements can nonetheless be introduced and adopted. As long as they work in concert with the larger

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accepted vision of Holmes, these 'mutations' in the character's aesthetic are assimilated. An example of a costume design decision that complements the well-tailored English hero represented by Holmes is Benedict Cumberbatch's ubiquitous scarf, which is now mirrored in Jonny Lee Miller's wardrobe in *Elementary*. This costume element links the two twenty-first century Holmes' with a well-known period depiction, as Jeremy Brett's Holmes was frequently clothed in a scarf similar to Cumberbatch's and wore it along with more traditional elements of the Holmes costume, like the deerstalker hat. [fig. 23]. This underlines the fact that Holmes is not static, but ever-evolving within particular visual boundaries.

Fig. 23. Jeremy Brett from 'The Priory School,' *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, Dir. John Madden, Granada, 1986, Television; Benedict Cumberbatch from 'The Blind Banker,' *Sherlock*, Dir. Euros Lyn, BBC, 2010, Television; Jonny Lee Miller from 'You Do It To Yourself,' *Elementary*, Dir. Phil Abraham, CBS, 2012, Television.

On the other hand, just as mutations in concert with the larger vision of Holmes, like Brett, Cumberbatch, and Miller's scarves, are incorporated into the character's

aesthetic, some costume design decisions are ultimately in conflict with the larger Sherlock Holmes aesthetic, and they never survive the particular adaptations in which they figure to become part of the trans-adaptational Holmes character. For example, costume designer Jenny Beavan, in her work on the Warner Brother's film, elected to give Holmes an unkempt, dirty appearance, which contradicts the composed and ordered nature of the English national character that Holmes represents. This aesthetic vision does not transcend Beavan's adaptations to become associated with the Holmes character. Thus, those elements that narrow and strengthen a particular notion of Holmes' character are retained and continue that character-defining process, and those that might expand the meaning of Holmes' character too much are left to fade into obscurity.

Just as the aesthetic of a Victorian Holmes may be rejected for contradicting the perception of the character, the aesthetic of a modern Holmes may be accepted for upholding that perception. *Sherlock*, for example, for all its contemporary setting, creates a focused visual tone through a grey-washed colour palate that seems to cite the monochromatic Sherlock Holmes of Sidney Paget's illustrations and Basil Rathbone's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939). Despite his youth, Sherlock as a character never 'dresses down', and this invokes the Victorian gentleman in the millennial prodigy. Similarly, Jonny Lee Miller's Sherlock in *Elementary* is given an old-fashioned dress sense: he wears waistcoats and though he does not sport a tie, he unfailingly keeps his shirt buttoned to the very top, suggesting a Victorian repression that visually links him with more traditional character traits. This supports the notion that costume acts more on character than on narrative: its ability to visually ground Holmes in the nineteenth or

the twentieth century is less important than its ability to contribute to the larger understanding of the character's nature.

One important way the cyclical manner in which costume design influences the future conception of a character is through fashion. When *Sherlock* aired, it made a stir not just in the world of television broadcasting, but in the world of fashion, so that Sarah Arthur became in-demand for interviews, even appearing in *GQ Magazine* instructing readers how to 'dress like Sherlock and Watson'. In her *GQ* interview, she acknowledges that the clothes in which she clad Holmes were meant to 'accentuate [his] character' (Morris), which, considering their traditional cut and subdued colours, seem designed to accentuate his Englishness. These classically tailored English styles, not to mention Holmesian-style capes, which were touted by Vogue market editor Emma Elwick as 'elegant and dramatic' (Bignell and Shields), will help to further cast Holmes as an English signifier. Even in a modern incarnation, the character is narrowed to an unyielding Englishness through his sartorial image.

This very specific image is not simply a creative coup, but a financial one as well. Belstaff, the fashion company responsible for the coat that Sherlock wears, discontinued the design shortly after the coat was purchased for use on the programme. When it became a hit, Belstaff received so many inquiries after the coat that they brought it back into production, issuing a press release declaring that '"Sherlock Chic" has become the latest must-have for every man's wardrobe' and that 'Although Holmes is better known for his precise turn of phrase and uncanny powers of deduction, the fictional detective is now a fashion icon'. Fans can purchase their own Sherlock coat for £1,350 at any Belstaff store. Other fashion outlets have also taken advantage of their products' use on the programme. CBS's *Elementary* has followed *Sherlock*'s lead as it,

too has become a branding tool for 'Sherlock Chic' fashions, which often owe little to the programme's actual contemporary costume designs and much more to the traditional tweedy image of the Sherlock Holmes that exists in the collective consciousness of the viewing public. This continues to contribute to the cycle of meaning perpetuated by designers, the fashion industry, and fandom.

This diffusion into the fashion industry is not entirely a profit-driven affair; Sherlock fan culture has fed it and embraced it to the extent of supporting a popular blog and twitter feed called 'WearSherlock' as well as several other derivative fan-run outlets focused on costume and fashion in, especially, BBC's *Sherlock*. 'WearSherlock' works tirelessly to both identify clothes from the program and identify clothes that the actors—most often Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman—wear off screen. The bloggers diligently post where all of these clothes can be purchased. Among other things, these twin efforts of industry and fandom create a heightened awareness of costume as a seminal quality of the series' production. Viewers of *Sherlock* are paying attention to how the characters and their alter egos—the actors who play them—are dressed. The costume of this Sherlock Holmes is instrumental to his export as an English commodity.

'WearSherlock' also operates as a resource for cosplayers, a form of fan engagement traditionally associated with comic books, anime, and manga. Cosplay is essentially founded on the assumption that portraying a character begins with the precise replication of costume. Because costume is such a vital aspect of comic books and comic book adaptations, cosplayers often focus on characters from those genres. It is worth noting that the community of fans who cosplay *Sherlock* and other incarnations of Sherlock Holmes is broad and vibrant, and these fans occupy spaces similar to those

generally associated with fans of comics, fantasy, and sci-fi. In 2013, the first dedicated

Sherlock Holmes fan convention, 221B Con, modelled on similar events such as Comic

Con and Dragon Con, was held in Atlanta, Georgia and drew several hundred attendees

[fig. 24]. [21] 'WearSherlock', as a resource for *Sherlock* cosplay, not only exists, but can

flourish because fans recognise the fundamental importance of costume to the Sherlock

Holmes mythos. This is further evidence that the connection between Sherlock Holmes

and superheroes, founded in costume, is not merely the product of a textual analysis but

is clearly vested in production choices, industry tie-ins, and fan consumption and

interplay.

Fig. 24. isaisanisa, '221b-con: So. We Meet (isaisanisa and Moramori),' Photograph,

Isa Is An Isa, Tumblr, 17 Apr. 2013, Web, 12 July 2013.

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[21] 221B Con was successful enough that before the first convention was over, the event-runners declared that it would be an annual convention. This type of fan engagement is covered in more depth in Chapter three

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The image of Sherlock Holmes as a character-defining attribute has evolved through the interplay of several environmental pressures. It arrives through the gradual strengthening of a particular aesthetic through years of incarnations. The image accumulates strength without breadth as mutations that do not conform to the accepted image of the character are discarded. It is drawn from various designers' wish to accentuate Holmes' nature and ground him in a recognisable visual history. The work of these designers is buffeted by an eager fashion industry and tenacious fans who bring their choices under a wider scrutiny, ultimately participating in the coding and commodifying of Englishness itself through the character of Sherlock Holmes. The character's costume generally operates on the same level as that of Superman on screen, which, Keith Booker notes, 'draws upon a number of... precedents in American film, participating in so many... American cultural myths that it becomes a sort of summation of American cultural history' (7). Sherlock Holmes participates in as many English cultural myths and thus, though every film, television series, pastiche, and product adapted from the stories technically expands the franchise, the breadth of the franchise directly contributes to the narrowing and distilling of the concept of Sherlock Holmes into the quintessential English superhero.

In order for the character of Sherlock Holmes to survive and evolve across time and text without a specific narrative to ground him, he must have an inherent meaning grounded in universally identifiable indices. Coding those characteristics falls to the designers whose work directly applies meaning to character: designers of costume. Costume offers a visual language that allows Holmes to stand out from others on screen while existing in a realistic aesthetic, and visually encodes qualities of the English

national character. Both it its reproducibility and its ability to mutate, the aesthetic of the character functions as part of the Holmes' DNA that evolves across time and text.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to consider the long-term processes at work on the Holmes character, as evolution is a gradual process of change over time. The aim has been to realign the focus of how we address Sherlock Holmes adaptations: rather than viewing the creative work as the adapted texts themselves, the intention here has been to establish that the primary creative work is not any single text, but rather the Sherlock Holmes character itself. With this new focus, we have moved past the territory charted by fans as well as scholars such as Scott Allen Nollen who necessarily analyse individual adaptations with limited success.

As a character franchise, the true interest of Sherlock Holmes, and thus the value of a study like this one, lies in how the character has found success by negotiating changes in the socio-cultural environment. With this question at the heart of my analysis, I have pursued an exploration not of the production of individual texts, but of the attributes of the Holmes character that persist across adaptations. In focusing first on actors, I addressed the process of inheritance, whereby an actor's performance of the Holmes character reflects back into the indices that signify the character, and thus become part of the performances of subsequent actors. In this way, the character accumulates meaning through repetition.

In addressing the shifts in the gender identity of the Holmes character, I sought to illuminate the influence of environmental pressures. As adaptations exist at the crossroads of the socio-cultural contexts of literary text, and the adaptation's setting,

production, and consumption, the manners in which the character's gender and sexual function operate change from production to production. This section suggests that while the ambiguities inherent in the literary character provide a foundation for the variety of constructions of Holmes' gender, the circumstances of production are at least as complicit.

In looking at the performance of the Holmes character through the mutations of its aesthetic across time and text, this chapter reaffirms Deborah Nadoolman Landis' contention that costume design is not about generating reality, but rather generating character. The work of costume designers from the earliest Holmes vehicles to the most recent adaptations is a continuing conversation about the underlying meaning of the Sherlock Holmes character. It becomes clear through an examination of how Holmes' aesthetic functions both intra- and extra-textually that visually, he is usefully read as a superhero and that, like other superheroes, he is a distilled ideological figure—costume is not a neutral component of adaptations, rather, it contributes to the essential understanding of the character: It is through costume design that Holmes' ideology and thus is character is narrowed and crystallized across time and text.

The aim has been to fill gaps in our understanding of how Sherlock Holmes has changed as a consequence of long-term evolutionary processes. These gaps exist largely because the approach of this work, which privileges character over any other intertextual point of contact, has never been used to study Sherlock Holmes at length and in depth. Although there are doubtless other influences beyond the three examined here, this chapter has nonetheless established a viable precedent for the shift from viewing the primary remediation of a character franchise as an adaptation of text to an adaptation of character.

CHAPTER TWO: MODES OF SELECTION

Directional Shifts and Stabilizing Forms

Introduction

Evolution is a process of gradual change over time. Chapter one focused on an examination of the pressures at work on the adapted Sherlock Holmes that contribute to steady changes in the character. This chapter addresses the mechanism of selection, which is the means by which particular changes become normalised within the character. While, as Bortolotti and Hutcheon note, 'Cultural selection, like natural selection, involves differential survival through a process of replicating into future generations' (449), and is therefore also a gradual process, it is possible to pinpoint specific moments in which particular readings of the character were selected and normalised. Selection can either be dynamic or conservative, and this chapter will consider both mechanisms: directional and stabilizing selection.

The case study I have chosen to illustrate directional selection—the mechanism by which 'an environment changes in one particular identifiable direction', and 'adaptations move toward a new cultural norm' (449), is 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. I have chosen this particular case study because it represents the most significant discrete and quantifiable change in the adapted Sherlock Holmes character. This work seeks to focus particularly on changes that work across the network of intertexts and fundamentally re-imagine the character itself rather than those that merely influence specific texts, which demands a case study for directional selection that illustrates a significant change that has persisted since it was enacted. The Second World War, for example, re-authored Basil Rathbone's

Sherlock Holmes in 1942. The character was contemporised so that he could directly battle Nazis onscreen. This selection for a war-time Holmes lasted only as long as the war, however, and once the Nazis were defeated in reality, Holmes reverted to his nineteenth century milieu on screen in subsequent adaptations. These specific adaptations reacted to the war itself, but the character made what might be called a return to factory settings afterward. As this work does not seek to place individual texts under a microscope in isolation, I have chosen to analyse how and why selection for the version of Sherlock Holmes in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939) has left a lasting legacy on the franchise.

Although the Second World War directly influenced only half a dozen Sherlock Holmes adaptations in the early 1940s by including Nazi antagonists, and/or immediate or tangential references to the war,[1] analysis suggests it triggered the selection for a periodised Sherlock Holmes. Despite the recent contemporary adaptations from the BBC and CBS, Sherlock Holmes remains, in the public consciousness, a symbol of Victorian England. It is significant, then, that until 1939 he was always a contemporary figure. Adaptations prior to Twentieth Century Fox's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and its equally lavish sequel *The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes*—released on the first of September, a mere two days before Chamberlain declared war with Germany—were, without exception, set during the time in which they were made. The first section of this chapter addresses the twin pressures of nostalgia and cultural preservation, which were arguably triggered by the trauma of the war and outlasted the war itself. These pressures

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[1]As the contemporary films starring Basil Rathbone progressed, WWII played a smaller and smaller role in each. The first three, *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* (1942), *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon* (1942), and *Sherlock Holmes in Washington* (1943), all pit Holmes against the Nazis. *Sherlock Holmes Faces Death* (1943) takes place in a manor being used to house convalescent military officers tended to by Dr. Watson. *The Spider Woman* (1944) includes a fairground game in which a prize is won by shooting targets painted to look like Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito. *The Scarlet Claw* (1944) ends with Holmes quoting Winston Churchill. The remaining six films do not refer to the war in any way.

have exerted a lasting influence on the Holmes character, and have driven the prevailing conception of Holmes as a representation of not just an English protector, but of England's history. In his character, the romance of Pre-War England is preserved and can be relived.

The second section of this chapter examines the contrary selective mechanism: stabilizing selection. In an environment where a particular vision of the Holmes character is thriving, stabilizing selection acts as a conservative pressure, rewarding 'retelling' rather than 'reinterpretation' (449). The case study I have chosen in order to investigate stabilizing selection is the cluster of current adaptations—the Warner Brothers film franchise including *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011), BBC's *Sherlock* (2012), and CBS's *Elementary*. An examination of stabilizing selecting necessitates comparing disparate adaptations that operate within the same socio-cultural environment to determine whether the character is in flux, or is relatively uniform in its rendering in each. While Sherlock Holmes adaptations have been more or less continually created for the last century, there are relatively few periods in which several straight[2] adaptations were in progress concurrently. Other possible case studies could include the years 1929 through 1932, during which Clive Brook, Arthur Wontner, Robert Rendel, and Raymond Massey were all active in the role of Sherlock Holmes, and the years 2000 through 2002, during which Matt Frewer, James D'Darcy, and Richard Roxburgh all played Holmes. The first case study is problematic for practical reasons: Only one of Brook's films survives, and Rendel's film only exists as an incomplete reconstruction. In addition, while instructive, such a study is obviously less topical than an examination of the current

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[2] I am discounting brief 'cameo' appearances of the character, parodies, and non-Anglo-American productions.

trend in presentations of the Holmes character. The second option is less useful than my chosen case study because all of the adaptations are unpopular, and virtually unwatched. An examination of the attributes of the Holmes character in failed adaptations would be interesting and valuable, but this project's scope is limited to trends that contribute to the character's success.

In analysing these two mechanisms for selection, this chapter highlights moments of rupture and change that represent either clear directional shifts, or a consolidation of meaning for the character of Sherlock Holmes. The case studies that follow bring us closer to an understanding of how and why such selection occurs, and thus how particular indices of the character become more or less essential as a consequence of the circumstances of particular adaptations.

Periodisation and Directional Selection: **The Hound of the Baskervilles** *(1939)*

To ask an average member of the public in nearly any country in the world to describe Sherlock Holmes and his world is to ask for an invocation of Victorian London, complete with the rattle of hansom cabs on cobblestones, parading through grey and foggy gas lit streets. It is to ask for the image of a man in a deerstalker hat and an Ulster cape, smoking a pipe and scratching on a violin in the cluttered confines of 221B Baker Street; this is true in spite of the popular and pervasive contemporised adaptations *Sherlock* and *Elementary*.[3] In the public consciousness, Sherlock Holmes belongs to a specific and definable historical moment, but this was not always the case, and that transition is an important aspect of the character's evolution.

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[3] This claim is justified by the language used to discuss these two twenty-first century programmes, which generally includes reference to their modern setting; this suggests that rather than normalising a timeless or a modern Sherlock Holmes, they continue to represent a transgressive interpretation of the character.

This section addresses the importance of period setting to the Sherlock Holmes character by analysing the film—1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*—that first intentionally periodised Holmes. The periodisation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* represents a defining moment in the evolution of the Holmes character; within Bortolotti and Hutcheon's evolutionary model it is an illustration of directional selection, which occurs when 'an environment changes in one particular identifiable direction...as adaptations move toward a new cultural norm' (449). This section will focus on the motivations for periodisation, which are the impetus behind this shift in direction. Scholarly work on the importance of historical period to adaptations of Sherlock Holmes is scarce. In fact, the language that pervades the work on Holmes of, for example, Scott Allen Nollen, speaks about periodisation as though it is nothing more than an accepted measure of the quality of a Holmes adaptation. Nollen touts 1939's *Hound* as 'arguably the best Sherlock Holmes film and the most faithful adaptation of a Conan Doyle story produced for theatrical release', and later adds, with reference to the twelve Basil Rathbone films that re-contemporised Holmes, that 'Considering what came later, as a result of the story rights being sold to Universal, it is unfortunate that [Twentieth Century Fox] did not film at least one more period adventure' (126, 134). This is a testament to the degree to which the image of Holmes as a Victorian figure has saturated the popular perception of the character. Rather than addressing it as a measure of quality, this section analyses when, why, and how historical period became such an important aspect of Sherlock Holmes.

In order to properly situate a discussion of periodisation, this section appropriates and engages with scholarship on heritage cinema. Although the critical term 'heritage cinema' is used to refer to films made in the final decades of the

twentieth century, this section argues that *The Hound of Baskervilles*, with its literary origin, its melodramatic plot, its scrupulous attention to period detail, its focus on periodisation as a marketable commodity, and its production in a time of national crisis, may usefully draw from work done on heritage films of the Thatcher era. It engages with Andrews Higson's work, which offers negative critiques of the political motivations of the heritage cinema trend, as well as Claire Monk's more positive, audience-focused scholarship. These readings of the film will be linked with Guy Barefoot's analysis of a trend in 1940s cinema toward 'Gaslight Melodrama', a sub-genre of Victorian-set mystery and horror films, to which *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and perhaps even more so its sequel, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, belongs. The aim of this analysis is to establish how profoundly *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* affected the Sherlock Holmes character franchise, as after the films were made, periodisation became fundamental to the character, even surviving as the default position in the face of successful modern updates.

In order to understand how drastically *The Hound of the Baskervilles* diverged from the status quo, it is important to understand how Sherlock Holmes operated as an adaptational commodity before *Hound* was made. Arthur Conan Doyle never defined Holmes as the hero of a particular period; he introduced new inventions such as the telephone and the motorcar into Holmes' world just as they were introduced into the real world. As Sherlock Holmes shared the moment of his birth with the birth of cinema itself, the notion of periodising the character seems not to have occurred to early filmmakers—Holmes was, to them, a contemporary figure and the detective's early cinematic outings reflect this: Eille Norwood was a mainstay as Holmes from 1921 through 1923, playing the character in 47 silent films, an astonishing one hundred reels

of footage. No attempt was made to disguise the look of 1920s London, and this seems perfectly reasonable when one recalls that by the time Norwood hung up his deerstalker for good, as many as nine of the sixty Sherlock Holmes stories penned by Conan Doyle were still yet to be published. This lack of period awareness or privilege was not only acceptable to filmmakers and audiences, but it seemed to have been perfectly acceptable to Conan Doyle as well. As mentioned in chapter one, Conan Doyle's appreciation of Norwood's work is well documented.

In the first forty years of his life on screen, filmmakers treated Holmes much like they now treat the character of James Bond: despite the fact that Ian Fleming wrote the original Bond novels between 1953 and 1966, and despite the fact that the character was written to directly interact with contemporary world events—cold war politics in Bond's case—the James Bond adaptations are set during the periods the films are made. Bond is privy to 1960's technology in the films made in the sixties, seventies technology in the seventies, eighties technology in the eighties, and so on. This trend is so commonplace in the case of Bond that *Casino Royale*, a James Bond adaptation made and set in 2006, tells the origin story of a character defined by a career as a Cold War-era spy. Although this easy contemporisation actually creates something of a problematic timeline, the chronological cognitive dissonance does not seem to bother audiences and critics.

Just like today's Bond, the Sherlock Holmes of the early twentieth century lived in a kind of temporal neverland. The first British Holmes talkie, *The Speckled Band*, made in 1931, gives Holmes a modern office complete with Dictaphones and an intercom for the detective to communicate with his busily typing secretaries. 1932's eponymous *Sherlock Holmes* sees the detective battling Tommy Gun-toting underworld

gangsters with the aid of an electric ray machine [fig. 25]. Many of these changes went unremarked, some garnered a negative reaction from critics for their clumsiness, but it was not until 1939, nearly forty years and at least a hundred appearances since he first graced cinema screens in 1901, that a film was made that intentionally resettled the character back in Victorian England. With one reverberating cinematic blow, Twentieth Century Fox's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, starring Basil Rathbone, caused all that came before, the lauded and the panned, the enshrined and the obscure, to fall away and set the foundation for all that would come after.

Fig. 25. *Clive Brook and Miriam Jordan*, 1932, Photograph, David Stuart Davies, *Starring Sherlock Holmes* (London: Titan, 2007) 28. Print.

The purpose of this work is to address the question of authorship across time and text, and as such, it has thus far avoided extended scrutiny of individual productions in an effort to focus on the process of the character's evolution. However, this single film

and its immediate sequel are such vital pieces of the larger picture, that it demands such scrutiny. The periodisation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* irrevocably re-authored the Sherlock Holmes character. In order to dissect how and why these rewrites happened and what their legacy is, this section first examines the context of the film by analysing the historical moment into which it was born and how the periodisation reflects choices based on that historical moment as well as trends of Victoriana in cinema of the 1930s and forties. It also considers the text through the lens of paratextual marketing materials, how they are rooted in the film's periodisation, and how those materials forged a link between the perception of Holmes as a cinematic character and Holmes as a literary figure.

It is of no small import that *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was produced in the year 1939. Setting the film in opposition to nearly forty years of established tradition was a choice both practical and psychological. In the first few decades of producing Sherlock Holmes adaptations—the first brief 'film' starring Sherlock Holmes was made in 1901 and full adaptations were being made by several production companies before the first decade of the twentieth century was out[4]—the changes that would have to have been made to prevent Holmes from straying out of the Victorian and early Edwardian period would have been slight at first, but increasingly more costly. Shots of city streets, for example, would have to be stripped of motorcars and filled with horse drawn hansom cabs and broughams. Fashion changed drastically following the Great War, particularly for women, and extras would have needed wigs to cover fashionable cropped hair styles and dresses with much lower hemlines and much higher necklines.

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[4]Among others, Vitagraph produced an eight minute adaptation of *The Sign of Four* in 1905, Cresent produced *Sherlock Holmes and the Great Murder Mystery*, a riff on Edgar Allen Poe's 'Murders in the Rue Morgue', in 1908, and the Danish company Nordisk created thirteen Holmes films between 1908 and 1911 (Davies 12).

Gentlemen's hat styles may have been only slightly different in early films, a homburg could suit the late nineteenth century as well as the 1920s, but as the thirties drew to a close, the soft fedoras in general use would have needed to have been exchanged for more traditional period headgear. Simply put, it was not financially viable for filmmakers to worry about whether Sherlock Holmes existed on screen in 1891 or 1921; production schedules were too fast to invest in the meticulous recreation of a period only a few decades past. Nostalgia of this type was not profitable.

Sherlock Holmes was, therefore, a perennially contemporary figure. It was more economical to make him modern, and in any case, the years of Edward VII's reign were recent enough that without cries of attention to the present, the present might yet stand in for the past. However, by the end of the 1930s, the capacity of the contemporary world to be confused with the world of Victorian and Edwardian England had all but disappeared. Changes in fashion, decor, technology, and speech were drastic enough to force the tension between Holmes' native period and the present day to its crisis: by necessity, filmmakers would have to choose whether Holmes would be intentionally and conspicuously modern, or whether it was worth the price to return him to his Victorian roots. Twentieth Century Fox, through the creative team of producer Gene Markey, director Sidney Lanfield, and screenwriter Ernest Pascal, decided it was worth the expense and proceeded to scrupulously reconstruct the bygone England of Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, originally set in 1889.

Time forced the crisis, but the easier and cheaper option was certainly simply to concede that Holmes was to be a man without a fixed temporal home. The question then becomes why Twentieth Century Fox chose the route that cost them effort and expense when precedent showed that a contemporary Holmes would bring audiences to the

cinemas well enough. There are likely two main reasons for the decision. The first is that the choice was a psychological one: 1939 saw a world in distress, on the brink of war, and the production banked on some combination of a drive to preserve an idealised past and the draw of period escapism. The second is that the film was at the vanguard of a trend of renewed interest in Victoriana that bred the genre that Guy Barefoot calls the 'Gaslight Melodrama'. Both are worth exploring.

There is a comfort intrinsic to Sherlock Holmes: he is an incorruptible hero who makes sense of chaos, a perfect hero for those facing the chaos of a world attempting to hold back the flood of war so soon after the end of the last conflict. The temptation to let such a hero apply himself to sorting through the chaos directly would eventually lead to a brief re-contemporising of Holmes during which he would be enlisted to battle Nazis on screen. The twelve films from Universal Pictures made between 1942 and 1946, also starring Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes, would not achieve the critical and commercial success nor have the acclaimed afterlife of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The periodisation and the related escape back to a time of relative peace and prosperity better addressed the desires of the viewing public during the turbulence surrounding the Second World War.

I am only one of very many scholars to argue that nostalgia during a time of social upheaval is a powerful motivator in artistic production. In his 1987 work *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Time of Decline*, Robert Hewison argues that heritage cinema functions as an escape, that within the period context of the film or television programme, viewers were 'safe from the menace' of the present (69). If the economic uncertainties of the 1980s to which Hewison refers are menacing enough to prompt a

retreat to a safer, more secure past, it is undeniable that the eve of the Second World War justifies a similar response.

Embedded in the period escapism of the film is the illustration of a safe and secure Britain—a Britain not only not facing down the rise of the Nazi menace, but a Britain prior to the Great War that, in the context of the film, seems to have no wrongs that cannot be righted by a single man. This depiction of Britain exemplifies what the country means to the world and why it is worth fighting for; it serves as a call to action. Sherlock Holmes in his native Victorian era is a symbol of the strength and character of a whole nation, and in 1939, that nation was in very real danger of ceasing to be. Seeing a hero like Holmes bring equilibrium to the cultural and moral haven of Victorian Britain was a call to protect and preserve what Britain stood for in the present.

In addition to this embedded call to action, the meticulous recreation of the past was an act of preservation. If, as was not impossible in 1939, Britain itself was to face annihilation, committing this peaceful and prosperous conception of Britain to celluloid preserved the idea of Britain, should the nation fall. There is comfort to be found in the act of enshrining a bygone age and therefore having the ability to return to that age when reality becomes too troubling; this is the essence of nostalgia's draw during a time of uncertainty.

This is a conservative, if not a Conservative reading of the motivation behind period fetishisation. Much work done on heritage cinema as the trend was emerging in the 1980s posits that heritage films were Conservative in nature, that is, that they were actively complicit in propagating a Thatcherite anti-progressive worldview. While *The Hound of the Baskervilles* does not fall into the narrowly defined critical category of

heritage cinema, it shares much in common with heritage films as it focuses on an idealised past.

Andrew Higson, who contributed to early volumes on heritage cinema, such as Lester Friedman's *Fires were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism*, reviewed the 1944 collaboration between Noel Coward and David Lean, *This Happy Breed*, using the same critical framework that he uses in his work on heritage films of the eighties and nineties. This offers a precedent for equating the social upheaval of Thatcher's Britain with the fear and uncertainty that surrounded the Second World War. In his review, Higson makes this argument:

> The film should... be understood as one small facet in the process of ideological re-construction, an attempt to renew the nation's self-image. It does this by adopting a self-consciously populist mode of address, and by working with the traditions of a conservative and nostalgic urban pastoral to construct an image of an organic national community, the British people as one large happy family, and nationhood as a timeless and invariant category. (95-6)

According to Higson, then, it is logical to read the nostalgic presentation of a pre-WWII (and, by extension, as is the case in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, a pre-WWI) Britain as part of a process of establishing an ideologically pure national identity. Although this process may or may not have been considered and intentional in the construction of an idealised Britain that promoted the Conservative values of the Thatcher government in the 1980s, it may be understood as a more visceral, need-based effort of cultural conservation and preservation in the face of the Second World War, when both *Hound* and *This Happy Breed* were made. As it constitutes a 'looking back', periodisation is, at

its heart, a conservative process, and, as an act of building or preserving a national identity in peril, it is not at odds with the parallel, and arguably equally conservative, evolution of Holmes as a national hero discussed in chapter one.

The film projects several messages that relate to the appeal of its periodisation, most notably through its position as a British-American collaboration, and through the personal life of its star. These extra-textual elements likely influenced contemporary readings of the film and contributed to its considerable and influential afterlife. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was officially an American production, filmed in Hollywood by an American company. However, its stars, Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce, Richard Greene, Wendy Barrie, and Lionel Atwill, were all English and the film's screenwriter, London-born Ernest Pascal, was largely known, particularly at the time of *The Hound of the Baskerville*'s release in 1939, for his work on Anglo-centric historical screenplays such as 1936's *Lloyd's of London*, 1937's *Wee Willie Winkie*, and 1938's *Kidnapped*. The face that the film turned to the public, therefore, was an English face rather than an American one.

At a time when Europe teetered on the brink of war and the US struggled to reassert its non-involvement, a picture written by an Englishman, peopled with English actors, and depicting a romanticised England of the past was a powerful message to Americans who saw the impending conflict in Europe as a problem that did not and would not involve them. This message grows stronger in light of Basil Rathbone's involvement. Rathbone, a decorated soldier from the First World War, was a vocal supporter of the British in the lead up to the declaration of war in 1939. The MGM contract that lead to all of his Sherlock Holmes films and radio appearances was, according to the actor, due to the war—an effort to 'secure [him] with an assured annual

income that would take care of [him] and [his] family under all conditions, excepting world catastrophe' so that he and his wife could 'throw [themselves] wholeheartedly into [their] war work' (Rathbone 167). He would eventually be elected president of British War Relief on the Coast and there is no doubt that his association with Sherlock Holmes changed the public's understanding of the character into something altogether more heroic and more patriotic.

In recent years, alternative readings of heritage cinema have arisen that challenge the underlying notion that the films of the eighties and nineties that fetishised the past did so as part of a larger Conservative agenda. Claire Monk, approaching heritage films from the avenue of reception rather than production, argues forcefully that the work of scholars such as Higson, Cairn Craig, and Tana Wollen is 'overwhelmingly pejorative and censorious'. She goes on to argue that though they 'treated the "heritage" films as ideologically complicit with aspects of the Thatcherite "project" and saw them as vessels of a complacently bourgeois (and literary) notion of quality and of a triumphalist English cultural imperialism', it is reductionist to do so. According to Monk, this reading of periodisation fails to account for the motivation of audience pleasure in the non-political and politicisable aspects of the heritage films, which her work argues are intrinsic to the success of costume dramas. As the popularity of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is at least as important as its production, it is worth situating the film in the context of other similar films of the period to explore that popularity.

In his *Gaslight Melodrama: From Victorian London to 1940s Hollywood*, Guy Barefoot explores the trend of what he terms 'gaslight melodramas', which are mystery and horror films that utilise a distinctly Victorian aesthetic, a surprising number of

which were produced in succession from the late 1930s through the early 1950s. He charts their rise in popularity, addresses how 'individual films drew upon shifting, twentieth-century, Anglo-American attitudes to, and images of, an era on the edge of modernity', and interrogates the motivations behind this very specific trend (1). Barefoot's primary aim, however, is to analyse the link between the melodrama of mystery and horror films and the utilisation of the late Victorian and early Edwardian period. He establishes that Victoriana started to successfully sell to film audiences around the time that *The Hound of Baskervilles* was released, and even quotes Willson Discher writing in 1939: 'there can be no denying the fad. Victorianism is in vogue' (qtd. in Barefoot 120). In emphasising the link between this vogue and its exploitation in melodrama films, his work helps to validate Monk's view that much of the 'enjoyment in [heritage] films include...the catharsis of heightened emotion which costume drama and film can somehow facilitate'. In other words, the popularity of Victoriana and the escapism inherent in period films help explain why *The Hound of the Baskervilles* not only rewrote, but essentially overwrote the forty years' worth of Sherlock Holmes adaptations that preceded it.

The promotional paratexts that surround *The Hound of the Baskervilles* further establish the importance of periodisation to the film's success. In his discussion of medium theory, an approach to media studies that examines the methods of spectatorship rather than content, John Ellis argues for the importance of what he calls 'narrative image', particularly with respect to the pre-television cinematic experience of the first half of the twentieth century. Ellis defines this narrative image as the 'idea of a film [which is] widely circulated and promoted', and which operates as 'the film's circulation outside its performance in the cinemas' (30; 31). Ellis further explains that

narrative image can be understood to consist of three elements: 'direct publicity'; 'general public knowledge of ingredients involved in the films', such as 'stars, brand identification, and generic qualities'; and 'ways in which the film enters into ordinary conversation and become the subject of news and of chat' (31). The second of these attributes is incontestable: the Sherlock Holmes character already held a strong currency in cinemas by 1939, as did most of the actors associated with the film. The film would have drawn contemporary audiences regardless of periodisation. It is the other attributes—publicity materials and general conversation surrounding the film that mark, as Ellis would have it, the film's period setting as its defining characteristic.

It is clear from a study of the pressbook for *Hound* that the period setting was the major selling point of the film. It cunningly mocked what promotional materials labelled 'the Holmes tradition' by calling such elements as the 'two-way cap', 'the magnifying lens' and the 'calabash pipe', which were linked with the character as early as the illustrations of Sidney Paget and Frederic Dorr Steele that accompanied the Holmes stories in *The Strand Magazine*, 'hackneyed'. Yet in drawing on those very same elements—all neatly exploited within a single promotional still for the film [fig. 26]—*The Hound of the Baskervilles* becomes part of the tradition and, indeed, cements it by identifying and naming it in the first place. The same press release decrying 'the Holmes tradition' ends with a reaffirmation of that tradition by placing in Rathbone's mouth the famous words, dating to at least 1909 and possibly as early as 1899, 'elementary, my dear Watson'. With the fresh and unique spin of periodisation, *Hound* effectively recreated the Holmes tradition in its own image. So strong was the link with the character and this particular interpreter, that even the line 'elementary, my dear Watson' is often erroneously thought to originate with Rathbone's interpretation.

Fig. 26. 'The Deerstalker,' Photograph, *basilrathbone.net*, Fansites, 2012, Web, 4 Aug. 2012.

Despite its criticism of the 'hackneyed' elements of the Holmes tradition, the film's promoters had no compunctions about encouraging the use of those elements in drawing an audience. A very revealing flyer sent to movie theatre owners explaining how to build effective displays promoting the film instructs them to 'be sure to capitalize on... that famous pipe, that famous hat, that famous lens' [Fig. 27]. Thus Basil Rathbone became connected to the Holmes tradition and also to a period representation of the character. In doing so, *Hound* re-conceived Sherlock Holmes as a period character.

Fig. 27. 'The Hound of the Baskervilles,' *Cinema Pressbooks 1920-1940* (Cambridge, England: Chadwyck-Healey Ltd, 1991) Microfiche.

The marketing material also played up the cost and effort involved in their periodisation. The sinister moors of Devonshire are not merely represented on screen, they are recreated, boasts the pressbook; three experts were sent to Dartmoor to map the terrain and then the studio's research department set to 'determining the changes that had taken place in the moor since the period around the turn of the century in which the story is laid'. Surely the film's primary American audience would not know fin de siècle Dartmoor from any other desolate space the studio may have used in its stead. In taking the trouble to recreate the novel's exact setting on a Hollywood sound stage, a set so large and intricate that according to cinema lore one of the stars, Richard Greene, got lost on it during shooting, the filmmakers brought the notion of attention to period detail

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to the forefront of conversation about Sherlock Holmes adaptation, where it has since remained.

The efforts were not fruitless; the film drew millions of viewers and was the fourteenth most successful picture released in a year that included such legendary triumphs as *Gone with the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. It fared well with critics also, which is a vital component of a successful and cohesive narrative image. Ellis notes that

> equally important in the creation and circulation of the narrative image
> of a film are those activities that are not directly paid for by the
> marketing agencies. The most intimately connected are those of
> journalism, which includes the activities of film reviewers. Film
> reviewers provide descriptions and classifications of films as much as
> judgments: indeed, the newspaper reviewer's very judgments tend to
> become a form of generic classification. (35)

The Hound of the Baskervilles was successful largely due to its period setting. Consider Graham Greene's response to the film in *The Spectator* on July 14, 1939:

> In this film Holmes is undoubtedly Holmes, and he hasn't to compete
> desperately with the telephones and high-speed cars and 1939. ...That
> atmosphere of unmechanised Edwardian flurry is well caught: the villain
> bowls recklessly along Baker Street in a hansom and our hero discusses
> plans of action in a four-wheeler.

It is not the performances that are lauded; indeed, in the same review, Greene goes on to criticise Rathbone's reading of the character. It is simply the severance of Sherlock Holmes from the world of 1939 that elicits the praises of Greene and other critics. As

Ellis suggests, the language used by critics comes to define films as much as the critics' judgments do, so that the emphasis that Greene and others place on the film's period setting furthered the producers' project of placing the Victorian milieu as the central locus of discourse surrounding the film.

The history of this film and the reasons behind its period portrayal provide a vital clue to unravelling the large and complex web of Sherlock Holmes adaptations. 1939's *Hound of the Baskervilles* effectively obliterated the contemporary 'modern-man' image of Sherlock Holmes. When Universal cast Rathbone as Holmes in films set during the war only a few years later, the public and critics sneered. Although the experiment in periodisation had only been going on for two films—*Hound* and its Twentieth Century Fox sequel *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, also released in 1939—public memory was short so that in 1942, when it was announced that the first Holmes film since *Adventures—Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*—was to have a contemporary setting, trade paper *The Hollywood Citizen News* couched its response in the following terms: 'Here's Sherlock Holmes today fighting the Nazis. Without his two-way cap, or his calabash pipe, or his magnifying glass. Tch-tch-tch, or what is the world coming to?' The world of Sherlock Holmes adaptations was doing nothing more than returning to equilibrium and forty years of precedent, but in the meantime the *The Hound of the Baskervilles* caused the Victorian period to become an entrenched element of the 'Holmes tradition'.

There can be no doubt that the visual elements of costume, props and sets in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* were entirely derivative of earlier incarnations. The story was certainly familiar to audiences as well; the original generated considerable press when it was first published in 1902 as it represented the first appearance of Holmes since Conan

Doyle had killed the character off in the short story 'The Final Problem' in 1893. It had been adapted into a silent film in Germany, *Der Hund von Baskervilles*, in 1914—a film that spawned six original sequels; Germany produced two further versions of *Der Hund* in 1929 and 1937. In the UK, a version was made starring Eille Norwood in 1921. In 1931, as a response to a public poll that indicated popular demand, the first talkie adaptation of the novel was made. With at least five versions of the story already committed to film, the novelty of the popular character's manner and speech on screen exhausted, actors who had given acclaimed 'definitive' interpretations of Holmes numbering several, and the visual appearance of Holmes thoroughly embedded in the public consciousness, there can only be one unique element to account for the success and afterlife of 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*: its conscious attempt to set Holmes back in his native period.

The popular conception of Sherlock Holmes is rooted in Victorian England, and that concept owes its strength and staying power to 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. From *Hound* onward, use of period became an essential component of every presentation of Sherlock Holmes on screen. Even now, when the tradition has arguably been undermined by two successful and earnest contemporary depictions of the detective on television in BBC's *Sherlock* and CBS's *Elementary*, the conversation still revolves around period. Particularly in the case of *Sherlock,* which took the creative risk first, the contemporisation is the unique and vital element of the programme precisely because it is consciously eschewing the Holmes tradition established by 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Had *Hound* never existed to return Holmes to his Victorian roots, *Sherlock* would be much less remarkable: merely another in an endless

line of contemporary Sherlocks. The programme is groundbreaking because it is an outlier.

It is unwise to speculate on the future course of the character's evolution. Regardless, one of the aims of this study in its entirety is to argue that adaptations do not represent interpretations of static characters, but actively maintain the dynamism of those characters as they change and evolve on screen from one version to another. It is interesting to note that while the press surrounding *Sherlock*'s debut in 2010 focused on the programme's contemporary setting as its most salient quality, two years later, the same quality in *Elementary* attracted less attention. This suggests that perhaps as *The Hound of the Baskervilles* represented a key moment in its directional selection for a period Sherlock Holmes, so *Sherlock* may represent a similar turning point for the character for future adaptations. However, even resituated and accepted as a twenty-first century hero, the Sherlock Holmes of both contemporary iterations is presented, as *Elementary*'s executive producer and writer Rob Doherty notes, a 'fish out of water' (Doherty and Beverly Personal Interview). Thus, in the twenty-first century, Sherlock Holmes feels nonetheless a Victorian man, never quite at home in either the London or the New York of the present day. Whether he will survive and evolve in the modern consciousness through contemporary renderings remains to be seen, but it seems undeniable that the concept of Sherlock Holmes that 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* concretised has etched a deep mark on the character.

Anti-Heroism and Stabilizing Selection: The Post-Millennial Sherlock Holmes

A property that is as frequently adapted and as culturally embedded as Sherlock Holmes is always in danger of creative entropy. The controversial elements of more

avant garde interpretations generally do not get carried over and incorporated into the character as drawn on for future adaptations, and the least compelling features of the blander versions are as quickly discarded. It thus becomes difficult to reinvigorate Holmes as, with each new adaptation, the battle to create a lasting challenge to the homogeneity of the character—to redefine what are perceived as his definitive qualities, such as his grounding in the Victorian period and his aesthetic—becomes harder to win. The daunting nature of this challenge is illustrated by the fifteen year gap between the series that aired on Granada between 1984 and 1994 starring Jeremy Brett, which has often been hailed as 'the definitive portrayal' by critics and fans alike since its creation, and the next serious Holmes adaptation in 2009. Despite the challenge, the most recent adaptations of Sherlock Holmes manage to effectively combat that entropy and, taken together, offer not only unique interpretations of the character, but also a surprisingly uniform vision of how this hero of page and screen has evolved to appeal to a twenty-first century audience.

It is the uniformity of these adaptations that is the subject of this section. The case study of 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* illustrated how a particular film can catalyse a major directional shift in the conception of an adapted character. In their evolutionary model for investigating adaptation, Bortolotti and Hutcheon also identify a second type of selection: stabilizing selection. This type of selection occurs 'when an environment is stable' and adaptations therefore 'differ little from the previous generation' (449). While the *Hound* case study is an easy choice to justify, the decision to use the cluster of adaptations that are currently still being produced demands further explanation. In order to investigate stabilizing selection, it is necessary to consider adaptations that are not from disparate time periods. Chapter one illustrated that

changes in the cultural environment affect the evolution of the character. The question

at issue in this section is whether adaptations generated in and for essentially the same

cultural environment will select for a stable vision of the Sherlock Holmes character.

While Sherlock Holmes has been a mainstay on film, and, later, on television, for

roughly a century, the recent explosion of adaptations in the past five years represents a

unique moment. Not only are three mainstream franchises currently in production

concurrently, but the transmedial landscape of contemporary viewing practices mean

that all three are widely seen and have access to the same potential global audience.

There are three individual 'sets' of Sherlock Holmes adaptations of the last five

years that represent the lion's share of the current Holmes adaptation narrative: Warner

Brother's film franchise including *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), and *Sherlock Holmes: A*

Game of Shadows (2011), with an announced as yet unnamed third film; the three series

of BBC's serial mini-series *Sherlock* (2010-) with a fourth due to air beginning at

Christmas 2015; and CBS's television series *Elementary*, which aired its first season in

the Autumn 2012 line-up, and is currently in its third season. They each fall into

different categories by genre. The films are action-adventure stories, stylistically

sharing more in common with comic book adaptations than the tradition of detective

fiction on screen. The BBC's series is considered 'quality television'. It owes much

regarding its focus on high production values and character development to similarly

eponymously named crime dramas such as *Marple*, *Poirot, Columbo*, and *Rebeus*

among others.[5] CBS's programme is an American police procedural that is most

comfortably grouped with franchises like *CSI*, *NCIS*, *The Mentalist*, and *Criminal*

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[5] Although 'Quality Television' is arguably an aesthetic category, scholars, myself included, often term it a genric category as well. It generally includes programmes that are more cinematic in nature, and is often linked to cult television. For further reading, consult Jonathan Bignell and Stephen Lacey's *Popular Television Drama: Critical Perspectives* (2005) and Mark Jancovich and James Lyons' *Popular Quality Television: Cult TV, the Industry, and Fans* (2003).

Minds—all programmes, not coincidentally, that also air on CBS. These differences in genre, medium, aesthetic, and country of origin could yield radically divergent iterations of the Holmes character, yet they have more in common than their source text.

The first proper glimpse of the post-millennial Sherlock Holmes was not an adaptation, but an original series. In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon defines an adaptation as 'an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works' (7). *House M.D.*, which premiered in the Autumn of 2004, does not meet this burden. It was conceived as an original idea, with the thread of Sherlock Holmes woven in only after the framework of the series was in place; the concept for *House M.D.* predates the intentional remediation that would otherwise qualify it as an adaptation. It is therefore not a transposition, but an incorporation of the Sherlock Holmes text. In addition, though the House character owes much to Holmes, the connections between the written Holmes stories and the complete *House M.D.* series could not reasonably be considered 'extensive'. Although *House M.D.* is not an adaptation, Conan Doyle did maintain that he based Sherlock Holmes on Joseph Bell, a doctor of diagnostic medicine at the University of Edinburgh where Conan Doyle took his degree. Interestingly, therefore, the series is actually 'backed up' beyond the literary Holmes to the character's supposed inspiration.

The construction of *House M.D.* is much closer to the mystery genre than to the medical genre, with each episode posing a diagnostic mystery and evidence that leads to the solution of the problem. However, it is the character of House—the name itself a sly tribute to Holmes—that actually draws from the Sherlock Holmes mythos. *House M.D.* series creator/executive producer David Shore confirms that the analogy between Holmes and House was born 'pretty early on' in the creative process for the programme

and manifests itself mostly in House's character. '[Holmes is] an unusual character... he was never solving the cases because he cared about his clients. He was actually always rude to his clients, and the more I started thinking about it, the more I started relating that to [House]' (PaleyCenter). Drawing on Holmes' single-minded pursuit of the facts and amplifying it into a vitriolic contempt for the complications of everyday human interaction led Shore to create House as a genius without any social graces. Like Holmes, he battles addiction, finds refuge in music, and confides only in a single friend. Nods to Sherlock Holmes are peppered throughout the programme: House lives in an apartment numbered 221B, his first case in the programme involves a woman called 'Adler', he is shot by a man named 'Moriarty', he is given a first edition Joseph Bell text, and he even fakes his own death *à la* Sherlock Holmes at Reichenbach Falls in the programme's final episode, to name a few.

Though it is not an adaptation, the series' reimagining of the detective as a maverick diagnostician from New Jersey arguably establishes the mechanism by which a stable reading of the character will appear in subsequent adaptations in several important ways. It plants the seed for the relatively consistent vision of Holmes as an acerbic social outcast. Shore's amplification of Holmes' belief that 'it is of the first importance not to allow your judgment to be biased by personal qualities' and that 'emotional qualities are antagonistic to clear reasoning' (Conan Doyle, Vol. 3 235) into profoundly antisocial behaviour is carried through every recent interpretation of Holmes. Previous adaptations have included this quality without necessarily privileging it. The series effectively drops the character's persona of practiced professional, and instead re-imagines him as a kind of child prodigy in an adult body: House behaves like a child and needs a capable team to provide structure for the useful application of his

extraordinary skills as well as to manage his socially destructive tendencies. This conception of Holmes as an out of control genius who needs to be grounded and managed has grown stronger with each subsequent adaptation.

The series also primed audiences to accept the character in the context of the twenty-first century, which is the setting of two of the three sets of interpretations—both *Sherlock* and *Elementary* are contemporary versions—and is helpful in understanding the re-contextualised Victorian era of the films in the Warner Brothers franchise. *House M.D.* survived for eight seasons, an excellent run on American network television, finally coming to a close in 2012. Its popularity cleared the path for the recent resurgence in popularity of Holmes adaptations.

In 2009 Warner Brothers released *Sherlock Holmes* as its Christmas blockbuster to hype and expectation. It was the first U.S. cinematic release of a Sherlock Holmes film since 1988's spoof comedy *Without A Clue*. The film and its sequels are the brainchild of auteur director Guy Ritchie and star popular actors Robert Downey Jr. as Holmes and Jude Law as Watson. Although the films' creative teams claim a respect and display an affinity for Conan Doyle, the films are stylistically a-typical of Sherlock Holmes adaptations, drawing as they do from the action-adventure genre, rather than from crime drama. The financial demands of modern big-budget films dictate that they must be made to appeal to an audience far beyond those who are fans of or, indeed, who are aware of Conan Doyle and, as such, offer a Sherlock Holmes more linked to the historical moments in which the adaptations are made and consumed than the moments in which the source was written or the film set. This is a modern sharp-tongued action hero: a Victorian Holmes for the twenty-first century.

Robert Downey Jr.'s Sherlock Holmes has a personality more akin to Gregory House than to Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, or for that matter, to Basil Rathbone's, Jeremy Brett's, or any number of other screen interpretations of the character. His antisocial nature is evident from his first post-opening-credits appearance on screen. Watson enters Holmes' rooms to find him wallowing in darkness, having had no case to which to apply himself for three months, and having not even left the premises for two weeks. Within minutes, the detective insults his long-suffering landlady and his best friend. Like House, this Holmes is not merely dismissive of the distractions posed by emotion. He crosses the line from rudeness to cruelty even with the few friends that he has, so that within the first twenty-five minutes of the first film he has wine thrown in his face by Watson's otherwise patient fiancée and is punched in the face by Watson himself.

It is difficult to deny that though he is fun to watch on screen, there is very little that is personally likeable about the Sherlock Holmes of the Warner Brother franchise. In fact, he represents an encroachment of anti-heroic qualities onto the more traditional heroism of the character. Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes claims that he 'represent[s] justice so far as [his] feeble powers go' (Conan Doyle, Vol. 2 1550) and this quality has generally been the fundamental motivation of the character in adaptations. The elevation of Holmes' ever-present pursuit of 'the puzzle' to a mania that, as a motivation for his actions outstrips his concern for justice, is the tipping point between heroism and anti-heroism; it is also the quintessential attribute of the stable post-millennial vision of Sherlock Holmes.

In a 2005 article from *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Stephen Fuller identifies the often rigidly defined categories of hero and anti-hero as a hallmark of the detective

genre. He goes on to say that the weakening of the boundary between those categories within the genre is an act that is 'complex, nonessentiallist, and postmodern' in nature (832). Particularly with Sherlock Holmes, such a traditional cornerstone of the genre, this muddying of categories is highly transgressive as well as relatively recent in mainstream adaptation. While Robert Downey Jr.'s version of the character flirts with elements of the antihero—his impetus for doing good is self-interest, not justice—he still offers a less self-destructive and socially outcast version of Holmes than subsequent portrayers Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller do. Downey Jr.'s Holmes is, like House, more of a child prodigy than a seasoned professional. This childishness manifests itself in a flouting of authority, a restless energy, and a smart mouth. Ultimately, this helps the character shed the tweedy image that Sherlock Holmes has acquired over decades of stodgy portrayals and makes him appeal to a twenty-first century movie-going audience that is, itself, young, and demands complex characters that can thrive not only within a film's narrative, but can withstand the multifaceted scrutiny inherent in navigating the transmedial world of today's Hollywood blockbuster experience. Essentially, Robert Downey Jr. has reinvigorated Sherlock Holmes by infusing him with the same hair-trigger edginess that Christian Bale brought to the creatively exhausted Batman franchise.

In order to bring a reasonable balance to a Sherlock Holmes that appears untamable, the Warner Brothers films offer him an equally strong-willed, level-headed foil in Jude Law's Watson. Guy Ritchie calls him 'the alkaline to Robert's acid' ('Sherlock Holmes: Reinvented'). He is cast as the adult that tempers the childish instability of Downey Jr.'s Holmes. This task of managing Holmes becomes an even

more pronounced element of Watson's character in subsequent adaptations, reaching a pinnacle in CBS's *Elementary*.

The modern movie audience is not only interested in complex characters, it also demands a visually engaging experience. 2009's *Sherlock Holmes* was the first time that Sherlock Holmes was given a modern technology-savvy makeover. All the hallmarks of a major high-budget Hollywood blockbuster were brought to bear on the film and the result is an atmospheric production, memorable for its dark and fretful London cityscape. By creating such a vast, intricate and evocative setting and treating it with all the fights, chases, and requisite explosions that audiences expect from similarly marketed action-adventures, *Sherlock Holmes* sets a new standard for the character and his milieu. The twenty-first century Sherlock Holmes is thus fast-paced and high-energy, not remotely the armchair detective. The bar for this standard has been raised even higher in the film's sequel *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011), which has Holmes and Watson follow their adventures across the far wider landscape of continental Europe, taking on more intense battles, faster heart-pounding chases, and bigger explosions.

Sherlock Holmes and its sequels necessarily conflate the historical with the modern. Although it is set in Victorian London, Ritchie frequently uses the word 'contemporary' to describe his take on Holmes. Indeed, the films often feel more like pieces set in a twenty-first century Steampunk world than the historical nineteenth century, featuring a tousle-haired Sherlock Holmes in jaunty wire rimmed sunglasses. This Holmes owes more to John Lennon than to Basil Rathbone, giving the character a modern 'rock n' roll' star quality that drags Victorian London a century into the future [fig. 28]. In this way, Ritchie and his creative team strive toward their goal of

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reinventing Sherlock Holmes. Indeed, 'Sherlock Holmes: Reinvented' is the title for the

DVD's 'making of' featurette, which features Ritchie, Downey Jr., Law, and others

explaining why this is Sherlock Holmes as audiences have never seen before. Their

vision for an edgy Holmes for the twenty-first century shares much with the vision,

created independently but concurrently by Stephen Moffat and Mark Gatiss, that

informs their television series *Sherlock*.

Fig. 28. Robert Downey Jr. as Sherlock Holmes from *Sherlock Holmes*, Dir. Guy

Ritchie, Warner Brothers, 2009, Film.

On 25 July, 2010, BBC aired the first episode of three in their much-anticipated

modern-day reboot of the Sherlock Holmes mythology, *Sherlock*, starring Benedict

Cumberbatch as Sherlock and Martin Freeman as John Watson. From the beginning,

this was meant to offer a totally new Sherlock Holmes—one at home among the

technology and sensibilities of the twenty-first century. This is not just Holmes for the

twenty-first century, but Holmes of the twenty-first century. Despite the differences in

genre, medium, and setting, this Sherlock Holmes shares much in common with Downey Jr.'s.

The anti-hero qualities latent in the Holmes of the Warner Brother franchise are forced into the spotlight in *Sherlock*. In the series' first episode 'A Study in Pink', writer Stephen Moffat takes pains to set Sherlock up as friendless and antagonistic toward everyone with whom he has contact. He is carelessly cruel to those who care for him as well as with his sparring partners. Members of the official police force who use his services as a consulting detective call him 'the freak' and openly dislike and denigrate him. Sherlock himself admits that when he rattles off a string of deductions people generally tell him to 'piss off'. Most tellingly, Sherlock corrects a Scotland Yard officer who calls him a psychopath: 'I'm not a psychopath; I'm a high functioning sociopath, do your research' ('A Study in Pink'). This moves the character beyond a rational disdain for emotions insofar as they interfere with logical reasoning, and crafts him into a person who is psychologically incapable of understanding and experiencing the normal range of human emotions.

Interestingly, Moffat does not necessarily see the character in this way. In an interview I conducted with Moffat about the second series of the programme,[6] he argued that '[Conan Doyle] never said [Holmes] was unemotional, he said that he disdains such things as distractions. If they are distractions to him, that means he's aware of them'. His opinion seems to contradict his own text: Sherlock is often portrayed as genuinely mystified when emotional motivations complicate his cases. Because Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock cannot organically factor the emotional elements of the human equation into his work and his life, he often seems positively

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[6] The full transcript of this interview is included in this work as Appendix A.

giddy at wildly inappropriate moments. 'We've got ourselves a serial killer', he quips in the first episode, 'love those, there's always something to look forward to' ('A Study in Pink').

Sherlock's anti-heroic nature is so germane to the programme that in the final episode of the second series, 'The Reichenbach Fall', his reputation falls apart as he becomes the suspect of a series of heinous crimes, seemingly fulfilling a police inspector's prophecy from the first episode of the first series: 'One day just showing up won't be enough. One day we'll be standing around a body and it'll be Sherlock Holmes that's the one that put it there. He's a psychopath. Psychopaths get bored'. *Sherlock* not only interrogates the transgression of the hero/anti-hero boundary, it deconstructs those labels by making that transgression the key to understanding the character.

Once again, there is the sense of Sherlock Holmes being an unmanageable child in this adaptation. Inspector Lestrade even states that in dealing with Sherlock he has to treat him like a child. While Robert Downey Jr.'s childishness manifests itself as a relatively harmless adolescent petulance, the childishness of Cumberbatch's Sherlock is much more destructive to himself and others. He displays the type of arrogance that one would expect from a bright teenager who has yet to learn humility and cannot admit that he is ever wrong. This leads Sherlock to play fast and loose with peoples' lives, including his own. In the tense climax of 'A Study in Pink', Sherlock is baited by the villain to gamble his own life simply because he has a pathological need to know that he is right.

In a step beyond *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), the John Watson of *Sherlock* (2010) not only needs to provide the 'grown-up' grounding for the detective, he has to be solid

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and level-headed enough to save Sherlock from himself. Sherlock may well have committed suicide in order to prove his cleverness in 'A Study in Pink', but he was saved by Watson's well-aimed and well-timed bullet. Once again, Sherlock is conceived, like House, and like Downey Jr.'s Holmes, as needing to be managed. He is deeply flawed and can only function properly with Watson acting as an emotional mediator.

The contemporisation of the characters and stories is likely the most discussed element of the adaptation. The series represents the first legitimate updating of Sherlock Holmes since the Universal films of the 1940s starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. In our interview, Stephen Moffat discussed his and series co-creator Mark Gatiss' love of these often disparaged films with me, calling them 'irreverent'. 'There is a tendency, perhaps because it is a period piece, to treat it like holy writ and that can sometimes suffocate the voice of the author who didn't regard it that way at all', he said. He went on to firmly state that 'irreverence is important to Sherlock Holmes' (Moffat telephone interview). This goes a long way in explaining the decision to update the stories.

This irreverence, which, interestingly, Moffat also extended to include the Warner Brothers' franchise, is vital to keeping Sherlock Holmes relevant. Guy Ritchie brought this impulse to bear in the Steampunk aesthetic of his films, he thus undermined the often stifling veneration for Victorian England that is typically associated with Sherlock Holmes. Moffat and Gatiss channeled their impulse into contemporisation, which was an even more effective and complete method of cleaving the fundamentals of Sherlock Holmes—interesting characters and good storytelling— from the trappings that had built up around them in a century of adaptations and cultural entrenchment. The effortless re-contextualization of Cumberbatch's Sherlock from

Victorian gentleman to twenty-first century wunderkind easily justifies the creators'

decisions, as it has convinced fans, critics, and, importantly, television executives that

Sherlock Holmes is both a modern man and a bankable property for a new century of

adaptations.

The success of *Sherlock*'s contemporisation validates CBS's decision to create

its own take on a twenty-first century Sherlock Holmes. So completely did *Sherlock*

succeed that, while the hype and anxiety surrounding the programme's debut in 2010

centred on the update, the contemporisation of CBS's *Elementary* is merely accepted as

a matter of course. Executive producer Carl Beverly, who originally generated the

concept for *Elementary*, claims that doing the adaptation as a period piece never even

crossed his mind (Doherty and Beverly personal interview).[7] Though the series, at a

glance, foregrounds several important differences from both the Warner Brother

franchise and from *Sherlock*—it is not only contemporary, but it is set in New York

City and Watson is an American woman—it carries the common characteristics of the

stable post-millennial Sherlock Holmes to the next logical level rather than diverging

from them and is born from the same impulse to preserve the longevity of Sherlock

Holmes through a fresh and irreverent concept and aesthetic.

Executive producer and series writer Rob Doherty distinguishes his version of

Sherlock from Moffat and Gatiss': 'I absolutely don't see him as a sociopath', he says.

'I see him as someone who is driven, again, to solve puzzles, to do the right thing, to

help people. I really do think, at the end of the day, he believes in justice' (Miller).

Although this would seem to rebalance the motivations that distinguish a heroic

Sherlock from an antiheroic Sherlock, Doherty also says that the drive to solve puzzles

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[7] The full transcription of this interview is included in this work as Appendix C.

'is his obsession to the point you might call it an addiction' (Miller). Conceptually, the whole programme is an interrogation of a single simple premise: What if, driven by his addiction to solve puzzles manifested in an intense aversion to boredom, Sherlock Holmes pursues all avenues to feed that addiction including drugs, and he self-destructs? The pilot begins on the day Sherlock is released from rehab, having hit bottom. Thus the series represents an antihero attempting to navigate his own deep flaws, bringing the journey of the Sherlock Holmes in recent adaptations to a new stage of the uniform twenty-first century examination of the character.

Unlike Cumberbatch's self-described sociopathic Sherlock, Actor Jonny Lee Miller's Sherlock Holmes is a more emotional being. During the course of the pilot, he seems to empathise with victims, he becomes easily enraged, he offers a sincere apology to Watson, and he even crashes a car in what amounts to a simple temper tantrum. When I asked him whether he felt this was still consistent with the twenty-first century conception of the character, Doherty declared that it was because '[*Elementary's*] Sherlock is a few years past your standard Sherlock, to whom everything came easily. ...He's discovered he's not a machine in bottoming out—and being surprised that he's capable of bottoming out' (Doherty and Beverly personal interview). This is a Sherlock who has self-destructed due to an addictive mania for puzzle-solving; his self-destruction proved to him that he has emotions and he must engage with them. The character in *Sherlock* shares the puzzle-solving mania, but it eclipses his emotions rather than engages them because he has not self-destructed yet. Both adaptations become more interesting when, placed in conversation, *Sherlock* can be understood as an earlier, less damaged version of the character in *Elementary*.

The relationship between Holmes and Watson as unstable child and responsible adult is overtly presented in *Elementary*. Their partnership is built on that model as Watson, a suspended surgeon, is hired by Sherlock's father to be his live-in sober companion. In this way, she literally becomes a parental surrogate. Sherlock outlines his father's conditions for his sobriety in the first five minutes of the pilot: 'I use, I wind up on the street. I refuse your quote, unquote help, I wind up on the street.' Watson is responsible for being in his company constantly to ensure that he does not relapse into his drug habit. When he gives her the slip one morning by disabling her several alarm clocks, she tracks him down and without preamble, thrusts a swab in his mouth to test if he is positive for any drugs. Once again, the post-millennial Sherlock Holmes is presented as a flawed figure whose self-destructive genius must be managed by others. Like Robert Downey Jr. and Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock Holmes, Jonny Lee Miller's version is imbued with a childishness that brings with it a volatility and unpredictability that effectively rehabilitate Holmes from any culturally ingrained perception of the character as turgid and dull.

With a character as long-lived and as venerated as Sherlock Holmes, there is always a certain amount of anxiety preceding a new adaptation. In anticipation of the first episode of *Elementary*, fans and critics were awash in anxiety over the series. Much, though not all, of this dissipated when it began its run on 27 September 2012, just as similar anxiety over *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *Sherlock* (2010) dissipated in the wakes of their premieres. Interestingly, much of the anxiety over *Elementary* is related to its perceived encroachment on the intellectual property of *Sherlock*. On viewing, it is clear that such anxiety is misplaced. What *Elementary* offers is the same irreverence and freshness that Moffat praises in both his own programme and the

Warner Brothers franchise. The unique aesthetic of CBS's series is grounded in its New York City location: The audience's introduction to Joan Watson occurs as she takes a jog through the city's distinct cityscape [fig. 29]. The series, like its predecessors, engages playfully with the Sherlock Holmes canon, making extended references to opera and beekeeping in the pilot and continuing to offer small concessions to fans throughout its run. The execution of the programme's vision differs conceptually and visually from *Sherlock* and from the Warner Brothers films, preserving the integrity of each adaptation, but they are all motivated by the same drive to make a viable Sherlock Holmes for today's audiences.

Fig. 29. Lucy Liu as Joan Watson from "Pilot," *Elementary*, Dir. Michael Cuesta, CBS, 2012, Television.

The transition of Sherlock Holmes into a more complex anti-hero is fundamental to the character's journey into the twenty-first century. Each adaptation has navigated that transition in a unique way, but the creators of each have selected for a Sherlock

Holmes that is made interesting through a blurring of the hero/antihero categories. Each adaptation strives to break down the creatively arresting attachment between the strength and appeal of Sherlock Holmes and the culturally derived definition of the character burdened with a century of awed and reverent baggage associated with heroism and historical period, though as the previous section demonstrates, they remain part of the same conversation. Nonetheless, an interrogation of the three sets of Sherlock Holmes adaptations born into the context of the twenty-first century prove that the financial and creative risks taken by the minds behind them are more than warranted. They prove that Sherlock Holmes is not merely a nineteenth century hero. Rather, as Rob Doherty asserts, '[Sherlock] is a hero for the twenty-first century, the 22nd, the 23rd, the 24th; history would seem to suggest that Sherlock will outlive us all, and well he should' (Doherty and Beverly personal interview).

Conclusion

This chapter has built on the examination of environmental pressures and long-term changes highlighted in chapter one in the continuing pursuit of this project's primary question: How has the Sherlock Holmes character evolved in order to survive? By an examination of the mechanisms of selection, my intention has been to use and expand the framework of Bortolotti and Hutcheon's theoretical model in order to consider how the success of individual iterations of the character can be selected and normalised.

The first section focused on the text and context of 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in an effort to understand how the Victorian and Edwardian context of the original stories has become an integral part of the Sherlock Holmes mythos. By

considering the impending world war as a catalyst for escapist entertainment, nostalgia, and a drive toward cultural preservation, and by examining how period recreation was utilised as a marketing tool for the film, I hope to have shed some light on how historical period functions as an aspect of Holmes' character, and, more particularly, how *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939) represents the moment at which period became one of the character's primary indices.

Although there are several potential examples of stabilizing selection to be drawn from the adaptational history of Sherlock Holmes, my intention in section two was to both illustrate how disparate adaptations can tend toward a uniform reading of the character, and to identify and discuss the current trend in the Sherlock Holmes character. To that end, I elected to place in conversation the adaptations currently in progress. These adaptations have selected for a reading of the Holmes character that both suits the current socio-cultural environment and transmedial consumption and remediation of the texts.

This analysis of the mechanisms of selection complements the earlier examination of environmental pressures. Taken together, they paint a larger, and hopefully more systematically organised picture of the process of evolution at work in the trans-adaptational character of Sherlock Holmes. The language of 'selection' may also be useful in further evaluations of moments of rupture and trends of change, both in the Holmes character, as well as in other character franchises, as these case studies may serve as a model for additional work in this area.

CHAPTER THREE: THE EXTENDED PHENOTYPE

Fan Discourse and Creative Regulation

Introduction

In 1982, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins published a book that introduced a new concept to his field: the 'extended phenotype'. Although challenges have been levelled, and competing theories posited, in the intervening years, the report of the European Science Foundation on a workshop it held in January of 2009 to reassess and discuss the concept reasserted that the explanation of the extended phenotype 'is as relevant now as when it was first proposed... and is not at odds with other evolutionary explanations'. Dawkins explains the concept in this way:

> Replicators are not, of course, selected directly, but by proxy; they are judged by their phenotypic effects. Although for some purposes it is convenient to think of these phenotypic effects as being packaged together in discrete "vehicles" such as organisms, this is not fundamentally necessary. Rather, the replicator should be thought of as having *extended* phenotypic effects, consisting of all its effects on the world at large, not just its effects on the individual body in which it happens to be sitting. (4)

It is worth unpacking this explanation in order to suit it to a discussion of adaptation. The replicators that Dawkins discusses are genes: they code for proteins that are the building blocks of organisms. As I explained in the introduction to this work, this is analogous to all the raw indices that might be utilised to signify the character of Sherlock Holmes. Adaptations provide the vehicle for the performance of character.

Just as the information coded in the genes of an organism selectively manifest to produce a particular phenotype, so the Holmes character is selectively manifested in any given adaptation. The new idea that Dawkins' work contributes is that phenotypic variation can extend beyond the organism—those attributes coded into the organism that manifest outside it can contribute to biological success.

Bortolotti and Hutcheon restrict their discussion of the extended phenotype to, essentially, paratextual material associated with individual adaptations. Because this project is concerned with the trans-adaptational character, the 'popular hero' of Sherlock Holmes, I will use this section to examine two different extended phenotypes. Both exist as a consequence of the Holmes character, and both act in various ways to direct the character's evolution. Neither is manifested within the text of an adaptation.

The first section defines and examines the competing traditions within the Sherlock Holmes fan community. It focuses on the tension between the affirmational and transformational fan groups and their practices, placing particular emphasis on the emerging and often independent fan communities interacting with, though outside the official production boundaries of, BBC's *Sherlock*. This section engages with the schism between fans who remediate the Sherlock Holmes of the Conan Doyle stories—the version of the character that may be considered to have evolved slowly over time as addressed in chapters one and two, with a lineage stretching back to the urtext—and fans who remediate the specific and defined character who exists in *Sherlock*, who, despite sharing the same lineage, is distinct enough in himself and his world to potentially be treated as an entirely different character. It utilises quantitative data from the database fanfiction.net as well as interviews with members of the *Sherlock* and Sherlock Holmes fan communities to address the possibility that *Sherlock* may involve

a kind of devolution of the Sherlock Holmes character that strips away some elements that have been added previously.

Section two examines how assertions of ownership and authority over the Holmes character have both directed its evolution and contributed to its survival. Henry Jenkins, both in his seminal 1992 monograph *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* and his 2006 *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* examines the relationships between those who hold the reigns of intellectual copyright—corporations and individuals such as CBS, Warner Brothers, George Lucas, and J. K. Rowling—and the fans who remediate those texts. While Jenkins explores the relative benevolence and symbiosis or lack thereof in relationships across the spectrum—from Warner Brothers sending cease and desist letters to teenage *Harry Potter* fan fiction authors in 'Why Heather Can Write' to Lucas' participation as a judge in a Star Wars fan video competition (Jenkins 161)—he does not question the existence of the hierarchy itself. This section does question it by addressing the legal context of the production of corporate artefacts, i.e. adaptations; fan-produced commercial artefacts, i.e. pastiches, other published works, and commercial art; and fannish or not-for-profit artefacts, i.e. fan fiction and uncopyrighted art and video. This legal context is offered through the 'Free Sherlock' campaign and the corresponding lawsuit brought by fan, scholar, consultant, and lawyer Leslie S. Klinger against the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd. to establish the character in the public domain. This section explores what authority over a character like Sherlock Holmes means, and how that affects the abilities of various parties to affect the nature of the character.

Studying the blurred boundary between producers and consumers of texts is not a new pursuit. Neither is it an original observation that, particularly in cult and other

participatory fandoms, consumers are, themselves, producers in some respects. This chapter does not rehash the same arguments, which, with the increasing entrenchment of what Henry Jenkins calls convergence culture, are undeniable in their essentials (if still contested in their details). This chapter does not question whether fans influence the Sherlock Holmes character. Nor does it seek to examine in great depth the paradigmatic processes by which fans communities function. Those processes are better explained and more fruitfully analysed by social scientists, and the creative and social protocols by which the Sherlock Holmes fan community are governed have been effectively scrutinized by Roberta Pearson in several pieces over the years, including '"It's Always 1895": Sherlock Holmes in Cyberspace' from the 1997 collection *Trash Aesthetics: Popular Culture and its Audience* and the recent '"Good Old Index" Or, the Mystery of the Infinite Archive' from the 2012 collection *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom.* Instead of defining and explaining these processes of production, this chapter continues the work of the previous chapters of examining the processes by which pressures beyond adaptations influence the Sherlock Holmes character franchise.

As an addendum to this introduction, I feel that I should explain my own position with regards to the 'aca-fan' debate. The concept of the aca-fan was popularised by Jenkins several years ago and has been the subject of discussion in the intervening years. It refers to the intersection between academic and fan identities; I agree with those, like Jenkins, who contend that the affective response to texts experienced and performed by fans is essentially impossible to completely disengage from a professional, academic scrutiny, particularly if the academic is involved non-professionally in the fandom(s) that she researches. Rather than attempting to limit my interaction with the Sherlock Holmes fan community—I am an active member of both

the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Babes—I seek to use that engagement to illuminate my research. While my position as a fan and the affective pleasure I draw from my involvement with the character and with other fans does mark my belief that Sherlock Holmes is intrinsically worthwhile as cultural artefact, in my scrutiny of texts, and particularly in my discussion of fan practices, I work to distance myself from my fan identity. It is my aim to not privilege particular modes of fan discourse, and though this chapter employs the terms 'affirmational' and 'transformational' fans to distinguish and analyse those modes, I do not consider one or the other to be more legitimate. I find the aca-fan debate to be interesting and instructive, but a longer discussion of the formulations and functions of aca-fandom are not within the scope of this study.

Sherlockian Practices: Fan Discourse as Extended Phenotype

Until this point, the focus of this project has been on the phenotypic variations of the Sherlock Holmes character, manifested in various screen adaptations. Although Bortolotti and Hutcheon only offer passing mention to the biological concept of 'the extended phenotype' in their article, this section will interrogate what I assert is the most conspicuous and influential extended phenotype of the Sherlock Holmes character: the practices and discourses enacted by Sherlockians.[1]

Sherlock is unique among the hundreds of adaptations of Sherlock Holmes because it has caused a fragmentation in the traditional fan discourse. It has found acclaim both with new fans who are unfamiliar with the work of Arthur Conan Doyle

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[1] 'Sherlockian' and 'Holmesian' are interchangeable labels used to describe fans of Sherlock Holmes. 'Sherlockian' is traditionally the label used by Americans, while 'Holmesian' is favoured in the UK. The growing transnational fandom seems to have adopted 'Sherlockian'; that is the label I will utilise throughout this chapter.

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and with the most dedicated members of the established Sherlockian community, who have largely guided the fan discourse for over a century. This section adopts the terminology coined by obsession_inc and adopted by other scholars of fan studies by referring to these dedicated fans, who long operated as the controllers of the unifying fan narrative governed by the elaborate fantasy called 'The Grand Game', as affirmational Sherlockians.[2] Though these affirmational fans do not represent the largest portion of the fan community, they may be considered the authors and arbiters of the rules that generally outline the boundaries of 'The Game'. The larger proportion of the Sherlockian community, judging by the relative production of fan artefacts and proportion of discourse in the public sphere,[3] is made of transformational Sherlockians, who, in accordance with the dominant paradigms of transformational fan communities, interact primarily in virtual spaces. Notions of 'dominant' modes of discourse are, in this work, confined to public fan activity.

This section grapples with the tenets of 'The Grand Game' and how the existence of such a specific and acknowledged mode of fan discourse has operated as an extended phenotype for the Sherlock Holmes character, focusing and controlling not only other fans' methods for and abilities to influence the Holmes character, but the methods and abilities of adaptors as well. It brings attention to the intrinsically restrictive influence of 'The Game' on how affirmational Sherlockians perceive

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[2] As noted in the introduction to this work, the term 'affirmational' applies to fans who make meaning and derive pleasure through evaluation and interpretation while preserving the original artefact. The term 'transformational' applies to fans who make meaning and derive pleasure by altering and/or expanding the artefact. This work seeks to discuss the discourses of both types of fan without judging either as a superior mode of engagement.

[3] This work does not attempt to catalogue the relative numbers of affirmational and transformational fans overall. Identifying one group as a majority of the Sherlockian fan community at any particular point in the history of the fandom is dependent on the public presence of those groups at the time. While transformational Sherlockians certainly predate both *Sherlock* and the internet, until both converged, affirmational Sherlockian discourse may be understood to have been the normative position. This study does not mean to discount private fan engagement, but necessarily regards it as less central to the question of the evolving Sherlock Holmes character, which is fundamentally collaborative.

adaptations. Operating as what Henry Jenkins terms 'gatekeepers' for the Holmes franchise, these fans have applied continuous pressure on the ever-evolving Holmes character to keep it within certain boundaries consistent with the rules of their discourse. Establishing the function and consequences of this type of affirmational fan discourse allows this section to then address how the transformational Sherlockian community, by utilising BBC's *Sherlock,* rather than the evolving Sherlock Holmes character itself, as its primary text, has found what amounts to a loophole in the rules of 'The Game' and, in so doing, inspired new and different modes of fan discourse that have allowed an expanded, less guarded influence on the character. Finally, it includes a detailed quantitative study of the fan fiction database fanfiction.net and interviews with writers of *Sherlock* fan fiction, both of which are included in order to examine the actual nature of transformational fan influences on the character.

The study of fan communities, their functions, and their interactions, is one of the more represented types of scholarship on Sherlock Holmes. Roberta Pearson has included several analyses of Sherlockian fan discourses among her work in the discipline, although even in this area, Pearson opines that 'Sherlockians have so far (with the exception of a previous article of mine: see Pearson 1997) escaped academic scrutiny, despite being probably the oldest established fandom' (Pearson, 'Bachies' 105). This section takes Pearson's work in addressing the various protocols of the Sherlockian fandom[4] and builds on it, exploring the modes of discourse inherent in different sections of the Sherlockian community and how those modes influence the types of pressures that fans exert over the Holmes character. This section also utilises

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[4] Though notably it does not eschew the term 'fan' itself, which Pearson's personal experience and a handful of interviews suggest is not a preferred label of many affirmational Sherlockians ('Bachies' 106). My own anecdotal evidence derived from interaction with the Sherlockian community supports Pearson's conclusion, but the term is nonetheless the most useful one for the purposes of this study.

the fan community for BBC's *Sherlock* as representative of the pressures exerted by transformational Sherlockians. In doing so, it continues work begun in 2012's *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom*. The book, edited by Louisa Ellen Stein and Kristina Busse, includes chapters on *Sherlock* fandom's protocols, the function of the programme as part of a larger intertextual and transmedial conversation, and its interpretations and reception. This section expands and re-contextualises my chapter, 'Winning "The Grand Game": *Sherlock* and the Fragmentation of Fan Discourse', from the collection.

While Henry Jenkins' work, most relevantly *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture* and his more recent *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* does not directly address Sherlock Holmes fan communities, it does explore the creative potential inherent in fandom and also the hierarchical and self-policing nature of individual fandoms, both of which influence the Sherlock Holmes character. This section represents an attempt to rectify Pearson's comment about how underrepresented Sherlock Holmes fan communities and practices are in the larger body of scholarship centred on fan studies and audience reception.

The tradition of Sherlockian fan writing is older than many of the Sherlock Holmes stories penned by Arthur Conan Doyle. Despite the often whimsical nature of the discourse, it tends to follow quite strict rules, which are enforced through a system of praise and censure within the affirmational fan community. These rules function to prevent certain readings from becoming permanently associated with the character. Affirmational Sherlockians exert this influence by engaging in a complex fantasy called 'The Grand Game' or simply 'The Game', in which Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson are envisioned as real historical figures and the sixty stories that comprise the Sherlock Holmes canon are considered genuine records of their exploits, written by Watson. This

fantasy necessarily relegates Arthur Conan Doyle to a supplementary position and within the context of 'The Game', he is referred to as 'The Literary Agent'.

In understanding how 'The Game' operates as a method of gatekeeping—not only for Sherlockian writing and adapting, but for the evolution of the character as well—it is interesting to note the several connotations of the word 'game' itself. It defines an undertaking, the foremost purpose of which is entertainment. It also implies rules and boundaries that define acceptable behaviour within the game's established context; one cannot play a game without knowing and abiding by its rules. Both of these are central to understanding 'The Grand Game' as played by affirmational Sherlockians: it is certainly a form of play for fans of Sherlock Holmes; it involves literary and historical puzzles and a joyful engagement with much beloved characters. Any 'Game'-centred discussion with Sherlockians makes this sense of playful fun immediately apparent. However, the rules are equally as vital as the play and it is on an analysis of the nature and implications of the rules, rather than the play, that this section focuses.

'The Game' dates its origin one century ago, to Monsignor Ronald Knox's satirical essay 'Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes', first delivered as a paper at Trinity College, Oxford, in 1911. In the past hundred years, societies of Sherlockians around the world have sprung up and through them 'The Game' has become thoroughly entrenched. Michael Whelan, the current head of the most exclusive Sherlock Holmes society in the world, the Baker Street Irregulars, rightly identifies it as 'a literary phenomenon', inspiring thousands of essays (King and Klinger i). The continued relevance of this mode of discourse in the fan community is corroborated by the 2011 publication of a two volume anthology of Sherlockian pseudo-scholarship, itself titled

The Grand Game. 'The Game' has become inextricably linked with fan engagement with Sherlock Holmes, and thus defines the majority of affirmational Sherlockian fan discourse, which was the dominant form before transformational Sherlockians, riding the wave of BBC's *Sherlock* through the transmedial world of the internet, came to the fore.

.   'The Grand Game' is played out by affirmational Sherlockians primarily through two types of fan writing: pastiche[5] and pseudo-scholarship. The structure of the Holmes stories easily lends the franchise to pastiche. Conan Doyle's stories frequently made mention of 'unpublished cases' and authors as diverse as Isaac Asimov, Neil Gaiman, Stephen King, and even Mark Twain, among hundreds of others, have produced Sherlock Holmes pastiche. It is common practice to adopt Conan Doyle's style, using Watson as the narrator and imitating the voice of the character to tell the story. Often, writers of Holmes pastiche will play into the fiction entirely, placing themselves in the role of editor rather than writer of the text, and including a preface in which they recount how they happened upon this 'previously unpublished' manuscript written by Dr. Watson. This is not to suggest that affirmational Sherlockians, playing 'The Game' either casually at social gatherings or professionally in for-profit pastiche, cannot tell the difference between reality and fiction. On the contrary, Pearson gives voice to several such Sherlockians in her 'Bachies, Bardies, Trekkies, and Sherlockians', and it is clear from their self-labelling that they consider their rational and considered approach to their fannish activity central to their Sherlockian identities.[6] The intention of this investigation is not to pass judgement on affirmational

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[5] Pastiche is the preferred term of affirmational Sherlockians for fan writing in the style of Conan Doyle.
[6] See Roberta Pearson, 'Bachies, Bardies, Trekkies, and Sherlockians,' *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*, Ed. Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Harrington, New York: NYU Press, 2007. (106).

Sherlockians, but rather to examine how their modes of discourse influence the Sherlock Holmes character and police the influence of others.

Pseudo-scholarship is also produced in abundance in the Sherlockian community. Taking their cue from Knox, fans publish essays that attempt to reconcile inconsistencies within the original stories. 'The Game' is the cornerstone of these essays, and manifests itself as aficionados, familiar with the canon down to the last detail, seek to generate a single cohesive narrative that slots flawlessly into historical reality. This pseudo-scholarship ultimately serves the same fannish function as pastiche, which is to fill in the gaps of the characters' backgrounds, lives, and activities.

'The Grand Game' has a fascinating, though underexplored influence on how fans interpret and engage with adaptations of Sherlock Holmes. Like many fandoms, the affirmational Sherlock Holmes fan community has established itself as the unofficial protector and guardian of the integrity of the urtext: the gatekeeper for the Sherlock Holmes character. In his analysis of the Star Trek fandom in *Textual Poachers*, Henry Jenkins discusses this tendency, noting that 'fandom's institutional structure ...constrain[s] what can be said', and 'an individual's socialization into fandom often requires learning "the right way" to read as a fan, learning how to employ and comprehend the community's particular interpretive conventions' (89). These conventions and the role of affirmational fandom as a gatekeeper within an adaptation-fuelled character franchise are even more complex than they are with a property like *Star Trek*. Learning to operate according to the perceived conventions of affirmational *Star Trek* fandom involves a hierarchy among fans based on intricate knowledge of the *Star Trek* universe as established in the official *Star Trek* properties. As gatekeepers, they can police one another and they can, as John Tulloch notes of *Doctor Who* fans,

'write the aesthetic history of the show' (qtd. in Jenkins 87). They can complain about productions, but they are a 'powerless elite' (87). Affirmational Sherlockians are not powerless; the control that their modes of discourse exert over the Sherlock Holmes character extends beyond policing one another and writing the aesthetic history of Holmes. Since the Holmes character supersedes any single adaptational property, affirmational Sherlockians are gatekeepers for what they perceive to be the integrity of the Holmes' character, claiming a species of authority over commercial adaptors.

Fidelity is a complex issue in the field of Adaptation Studies, addressing the fundamental tension between an adaptation's subordinate position as a derivative work and its primacy established through the original qualities unique to its medium. Despite these complexities, fidelity is often the most important gauge of quality to a fan. Though fans often take texts in hand and stretch or alter them through fan fiction and other outlets, there is a general sense that an adaptation ought to bring the written characters to life, that, simply put, 'the movie should be like the book'.

As a result of 'The Game', affirmational Sherlockians have an even more complicated relationship with the fidelity of adaptations than does the average fandom of an adaptational property. According to Timothy Corrigan, 'fidelity supposedly indicates a quantitative and qualitative measure of accuracy in how, for instance, descriptions of settings, the nuances of dialogue and characters, or the complexity of themes are moved from page to screen' ('Film, Fidelity, and Literature' 160). He rightly identifies this as an 'impossible measure' as a result of the inherent differences between written and visual texts. Fidelity is further complicated by the manner in which Sherlockians engage with those settings, nuances of dialogue, characters, and themes. The conceit of 'The Game' recasts Conan Doyle's written characters as real people; in

this context, adaptations may be considered fictionalisations of historical events rather than a transfer of one fictional representation to another. The characters must be played by actors, the sets and costumes must be chosen, and the words must interpreted through directors, screenwriters, set dressers, and costume designers. Within the context of 'The Game', the final product, if successful, is more akin to a documentary or a re-enactment than to a traditional adaptation.

Conceptualising the incarnation of beloved characters on screen as an act of fictionalisation is largely a result of the specific transition from page to screen. Henry Jenkins points out that '… [texts] assume increased significance as they are fragmented and reworked to accommodate the particular interests of the individual' (51). The affirmational Sherlockian community does continuously fragment and rework the source text through pastiche and pseudo-scholarship; in such play rests the joy of 'The Game'. Pastiche and pseudo-scholarship are distinguished from the canon, though; through the lens of 'The Game', these texts are 'a-historical'. Based on the authority claimed by fans as well as the constructs of 'The Game', adaptations fall into this category as well, as they are technically derivative of Conan Doyle. The difficulty, of course, lays in the adaptations' claim to primacy in their medium; they do not situate themselves as subordinate to the canon. Robert Stam describes this view, criticising instances when 'the inter-art relation is seen as a Darwinian struggle to the death rather than a dialogue offering mutual benefit and cross-fertilization. Adaptation becomes a zero-sum game where film is perceived as the upstart enemy storming the ramparts of literature' (4). The role of the affirmational fan-as-gatekeeper thus expands to include the protection of the Sherlock Holmes character from adaptations that are perceived, in

the context of the fan discourse, to threaten its integrity: Affirmational fan discourse is preservationist in nature.

This perception of the battle between source and adaptation was vocalised by Nicholas Meyer, himself an author of a Holmes pastiche and the scriptwriter for the adaptation of his Sherlock Holmes novel *The Seven Per-Cent Solution*, in a keynote address at a Sherlock Holmes symposium in the early nineties. He noted that where Holmes adaptations are concerned, he has 'never met a Sherlock Holmes movie [he] didn't dislike' mostly as a result of 'the hideous capacity for film to...inevitably get it wrong'. The idea of 'getting it wrong' springs from what is best termed an act of libel against fiction: a process by which fictional characters are seen by fans to be grievously misrepresented on screen. As a legally actionable act of defamation, libel cannot, of course, be perpetrated against a fictional character, but the boundaries between fiction and reality are blurred within the discourse of 'The Game'. While on a conscious and rational level, the fans certainly understand that libel against Holmes and Watson is not a real offense, the dominant mode of discourse demands that though it cannot be actionable in courts of justice, it demands recognition and retribution in the courts of fandom. Rarely does a Sherlock Holmes adaptation appear that does not cause some fans to bemoan, for one reason or another, that the screenwriter, director, and/or actors were not familiar enough with the literary source, that if only the canon had been consulted more often and more assiduously, the adaptation would not have contained so many 'errors' or committed so many 'violations'. The result of being perceived guilty of this type of libel is a reassertion of the authority of the canonical Holmes.

Where adaptation is concerned, 'The Grand Game' is a not merely a fandom protocol. Its very nature predisposes fans to be suspicious of each new incarnation of

their heroes, to which suspicions the speculation and fervour preceding the release of

Warner Brothers *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), BBC's *Sherlock* (2010), and CBS'

Elementary (2012) testify. The same modes of discourse do not underlie the

transformational Sherlock Holmes fandom, which is best personified in devotees of

BBC's *Sherlock*, which would rightly be classified as cult television.[7] *Sherlock* is a

unique product for many reasons, but as regards the fan community, foremost among

those reasons is its resistance to integration with 'The Game'. The modernisation of the

text has created a world that is different enough from Conan Doyle to have passed

beyond the realm of those reconcilable inconsistencies upon which 'The Game' thrives.

Unlike period adaptations, it cannot be envisioned as a re-enactment of historical events

or the portrayal of historical figures. The programme, in effect, needs no elaborate

fantasy to reconcile the fictional and non-fictional elements of the source; it supersedes

rather than integrates the source and therefore there is nothing to reconcile.

The omnipresent issue of 'fiction libel' does not apply in the case of *Sherlock*.

The programme has effectively rewritten the 'historical' Sherlock Holmes out of

history; it therefore cannot be conceived as a representation of that history. Benedict

Cumberbatch is not portraying Conan Doyle's or even, as 'The Game' would have it,

Dr. Watson's Sherlock Holmes because in the context of the programme, that Sherlock

Holmes necessarily cannot exist. Because it has written its own antecedent out of

existence, viewers are obliged, at least superficially, to engage with *Sherlock* as though

it were a primary text. This does not mean that viewers do not recognise and appreciate

that the series is an adaptation, but rather that it functions on a level equal to its source

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[7] Pearson notes, in 'Kings of Infinite Space: Cult Television Characters and Narrative Possibilities', that 'Cult television characters can potentially move amongst an infinitely large narrative space', a defining characteristic of the Sherlock Holmes character franchise, and, indeed, the entire concept of the character franchise itself.

instead of as subordinate to it. The consequence of *Sherlock*'s innocence on the charge of fiction libel is a positive response from even the most discerning fans. *Sherlock* wins favour among affirmational Sherlockians because it has broken the rules of the game.

The methods by which *Sherlock* has broken the rules of 'The Game' and thus catalysed new and different fan discourse can only be understood in the larger context of the network of Sherlock Holmes intertexts. Intertextuality is often considered to begin with the dynamic and multidirectional relationship between the source text and the adaptation. The act of interpreting a text affects future readings of that text; therefore, creating an onscreen interpretation not only involves an action of the source on the film or television series, but also an action of the film or television series on the source. When a franchise such as Sherlock Holmes involves the production of hundreds of unique adaptations of a single source, each one is an intertext, being acted on and acting upon, both by the source as well as every other adaptation. This is, of course, the process by which the Holmes character evolves.

In his discussion of intertextuality in *Uncommon Cultures*, Jim Collins distils the term into two common interpretations: first, 'it has been used to describe a free-floating intersubjective body of knowledge' and second, 'it has been used to examine the explicit presence of other texts within a given work by focusing on the processes of citation, reference, etc.' (44). Both definitions can be liberally applied to the body of Sherlock Holmes adaptations. As the previous two chapters illustrate, film and television are almost entirely responsible for the look and feel of Sherlock Holmes; the details of costume and setting have been constructed over the course of many incarnations and reinforced through repetition. It takes merely the vaguest silhouette of a man wearing a deerstalker hat and smoking a pipe to call the detective to mind and

even those with no experience of Conan Doyle's stories or any adaptation at all have a subjective notion of the character and its context. As to the latter definition, the search for references within adaptations to elements of the canon and to elements of other adaptations could be an endless pursuit, from the assimilation of a scene written for Twentieth Century Fox's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939) into the script of a version of the same story adapted in 2002, to the precise replication of the camera's track down Baker Street, lifted from the opening credits of Granada's television series and deposited wholesale into *Sherlock Holmes* (2009).

The 'free-floating intersubjective body of knowledge' of Collins' first definition of intertextuality could easily be labelled 'the idea of Sherlock Holmes'. It involves a culturally invented collection of visual cues, catch phrases, and period referents that bares very little resemblance to Conan Doyle's character, and as such is often a source of frustration to affirmational Sherlockians. They never tire of reiterating that in the canon, Sherlock Holmes was never said to wear a deerstalker, never said to smoke a calabash pipe, and never said to intone the words 'elementary, my dear Watson'. Mark Gatiss and Stephen Moffat have eschewed this 'idea of Sherlock Holmes' and, as Gatiss says, made 'an attempt to get back to the very essence...and not [make it] about the trappings' (Gatiss, Cumberbatch, and Freeman). They chose not to have Sherlock smoke a pipe and wear a deerstalker[8] and the act of modernisation itself eliminates the Victorian world of 'pea-soupers', gas lamps, and steam trains. To affirmational Sherlockians, *Sherlock*'s rejection of these omnipresent Holmes referents might be read to be a show of solidarity and an acknowledgement of the supremacy of the source text

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[8] As discussed in chapter one, section three, 'Sartorial Sherlock Holmes: Mutations in Character', Cumberbatch's Holmes does don the deerstalker in the second series of the show, in a complicated act of defiance and assimilation. However, the character, the series, and the *Sherlock* fandom were all established before this act took place—it was not part of the showrunners' original creative concept.

over the acquired aspects of the character, though Moffat and Gatiss would almost certainly not view it this way. Regardless of the reasons, the rejection of these referents has led affirmational Sherlockians to argue that *Sherlock* 'is in many ways truer to the spirit and heart of the original canon than other recent adaptations' (Takenaka 20-1).

Affirmational Sherlockians have a complex relationship with the intertextual conversation. They often judge the merit of an adaptation by the second of Collins' definitions, revelling in the search for canonical references. Because 'The Game' suggests that adaptations should be viewed as fictional representations of reality, the more they reference the canon, the less likely they are to be 'libellous'. It would be grossly inaccurate to suggest that affirmational Sherlockians are incapable of enjoying or appreciating any Sherlock Holmes adaptations. It is likely that most fans of Conan Doyle have a favourite incarnation of the character on screen. Interestingly, that favour often falls upon the actors who valued canonical fidelity such as Jeremy Brett, who was famed for carrying a copy of the original stories on set and to script meetings, and Peter Cushing, who was himself a great fan of Conan Doyle and stated in his film studio biography that 'the stories should be treated in traditional fashion, true to the spirit of Conan Doyle's original works' (Peter Cushing File). Both actors insisted that their productions include as many direct and indirect references to the canon as possible.

The cross-pollination of references from adaptations back into fan discourse and ultimately as additions to the accepted nature of the evolving Holmes character itself is not as well received by affirmational Sherlockians. At the 2011 annual meeting of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, crime fiction author and screenwriter Anthony Horowitz announced the upcoming publication of his own Sherlock Holmes novel. His speech underscored the tendency of the Sherlockian community to view adaptations as

subordinate constituents of the intertextual conversation. He opened his speech by noting that his 'notion of Sherlock Holmes is… not escaping from circular saws or leaping into the River Thames; [he]'ll leave that to Robert Downey Jr.' By insinuating that the Sherlock Holmes of the screen is not 'the proper' Sherlock Holmes and should not be consulted as a source for interpreting the character, Horowitz could be confident that he would not break the most important rule that he had developed for writing Sherlock Holmes pastiche: 'try not to annoy the Sherlock Holmes Society of London'.

Sherlock plays gleefully with both canonical references and with references to adaptational intertexts. Mark Gatiss calls the programme a 'purist's dream' because it is 'threaded with little nods to some of the most obscure stories... if you actually know your Sherlock Holmes, there are lots of little things which hopefully bring a measure of delight' (Gatiss, Cumberbatch, and Freeman). These references have delighted those that Gatiss and Moffat lovingly call 'Sherlock fan boys'. The programme does not end its intertextual references with the canon, however. In his commentary for the first episode of the series, Moffat states that they 'decided early on that everything was canonical, every version; we're not just drawing on the stories, but the Rathbone films and Jeremy Brett' (Vertue, Gatiss, and Moffat). At a glance, this seems like affirmational fan-heresy, but it has not caused an uproar among Sherlockians the way that such a statement would have had it been used by Anthony Horowitz in describing his pastiche. I would argue that this is because *Sherlock*'s context is so different from the traditional notion of Conan Doyle's Holmes and the countless Victorian incarnations on screen that the inherent fear of affirmational Sherlockians that an adaptation should displace or alter 'the real' Sherlock Holmes is largely put to rest. This

may be a misguided assumption, as I will discuss later in this section, but it has nonetheless paved the way for transformational fans to exert their own influence.

The creators' conscious elevation of *Sherlock* within the web of intertexts—treating, as they do, all versions as equally worthy of reference and reverence—is the most powerful tool the series has for transgressing the rules of 'The Game'. Despite an abundance of canonical references as well as episodes that are clearly adapted from specific stories, the programme is also an original property. Because *Sherlock* does not have to submit itself to the same type of scrutiny 'The Game' often places on adaptations, the series is able to offer a wider scope for unencumbered and much broader fan discourse.

'The Grand Game' provides the mode of engagement for traditional written fan discourse in the Sherlock Holmes fan community. It lends itself to pastiche, which has been the normative form of fan writing for over a century. The term 'pastiche' describes a work that imitates another's style and may also incorporate parody. It is used by Sherlockians to describe their fan writing, as they seek to imitate the style of Conan Doyle, or what they would call, in the spirit of 'The Game', the 'Watsonian' style. Pastiche is directly related to fan fiction, though their definitions do differ in two significant ways. Fan fiction is defined by the status of its author as an amateur rather than a professional, which is not necessarily the case with pastiche. Like pastiche, fan fiction is based on existing characters; however, fan fiction is not restricted to an imitative style. Although the community of writers and readers, like the affirmational Sherlockian community, does direct the course of fan fiction through praise and

censure, the rules are less strict and, importantly, writers of fanfic[9] are free to engage with the texts they enjoy without adopting the style or tone of the source.

The differences between pastiche and fan fiction have generated tension within the Sherlockian community; because Sherlock Holmes fan writing considerably predates the internet, the older affirmational fan community has a reputation for mistrusting online media. Before the internet, writers had limited options for disseminating their work and traditional publishing methods have acted in a sense as quality control for pastiche. Various Sherlock Holmes fan journals provide outlets for fan-authored short stories; as submissions are critiqued by other fans, these stories almost always conform to 'The Grand Game'. Large publishing houses occasionally publish Sherlock Holmes books, banking on Holmes as a safe property with inbuilt demand. As the fan base is the core of the target audience, efforts are generally made not to alienate them, as Anthony Horowitz's rule attests. Ambitious Sherlockians may also seek to publish through Gasogene Press, an imprint of Wessex Books, which produces only Sherlock Holmes publications; though as the publishing house specializes as much in Sherlockian pseudo-scholarship as in Sherlockian pastiche, it is also heavily enmeshed in 'The Grand Game'.

Fan fiction lacks the regulatory mechanisms that pastiche has enjoyed. Though vanity publishing has long been available, it was largely cost prohibitive until the birth of print-on-demand services that evolved as a natural consequence of digital publishing. Even print-on-demand requires certain financial and time commitments to one's work,

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[9] The term 'fan fiction' is often shortened to 'fanfic' or simply 'fic'.

however, and is thus a poor platform for the 'one-offs' and 'drabbles'[10] that fill the archives of online fan fiction repositories. It is on these websites, then, that amateur writers are able to give free reign to their imaginations with no financial outlay and little to no direct censure from the established fan community for taking liberties with the source material.

The internet has created a schism between the affirmational fandom, which still largely favours face-to-face interaction and traditional methods of publication, and the transformational fandom, which generally occupies a virtual space and utilises a vast array of digital tools for creative dissemination from social networking sites to fan fiction databases. On one side of the divide is a fan community still focused on its gatekeeping functions; its unstated goal is to police the boundaries of the Holmes character to prevent unwanted material, whether officially or unofficially produced, from influencing it. On the other side is a community that seeks to test and push those boundaries by working not to fill in the gaps and create something more complete, but rather to explore the potentially infinite elasticity of the Holmes character.

In order to understand how the transformational fandom applies pressure to the Sherlock Holmes franchise, it is useful to employ some statistical analysis to understand the influence of *Sherlock* on Sherlock Holmes fan writing.[11] It is certainly true that because traditional Sherlockian discourse has largely eschewed online publication, comparing canonical fanfics to *Sherlock* fanfics must be accepted as evidence but not proof of this influence. It is also true that a generational gap is evident, with younger fans enormously more in evidence in online forums. It is nonetheless a useful analysis

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[10] Fan fiction stories are generally published chapter by chapter; a 'one-off' is a story that is published in a single upload. A 'drabble' is traditionally only 100 words in length, but within the fan fiction community a drabble often refers to any short piece up to 1000 words.
[11] All statistics accurate as of 1 September 2013. Note that the electronic counters used by fanfiction.net round numbers above one thousand to the nearest hundred.

to undertake because it attests to *Sherlock*'s function as a catalyst for transformational fan engagement.

The largest and most popular archive of fan fiction on the internet is fanfiction.net, which was founded in October of 1998. The first Sherlock Holmes fic to appear on the site was published almost exactly two years later, on 22 October, 2000. The website categorizes works first by the medium of the source text,[12] then within that category offers a list of the sources that users have cited as the inspiration for their fics. The website lists six sources in four categories that relate to Sherlock Holmes. Within the main category of 'books', there is a section titled 'Sherlock Holmes' which is the oldest repository of Holmes fan fiction on the site. It lists 3,200 searchable published works; these account for 7.7% of Sherlock Holmes-related works in all the categories. There is also a small section for fan fiction based on Laurie R. King's popular Sherlockian novels,[13] comprising just over 0.2% of total Holmes-related fan fiction on the site. There is one cartoon series, the 26 episode *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century*, which aired between 1999 and 2001. With just over 100 fanfics, the programme has inspired almost 0.3% of the total number of Holmes fics on the site. There are only two Holmes-related sources under the 'movies' category. This is perhaps surprising considering that hundreds of Sherlock Holmes films have been made. There are 505 works (1.2% of the total) inspired by the Disney film *The Great Mouse Detective* (1986), which is a loose appropriation of Sherlock Holmes, and 1,900 (4.57%) inspired by the 2009 Hollywood blockbuster *Sherlock Holmes*. The final two sources are in the category of 'TV': CBS's *Elementary*, which, a full year after its

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[12] The nine categories are anime, books, cartoons, comics, games, miscellaneous, movies, plays, and TV.
[13] Laurie R. King is the author of twelve novels starring Sherlock Holmes and her own original character, Mary Russell; the first in the series, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*, was published in 1994.

premier has inspired 324 fics (0.78%), and BBC's *Sherlock*. Despite being a year younger than *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and comprising a mere six episodes as of its second series compared with the 24 episodes that comprise *Elementary*'s first, *Sherlock* has inspired 35,400 pieces—over 85% of all fan fiction related to Sherlock Holmes on the website. While its outnumbering fics based on the literary Holmes by ten to one may be skewed by the 'newness' of *Sherlock*, the same criterion cannot explain why *Sherlock* has generated almost twenty times the number of fics inspired by *Sherlock Holmes* and over a hundred times the number inspired by *Elementary*, both of which were also born into the transmedial landscape of the burgeoning transformational Sherlock Holmes fan culture. Additionally, when I generated these statistics the first time for *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom* in February of 2011, the number of fanfics citing *Sherlock* as their inspiration was 1,966 and they accounted for just over a third of all Holmes fics on the website. While other Holmes-inspired stories have been posted at a steady rate, the number of *Sherlock* fics has exploded.

In light of these statistics, it is undeniable that *Sherlock* has struck a chord with fans and is playing a major role in determining the current direction of Sherlock Holmes fan discourse. The authors of the fan fiction themselves seem best suited to define the qualities that make *Sherlock* the text that has inspired this influx of fans eager to engage in a different mode of discourse; several regular members of the now defunct online Sherlock Holmes forum Holmesian.net were willing to discuss their motivations for writing in interviews conducted through the forum in 2011. The forum was a community of fans drawn from across the globe and consisted of both affirmational canon-centric fans and transformational adaptation-centric fans.

Part of *Sherlock*'s unique appeal is that it provides an outlet for Holmes fans who wish to write yet do not feel themselves capable or willing to write for any other incarnation of the character. According to fanfic author Zetared,[14] it is 'monumentally difficult to capture the right "voice" for Canon!Holmes.'[15] She is clearly directly or indirectly influenced by 'The Game', as she claims that she 'cannot write in the proper "Watson" voice, nor [does she] feel like the Canon is properly captured in the third person' (Polasek, 'BBC!Sherlock'). This suggests that the gatekeeping conducted by the affirmational Sherlockian community is effective in setting the grounds for what characteristics and situations are appropriate for the Sherlock Holmes character. As *Sherlock* is less effectively policed by 'The Game', Holmes fan writers are using the programme to re-imagine the Holmes character outside this affirmational model.

It is not only of interest to consider how fans may be attracted to writing *Sherlock* fics over canon fics, it is important to explore why *Sherlock*, among the multitude of adaptations that have been made, is the adaptation of choice for a majority of fan writers. Some writers of *Sherlock* fan fiction are also writers of fan fiction for the canon, and yet they write for only those two incarnations. Lady Halle, a fan fiction writer who has published seven Holmes fics online ranging in length from a few pages to a 70 page story, is this type of fan. She says that while readers are likely to see similarities between her canon Holmes and Jeremy Brett's television incarnation, she does not have Brett or anyone else in mind when she is writing fan fiction featuring a Victorian Holmes. When asked to consider why she has not written for any of the other screen versions of the character, she states that she does not 'see any other version

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[14] Author handles specific to www.Holmesian.net.

[15] An exclamation point is the preferred notation for distinguishing one version of the character from another in fan writing: i.e. Canon!Holmes is the character from Conan Doyle's stories and BBC!Holmes is the character from *Sherlock*.

besides the contemporary *Sherlock* as being different enough from the original to warrant exploring. *Maybe* the premise of Sherlock fighting the Nazis, but [she] personally [doesn't] know a lot about that whole era' (Polasek 'BBC!Sherlock'). This illuminates the two main textual elements of *Sherlock* that make it a compelling source for transformational fans. First, the programme is different enough from its own source that writers can use it to explore themes that they would be less able to explore through the canon. Second, in order to write about characters in a contemporary setting, fans need only have knowledge and experience of the world around them, rather than specific historical knowledge, to engage with the context of the programme.

Zetared asserts that *Sherlock* is appealing to write about because 'there are issues one can write about that would have been examined and presented quite differently in the Victorian era' (Polasek, 'BBC!Sherlock'). The abundance of new themes that are available to writers of *Sherlock* fan fiction is one of the programme's main draws. Writers are often wary of foregrounding issues that would seem out of place in a narrative about Victorian England. The most popular 'taboo subject' that is explored in all fan fiction is through the pervasive 'slash', a category of fic defined by same-sex romantic pairings. Slash is considerably less represented in fan fiction about the Victorian Sherlock Holmes than it is in fan fiction about *Sherlock*. '[T]he possible homosexual relationship between characters like Sherlock and John is simply more easy to write about in the modern era than it would be in the Victorian age', says Zetared, 'After all, a story about a homosexual relationship in the Canon-time would likely have to focus on issues like forbidden love, the hiding of affection, and the struggle of outwardly straight characters...coming to terms with the "sin" of their attraction to a member of their own sex' (Polasek, 'BBC!Sherlock').

Though the homoerotic subtext of the series is one of the most explored themes in *Sherlock* fan fiction, it is only one of many that allow writers to branch out from the canon and more traditional elements of Sherlock Holmes narratives. Lady Halle adds that she 'could see writers taking on the implications of various scientific or technological advancements—prejudice—terrorism—the rise of scepticism and atheism—things like that. Those types of themes would be more difficult to pull off in an1890s version of Holmes' (Polasek, 'BBC!Sherlock'). The fog-shrouded, gaslit world of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is often as mysterious as the detective's cases. People spoke differently, dressed differently and lived differently; society itself was structured differently. To engage with Conan Doyle is, for a modern reader, to engage with an alien way of life. 'The Grand Game' works to preserve the minutiae of this life and even non-traditional fan fiction writers seem reluctant to tamper with it. A cross reference of the publication dates and the synopses of Sherlock Holmes stories on fanfiction.net shows that fan writers were finding ways to circumvent the challenge of writing stories set in an unfamiliar context by updating the characters long before Stephen Moffat and Mark Gatiss announced their intentions to do so in *Sherlock*. The programme itself provides a framework for writers to do this without having either to invent a plot device to modernise the characters or to weave their own intricate modern context and modern mindsets for them. *Sherlock* gives writers a means to call on their own personal experiences as well as their own historico-cultural contexts, from the technology they use every day to pop culture references that permeate their lives, to create the foundations for their stories and their interpretations of the Holmes character.

Exploring content such as explicit erotic material through the contemporary lens of BBC's *Sherlock* rather than a canonically-inspired text seems to render such content

less threatening to the affirmational Sherlockian paradigm. However, for the writers and readers of these transformational works, the nature of the Sherlock Holmes character, whether Victorian or contemporary, is fundamentally altered. Their control over the character does not necessarily extend to the production of commercial works, but the evolution of the character is as much about perception as it is about production. The perception of transformational fans is that Sherlock Holmes is essentially an infinite repository for virtually unlimited depths and levels of play.

A shift in writing patterns is a hallmark of transformational fan engagement, but such engagement extends far beyond the production of written texts. Transformational fandom thrives in a transmedial environment, and transformational Sherlockians have utilised innumerable platforms for their fan activities, including posting gifs and fan art on Tumblr, discussing their interests in sub-communities on livejournal, creating 'fanvids' for YouTube, and cosplaying at conventions, as well as much more abstract platforms. To judge how the pressure of transmedial, transformational Sherlockians influences the evolution of the Holmes character, I will briefly discuss two of these modes of engagement and how they operate on Sherlock Holmes.

The first mode of engagement is an online fan project hosted on the blogging website Tumblr titled 'Let's Draw Sherlock'. The project was established in March of 2013 and has elicited thousands of submissions. It began as an effort to 'get many different images with the same layout to show the diversity of Tumblr's Sherlock fanartists', who were encourage to 'be as diverse with style, color, and medium as [they] want. [And to] change the clothes, the meaning of the scene, the expressions, anything... [and] to push it as far from the original as [they] want' (letsdrawsherlock). The project was continued as a series of artist-fan 'challenges', which each consists of a

set of rules for creating a work of *Sherlock* fan art that places the characters from the programme in some other context. For example, one of the challenges was 'Let's Draw Sherlock: Reinterpreting Famous Works', for which fans created intertexts merging *Sherlock* with famous works of art. Among the hundreds of works reinterpreted, Sherlock Holmes was placed in the context and/or style of Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus' [fig. 30], Munch's 'The Scream' [fig. 31], and Michelangelo's 'Pieta' [fig. 32]. Artists covered Tutankamen's sarcophagus, daVinci and Degas, Van Gogh and Chagall, Sargent and Escher. Sherlock and Watson appeared as angels, devils, knights, lovers, women, and animals. The content ranged from high-church iconography to explicit pornography, and in every case the artist revealed or explored some aspect of the characters as they see them. Unlike the affirmational Sherlockians who work to define and police the character, these transformational fans expand the character's potential meanings by visually expanding its history and context and by appropriating other signifiers, such as Christ and Rosie the Riveter.

Fig. 30. Katzensprotte, *Sample Art*, 2013, *Butts & Cats [In an Art Related Context]*, Tumblr, 27 Apr. 2013, Web, 29 Aug. 2013.
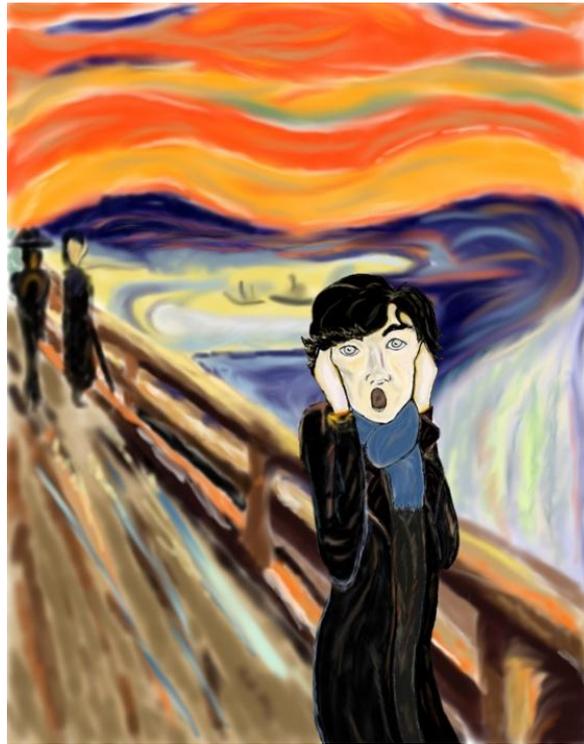
Fig. 31. mrsatchou, *Untitled*, 2013, *Home is Behind, The World Ahead*, Tumblr, 5 Mar.

2013, Web, 29 Aug. 2013.

Fig. 32. Chaak-kun, *Untitled*, 2013, *Entre Nubes: Chaak-Kun*, Tumblr, 27 Apr. 2013,

Web, 29 Aug. 2013.

The other, far more abstract, mode of fan engagement I wish to offer as an example of the transmedial play of transformational Sherlockians is the work of *Sherlock* fan Cara McGee, who has begun to make a living blending and selling *Sherlock*-themed loose leaf teas through an online vendor. Adagio Teas serves the niche market of fan communities by allowing users to create ranges of 'fandom blends', which include loose leaf teas with flavour blends intended to reflect the nature of specific characters or moments, and sell them to others. As of 1 Sept. 2013, over 40,000 fandom blends were available. Among the hundreds of fandoms represented are cult classics such as *Star Trek* and *Doctor Who*, a host of Japanese anime, modern television programmes such as *Downton Abbey* and *Game of Thrones*, and literary figures such as Shakespeare and Jane Austen. Cara McGee's 33 distinct *Sherlock* blends are listed as among the most popular and best-selling on the website.

While text-based and visual fan works have been influencing the Holmes character for nearly a century, the concept of influencing the character by engaging other senses—in this case smell and taste—is much less common. McGee has created blends for many of the characters that appear in *Sherlock*, but the blend representing Sherlock Holmes himself was first. While the exact blend is proprietary, McGee claims that her choices in ingredients and ratios were based on her attempts to express Holmes' nature. The Sherlock blend 'is an acquired taste—much like Sherlock himself', she states. It has a 'characteristic smoky quality' that is meant to put drinkers in mind of 'pipe smoke and tobacco'. Note that though McGee's blend is intended to represent the Holmes of BBC's *Sherlock*, that version of the character is not a pipe-smoker. That 'Sherlocky' quality, as McGee puts it, is drawn from the indices of the Sherlock Holmes

character that exists in the public consciousness. The blend also includes oriental spice, which McGee hopes adds 'a mysterious otherworldly quality—something you [can't] quite pin down' (McGee). The blend's reviews are as interesting as McGee's creative intentions. Venessa C. responded to the tea with a very clear mental image: 'I can close my eyes and almost believe I'm in a cabin in the Sussex Downs at winter-time with Sherlock playing melancholy music in the background' (qtd. in 'Sherlock Blend'). According to Kayla B., 'It's difficult to describe. A hint of...danger? I sound silly, but it really is an intriguing blend. Like you have to drink more to figure it out. All in all, a perfect blend for Sherlock' (qtd. in 'Sherlock Blend'). Note that like McGee, the reviewers are applying their sense experience directly to their interpretation of the Sherlock Holmes character.

The interconnectedness and transmedial possibilities of the digital age have opened previously unimagined and unimaginable avenues for fans to contribute to the Sherlock Holmes character both through their own creative impetus and through their involvement with the creative products of others, so that fan writers produce tens of thousands of new texts, fan artists are challenged to share their visions with one another, and even smell and taste are utilised as tools for expanding and explaining character. The tension that exists between affirmational fans, who primarily exert pressure on the character in a preservationist mode and transformational fans, who's primary mode is exploitative or expansionist, will be explored further in the next section. Regardless of the intentions or the methods, the power held by Sherlockians of all stripes will continue to be an integral aspect of the ongoing process of Holmes' evolution and seems to mark them as the most influential extended phenotype of the Sherlock Holmes character.

Copyright and Authority: Ownership as Extended Phenotype

The fannish authority exerted on the Sherlock Holmes character is largely proactive. Certainly transformational fan engagement is a creative act, expanding readings of the Holmes through discourse and the generation of fan works. Although affirmational fan engagement is essentially conservative, 'The Game' is also a creative endeavour, enlarging the character and its milieu beyond the literary canon, albeit in a regulated, more systematic fashion. However, extended phenotypes, biologically speaking, are simply attributes of an organism outside its physical body. The behaviours encompassed by this definition are not only proactive and creative—they include any attribute that contributes to the fecundity, longevity, and diversity of the character. I contend that 'universal' ownership of Sherlock Holmes joins fan discourse as the most influential extended phenotype of the Holmes character. Unlike the paratexts associated with individual adaptations that Bortolotti and Huntcheon list, such as promotional materials, soundtracks, and interviews, ownership, or rather, the lack of concentrated ownership of the character functions, like fan discourse, trans-adaptationally.

This section focuses on two related regulatory processes, and their ultimate failure to restrict the evolution of the Holmes character, with the aim of illustrating that situating Holmes as a property available to universal creative enterprise contributes to character's ability to persist and succeed. The first is a legal process that is founded in intellectual property rights. Of the sixty stories penned by Arthur Conan Doyle, the last ten remain under copyright in the U.S., though not in Britain. As a result, the entity called the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd., which itself has a complicated legal history, claims the sole right to license the characters and is vigilant about exacting fees from anyone

utilising the Holmes character for profit, from vanity-published fan writers to corporate-backed big-budget filmmakers. On 14 Feb. 2013, fan-scholar and lawyer Leslie S. Klinger filed suit to have not the remaining protected stories, but the character of Sherlock Holmes itself declared out of copyright, stating in the tagline to his website, *Free Sherlock*, which lays out his case to the public, that 'Holmes belongs to the world'. The implications of 'world ownership' are far reaching, not least because they challenge the traditional hierarchy that privileges corporate products over fannish products.

The second process of regulation that this section analyses is intra-fandom regulation. As Henry Jenkins notes when discussing *Star Trek* fans, fandoms are traditionally hierarchical in nature, with new, less knowledgeable, and/or casual fans at the bottom, and more veteran fans, often with encyclopaedic knowledge and potentially large financial investments in collectables at a higher level. Maintaining this hierarchy demands the regulation of ideas, as those at the top police and judge the contributions of those they perceive to be below them in the hierarchy. This should not be understood as a tension between affirmational and transformational fans, whose discourse and communities frequently overlap; however, the rapid rise in numbers of transformational fans of *Sherlock*, and their vocal denouncement of the normative fan hierarchy, is a catalyst for fragmentation in the Sherlockian fandom that has led to a challenge of the regulation of ideas and claims of authority that exist within it by both affirmational and transformational fans alike.

This type of examination of the function and failure of authority and claims to authority on the creative process of adaptation and character development is unusual. Henry Jenkins explores the workings of participatory culture in both his 1992 monograph *Textual Poachers* and his more recent 2006 work *Convergence Culture*, but

in both his focus is on franchises that already have a central controlling authority. Fans, in Jenkins' model, are not in a position to challenge that authority. This section addresses a franchise without that authority and what types of arguments have been made to try to co-opt it.

Roberta Pearson has written not just about fan culture and community protocols, but specifically about the Sherlock Holmes fan community. She observes that like James Bond and Batman, Sherlock Holmes has a mutability that renders him 'relatively easily reconfigured to suit different ideological formations' (145). Pearson rightly notes that this mutability is one reason for Holmes' popularity among online fan communities. However, she sets Holmes apart from other characters as well:

> Sherlockian fandom has never been hijacked by a media megaglomerate. Sherlockians participate in the mass commodification of their popular hero but on a sporadic basis as various corporations, large and small, see fit to market various Sherlockian commodities—books, films, games and so forth—Sherlockians, however, have never been subjected to the same media blitz as *Star Trek* or *Batman* fans. (149)

Pearson adds, as a footnote to this statement, 'The fact that no one company hold copyright to the Sherlock Holmes novels/stories is certainly a factor' (160). This section expands and explores this claim as well as how copyright as well as both corporate and fan ownership affect the evolution of the Holmes character.

Several scholars both in the fields of media studies and law have analysed specific copyright disputes. What makes this work unique is that although it utilises particular disputes, the nature and effects of those disputes—how they influence individual films or television programmes—is less important than how those disputes

themselves function within the larger process of trans-adaptational character development. This project remains focused on the intertextual conversation between texts and across time.

There are several processes of authorization and claims to authority that this section does not address. The first is institutional censorship. This type of regulation can affect a character's evolution by asserting authority over the general appropriateness of material. The 1999 collection of essays *Controlling Hollywood: Censorship and Regulation in the Studio Era* covers many assertions of such authority, which were prevalent in the Hollywood Golden Age when production companies also controlled the means of distribution. Sherlock Holmes has not been immune to institutional censorship—the closing lines of 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, 'Watson, the needle!' which reference Holmes' drug habit, were famously expunged from the film when it was shown in American cinemas—but the focus of this section is specifically on authority claimed by and claimed over consumers.

The other assertion of authority that is germane to adaptation studies is the labelling of one adaptation as authoritative—that its interpretation is more valid than others'. I do believe this discussion matters, and am not neglecting it because it lacks relevance. Instead, I have incorporated aspects of this argument throughout the previous two chapters, as I note more than once that qualities of adaptations and performances that are interpreted as 'definitive' are absorbed into the Holmes character and direct its further evolution. In his '*Sherlock*'s Epistemological Economy and the Value of 'Fan' Knowledge: How Producer-Fans Play the (Great) Game of Fandom', Matt Hills offers a valuable and detailed account of how this process of privileging occurs in relation to BBC's *Sherlock*. In 'Holmes is Where the Heart Is: The Achievement of Granada

Television's Sherlock Holmes Films', Elizabeth Trembley dissects qualities of the Jeremy Brett television programme that she argues render it a definitive version. Scott Allen Nollen, in his chapter 'Holmes Superbus, Watson Absurdus' from *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at the Cinema*, makes a similar case for1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, starring Basil Rathbone. It is not in the interests of this project to rehash these arguments, as they derive from qualitative judgments about fidelity that are less useful to the analysis of evolution that grounds this work. It is worth noting, however, that by linking notions of the definitive with specific adaptations, such analyses necessarily support my argument from chapter one illustrating the importance of actors in the process of character evolution.

Officially, the authority to alter and engage with a creative property belongs to the person or entity that holds the copyright over that property. Often, this is at least an easy position to identify—Warner Brothers owns the film rights to the Harry Potter franchise, and George Lucas and Lucasfilms own the Star Wars universe, for example. Legally, it is a relatively easy position to defend, if increasingly difficult to police in an environment of transmedial information sharing. For Sherlock Holmes, the position is not only challenging to police, it is also challenging to defend, and, in fact, even challenging to identify. As mentioned earlier, in the UK, copyright has expired on all sixty of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. In America, the final ten, collected in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes,* will enter the public domain at intervals, with the last remaining protected until 2023. The owner of these rights is an entity called the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd., which is a managed trust for several tertiary descendants of Arthur Conan Doyle.

In a long-standing battle for authority, the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd. has a competing claimant over the Sherlock Holmes copyright. When Conan Doyle died in 1930, the rights to the stories and characters passed to his oldest son, Denis, who was responsible for licensing the Basil Rathbone adaptations in the 1940s, and also the eponymously titled American television programme *Sherlock Holmes*, starring Ronald Howard, which ran as 39 episodes from 1953 through 1954. When Denis Conan Doyle died in 1955, the rights passed first to his brother Adrian, and after Adrian's death in 1970, to his sister Jean Conan Doyle. As a result of poor financial handling and family in-fighting, the American copyright was acquired in 1976 by Sheldon Reynolds, who had produced the Ronald Howard television series decades earlier. In 1981, Jean Conan Doyle reasserted her rights under the American Copyright Act of 1976 and reacquired ownership. However, Reynold's ex-wife Andrea Plunket, whose family money had been used to purchase the rights in 1976, continues to assert that as a result of the terms of her divorce and her ex-husband's subsequent death, she owns the copyright and therefore authority over the Sherlock Holmes character in the U.S.

Although Plunket's claims have been repeatedly defeated in court in deference to the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd., her assertion of authority nonetheless informs readings of the character. Plunket's response to the 2009 adaptation *Sherlock Holmes* is a prime example of how claims to authority function as attempts to restrict the creative contributions of others. In an interview on the American talk show *The Late Show with David Letterman* to promote the film, *Sherlock Holmes* star Robert Downey Jr. invited the audience to watch a clip and judge for themselves whether Holmes is 'a butch homosexual' ('Robert Downey Jr.'). Plunket responded two weeks later by issuing a

statement that was published by World Entertainment News Network [WENN] and picked up by several online outlets:

> I hope this is just an example of Mr. Downey's black sense of humour. It would be drastic, but I would withdraw permission for more films to be made if they feel that is a theme they wish to bring out in the future. I am not hostile to homosexuals, but I am to anyone who is not true to the spirit of the books. (WENN)

Plunket's disdain for the film's homoerotic subtext is not unique to her, but her method of expressing her vision of the Holmes character is: hers was an attempt not to expand and create, but to limit and regulate. While her threat was legally unenforceable, it nonetheless did affect the conversation around the film. In the days that followed her statement, news outlets, entertainment blogs, and fan sites commented on it in stories with headlines such as 'Stay in the Closet, Sherlock Holmes!', 'No Holmes 2 for Ritchie?', 'Enforcing Copyright to Ensure Heterosexuality', 'Conan Doyle's Estate Will Not Allow a Gay Sherlock Holmes', and 'Will Gay Subtext Sink Holmes Sequel?' (Rappe; Winning; 'Enforcing'; Rich; Drees). Plunket's attempt to regulate the nature of Sherlock Holmes fanned the flames of debate and consequently informed how *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), its sequel, and, indeed, the whole Holmes character might be read.

More recently, Plunket has attempted to exert authority over BBC's *Sherlock*. In an article published in *The Daily Mail*, which is no less useful to this study for its source's general unreliability, Plunket is quoted as saying that she 'love[s] Guy Ritchie, but [is] not enamoured of the BBC' and threatens to file suit to 'prevent the BBC making any more Sherlocks'. She concludes simply by stating, 'That is my wish'. Her obvious about-face regarding the Warner Brothers films, and the fruitlessness of her

crusade notwithstanding, Plunket seems determined to maintain some authoritative hold over the Holmes character.

Like Plunket, the Conan Doyle Estate, Ltd. also uses arguments based on legal authority to attempt to limit the evolution of the Holmes character. While Plunket's legal claims to authority are poor and her attempts to police changes to the Holmes character generally relegated to vague threats and empty grants of solicited permissions, the estate, represented in the U.S. by American Sherlockian Jon Lellenberg, is far more aggressive. Since the death of Jean Conan Doyle in 1997, Lellenberg has adopted a policy of contacting all publishers and adaptors in negotiations to produce a work involving the Holmes character to demand licensing fees. This exercise of authority, unlike Plunket's threats regarding *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *Sherlock* (2010), is not motivated by creative differences, but rather financial enterprise. Regardless, the estate's authorization alters the manner in which pastiches and screen adaptations are perceived by functioning as, essentially, an 'official brand'.

Sherlock Holmes writers have mixed feelings about this type of authoritative branding. According to Leslie Klinger, who has published several Sherlock Holmes books including W. W. Norton's three volume *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, and who serves as a technical advisor on the Warner Brothers film series, 'There are benefits...to the licensing process. The estate has been a focal point for attention...[and] acted to some extent...as a seal of good housekeeping—a quality control' (qtd. in Manente, 'Free Sherlock'). This method of utilising a legal authority to privilege certain versions of the character over others can also be a frustration, according to fan-writer Lyndsay Faye:

I definitely paid the license...[yet] when Anthony Horowitz's book [*The House of Silk*] came out... he was going around on a pretty extensive tour saying that it was the only book that had ever been licensed by the Conan Doyle Estate, which then turned into a sort of branding thing. ...Even though there isn't a fancy schmancy seal [fig. 33] on the cover of [my Sherlock Holmes pastiche, *Dust and Shadow*], mine is licensed by the estate as well. (qtd. in Manente, 'Free Sherlock')

By affixing an 'official seal' to the cover of his book, Horowitz appropriates the authority claimed by the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd. to define his version of the Sherlock Holmes character as a purer, more valid iteration.
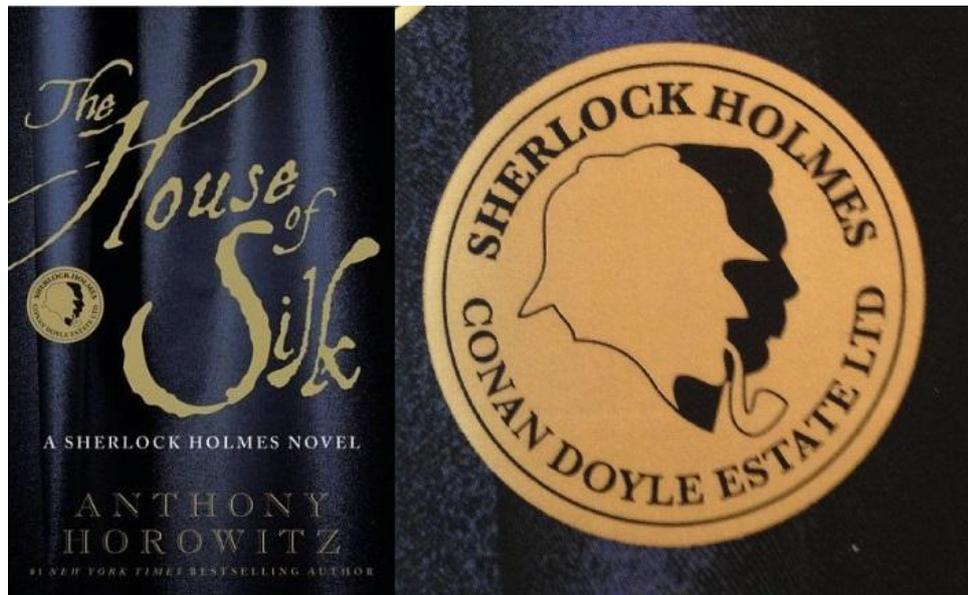
Fig. 33. Anthony Horowitz, *The House of Silk* (New York: Little, Brown, 2011) Print.

Jon Lellenberg is equally as zealous in pursuing corporate adaptors as he is in pursuing pastiche writers: Warner Brothers, CBS, and PBS Masterpiece (the broadcaster responsible for airing BBC's *Sherlock* in America), have all paid significant fees to the estate following demands from Lellenberg. This equal pursuit is significant,

as it challenges the traditional hierarchy that places corporate products above fan-generated products. In his chapter on fan knowledge and producer-fans in *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom*, Matt Hills notes that this hierarchy is naturally weaker in relation to Sherlock Holmes in any case, because 'there is no guiding [corporate] hand compelling any unity across media and across narrative iterations' (38). With its claim of legal authority through assertion of copyright, The Conan Doyle Estate Ltd. situates itself as that guiding hand.

In illustrating the mechanisms inherent in participatory culture, Henry Jenkins focuses on properties for which that guiding hand is evident: he spends much of *Textual Poachers* analysing *Star Trek*, and, in *Convergence Culture*, also includes properties such as Star Wars, the Matrix, and Harry Potter. Sherlock Holmes is a character franchise subject to the various pressures discussed in chapters one and two of this work precisely because it lacks that defined corporate ownership. The character franchise is more akin to what Jenkins identifies as folk culture, in which 'there is no clear distinction between producers and consumers' (*Convergence Culture* 146). The authority claimed and enacted by the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd. has the potential to restructure Sherlock Holmes into a more unified, less folk culture-esque franchise. To prevent this from taking place, fan-author and lawyer Leslie Klinger has brought a lawsuit against the estate to have the Sherlock Holmes character legally declared in the public domain, declaring 'the time has come to free Sherlock Holmes' (qtd. in Manente, 'Free Sherlock').

While the outcome of his case has particular creative and ethical implications, Leslie Klinger's lawsuit is based on a specific concrete grievance. He and co-editor Laurie King paid the estate's requested fee for their collection of short stories, *A Study*

in Sherlock, when the book was published by Random House in 2011, despite their contention that the fee was erroneous; according to Klinger, he counselled Random House to refuse, but 'it was cheaper to pay than to fight' (qtd. in Manente, 'Free Sherlock'). In 2013, they received a similar demand for licensing fees for the collection's sequel and refused. The estate then informed them that it would prevent the work from being sold in major retailers Barnes & Noble and Amazon. In response to this threat, Klinger and King decided to take the estate to court. 'Laurie and I talked about [the demand]', Klinger notes, 'and we were just very offended [at the estate's attempt to control the character]' (qtd. in Manente, 'Free Sherlock'). Using the law to direct and embody his offense, In mid-February of 2013, Klinger filed a civil suit with United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, with the following aim:

> [H]ave the Court determine that the characters of Sherlock Holmes and
> Dr. John H. Watson are no longer protected by federal copyright laws
> and that writers, filmmakers, and others are free to create new stories
> about Holmes, Watson, and others of their circle without paying license
> fees to the current owners of the remaining copyrights. (Klinger)

The purpose of Klinger's suit is not simply to avoid paying the estate's fee for his own collection: it is a wholesale legal challenge to the estate's authority over the Holmes character.

As the case has broader implications beyond his own publications, Klinger has made his case quite public, inviting fans and the general public to weigh in. He maintains a website called *Free Sherlock*, on which he posts updates from the case as it progresses, the complete legal complaint he filed, as well as the three exhibits he submitted in support of his claim. Two are merely lists of those stories in copyright and

those in the public domain. The first, and most interesting in terms of defining the Holmes character is 'Exhibit A: Sherlock Holmes Story Elements'.[16] In the document, Klinger defines the Holmes character in terms of his most essential qualities in order to prove that the character was fully formed within the fifty public domain stories. In attempting to systematize the literary Holmes' indices, Klinger presents a list that includes characteristics such as 'Bohemian nature', 'drug use', and 'aptitude for disguise'. The response of one of the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd.'s attorneys, Benjamin Allison, was to assert that 'Holmes is a unified literary character that wasn't completely developed until the author laid down his pen' (Schuessler). Klinger's list as well as Allison's response raise new questions about authority and the definition of the Holmes character, as different consumers value and privilege different aspects of the character, and as the character evolves and absorbs new meanings.

The Conan Doyle Estate's unofficial response was fleshed out in the estate's 'Opposition to the Request for Summary Judgment' to the court. In several affidavits from literary scholars and Sherlock Holmes experts, the Estate makes the case that Sherlock Holmes is, in his essentials, like a human being and that, as the official response argues, a 'Complex literary personality can no more be unravelled without disintegration than a human personality'. Regardless of whether the argument proves successful, the implications involved in reading Holmes as a real person with what amounts to a kind of 'indivisible soul' are interesting in their own right.

The lawsuit, of course, affects not only writers of Sherlock Holmes pastiches, but also adaptations. To avoid threats that could result in costly delays in production and distribution, adaptors have paid the estate to license Sherlock Holmes in the past.

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[16] The full court filing, including all three exhibits and the Estate's response, are included as Appendix D.

The archives of press coverage of the case on the *Free Sherlock* website attest to the lawsuit's reach: Many of the articles focus not exclusively on Klinger's collection, but on the implications of his lawsuit on adaptations. The website has two articles archived from *The Hollywood Reporter*, both of which feature large screenshots from *Elementary*. An article from *The Independent* begins with a prominent photograph of Benedict Cumberbatch; the Reuters article covering the suit includes a photo of Robert Downey Jr., and *Businessweek* even features an image of Basil Rathbone. In addressing how the suit would affect adaptations, *The Hollywood Reporter* notes that a win for Klinger 'wouldn't mean that CBS, the BBC and others have no protection over their own versions of Sherlock Holmes. But it might mean that the estate is subject to an order that would prevent them from interfering with any new derivative version' (Gardner). Klinger has stated that he hopes 'that at some point the big kids who have a lot of marbles in the game—the filmmakers—will see that it's in their interest to take a side in this case' (qtd. in Manente, 'Free Sherlock'). However, with a savvy PR campaign, Klinger has ensured that the case does not need the financial support of the studios.

The *Free Sherlock* website has been equipped with a donations page. The page invites readers to 'donate to the Free Sherlock! cause', and assures donors that 'funds will go exclusively to offset legal fees and expenses of the litigation'. Not only does this allow the plaintiffs to continue to press the suit as fees accrue, but it morphs the case from a minor legal complaint to a forum for the public to actively participate in the character's emancipation from authority. This proletarian battle to undermine the regulatory effects of character authorization is at the heart of understanding ownership as an extended phenotype: it re-legitimizes the elasticity and variability of the Sherlock

Holmes character franchise. It also asserts the relative equality of fannish readings, such as pastiches, to corporate readings, such as big-budget adaptations, as both would be placed in an equal legal position relative to the extra-textual Sherlock Holmes character. While adaptations would maintain authority over their specific iterations—see the short-lived speculation and press furore surrounding the potential for the BBC to file a legal challenge against *Elementary*'s creators for the programme's use of a twenty-first century Sherlock Holmes[17]—fans would not be subject to the same powerlessness that Henry Jenkins ascribes to fans of works with a central authority (*Textual Poachers* 118). Fans may not have the power to direct the development of *Sherlock*, but legally, the creators of *Sherlock* have no more authority over the Holmes character itself than fans or anyone else.

In covering Leslie Klinger's 'Free Sherlock' campaign, *New York Times* columnist Jennifer Schuessler draws a parallel between the estate's battle to exert authority over the Holmes character and the battle for authority that takes place within the fan community. She titles her piece 'The Adventure of the Social Media-Driven Copyright Debate, With Annotations on Sherlockian Sexism and the True Nature of Literary Devotion'. While the copyright debate and its argument over legal authority plays out in court, the annotations to which Schuessler alludes take place as a consequence of intra-fandom politics. In discussing *Star Trek* fans, Jenkins notes that 'meanings form the basis for the construction and maintenance of this fan community; the expectations and conventions of the fan community also shape the meanings derived from the series and the forms taken by the fan's own artistic creations' (88). In other words, the organization of fan communities contribute to the meanings that those

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[17] This challenge, which never manifested, was covered by *The Hollywood Reporter* on 25 Jan. 2012.

communities assign to texts, and, by extension, characters. Jenkins goes on to state that fans are 'responsive to the somewhat more subtle demands placed upon them as members of fandom—expectations about what narratives are "appropriate" for fannish interest, what interpretations are "legitimate", and so forth' (88). The structures and protocols of fan communities do not just affect the character; according to Jenkins, they authorize certain readings of the character.

These structures and protocols, which have been established in the Sherlockian community since the founding of the Baker Street Irregulars in 1934, and which were examined in the previous section of this chapter, have been challenged by adaptations and the fans drawn to Sherlock Holmes by those adaptations. In the 1980s, The evolution of the Sherlock Holmes character was not merely directed by Jeremy Brett's acting, it was also directed by the influx of Jeremy Brett fans, whose devotion to the actor informed their interactions with his and every other iteration of the character. At the time, these new Sherlockians disrupted the fan community; while most Sherlockians welcomed what they perceived as a positive disruption that brought a renewal of interest in Sherlock Holmes, a vocal minority considered the influx of what they considered second-rate Sherlockians a threat to their authority. According to Sherlockian blogger and Baker Street Irregular Brad Keefauver, these traditionalist Sherlockians had 'a reaction to the Jeremy Brett fans that were starting to have an impact on Sherlockiana. ...back then the old school sort of BSI hadn't really seen that sort of media fan coming into their hobby before. Film buffs were there, sure, but not any energetic fans of a particular Holmes'. Although Keefauver recalls frustration among many within the Sherlockian community at this attempt to regulate the fandom,

without digital media to disseminate them, these ideas created little disturbance at the time.

The same group of Sherlockians, who claim the authority to define what Jenkins terms 'legitimate interpretations' within the fandom, recently responded to the explosive growth of the Sherlockian community as a result of *Sherlock*'s popularity, just as they responded to similar growth due to the Jeremy Brett series thirty years ago. It is important to point out that these negative reactions were not a result of the adaptations themselves. In fact, both Brett's series and *Sherlock* are often cited by fans as versions most 'true to the spirit' of Conan Doyle's work; instead, the response was to the fans these versions brought into the Sherlockian community themselves and their interest in engaging with the programmes not just as iterations of Sherlock Holmes, but also as vehicles for actors whom they admire.

Philip Shreffler was the editor of the official publication of the Baker Street Irregulars, *The Baker Street Journal*, from 1985 through 1992, and in an article titled 'The Elite Devotee Redux', a direct continuation of his column 'The Elite Devotee', which was published in *The Baker Street Journal* in March of 1988, he works to reassert this authority and re-establish the structure and protocols of the traditional Sherlockian community. Shreffler's article,[18] which was typed and distributed to a small group of Sherlockians at a private party during the 2013 Baker Street Irregulars 'Birthday Weekend', an annual open gathering of Sherlock Holmes fans in New York City at the beginning of January, was not surprisingly leaked onto the internet. It caused a furore in which Sherlockians old and new scrambled to comment on Shreffler's claim to authority and his attempt to discount and disenfranchise the contributions of other

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[18] The original article, 'The Elite Devotee', as well as its follow-up, 'The Elite Devotee Redux', are included in their entirety as Appendix E.

fans. As a side note, one of the members of that private party was Jon Lellenberg, who seems to personify the ideological connection between the battle for legal authority and the assertion of fannish authority.

On a functional level, Philip Shreffler's article claims authority over the Holmes character and its development by labelling, defining, and ranking different modes of fan discourse and engagement. Jenkins notes that that this type of labelling and policing often seeks to regulate the exchange of ideas by deeming some narratives appropriate and others inappropriate for exploration (*Textual Poachers* 88). The language of Shreffler's article is directed to this exercise of authority, as he self-describes as an 'elite devotee' whose mode of discourse is intrinsically superior to that of 'fans', a moniker he rejects based on his perceptions of both the content and modes of fannish discourse:

> The 'fan', as opposed to the 'elite devotee', is commonly an individual of half-ideas, half-expressed—or possibly only enthusiasm with few or no ideas at all. Since much contemporary 'fandom' occurs on the Internet, I am reminded that Twitter allows only for communication limited to 140 characters, hardly a medium for a complex idea—even for a single idea. ...Sherlockians ought to be a temple to wit and wisdom and grace of expression, not a potting shed on which is scrawled derogatory graffiti. (Shreffler)

After making his argument about delineating fans from elite devotees, Shreffler goes on to define precisely how the elite devotee must engage with Sherlock Holmes to earn his label. Elite devotees, he argues, 'are able to adventure together, purely, into the Victorian and Edwardian byways and countryside in the company of the Master

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Detective, the canonical Holmes, unencumbered by machinations too vast for human comforts', by which he means transmedial discourses and adaptation-centric discussions. Shreffler claims authority based on his own mode of discourse, which privileges the literary Holmes, indeed, refuses to acknowledge any evolved or adapted version of the character at all. He then attempts to bend that authority to regulate and restrict other fans' influence.

'The Elite Devotee Redux' was acquired and made public by the Baker Street Babes, a group of young transformational female Sherlockians who were targeted in the article.[19] The founder of the group, Kristina Manente, whom Shreffler named and quoted in 'The Elite Devotee Redux', responded to its contents several times, stating in one post, 'we're just as intelligent and have just as many thoughts about Sherlock Holmes as they do. We are just as passionate' (Manente, 'Bullshit'). A wave of responses to the article appeared on the internet overnight, almost entirely in opposition to Shreffler. Even *The Baker Street Journal*, which had published the original 'The Elite Devotee' column in 1988, posted a response disavowing the article and its contents. Like Andrea Plunket, whose claims to authority over Sherlock Holmes are legally unenforceable, Shreffler's claims to authority were rejected by the larger fan community. Also like Plunket, his claim to authority is enough in itself to influence readings of the character.

The responses to Philip Shreffler's article shine a light on a secondary aspect of his claim to authority: his privileging of male discourses over female discourses. The Baker Street Irregulars did not invite women into its ranks until 1991—57 years after the organization was founded. Although many members would have voted to change

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[19] Although I did not participate in the Baker Street Babes when this chapter was initially researched and written, I have since become a member.

the policy earlier, the BSI itself is run through a central authority: its bylaws can only be changed by the group's leader. In coining and defining her terminology of affirmational and transformation fans, obsession_inc argues that 'the majority of fans that trend strongly toward affirmational fannish activities are male' and 'the majority of fans that trend strongly toward transformational fannish activities are female'. These claims are not substantiated by empirical data, merely by observation, but they are supported by scholarship on reader response.

Jenkins, extrapolating from work done by David Bleich, argues that 'Male reading acknowledge[s] and respect[s] the author's authority, while women [see] themselves as engaged in a "conversation" within which they [can] participate as active contributors' (*Textual Poachers* 108). Jenkins essentially defines affirmational and transformational discourses seventeen years before the terms were coined. This does not mean that these types of fan discourse should be read entirely as gendered categories; however, of the 315 living members of the Baker Street Irregulars, only 46—fewer than 15%—are women. In contrast, the *Sherlock* fandom is predominantly female. As a result, 'The Elite Devotee Redux', and its claim to authority based on modes and content of discourse, was also read as a claim to authority based on gender. As one blogger bluntly commented:

> If I took my magnifying glass to Phillip Shreffler's article, I would not
> be long in finding the actual thesis, 'Weren't the days just better when
> Sherlockians didn't have vaginas'? ...The Vincent Starrett poem[20] is

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[20] Starrett's poem, '221B', is a favourite among Sherlockians. Philip Shreffler refers to it several times in his article. The full text is as follows: 'Here dwell together still two men of note/ Who never lived and so can never die:/ How very near they seem, yet how remote/ That age before the world went all awry./ But still the game's afoot for those with ears/ Attuned to catch the distant view-halloo:/ England is England yet, for all our fears–/ Only those things the heart believes are true./ A yellow fog swirls past the window-pane/ As night descends upon this fabled street:/ A lonely hansom splashes through the rain,/ The ghostly

lovely but you miss the point if you think it's about nostalgia. It's an appreciation of the imaginary world that Sherlock Holmes inhabits as a character. I, for one, am glad that it's not 1895 because I actually like to, you know, vote and have some legal rights. ('The BBC Has Ruined My Life')

The related claim inherent in 'The Elite Devotee Redux', therefore, is not unreasonably understood by the broader Sherlockian community to be a claim that as male discourse is closer to the 'elite devotee' ideal, men should have ultimate authority over the Sherlock Holmes character.

Although the article and its fallout, which the Baker Street Babes dubbed 'Shreffgate', led mostly to discussions within fandom, the situation was aired publicly in Jennifer Schuessler's *New York Times* article on the 'Free Sherlock' copyright lawsuit. According to Leslie Klinger, he encouraged Schuessler to research and include the fandom in-fighting in her piece because it is 'a seemingly unrelated topic that really is related [to the copyright dispute]'. Klinger argues that both issues are about claims to authority over Sherlock Holmes: 'It's the idea of whether Holmes really belongs to the world or whether it—the character—is the property of an elite fandom' (qtd. in Manente, 'Free Sherlock').

The specific effects on the Sherlock Holmes character of these various claims to authority is virtually impossible to disentangle. Andrea Plunket's threat to restrict the Warner Brothers films based on their gay subtext almost certainly contributed to additional speculation about the intention of Guy Ritchie and of Robert Downey Jr. The

gas lamps fail at twenty feet./ Here, though the world explode, these two survive,/ And it is always eighteen ninety-five.'

Conan Doyle Estate Ltd.'s vigilant policing of upcoming projects to exact licensing fees may have prevented some minor projects, but its most significant contribution is born of Klinger's challenge to the estate's legal authority to act as a central guiding influence over the character. When that authority was judged to be invalid in a final ruling on the case in November, when the Estate's last appeal was denied, the debate over fidelity to the canonical Sherlock Holmes and the corporate-fandom hierarchy fell to pieces as each fan work and adaptation was deemed legally equal with respect to the literary Holmes character.

The particular creative results of battles to define and assert authority within the fan community are equally impossible to unravel. It is likely that the online publication of Philip Shreffler's article undermined his intention to establish his mode of discourse as authoritative: it created a backlash that challenged his authority even with some, like those in charge of *The Baker Street Journal*, on whose support he may have counted. The article, which seeks to destabilize and discredit the evolved Sherlock Holmes that has been the result of hundreds of adaptations and potentially millions of fan works, galvanized the fan community's support for the egalitarian process of a multiplicity of contributors to the evolutionary process. It also helped undermined the notion of male authority over the character's development and interpretation.

Whether or not such claims to authority are legally, ethically, or creatively defensible is essentially irrelevant. The assertion of the authoritative right, and the ultimate denial of such authority to restrict readings of the character, influences the process of evolution. The trend seems to indicate that those who seek authority to shape and regulate Sherlock Holmes are unsuccessful in the long run, and if new and varied

interpretations of the character are not beholden to the authority of copyright claimants or of elite devotees, the evolution of Sherlock Holmes is potentially limitless.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to unpick several of the protocols and processes that have arisen to interact with the Sherlock Holmes character, and by which fans influence its evolution. A study of the evolution of Sherlock Holmes would be incomplete without a full consideration of how the character changes through the various means of its reception and consumer remediation.

In order to understand how the Holmes character is received and remediated by fans, this chapter first analysed the functions and discourses of various Sherlockian fans, from those affirmational fans who seek to preserve character, through transformational fans who explore it by altering it. In considering both how the discourses of the former group realign readings of adaptations as necessarily secondary and derivative versions of varying success, and how the latter has exempted itself from those discourses in order to create a variety of new fan works through transmedial engagement with different adapted versions of the character, this section offered several explanations for how Sherlock Holmes is altered through pressure exerted by fan discourse.

The chapter addressed a second extended phenotype of the Holmes character by introducing the concepts of authority, regulation, and ownership as attributes that affect its evolution. In addressing this restrictive, regulatory process both in the legal realm of copyright disputes and the fannish realm of fandom hierarchies, this section sought to include the means by which readings are rejected in the discussion that had thus far

been focused on how meaning is created. By engaging with the idea that Sherlock Holmes belongs to the world and thus must be immune to such claims to authority, this section helps justify the character franchise theory as a whole.

Each of the sections in this chapter relate to how the reception and perception of the Sherlock Holmes character affect the nature of the character. Taken together, they function within the larger argument for reading Sherlock Holmes as an extra-textual character: while particular consumers privilege particular readings and, indeed, methods of reading Holmes, they all implicitly acknowledge that the character does exist as a kind of folk hero, subject to a multitude of often contradictory interpretations. Whether this inspires them to explore those interpretations, regulate them, or restrict them, is part and parcel to an understanding that such a multitude of meanings is possible at all.

CONCLUSION

Sherlock Holmes Across Time and Text

'Each fact is suggestive in itself. Together they have a cumulative force.'

–Sherlock Holmes, 'The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans'

In a 1901 article for *The Independent* written by Harry Thurston Peck, senior editor of the American version of the literary journal *The Bookman*, the Sherlock Holmes enthusiast wrote that 'in the very best of the Sherlock Holmes stories [Arthur Conan Doyle] is as ingenious as Gaboriau, as imaginative as Poe, and in addition he creates for us characters that are broadly human and that interest us wholly apart from their relation to the plot' (qtd. in Dahlinger and Klinger 2). Over a century ago, even before the first embryonic adaptations of Sherlock Holmes made it to cinema screens, Peck was able to identify the most salient and unique quality that would contribute to the longevity of the works he so admired: the significance and value of Sherlock Holmes rests in the character's capacity to exist and sustain interest outside the constructs of the particular narratives into which it was first written.

Although Sherlock Holmes is an even more popular, lucrative, and creatively energized property today than it has ever been before—presently supporting a Hollywood blockbuster movie series, a venerated British cult miniseries, a critically acclaimed American television drama, a Russian television series as well as a BBC film starring lauded actor Sir Ian McKellen—scholarship on Holmes has failed to match its subject in its pervasiveness and variability. Academic treatment of Sherlock Holmes remains resolutely focused on the why questions: why has Sherlock Holmes endured, why continue to adapt the same stories and characters, and why do audiences keep

returning for more? This work has sought to contribute to the academic conversation by shifting to an examination of how questions: how has this character changed though its journey across time and text, and how does the nature of the character, the texts in which it figures, and the manners in which society engage with it, alter and perpetuate it? By making this shift, my work offers a unique perspective on both the actions of the adaptive process on the Holmes character as well as the actions of society and consumers on the adaptive process. In this way, it shines much needed and long overdue light on one of the most enduring and dynamic figures ever to make the transition from page to screen as well as offering a fresh method of approaching adaptation studies as a whole and other character franchises in particular.

In the course of three chapters comprising seven sections, each addressing a different aspect of the evolutionary process that has exerted pressure on the Holmes character, I have had recourse to compare Sherlock Holmes in various respects to Batman, Superman, Doctor Who, James Bond, Harry Potter, and Robin Hood, among others. Each of these characters and many more besides can benefit from the methods I apply to examining the Sherlock Holmes character. Each of the pressures, processes, and mechanisms I discuss in this work operates as evidence to support my larger argument that frequently adapted characters, and Sherlock Holmes in particular, are in constant flux as they float between adaptations, and are therefore involved in a process that takes place outside the confines of the strict page to screen textual remediation.

The closing section of the introduction established my contention, supported by other scholars who analyse 'popular heroes', that Sherlock Holmes is a modern mythological figure, which is the foundational attribute of the character franchise. The postmodern process at work with the Sherlock Holmes Museum writes the character

into history, cementing his mythological status and suggesting that Sherlock Holmes is best understood as a character not tethered to the confines of either its literary source or the individual narrative of any specific adaptation.

The first chapter of this work examined long-term trends in the performance of Sherlock Holmes' identity, arguing that the continual construction and reconstruction of that identity through adaptation is a process that takes place not in the transfer of a work from page to screen, but in the accumulation and transfer of indices of character across adaptations. It began by making the case for actors as the means by which the myth of Sherlock Holmes is physically embodied. Each actor accepts the mantel of Sherlock Holmes from a previous actor, along with the qualities with which that previous actor imbued it. As a result, the character evolves cumulatively, absorbing traits from actors who become closely linked with the role—actors whose versions might be judged 'definitive' for any number of reasons. Chapter one went on to analyse the performance of Holmes' gender through several variable socio-cultural environments, noting that this fundamental construct of the character has long been in flux, and alters according to the needs and wants of the time. The chapter ended with an examination of the performance of Holmes' aesthetic and how mutations in image directly influence the perception of the Holmes character. This sections contended that Costume works as a meaning-making tool, acting on and defining character, rather than simply functioning as means to ground a production in time or place. The cumulative effect of costume design has expanded the meaning of Sherlock Holmes beyond a mere nineteenth century fictional detective and helped establish how he is understood as an English superhero.

The second chapter of this work addressed mechanisms of selection, and how particular versions of the Holmes character, manifested in adaptations, can be 'selected

for'. It first considered the directional selection at work in 1939's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to examine how the legacy of a periodised Sherlock Holmes is a consequence of twin desires to preserve a shared history, and to escape from an uncertain present, arguing that these societal pressures are partly responsible for the perception of Holmes, even in the face of contemporised versions, as a Victorian figure. The chapter then turned to the relatively uniform vision of the current incarnations of the Holmes character as an illustration of stabilizing selection. It compared these disparate adaptations, and offered the stability of their environments, and the similar transmedial landscapes of their consumption as an explanation for the twenty-first century vision of an anti-heroic Sherlock Holmes.

The final chapter completed the picture and rounds out my argument by addressing perhaps the two most influential examples of the Holmes character's extended phenotype. I argued first that competing modes of fan discourse contribute to the character's ability to remain fresh and variable. I addressed the interplay between fan discourses and adaptations, and how the first dictates how the second is received, and, as a result, how the Holmes character is understood. The second section built on the first, noting the competition between these discourses as one of several attempts to claim authority over the character and thus to direct its evolution through regulation. I connected two processes in particular: that of claiming legal authority, and that of claiming a superior position as a result of particular fan traditions. Both address the vital question of whether Sherlock Holmes truly 'belongs to the world'. The failure of any party to successfully acquire and retain the authority it seeks supports the overall argument of this work.

Doubtless debates will continue to rage over which adaptation of Sherlock Holmes is superior to which others, whether any is truly representative of the 'real' Sherlock Holmes, and who that figure might be. Scholarship asking the 'why' questions will continue to marvel at the longevity of Sherlock Holmes. After following the scarlet thread of character through the vast skein of intertexts that comprises the Sherlock Holmes franchise, it is clear that there is a better and more enlightening set of questions to ask. This work could not possibly follow every contributing evolutionary process to its conclusion. That exercise would demand the work of a lifetime as regards a character with a history as complex as that of Sherlock Holmes, particularly as Holmes continues to evolve even as such scholarship is underway: when this project was conceived the first Warner Brothers film was on the eve of release, the BBC's *Sherlock* was not yet in production, and CBS's *Elementary* had not even been pitched as a concept. However, although the work of such scholarship is never truly finished, this project provides fresh insights into a character, the history of which is at the very heart of adaptation studies as a discipline. Sherlock Holmes has lived and grown as a result of adaptations: the influences on his evolution are too numerous to count, but this work has shown that over a century's worth of processes, pressures, and mechanisms have contributed to the Sherlock Holmes we know today.

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APPENDIX A

Personal Interview with Stephen Moffat

On the 12th of April, 2012, I conducted a personal phone interview with Stephen Moffat, executive producer and writer for BBC's Sherlock. *This is the transcript of the interview. Punctuation has been selected in every case to most clearly convey the speaker's intent.*

Question: 'What do you think accounts for the enduring appeal of Sherlock Holmes?'

Moffat: 'It's very good! I know that's a dull answer, but it's the truth. The bad things don't survive and the original Sherlock Holmes stories are very, very good. I'm sure in that genre—and I don't so much mean mystery as action-adventure, and all these charismatic heroes and all that—I'm not sure there's anything as good as Sherlock Holmes. I mean, the originals, the actual version that you read on the page, is superb. I think it's as good as it gets'.

Question: 'Did you have a long-standing desire to adapt Sherlock Holmes to the screen, and did you always plan for it to be an updated version?'

Moffat: 'No...well, both Mark and I are long-standing Sherlock Holmes fans, so I was more thinking about who's going to adapt it next and be more keen to see what was going to happen in the cinema and television. I followed all versions of it quite carefully. It wasn't of a long term ambition to do it myself, so much as when Mark and I were on the train and had the idea of updating it, and doing what they did with Rathbone and Bruce again, it just seemed like such a great idea. And from that point on we wanted to do it because we had a take on it—we had a spin on it that would make it interesting again. You don't just want to do something because you're a fan of it, you want to know that you're going to have a specific attitude to it. By updating it, we had our take'.

Question: 'You never had a desire to do a nineteenth century version that stayed very close to the original text?'

Moffat: 'Yes, had someone approached me, I certainly would have said 'yes' about doing a nineteenth century version. I wasn't particularly pursuing it. I think Mark had a momentary involvement in some projected one for a while that didn't come off, and I remember feeling quite jealous that he was going to do that. I had strong views about what you should do with Sherlock Holmes. I can't imagine I'd ever have been the kind of adaptor who thinks your job is just to make it exactly the same as what it was in the first place, because that's not adaptation; that's not how you do it well. You know, I love the originals—I absolutely adore them—but I think what's special about Conan Doyle is not the detail of the stories, it's the detail of the storytelling. It's trying to do a story like him. It doesn't really matter whether you follow every "B" of the plot; it's unlikely that everything will survive from the printed page to the screen in the same

way. You know, they always say that—to mention James Bond—they always say that the James Bond films play fast and loose with the Fleming books, but they don't really. They play fast and loose with the incidental details of the plot: the format of James Bond has remained unchanged since the 1950s'.

Question: 'Was it a hard sell to the BBC or was it readily embraced, would you say?'

Moffat: 'I've never had an easier sell in my life, ever! Mark and I prepared our pitch, walked in and just said, "I'm making Sherlock Holmes", and they just said "yes". In fairness, we both had fairly good careers going, so it's a fact that we'd get a very sympathetic hearing anyway, but everybody just leapt at it. It was a very, very easy sell'.

Question: 'I know you have a third season planned, I think you're filming perhaps later this year, is that right?'

Moffat: 'We'll be filming early next year, in fact'.

Question: 'Ah, ok. Well, do you hope to extend it indefinitely?'

Moffat: 'Well, we will pitch it one year at a time. Mark and I would keep doing it for a long while. And the fact that it's not really like a series, it's like we do three movies every so often. People don't feel committed to it: working in *Doctor Who* is slavery and this is an occasional holiday, if you see what I mean'.

Question: 'Do you feel there is a larger conversation going on between the multitude of adaptations, and where do you think *Sherlock* fits in to that?'

Moffat: 'I don't know if there is much of a conversation, I mean, we literally don't talk to each other! Do you mean do they influence each other?'

Question: 'Yes'.

Moffat: 'I don't know what the others have done. I mean, I think obviously because Sherlock Holmes has been adapted so often and some of the adaptations are incredibly famous, the canon, as it were, has been enlarged. There are aspects of Sherlock Holmes that have become very famous that never appeared in the original stories at all. So you are aware of Basil Rathbone and all that kind of thing. In terms of Mark and I doing this one, we were certainly influenced by—we rather liked in a sort of heretical way—the updated Rathbone and Bruce films. We thought there was something immediately irreverent and cheeky about them that made them more like the racing original stories and some of them were ponderous adaptations. We also absolutely adored the Billy Wilder film, *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, and again, because it was a comedy. Somehow, more of the original made it on to the screen than in some of the other ones. There is a tendency, perhaps, because it is a period piece, to treat it like holy writ, and that can sometimes suffocate the voice of the author who didn't regard it that way at all. That's obviously also not true of the Robert Downey Jr. films where they're again, a

very irreverent take on the original. But I think irreverence is important to Sherlock Holmes'.

Question: 'You did such a fine job with the complex relationship between Sherlock and Irene Adler in "A Scandal in Belgravia"; you also address the possibility that Sherlock might be gay in "A Study in Pink": how compelled do you feel to raise questions about Sherlock's sexual identity in the show?'

Moffat: 'I don't feel compelled to do it at all. I think it's really a function of putting him in the modern day—people would ask that question, more so than they would in Victorian times, when it would all be repressed and not spoken about. People just would ask if Sherlock Holmes and John Watson living together in the same flat—were they a couple or not? People might just assume that. And there's a certain amount of comedy and playfulness to be had out of that. Compelled? I mean, it's interesting. What's really going on there is interesting; particularly when you go back to Doyle and see that all the things that people say about Sherlock Holmes aren't in the original. It never said he's asexual. It never even said he's unemotional. It said he disdains such things as distractions. If they are distractions to him, that means he's aware of them. So he's not Mr. Spock; he's not a computer: he has to wrestle those feelings to the ground in order to get on with what he does. What's interesting, and maybe that's partly an answer to your previous question as well, what's interesting is all our theories about Sherlock Holmes that we keep on top of the text, that have somehow seeped in to him. It seems very specific that he ignores women not because he is bored by them or is uninterested in them, but precisely because they are a distraction. If they are a distraction, what does that tell you about him?'

Question: 'I understand that Benedict was your first and only choice for playing Sherlock, is that right?'

Moffat: That's right, yes'.

Question: 'Is the tone and content of your writing swayed by your casting choice? Would you have written the character differently if you'd have had someone else do the role?'

Moffat: 'Well, we wrote before we cast him, and then he was our one and only choice after we had a script, so probably not. I think in a curious way, Benedict would be offended if he thought we had to write Sherlock Holmes for him; he just wants us to write Sherlock Holmes, and he can get on with playing him. It's sort of unwise to write a performance for an actor. They bring their expertise to bring your words to life and they don't want you to help them, or to have views on their limitations or specialisms, so to speak. s the show goes on, you've got Benedict's voice and Martin's voice in your head, so inevitably and unstoppably you are writing their versions of the characters. That's practically an unconscious thing—you don't really have to think about it'.

Question: 'You mentioned the Rathbone Bruce films of the '40s. Basil Rathbone's Sherlock Holmes is such an ideal hero for wartime Britain. With all his brilliance and

faults and complexities, do you think that your Sherlock is a fitting hero for modern Britain?'

Moffat: 'It would seem so, because people have taken to him so much. I think he probably always is: I think Sherlock Holmes, the ordinary human man who by effort of will makes himself brilliant and rises above his frailties—that's always going to be thrilling. We're always going to want to believe in that'.

Question: 'Fans of both show often compare *Sherlock* and *Doctor Who*. Do you have a particular goal or aim that you feel unites your approach to both of them?'

Moffat: 'I kind of try not to think about that too much because the fact that I'm doing both shouldn't be relevant to either. I mean, there are connections between the two. Right at the beginning of *Doctor Who*, Sidney Newman said—right after the first few episodes came out—'we need to make the old man a bit more like Sherlock Holmes'. So we know there is a connection, but what I feel about that in terms of my position is I have to ignore it. If the Doctor does something a bit Sherlock Holmes-y, I shouldn't score it out just because I'm doing both shows. That's a legitimate thing for him to do. In some ways, they're actually quite different as characters. The Doctor is kind of lovely and sweet and rather un-intricate in the fact that he's a genius; it's not a big deal to him. He's very relaxed and casual about it, but he's so colossally clever that he'd far rather be going to a fair ground or something, whereas Sherlock Holmes is obsessed with it. So they are quite different. I can't imagine them getting on very well!'

Personal Interview with Rob Doherty

On the 29th of July, 2012 at the Television Critics Association Summer Tour in Los Angeles, California, I interviewed Rob Doherty, executive producer and writer of CBS's Elementary *in tandem with several members of the TCA. The interview was ad hoc and in progress when I joined the group. This is the transcript of that interview. The transcript does not distinguish between various interviewers. Punctuation has been selected in every case to most clearly convey the speaker's intent.*

Question: *Unknown*

Doherty: 'I would say give us a chance. I would say anyone who feels that way is absolutely entitled to that opinion. But I feel it's a little bit silly to just sort of decide that without seeing what we've done. I honestly don't know which came first, whether it was the movie series or the BBC series, but I mean one obviously didn't stop the other. And again as I was saying before, Sherlock has been done many times very successfully by many smart people. I think at the end of the day what matters is that it is being done by somebody that has a passion and respect for the character and the mythology. I feel we have that, I feel the BBC show has that, and I feel the movie series has that'.

Question: 'For those that haven't seen your show, what would you say is the thing that distinguishes you most from what Moffat's doing?'

Doherty: 'What distinguishes us the most, you know, we are in a completely different setting in New York, obviously. We're setting our Sherlock in America. To the best of my recollection, I haven't seen that before and as I said, I feel like what distinguishes us from many Sherlocks, not just the BBC version, is again, our Sherlock broke down. Our Sherlock is a guy who's in a state of repair and recovery. He'll still present in many respects as a typical Sherlock. He's still wildly brilliant, he's still obsessive when it comes to cases and his work, he's a difficult personality, but as I was saying during the panel, there is this little kernel of doubt that never existed for this character and for him to sort of attack the same job, the same profession in a totally different place with new people wondering if he can really still do what he used to do, that's the big difference, like I said, that separates us from that particular show, which I think is incredible, but also from other Sherlocks that I've seen'.

Question: 'Have you gotten a reaction from the traditional fans, like the Baker Street Irregulars, those sort of people?'

Doherty: 'I've met some... I want to say Les [Klinger]... I met the president of the Baker Street Irregulars... and had a lovely conversation with Les. I had fun talking to him because he's a fan and I'm a fan, and he knows a little more about Sherlock than me, but no official response other than I met Les, he loved the pilot, I loved talking to him and I'm looking to doing a panel with them and show the pilot [over Labor Day, 2012 at the "Behind the Canonical Screen" Conference at UCLA] I believe'.

Question: 'Do you have any plans for Mycroft?'

Doherty: 'Mycroft—I don't have... I think actually I'd like to see Mycroft... Again I think something that separates us from other shows is I think Sherlock's dad is a bigger priority; I think we want to make sure we have a take on him. You know, we have a sense of what we want to do; we have some ideas. Again, I feel like I haven't seen that before; I'm sort of fascinated to meet the guy who either helped raise this person or didn't help raise this person. Mycroft is great. If I had to guess, I'd say at the moment probably not a season one character in our show'.

Question: 'Since it's such a concern of purists, what's the most unequivocal thing you can say about not overtly playing sexual tension between the characters? Is it completely off the table for at least season one?'

Doherty: 'For me, it's completely off the table in general. I mean, I have to worry about season one first, obviously, it's just not in my head for season one. Looking ahead, on the rare occasion that I look ahead, I just don't feel like that's a part of the show. For me, it's trying to honor the spirit of the original partnership and the original relationship. The original Holmes, to the best of my knowledge, never slept with the original Watson, so'.

Question: 'Are you saying it's not there, though, there's not a sexual tension there?'... 'CBS is cutting promos that are kind of falsely...'... 'Networks love to promote will they/won't they'.

Doherty: 'I get that. I understand it, I mean, you know, they have to use every arrow in their quiver, and we have a mind-bogglingly attractive pair in Jonny and Lucy. That's frankly one of the reasons I don't feel we the writers have to write to it. There's a very natural sexual tension when you put them in a room. And living alone in a house together and dealing with cases, you're going to feel it. You're just going to feel it. Are we going to write to it? No. Are they going to act to it? No. But it'll be there, and there will be people—they'll ask us every week. And there'll be people who want to see it happen. I don't want to break any hearts, but that's just not in our plans. For any of us. And I felt no pressure to pursue that kind of story line'.

Question: 'Is that, then, in tribute to the original stories that you want to keep them separate, romantically speaking?'

Doherty: 'Yes. First and foremost, it is about looking at what was in the source material and being true to it as best we can. Again, just personally, I don't tend to watch will they/won't they shows. I would not be any more likely to watch a show like that because that exists. When I think of a model, and again, take it with a grain of salt because eventually they ended up in bed, but I always thought the Mulder/Skully relationship in the X-Files was a great—they were colleagues. They were both real smart, they were good at what they did, and that's why I watched that show'.

Question: 'Did you start with a female Watson or did you end with a female Watson? Why and when did it first occur to you—did you say "mine's going to be female"'.

Doherty: 'Initially when I was doing my research, like I said, there were little bits and pieces—drug addiction, and when I read the books as a kid, I didn't notice it. When I read it as an adult, when I researched it as an adult, one of the things I came upon were several psychological assessments of Sherlock Holmes. Real doctors who had analysed the character: some people think he's bipolar. One of the characteristics that somebody noted was that he was a gynophobe: he struggled with women; he had an unusual fear of or difficulty with women and I laughed, just because my first thought was "oh! Then Watson should be a woman." What would be more trying for Sherlock if that's really in his head? Ultimately, and this is what I think is important—I always try to tack on to this: that's where it started; our Holmes is not a misogynist, he does not have problems with women the way the original Holmes did. So that's where it started. I read it, it made me laugh, it started me on my list of ideas: you know, maybe Watson should be a woman. The more I got into it, the more fun I had writing Holmes. It just shouldn't matter at the end of the day. A professional man can live with a professional woman and can do great work'.

Personal Interview with Rob Doherty and Carl Beverly

On the 29th of July, 2012 at the Television Critics Association Summer Tour in Los Angeles, California, I interviewed Rob Doherty, executive producer and writer, and Carl Beverly, executive producer, of CBS's Elementary. *This is the transcript of the interview. Punctuation has been selected in every case to most clearly convey the speaker's intent.*

Question: 'The whole thing about updating and putting it in New York... you don't have to do an updated version, but you chose to. Was that something you chose to do early on?'

Doherty: 'It was absolutely a part of it, but it was also what Carl [Beverly, Executive Producer] was starting from. Carl was starting from Sherlock, present day, New York City, and at the time, that was about all there was. Carl and I would meet periodically to talk about what could we develop, what would be intriguing to both of us, what could we really sink our teeth into, and we would trade ideas. At some point Carl said he'd been batting around the possibility of doing Sherlock in New York City in present day. I was draw to it. I feel like somebody has to propose that to you. It's hard as a writer to go, "I know what I'll do: Sherlock Holmes!" I feel like I could have worked forty more years in this industry and it never would have occurred to me to take on such an important and beloved character'.

Question: 'It was then Carl's idea first?'

Doherty: 'The notion started with Carl'.

Question: 'I got the idea that your idea was the Watson as female, is that right?'

Doherty: 'Here's honestly how it started, and I think this is a fair and proper reconstruction: Carl initially had said he loved the idea of doing a Sherlock show, setting it in New York—he referenced the [Sting] song "An Englishman in New York"—I sort of liked the idea of a fish out of water. It was a nice starting point; it was nice to hear somebody express interest in that, but as a fan, I'm aware that Sherlock is everywhere and has been everywhere for a hundred years. My first exposure was the books; they were on my reading list when I was in elementary school or middle school. After that, I saw and read Sherlock stories and comic books, and certainly right now there is the excellent BBC show and the movie franchise, so you do want to make sure that you're doing something that you're passionate about. You don't set out to differentiate it or separate it from the other things, you're making sure it's what's exciting to you, so it took me little time to really warm up to it and say 'yes, this is worth doing, this is something I feel I could make special and different.' It took some research and some delving back into the materials, which was fun'.

Question: 'You mentioned that you read the books and maybe reread them when you were thinking about this. Were you influenced by... I mean, so many years, a hundred

years of Holmes adaptations from Basil Rathbone and everybody else. Did you draw any influence from any of those?'

Doherty: 'I'd say if you're a fan—unless you've never heard of Sherlock Holmes before—it isn't possible that you haven't been touched by somebody's take on it at some point in your life. I've always liked Sherlock Holmes: that's why I saw many different interpretations and I feel like those works form a pool in your brain. In my lifetime I've seen Sherlock done quite well, I've seen Sherlock done quite poorly, but they're all in the pool. It's up to you to try to live up to the source material, to live up to the character, and frankly to try to sell the things you love about the character to people who may not be instantly familiar. Many people in America know and love the character, but not everybody. So there's a certain degree of trying to show people: "this is why it's special to me and this is why it should be special to you"'.

Question: 'So would you say you're not consciously pulling from those hundred years of adaptation , but it exists out there in the ether, and maybe even subconsciously you're pulling from them?'

Doherty: 'I have, certainly, my favourites: The Sherlocks I knew growing up. I knew Basil Rathbone because I would occasionally watch the movies with my mom. I knew Jeremy Brett from the Sherlock series way back when. There was the actor who played Sherlock in *The Seven Percent Solution* [Nicol Williamson]—he was a great Holmes and I remember seeing that movie before I could really wrap my head around it. You cannot forget the things that you've seen, and the things that you love, and the things that help you develop a love for the character and, again, the original books. It's hard to explain my creative process, but I had a knowledge based on things I loved—the shows I loved, the books I loved—in one of my favourite Batman comics, he meets Sherlock Holmes! It's something I still have in my collection. All of these things are with you, but you don't look at them as reference material: you don't take them, you don't lift from them'.

Question: 'So an inspiration on almost a subconscious level, would you say?'

Doherty: 'It's so hard to explain... I guess what I'm talking about now is fanhood: I can't separate the two. I can't unwatch the things I've seen or unread the things I've read, so absolutely. It's a matter of seeing who's done it well, who's done it poorly, that's more conscious. You have the opportunity... if you lived through the character a long time and you've seen a lot of iterations, that helps. You avoid the stuff that's bad'.

Question: 'Absolutely. And *House* is modeled on Sherlock Holmes—are you inspired by that at all?'

Doherty: 'My wife is obsessed with the show, always has been! I'm embarrassed to say that I've been late to that party and by the time it was a huge hit, I'd missed too much and it was too hard to get back into it. I feel like one of these days, I'll watch all of it. The snippets I've seen when I've come home and my wife is watching the show... it's incredible, and Hugh Laurie is brilliant. I've got to say that even though I've never seen the show, just when you boil it down to the bare bones, it's one of the most brilliant

Holmes adaptations I've ever heard of. I just love it as a premise; that's something you go, "wow, I wish I had thought of that"'.

Question: 'Not to belabour the point, but then the ultimate inspiration then, is the stories themselves?'

Doherty: 'Yes. That's what I turned back to once this became a possibility. It was a matter of turning back to the books and also studying some of the research that people have done—other fans of the character who have written books and reports and psychological assessments—those are fascinating to me. I love that people cared enough to put work like that out there, and it was really instructive for me as I was trying to find what I wanted to do with Sherlock'.

Question: 'I was intrigued by you talking about the self-doubt; is that to humanize him more than he has been in the past?'

Doherty: 'That's an interesting question. I hadn't thought of that. I think it's a symptom of that doubt. I feel like many of the Sherlocks whom I've loved and adored are mechanical in their thinking, they are relentless, they are so different from the rest of us in that regard. I just thought there would be a lot to do with a Sherlock who has struggled, hit bottom, and is coming back. I liked the idea of how that would upset a mind like Sherlock's: what does it do? How does it change him going forward? In the very short term, it's not going to change the way he does his business, but it's absolutely going to affect him with respect to how he lives his life in New York, how he develops a friendship and partnership with Joan, how he deals with his father when he shows up... I feel like our Sherlock is a few years past your standard Sherlock to whom everything came easy. I think he's discovered he's not a machine. In bottoming out, in being surprised that he was capable of bottoming out—when you're Sherlock, I don't think you can view the world in the same way. Something that was previously quite simple is now very complex and unpredictable'.

Question: 'I wanted to ask about those tattoos—I think Jonny [Lee Miller] said that those tattoos work well. do you think they work well for the character?'

Doherty: 'You know what's so funny? Initially when I met him... I've been a friend of Jonny's forever, but I didn't realise that Jonny had the tattoos. Initially when it came up in a production conversation—what would he do to cover up the tattoos and should we cover up the tattoos—I'm embarrassed to say that initially I was averse to the tattoos because I kept thinking that Sherlock Holmes would not take the time to flip through a book and pick a design and sit in a chair and be branded; it just didn't sound like the guy I had in my head. Then I got a look at Jonny in his first few costume fittings. I can't quite explain it, but visually it was so arresting; it was so different; it really jived with our depiction of a Sherlock who is sort of broken down and is on his way back up. In the moment I wish I'd've been smarter, to say "yes, absolutely, do it!" But I had to see that before I knew that they were perfect and I love what they say about our Sherlock'.

Question: 'Is Sherlock a hero for the twenty-first century?'

Doherty: 'I think he's a hero for the twenty-first century, the 22nd, the 23rd, the 24th. History would seem to suggest that Sherlock will outlive us all, and well he should'.

Question: 'Carl, so the initial idea for *Elementary* was yours, what made you think this would work?'

Beverly: 'It was less about knowing it would work, and more about... in a very busy world of CBS procedurals, how to you distinguish yourself? How do you find something that is on brand, but is also charts some new territory. So it was much more me being interesting in an iconic character genre and something that would make a little bit of a splash, because there's not much real estate at CBS. That really drove it initially, and talking with Rob [Doherty], it just kind of grew from there'.

Question: 'And early on you decided that it would be contemporary and in New York?'

Beverly: 'Yes. And as I tell Rob, he did all the hard work. There was something to me about New York, number one, being kind of the ultimate obstacle for Sherlock: the idea of fish out of water with water that is iconic in our American world. You know this is the quintessential American city. I thought 'the geography is hard to navigate, the people are hard to navigate at times, and yet, it's this iconic, wonderful American city, and seeing Sherlock have to navigate that and running up against that, that to me was interesting. And contemporary... I'd just seen Sherlock so many times as a period piece that I just thought it'd be interesting to see him wrestle with the modern trappings of life'.

Question: 'Did you even consider making it historical?'

Beverly: 'Never, never, never. It never crossed my mind'.

Question: 'Rob was saying it was his idea to make Watson a woman—how do you think that's going to be taken, or how does it seem to be taken by a lot of people who are big fans of Sherlock?'

Beverly: 'So far people love it. When we went to [San Diego] Comic Con I actually thought we might get some pushback, but people—as a function of it being a little bit ambitious and as a function of having Lucy Liu—people seem to be gravitating toward at least the attempt to do something different, and having an actor who is so good in Lucy: strong and emotional and she has humour and she just plays on so many levels, so I think people are really gravitating to the attempt to do something different. And hopefully they'll like the execution of it and they'll become fans of the show'.

Question: 'Is he in your eyes—Sherlock—a hero for the twenty-first century?'

Beverly: 'I don't know. I just think people like, I mean, I look at TV as an escape, and I think Sherlock, for a hundred and twenty years has been entertaining fans of the genre—people who just want to read a good book and forget about their troubles. They want to read a good book or watch a good movie and be entertained and I think that's what he is, so that maybe in some ways makes him a hero—because he's an escape—

he's someone who's almost like a family member, an odd, eccentric family member, who we get to watch and enjoy. I wouldn't go so far as to say he's a hero. I just think he's a fun, odd family member that we're familiar with'.

Official Court Filings in the Case of Klinger v. Conan Doyle Estate Ltd.

What follows is the full text of five documents submitted in the 2013 court case to establish whether Sherlock Holmes is in the public domain. Wherever possible, original formatting has been preserved.

Document 1: Court Complaint

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS EASTERN DIVISION

LESLIE S. KLINGER, an individual, Plaintiff,
v.
CONAN DOYLE ESTATE, LTD, a business entity organized under the laws of the United Kingdom, Defendant.

JURY DEMANDED COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY JUDGMENT
Plaintiff, Leslie S. Klinger, by and through his attorneys, Scott M. Gilbert and Kourtney A. Mulcahy of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, in support of his Complaint against Conan Doyle Estate, Ltd, states as follows:

PARTIES

1. Plaintiff Leslie S. Klinger ("Klinger"), a citizen of the United States residing in Malibu, California, is the author and editor of twenty-seven (27) books and dozens of articles on various topics relating to the mystery and thriller genres in literature, including two dozen books and numerous articles on the subject of the so called Canon of Sherlock Holmes, a phrase that refers to the four (4) novels and fifty-six (56) stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle featuring the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes and other related characters and story elements (collectively, "the Canon"). By way of example, Klinger is the author of, among other works, the definitive three-volume annotated collection of canonical Sherlock Holmes books and stories titled *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, which was published by W. W. Norton in 2004 and 2005, and which won the Edgar® Award for Best Critical/Biographical Work. Klinger is widely recognized as one of the world's leading authorities on the Canon and served as the technical adviser for Warner Bros. two recent Sherlock Holmes films and has consulted with many other authors on a number of scripts, books, and comics. Klinger is also an attorney admitted to the practice of law in California and specializes in tax, estate and corporate matters.

2. Klinger is the co-editor, with Laurie R. King ("King"), of a work titled *A Study in Sherlock*, published in 2011 by Random House and Poisoned Pen Press, a collection of new and original short stories by prominent contemporary authors, all of which were inspired by the Canon and feature various characters and other story elements from the Canon.

3. Klinger and King are also the co-editors of a sequel to *A Study in Sherlock*, currently titled *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes*, which is another collection of new and original short stories by contemporary authors, all of which were inspired by the Canon and feature various characters and other story elements from the Canon. *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes* is currently being prepared by Klinger and King for publication by Pegasus Books and distribution by W. W. Norton but has not yet been published.

4. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and upon such information and belief alleges, that defendant Conan Doyle Estate Ltd ("Defendant") is a company registered under the laws of the United Kingdom and owned by members of the Arthur Conan Doyle family, having a primary place of business at 9 London Road, Southampton, United Kingdom.

5. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and upon such information and belief alleges, that Defendant is actively engaged in offering to license and licensing its purported rights in the Canon, including purported rights under copyright, to third parties in this District and throughout the United States by and through the Defendant's exclusive authorized licensing agents in the United States, the firm of Hazelbaker & Lellenberg and its principal Jon Lellenberg (collectively, "Defendant's Agent"), whose primary place of business is located at 1501 Hinman Avenue, No. 8B, Evanston, Illinois.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

6. This Court has original jurisdiction over the subject matter of this lawsuit pursuant to *28 U.S.C. §§ 1331* and *1338* because this case arises under the Copyright Act, *17 U.S.C. §§ 101 et seq.* and the Constitution of the United States. This lawsuit is brought pursuant to the Declaratory Judgment Act, *28 U.S.C. § 2201*.

7. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and upon such information and belief alleges, that Defendant has systematically and continuously availed itself of the privilege of doing business in Illinois to exploit the copyrights currently asserted against Plaintiffs since at least as early as 1997 and continuing to the present, as set out in Paragraphs 17 through 35 of this Complaint, and that Defendant therefore has sufficient contacts with this District, both generally and specifically in connection with the facts alleged in this Complaint, such that Defendant is subject to personal jurisdiction in Illinois.

8. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to *28 U.S.C. § 1391* because Defendant, an alien, is subject to personal jurisdiction in this Court and because a substantial part of the harm threatened to Plaintiffs is occurring in this District by reason of the facts set forth in this Complaint.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS
The Canon and the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements

9. The books and stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle ("Conan Doyle") that present the fictional adventures of Sherlock Holmes are not only world famous but long ago achieved the status of iconic artifacts of Western popular culture. Sherlock Holmes uses

astute logical reasoning, his ability to adopt almost any disguise, and his skills in forensic science to solve difficult cases as he pursues criminals throughout Victorian and Edwardian London, the south of England, and continental Europe. Sherlock Holmes's constant companion, assistant, and frequent biographer-narrator is a doctor named John H. Watson ("Dr. Watson"). Throughout the four (4) novels and fifty-six (56) stories that comprise the Canon, a number of other fictional characters recur, including the Scotland Yard inspector Lestrade; the group of youthful "street Arabs" known as the Baker Street Irregulars, who are routinely employed by Holmes as informers; his landlady Mrs. Hudson; his even wiser but less ambitious older brother, Mycroft; and, most notably, his formidable opponent, Professor James Moriarty.

10. The fictional characters Sherlock Holmes ("Holmes") and Dr. Watson first appeared in *A Study in Scarlet*, which was first published in the *Beeton's Christmas Annual* in 1887. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson were introduced during Watson's search for lodgings, a scene in which Sherlock Holmes makes a characteristic remark —"You have been to Afghanistan, I perceive" — that suggests the type of inductive reasoning now universally recognized as Sherlock Holmes's stock in trade and principal character trait.

11. *A Study In Scarlet* thus introduced for the first time in 1887 many of the characters, character traits, dialogue, settings, artifacts, story lines and other story elements that appear throughout the Canon and were later used in countless adaptations, parodies, satires, pastiches, advertisements, commentaries, artwork, books, films and other works of authorship that were inspired by the Canon and that now pervade Western popular culture. Other characters, character traits, dialogue settings, artifacts, story lines and other story elements were introduced for the first time in the additional books and stories by Conan Doyle that were first published in the United States on various dates prior to January 1, 1923. For the purpose of this Complaint, a description of the characters, character traits, dialogue, settings, artifacts, story lines and other story elements that first appeared in the Canon as it was published in the United States prior to 1923 ("the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements"), and the book and stories in which they first appeared, are set forth in the attached Exhibit "A," which is titled "Sherlock Holmes Story Elements" and which is incorporated by reference in this Complaint. The foregoing list of Sherlock Holmes Story Elements is illustrative and not exhaustive, but Plaintiff seeks a declaratory judgment in the present action only as to the specific Sherlock Holmes Story Elements set forth in the attached Exhibit "A," as Exhibit "A" may be amended during the pendency of this action with leave of the Court.

12. *A Study in Scarlet* led to a commission to write a second Sherlock Holmes story, *The Sign of Four*, for the American magazine *Lippincott's*. *The Sign of Four* was published in 1890. Conan Doyle wrote and published two other novels, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, serialized in 1901 and 1902 in *The Strand*, and *The Valley of Fear*, serialized in 1914 and 1915.

13. Conan Doyle also wrote and published fifty-six (56) stories featuring Sherlock Holmes, and the stories were collected and published in five books: (a) *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, published in 1892; (b) *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, published

in 1894; (c) *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, published in 1905; (d) *His Last Bow*, published in 1917; and (e) *The Case-Book of Sherlock-Holmes,* published in 1927.

14. A list of all books and stories in the Canon that were first published in the United States prior to January 1, 1923, and the date of first publication in the United States for each such book and story, are set forth in the attached Exhibit "B," which Exhibit "B" is titled "Pre-1923 Sherlock Holmes Works," and which Exhibit "B" is incorporated by reference in this Complaint.

15. A list of all books and stories in the Canon that were first published in the United States on or after January 1, 1923, and the date of first publication in the United States for each such book and story, are set forth in the attached Exhibit "C," which is titled "Post-1923 Sherlock Holmes Works" and which is incorporated by reference in this Complaint.

16. Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and upon such information and belief allege, that the dates of first publication of the books and stories in the Canon in the United States as set forth in the attached Exhibits "B" and "C" are true and correct. Plaintiffs are further informed and believe, and upon such information and belief allege, that even if any of the dates of first publication in the United States as set forth in the attached Exhibits "B" and "C" are not accurate, all of the books and stories set forth in the attached Exhibit "B" were, in fact, first published in the United States prior to January 1, 1923.

Defendant's Claim of Ownership of the Conan Doyle Rights

17. Although other individuals and entities have asserted conflicting claims of ownership of various of the Conan Doyle Rights, now and at various times in the past, which claims of ownership are not at issue in this Complaint, Defendant holds itself out to the world as the sole and exclusive owner of the Conan Doyle Rights. For the purpose of this Complaint, Plaintiff does not deny that Defendant is the sole owner of the Conan Doyle Rights to the extent that any such rights are valid and existing.

Copyright Status of the Conan Doyle Rights

18. Pursuant to the copyright law of the United Kingdom and Canada, the Canon in its entirety, and all of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements, entered the public domain in the United Kingdom and Canada, and in other countries not at issue in this Complaint, fifty (50) years after the death of Conan Doyle, that is, in 1980.

19. Pursuant to the Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S.C. Section § 304), the author of a work that had passed into the public domain in the United States, or his heirs, were entitled to restore the work to copyright in the United States under certain conditions. In 1981, Dame Jean Conan Doyle, the last surviving child of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, availed herself of the foregoing rights under the Copyright Act of 1976 and applied for registration of the copyright to *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*, a collection of Sherlock Holmes stories, in the United States Copyright Office (*see* Exhibit "C").

20. *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* is comprised of twelve (12) stories that were first published in various periodicals between October 1921 and April 1927, and the collection was first published in book form in the United States in June 1927. However, none of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements first appeared in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* or in the stories that comprise the collection, and none of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements are protected by any copyright that may still apply to *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* or its constituent stories under U.S. law.

21. By reason of the facts stated in Paragraphs 9 through 20 of this Complaint and in the attached Exhibits "B" and "C," all of the books and stories in the Canon as set forth on the attached Exhibit "B," and all of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements that first appeared in the books and stories as set forth on the attached Exhibit "B," have now passed into the public domain in the United States.

22. Two of the stories published in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*, "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone" and "The Problem of Thor Bridge" were first published in the United States prior to 1923 and, accordingly, are now in the public domain. The remaining ten (10) stories in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* will enter the public domain in various years leading up to 2023. However, none of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements first appeared in any of the stories that were collected in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*.

23. For the purpose of this Complaint, Plaintiff is not seeking a declaratory judgment as to the copyright status of any story elements that appeared for the first time in any of the ten stories in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* that remain under copyright in the United States.

Defendant's Wrongful Copyright Claims Regarding *A Study in Sherlock* and *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes*

24. *A Study in Sherlock* is a collection of new and original stories inspired by the Canon and the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements. The authors who contributed stories to *A Study in Sherlock* provide original perspectives on Sherlock Holmes by placing the detective in new situations and by creating new characters who solve Holmesian mysteries. Some of the stories in the collection contemplate Holmes in his later years, while others propose new narratives to fill in the chronological gaps in the Canon. To the extent that the stories in *A Study in Sherlock* make use of Sherlock Holmes story elements, only the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements that have already passed into the public domain are used.

25. Klinger and King are currently preparing for publication the sequel to *A Study in Sherlock* under the working title *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes*, which will also consist of new and original stories by prominent contemporary authors who draw selectively on the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements that have already passed into the public domain. Accordingly, no permission or consent of any kind by Defendant was or is required for the use of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements in both *A Study in Sherlock* and *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes* because all of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements are now in the public domain in the United States due to the final

expiration of the copyrights in and to the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements under U.S. law.

26. On or about December 7, 2010, Plaintiffs entered into a contract with Random House to publish *A Study in Sherlock*. On or about June 27, 2011, Defendant's Agent contacted Klinger, King and Random House to assert exclusive rights in various unspecified elements of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements and to demand that Klinger, King and Random House enter into a license agreement with Conan Doyle Estate Ltd. under threat of an infringement action against them if a license were not obtained from Defendant. In response to the foregoing demand, Klinger, King and Random House asserted the position that *A Study in Sherlock* would not be based on any elements of the Canon that remain under copyright in the United States, therefore, Plaintiffs declined to enter into a licensing agreement with Defendant. Thereafter, Random House, without conceding the legal or factual merits of the position asserted by Defendant through Defendant's Agent, and for avoidance of litigation only, entered into a licensing agreement with Defendant for publication of *A Study in Sherlock* on behalf of Klinger and King on or about August 24, 2011. In or about October 2011, *A Study in Sherlock* was published by Random House and remains in print.

27. Notwithstanding Plaintiff's refusal to comply with Defendant's wrongful demand for licensing of public domain novels and stories as alleged in Paragraph 26 above, Klinger and W. W. Norton, the publisher of *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, voluntarily sought and obtained a license from Defendant for permission to republish the stories in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* that were still under copyright in the United States in connection with *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. Similarly, Klinger and another one of his publishers, Gasogene Books, also voluntarily sought and obtained a license from Defendant for publication of Klinger's annotated edition of *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* in the Sherlock Holmes Reference Library as published Gasogene Books. However, since *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes* will not use any storylines, dialogue, characters and character traits that were newly introduced in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*, no license was or is required for *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes.*

28. In or about October 2011, Klinger and King entered into negotiations with Pegasus Books, an independent trade publisher whose books are distributed by W. W. Norton, for publication of *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes*. The negotiations concluded with the offer of a publishing agreement by Pegasus Books to Klinger and King on terms agreeable to all parties.

29. On or about November 28, 2012, and prior to the signing of the publishing agreement for *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes*, Defendant's Agent contacted Pegasus and demanded that Plaintiffs and Pegasus enter into a licensing agreement with Defendants on the same terms as the previous agreement with Random House under the implied threat of an infringement action against Pegasus Books, King, Klinger and W. W. Norton if a license were not obtained from Defendant.

30. On or about November 28, 2012, Pegasus Books replied to Defendant's Agent by pointing out that *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes* would include only such

characters and other story elements from the Canon that have already passed into the public domain and would not use any characters or other story elements that first appeared in one of the ten (10) stories that remain under copyright in the United States. Pegasus Books also explained that it could not afford the same licensing terms as those offered to Random House in connection with *A Study in Sherlock*.

31. On or about December 11, 2012, Defendant's Agent replied and invited "reasonable counter-proposals." However, despite the knowledge of Defendant and Defendant's Agent that the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements are now in the public domain,1 and without asserting that any characters or other story elements that remain 1 In June of 2004, the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York held that "at most…only the increments of expression added by" the [Ten] Stories, either to these two characters or any aspect of Sir Doyle's stories that are in the public domain and underlie plaintiff's works, are protected." *Pannonia Farms, Inc. v. USA Cable*, 2004 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 23015, 29-30 (S.D.N.Y. June 7, 2004), *citing Silverman v. CBS Inc.*, 870 F.2d 40, 50 (2d Cir. 1989). The court continued, "Storylines, dialogue, characters and character traits newly introduced by the [Ten] Stories are examples of added contributions susceptible to copyright protection. Plaintiff, however, does not claim infringement of any creative element particular exclusively and originally to the [Ten] Stories. Defendants' Movie therefore is not derived from any material that plaintiff's under copyright would be used, Defendant's Agent threatened to wrongfully interfere with the publication of *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes*, which was then identified by the working title *Study in Sherlock II*, as follows: "If you proceed instead to bring out *Study in Sherlock II* unlicensed, do not expect to see it offered for sale by Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and similar retailers. We work with those company's routinely to weed out unlicensed uses of Sherlock Holmes from their offerings, and will not hesitate to do so with your book as well."

32. On or about December 11, 2012, Pegasus Books informed Defendant's Agent that "[w]e are advised that no license is necessary for the book we are preparing for publication, and we will not be responding to any further communications on this matter." No further communications have been exchanged between Defendant, on one side, and Klinger, King or Pegasus, on the other side, through the date of filing of this Complaint.

33. As a result of the demands and threats of Defendant and Defendant's Agent as alleged above, Plaintiff has a reasonable apprehension that Defendant will file suit against him, his co-editor, and their licensees in the United States if *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes* is published.

34. Pegasus Books, as a direct and proximate result of the threats and demands claimed copyrights could potentially encompass. Lacking an allegation of infringement upon plaintiff's own creative "embellishments and additions" to the Holmes and Watson characters, *Filmvideo Releasing Corp. v. Hastings*, 668 F.2d 91, 92 (2d Cir. 1981), plaintiff could not have reasonably expected success on its copyright claim." The foregoing case was brought by a claimant to the Conan Doyle Rights other than Defendant, but the principles of copyright law are applicable in the present of Defendant, has declined to enter into the publishing agreement for publication of *In the*

Company of Sherlock Holmes so long as the threat of a copyright infringement action by Defendant is present and has expressed its willingness to do so only if Plaintiff is successful in adjudicating the public domain status of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements.

ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING PERSONAL JURISDICTION

35. Defendant's contacts with Illinois for the purpose of exploiting the copyrights and other rights now asserted against Plaintiff have been systematic and continuous since 1981 and continuing until the present.

36. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and upon such information and belief alleges, that a major source of Defendant's revenues are derived from the licensing of rights of the Conan Doyle Rights in the United States, always under the stated or implied threat that unlicensed use of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements will be the subject of interference with distributors and resellers and/or the filing of an infringement action.

37. Defendant's business activities, including the licensing of rights to persons and entities in the United States, are conducted on its behalf by Defendant's Agent from his office located at 1501 Hinman Avenue, Suite 8B, Evanston, Illinois 60201. dispute between Plaintiff and Defendant.

COUNT I
DECLARATORY JUDGMENT - COPYRIGHT ACT [17 U.S.C. §§ 101, ET SEQ.]

38. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations in each of the preceding Paragraphs as if fully set forth in this Paragraph.

39. An actual controversy exists between Plaintiff and Defendant as to whether the publication of *In the Company of Sherlock* by Plaintiff, his co-editor and their licensees infringes any copyright of Defendant.

40. Plaintiff alleges, and Defendant denies, that, as a matter of law, the works of authorship set forth in the attached Exhibit "B" are now in the public domain in the United States, and, accordingly, any member of the public, including Plaintiff, has the right in the United States to copy the expression embodied in these public domain works, and to create and exploit derivative works based on these public domain works, without infringing any right of Defendant under copyright.

41. Plaintiff alleges, and Defendant denies, that, as a matter of law, the characters of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, and the other characters, character traits, dialogue, settings, artifacts, story lines and other story elements that first appeared in the works of authorship set forth in the attached Exhibit "B," including but not limited to the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements as set forth on the attached Exhibit "A," are now in the public domain in the United States, and, accordingly, any member of the public, including Plaintiff, has the right in the United States to copy the expression embodied in these public domain works, and to create and exploit derivative works incorporating any

and all of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements, without infringing any right of Defendant under copyright.

42. Plaintiffs are entitled to a declaratory judgment against Defendant as set forth in Paragraph 40 and Paragraph 41 above pursuant to the Copyright Law of the United States and the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for relief as follows:

1. For a judicial determination and order declaring that, copyright having expired in the United States as to the works of authorship set forth in the attached Exhibit "B," and as to the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements as set forth in the attached Exhibit "A," any member of the public, including Plaintiff, has the right in the United States to copy the expression embodied in these public domain works, and to create and exploit derivative works incorporating any and all of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements, without infringing any right of Defendant under copyright.

2. For an Order enjoining Defendant and its agents and attorneys from further asserting rights under copyright in and to the works of authorship set forth in the attached Exhibit "B" and/or the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements as set forth in the attached Exhibit "A," and from interfering with the exploitation of the Sherlock Holmes Story Elements by Plaintiff.

3. For the recovery of Plaintiff's full costs and reasonable attorneys' fees as provided in 17 U.S.C. Section 505; and

4. For such additional and further relief, in law and equity, as the Court may deem just and proper.

Document 2: Exhibit A

EXHIBIT A
SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY ELEMENTS

- Baker Street Irregulars: Street urchins used by Holmes as his "eyes and ears". Mentioned only in *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, and "The Crooked Man."
- Older brother Mycroft Holmes: Mentioned only in "The Greek Interpreter," "The Bruce-Partington Plans," "The Final Problem," and "The Empty House."
- Inspector Lestrade: Appears in 13 cases on "The Three Garridebs is not public domain. Regularly drops in on Holmes ("The Six Napoleons"), bulldog-like (*A Study in Scarlet*), tenacious, determined ("The Cardboard Box"), practical ("The Boscombe Valley Mystery"), appreciates Holmes (*The Hound of the Baskervilles*).
- Mrs. Hudson: Appears in no stories in the *Case-Book* except "The Mazarin Stone," which was published in the United States prior to 1923 and thus in the public domain, and "The Three Garridebs." That is, of her dozens of

appearances, only one is in a copyrighted story. No story provides a physical description other than having "queenly tread" ("The Naval Treaty") Longest description of the relationship is in "The Dying Detective." between Mrs. Hudson and other characters is in DYIN. She is an active figure in "The Empty House."

- Irene Adler: "The" woman to Holmes, mentioned only in "A Scandal in Bohemia," "A Case of Identity," "The Five Orange Pips," "The Blue Carbuncle," and "His Last Bow" (all in the public domain).
- Wiggins: Head of the Baker Street Irregulars—appears in *A Study in Scarlet* and does not appear in any *Case-Book* story.
- Professor Moriarty: The Napoleon of Crime. Appears as an actual character only in "The Final Problem," "The Empty House," and *The Valley of Fear*. The longest description is in *The Valley of Fear*. He is mentioned briefly in "The Norwood Builder," "The Missing Three-Quarter," "His Last Bow," and "The Illustrious Client," (the latter being in copyright).
- Colonel Sebastian Moran (right-hand man of Professor Moriarty): Appears only in "The Empty House." He is mentioned in "The Illustrious Client" (in copyright) and "His Last Bow." A complete physical description appears in "The Empty House," as well as discussion of his history.

As to Holmes himself:

- Birthdate, though never specified, is based on description in "His Last Bow"
- Family background ("The Greek Interpreter")
- Lodgings in Baker Street (virtually every story)
- Retirement ("His Last Bow," in public domain, and "The Lion's Mane," and "The Second Stain")
- Bohemian nature ("The Musgrave Ritual")
- Erratic eating habits ("The Norwood Builder")
- Schooling ("The 'Gloria Scott'" and "The Musgrave Ritual")
- Smoking ("The Devil's Foot" and countless other stories)
- Patriotic ("His Last Bow," "The Second Stain," "The Naval Treaty")
- Loner ("The 'Gloria Scott'")
- Drug Use (many early stories; by the time of "The Missing Three-Quarter," he is described as an addict whose habit "is not dead, but merely sleeping")
- Fees ("Thor Bridge," "The Priory School," "The Final Problem," "Black Peter")
- Methods of reasoning—explained in many, many cases
- Aptitude for disguise ("Charles Augustus Milverton," "The Man with the Twisted Lip," "The Final Problem," "The Empty House," "A Scandal in Bohemia")
- Favourite weapon: loaded hunting crop ("A Case of Identity," "The Red-Headed League," "The Speckled Band," "The Six Napoleons")
- Amateur boxing skills ("The 'Gloria Scott'," "The Yellow Face," "The Solitary Cyclist," *Sign of the Four*)
- Skill in baritsu (martial arts) ("The Empty House")
- Skill in chemistry (numerous stories)

- Physical appearance (many different aspects mentioned in various stories): Tall, thin, over 6 ft. tall, grey eyes, thi lips, hawk-like nose (all set out in *A Study in Scarlet*)

As to Dr. Watson:

- Army career (*A Study in Scarlet*)
- Courtship and marriage (*The Sign of Four*)
- Wound(s) (*A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, other stories)
- Second wife (only mentioned in copyrighted stories "The Illustrious Client" and "The Blanched Soldier")
- Schooling ("The Naval Treaty")
- Strongly built, thick neck, small moustache ("Charles Augustus Milverton")
- Former athlete ("The Sussex Vampire")

Document 3: Exhibit B

EXHIBIT B

The following ten (10) stories have not yet entered the public domain in the United States of America. These stories will enter the public domain in various years leading up to 2023.

SHERRLOCK HOLMES SHORT STORIES
- The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes
  - The Illustrious Client (1924)
  - The Blanched Soldier (1926)
  - The Three Gables (1926)
  - The Sussex Vampire (1924)
  - The Three Garridebs (1924)
  - The Creeping Man (1923)
  - The Lion's Mane (1926)
  - The Veiled Lodger (1927)
  - Shoscombe Old Place (1927)
  - The Retired Colourman (1926)

Document 4: Exhibit C

EXHIBIT C

Sherlock Holmes appeared in a total of 60 stories, written by Arthur Conan Doyle and published between 1887 and 1927. Of those stories, all four (4) novels featuring Sherlock Holmes are in the public domain in the United States of America. Forty-six (46) of the short stories following the adventures of Sherlock Holmes are also in the public domain in the United States of America.

SHERLOCK HOLMES NOVELS:

- A Study in Scarlet (1887)
- The Sign of Four (1890)
- The Hound of the Baskervilles (Serialized from 1901-1902)
- The Valley of Fear (Serialized in 1914-1915)

SHERLOCK HOLMES SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS:

- The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes
    - A Scandal in Bohemia (1891)
    - The Red-headed League (1891)
    - A Case of Identity (1891)
    - The Boscombe Valley Mystery (1891)
    - The Five Orange Pips (1891)
    - The Man with the Twisted Lip (1891)
    - The Blue Carbuncle (1892)
    - The Speckled Band (1892)
    - The Engineer's Thumb (1892)
    - The Noble Bachelor (1892)
    - The Beryl Coronet (1892)
    - The Copper Beeches (1892)

- The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes
    - Silver Blaze (1892)
    - The Yellow Face (1893)
    - The Stock-broker's Clerk (1893)
    - The 'Gloria Scott' (1893)
    - The Musgrave Ritual (1893
    - The Reigate Squires (1893)
    - The Crooked Man (1893)
    - The Resident Patient (1893)
    - The Greek Interpreter (1893)
    - The Naval Treaty (1893)
    - The Final Problem (1893)

- The Return of Sherlock Holmes
    - The Empty House (1903)
    - The Norwood Builder (1903)
    - The Dancing Men (1903)
    - The Solitary Cyclist (1903)
    - The Priory School (1904)
    - Black Peter (1904)
    - Charles Augustus Milverton (1904)

- o The Six Napoleons (1904)
- o The Three Students (1904)
- o The Golden Pince-Nez (1904)
- o The Missing Three-Quarter (1904)
- o The Abbey Grange (1904)
- o The Second Stain (1904)

- His Last Bow
  - o Wisteria Lodge (1908)
  - o The Cardboard Box (1893)
  - o The Red Circle (1911)
  - o The Bruce-Partington Plans (1908)
  - o The Dying Detective (1913)
  - o Lady Francis Carfax (1911)
  - o The Devil's Foot (1910)
  - o His Last Bow (1917)

- The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes
  - o The Mazarin Stone (1921)
  - o Thor Bridge (1922)

Document 5: Conan Doyle Estate's Response to Motion for Summary Judgment

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS EASTERN DIVISION

LESLIE S. KLINGER, an individual, Plaintiff,
v.
CONAN DOYLE ESTATE, LTD., a business Entity organized under the laws of the United Kingdom, Defendant.

CONAN DOYLE'S RESPONSE IN OPPOSITION TO PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT PURSUANT TO FRCP 56
Defendant Conan Doyle Estate, Ltd. (Conan Doyle) hereby opposes Plaintiff's Motion for Summary Judgment as follows.

INTRODUCTION

Sherlock Holmes is perhaps the most recognizable fictional character in modern literature. He is the creation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who over a period of forty-one years wrote four novels and fifty-six short stories creating and developing Holmes's character. Of these sixty stories creating Sherlock Holmes, known as the Canon, the last ten stories are fully protected by United States copyrights.

Not content to wait for the last of these copyrights to expire in 2022, plaintiff Leslie Klinger seeks a declaration that his list of "Sherlock Holmes Story Elements" is in the public domain. While fifty of Sir Arthur's original Holmes stories are indeed in the public domain, Plaintiff's list includes material Plaintiff himself admits was created in Sir Arthur's last ten copyrighted stories (the Ten Stories). This admission alone requires denial of Plaintiff's requested summary judgment.

Even more significant, Plaintiff seeks a declaration that the fictional characters of Holmes and Watson are available for all to use. But Plaintiff does not argue for that in so many words or list "the Sherlock Holmes character" or "the Dr. Watson character" on his list of allegedly free story elements. To have done so would have entailed answering the question whether those characters were created strictly in the public domain stories, or whether the characters' creation continued throughout the copyrighted Ten Stories. The facts are that Sir Arthur continued creating the characters in the copyrighted Ten Stories, adding significant aspects of each character's background, creating new history about the dynamics of their own relationship, changing Holmes's outlook on the world, and giving him new skills. And Sir Arthur did this in a non-linear way. Each of the Ten Stories is set at various points earlier in the two men's lives—and even late stories create new aspects of the men's youthful character. In other words, at any given point in their fictional lives, the characters depend on copyrighted character development.

By avoiding the question whether the literary characters were created in part in copyrighted stories, and instead listing parts of the characters from public domain stories (but even here slipping into admittedly copyrighted material) Plaintiff suggests that Holmes and Watson can be dismantled into partial versions of themselves. But a complex literary personality can no more be unraveled without disintegration than a human personality. While one case and one commentator have opined that in a series of works featuring the same character, the character is created in the first story in the series and enters the public domain along with that first story, those authorities addressed flat, simplistic entertainment characters. Such characters genuinely are created in the first work in a series, and succeeding works merely put the same character into new scenarios without the character continuing to be formed and developed.

No court has yet addressed this issue in the context of a literary character continuously created in a corpus of works. Although basic principles of copyright law apply, the outcome depends on the facts of when and where a character was created. A sufficiently distinct fictional character is recognized as an independent work of authorship with its own copyright. Such a character might be created whole in one story, or might be created in an arc of 100 stories, but that character is a work of authorship separate from the stories.

The critical question then is *In what stories were the literary characters Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson created*? If the creation of the characters was complete in works published in the United States before 1923, the characters are in the public domain. If, however, the characters as works of authorship were only completed in copyrighted stories published in 1923 or after, the characters are works of authorship protected by United States copyright law.

The present dispute came about because Plaintiff co-edited a collection of short stories by contemporary writers using Sherlock Holmes and materials from the Canon. Plaintiff believed Conan Doyle's permission was not necessary, but his publisher disagreed and obtained a license from Conan Doyle. The book not only used Holmes and Watson but also used clear story elements from the copyrighted Ten Stories. Conan Doyle learned of Plaintiff's plans for a sequel when one of the contributors wrote to inform Conan Doyle that he intended to use one of Sir Arthur's fictional characters originating in the copyrighted 1926 story "The Three Gables." Plaintiff nonetheless seeks a declaration that his proposed new book will not violate Conan Doyle's copyrights.

ARGUMENT

I. SHERLOCK HOLMES AND DR. WATSON, AS LITERARY CHARACTERS, ARE INDEPENDENT WORKS OF AUTHORSHIP PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT

Fictional characters who are distinctly delineated have long been recognized as having their own copyright. *Nichols* v. *Universal Pictures Corp.*, 45 F.2d 119 (1930) (Learned Hand, J.) (holding copyright protection granted to a character if it is developed with enough specificity to constitute protectable expression). In *Gaiman v. McFarlane*, 360 F.3d 644, 660 (7th Cir. 2004), the court held that a stock comic book character was distinct enough to have its own copyright because his "age, obviously phony title ('Count'), what he knows and says, his name, and his faintly Mosaic facial features combine to create a distinctive character. No more is required for a character copyright." *See also Suntrust Bank v. Houghton Mifflin Co.*, 268 F.3d 1257, 1266-67 (11th Cir. 2001) (Scarlet O'Hara and Rhett Butler from *Gone with the Wind* protected by copyright); *Burroughs v. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc.*, 683 F.2d 610, 632 (2d Cir. 1982) (Tarzan); *Walt Disney Productions v. Air Pirates,* 581 F.2d 751, 755 (9th Cir. 1978) (Disney characters); *Salinger v. Colting*, 641 F. Supp. 2d 250, 254 (S.D.N.Y. 2009) (Holden Caulfield from *The Catcher in the Rye*).

Sherlock Holmes is among the most distinctive characters ever created—in fact courts have used him as an example of a highly delineated character obviously entitled to copyright protection. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc. v. American Honda Motor Co.,* 900 F. Supp. 1287, 1296 (C.D. Cal. 1995) ("Like Rocky, Sherlock Holmes, Tarzan, and

Superman, James Bond has certain character traits that have been developed over time through the sixteen films in which he appears.").

Plaintiff in this case does not dispute that the literary character Sherlock Holmes is sufficiently distinct to be copyrightable—or that Sir Arthur's last Ten Stories are still protected by copyright. (Pl. Local R. 56.1(b)(3) Stmt. of Mat. Facts, ¶ 15.) (hereafter "Pl. Stmt. of Mat. Facts")

Plaintiff takes an approach that appears eminently reasonable: a list of "the characters, character traits, dialogue, settings, artifacts, story lines and other story elements" introduced in Sir Arthur's pre-1923 public domain works. (Compl., at 5 & Ex. A.) This approach is reasonable for dialogue, artifacts, and story lines created in the pre-1923 works. But the characters of Holmes and Watson were not completely created in pre-1923 works—a fact Plaintiff's own list of "Sherlock Holmes Story Elements" admits. (*Id.*, Ex. A.)

A. The Holmes and Watson Characters Were Created Throughout the Canon and Only Completed in the Final Copyrighted Stories

Although Holmes and Watson were introduced in Sir Arthur's 1887 novel *A Study in Scarlet*, the characters were not fully created or disclosed in that novel. Sir Arthur continued to create Holmes's and Watson's characters throughout the Canon, adding attributes, dimensions, background, and both positive and negative change in the characters until the last story. Plaintiff's own "Sherlock Holmes Story Elements" admits that the following two out of its list of seven character traits of Dr. Watson were created in copyrighted stories:

• Second wife (only mentioned in copyrighted stories "The Illustrious Client" and "The Blanched Soldier")

• Former athlete ("The Sussex Vampire" [1924]) (Pl. Stmt. of Mat. Facts, Ex. A, at 2.)

What Plaintiff does not admit is the significance of these developments in creating Watson's character and his relationship with Holmes during the middle of the men's careers. As a result of Watson's second marriage he moves out of Baker Street, altering his relationship with Holmes and requiring Holmes instead of Watson to narrate two cases, one before Holmes's retirement from active practice ("The Blanched Soldier," 1926), the other well into his retirement ("The Lion's Mane," 1926). (Conan Doyle's Stmt. of Add'l Mat. Facts, ¶ 6(b), 6(j).). In a copyrighted 1926 story, Holmes calls Watson's remarriage and move "the only selfish action which I can recall in our association. I was alone." (*Id.*) The implications of Watson's second marriage are even more farreaching for his own character and background, leading some scholars to surmise that Watson married not merely twice but as many as five times. (*Id.*) Because

Plaintiff admits his "Sherlock Holmes Story Elements" contain copyrighted material, his motion cannot be granted.

Sherlock Holmes's character also undergoes significant changes and development in the copyrighted stories—but Plaintiff's list fails to mention this. (Pl. Stmt. of Mat. Facts, Ex. A.)

Examples of Holmes' character development in copyrighted stories include:

• Holmes softens and grows more emotional over time, revealed in the copyrighted 1926 story "The Lion's Mane." (Conan Doyle's Stmt. of Add'l Mat. Facts, ¶ 6(a).)

• Holmes's and Watson's relationship develops dramatically in copyrighted stories. The copyrighted "The Three Garridebs" (1924) reveals how both men's character and relationship had changed. When the story's villain fires a gun at Holmes and Watson, wounding Watson, Holmes says:

> "You're not hurt, Watson? For God's sake, say you are not hurt!"
>
> It was worth a wound—it was worth many wounds—to know the depth of loyalty and love which lay behind that cold mask. The clear, hard eyes were dimmed for a moment, and the firm lips were shaking. For the one and only time I caught a glimpse of a great heart as well as a great brain. All my years of humble but single-minded service culminated in that moment of revelation.

This scene is critical for understanding the two characters, the way Holmes changed throughout the Canon, and the nature of his relationship with Watson over the years of their association. Plaintiff himself admits in one of his books that this copyrighted scene shows "Holmes's and Watson's relationship has grown from that of mere flatmates in 1881 to the closest of friendships." (*Id.*, ¶ 6(b).)

• Holmes changes from someone who cares little for dogs to someone with such great interest in them and their relationship to humans that, in the copyrighted "The Creeping Man" (1923), he intends to write a monograph on the subject. (*Id.*, ¶ 6(c).)

• Holmes's character takes on a darker cast in the Ten Stories, even becoming less racially tolerant—which Plaintiff himself acknowledged is "an attitude markedly different from his evident racial tolerance on view in [an earlier public domain] story." (*Id.*, ¶ 6(d).)

• Holmes is given a knowledge of medicine that he uses for detection—previously unknown about him from public domain stories. (*Id.*, ¶ 6(e).)

• the Ten Stories reveal that after Watson moved out of Baker Street, Holmes converted his practice into an "Agency" employing various informants and a "general utility man" named Mercer "who looks up routine business" for Holmes's Agency. (*Id.*, ¶ 6(f).)

• Holmes's famous retirement—the endpoint from which we learn of a gradual mellowing of his personality—is depicted only in the Ten Stories, where we learn that Holmes has given up London and his detective Agency and has moved to the South Downs of Sussex, quietly keeping bees and writing about nature. (*Id.*, ¶ 6(i).)

These examples do not list all copyrighted elements in the Ten Stories, only major aspects of Holmes's and Watson's character development; many more details could be identified by descending to greater levels of specificity in the Ten Stories. These facts do, however, establish that the "Holmes" and "Watson" referred to on Plaintiff's "Sherlock Holmes Story Elements" are works of authorship that incorporate copyrighted material. *McGraw-Edison Co. v. Walt Disney Prod.*, 787 F.2d 1163, 1173 (7th Cir. 1986) (holding genuine issues of material fact precluded summary judgment).

Moreover, Sir Arthur did not create Holmes's or Watson's character in a linear way. (Conan Doyle's Stmt. of Add'l Mat. Facts, ¶¶ 2, 4.) The last ten copyrighted stories did not merely develop Holmes and Watson's characters at the end of their lives. (*Id.*) All of the Ten Stories are set at various points earlier in the two men's lives, revealing aspects of their character as younger men. (*Id.*, ¶¶ 4-5.) Thus at any given point in their fictional lives, the two men's characters depend on the Ten Stories. It is impossible to split the characters into public domain versions and complete versions.

B. A Literary Character Is a Single Integrated Work of Authorship

Plaintiff's "Sherlock Holmes Story Elements" does not ask for the complete Holmes or Watson characters to be declared in the public domain. Instead Plaintiff lists "As to Holmes himself" and "As to Dr. Watson," and then lists partial renderings of their characters. (Pl. Stmt. of Mat. Facts, Ex. A.) Doing so both sidesteps the question where the characters were created and implies that the characters can be unraveled.

The notion that an author's literary character can be dismantled into more and less complete versions is wrong for two related reasons. First, copyright law protects "works of authorship." 17 U.S.C. § 102 (1978). A character copyright recognizes that the character is a work of authorship separate from the stories in which the character appears. *Rice v. Fox Broadcasting Co.*, 330 F.3d 1170, 1175 (9th Cir. 2003) (holding characters "receive protection apart from the copyrighted work"). As a work of authorship, a character has one copyright; no decision suggests that a single character constitutes multiple works of authorship or has multiple copyrights. But the character as a single work of authorship may very well be created in multiple stories. *Anderson v. Stallone*, No. 87- 0592 WDKGX, 1989 WL 206431, at *6 (C.D. Cal. 1989) (Rocky Balboa character as developed in three movies "constitute[s] expression protection by copyright independent from the story in which they are contained"); *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc. v. American Honda Motor Co.,* 900 F. Supp. 1287, 1293–96 (C.D. Cal. 1995) (James Bond as defined in sixteen films protected by a character copyright).

Whether Holmes's character was complete in the first story or whether his creator developed a single organically developing person through all sixty stories is a question of fact. Not only are Holmes's and Watson's characters developed throughout the entire Canon, but the Ten Stories contribute dramatically to their characters. (Conan Doyle's Stmt. of Add'l Mat. Facts, ¶¶ 2–6.)

Plaintiff's position would create multiple personalities out of Sherlock Holmes: a "public domain" version of his character attempting to only use only public domain traits, next to the true character Sir Arthur created. But there are not sixty versions of Sherlock Holmes in the sixty stories; there is one complex Sherlock Holmes. To attempt to dismantle Holmes's character is not only impossible as a practical matter, but would ignore the reality that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created a single complex character complete in sixty stories. (Sayers Aff., ¶ 12.)

Because the Holmes and Watson characters as works of authorship were not complete until the Ten Stories were published in 1927, the copyrights protecting each character were not complete until 1927. Under United States copyright law, Plaintiff concedes, works of authorship published after 1922 are still protected by copyright. (Pl. Stmt. of Mat. Facts, Ex. B (listing the Ten Stories and conceding they "have not yet entered the public domain in the United States").) This is true even if prior works containing the character are in the public domain. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 900 F. Supp. at 1293 (rejecting argument that MGM lost exclusive rights in James Bond character merely because Bond appeared in *Casino Royale* and *Never Say Never Again*, in which MGM had no copyright).

C. Case Law and Commentary on this Issue are Based On Flat Entertainment Characters Completed in the First Story in a Series; No Court Has Yet Addressed This Issue in the Context of a Complex Literary Character Created over a Substantial Corpus

1. *Silverman* Does not Address a Character Created In a Substantial Corpus

One case and one commentator argue that a character goes into the public domain along with the first work in a series featuring that character—on the grounds that the character was created in that first work. The case is *Silverman v. CBS, Inc.*, 870 F.2d 40, 50 (2d Cir. 1989), and it involved the characters Amos 'n' Andy. Their creators had assigned their rights to pre-1948 Amos 'n' Andy radio plays to CBS, and those radio plays were allowed to enter the public domain. *Id.* After 1948, CBS created several years' worth of copyrighted Amos 'n' Andy television shows. *Id.* at 42. The characters' original creators sought a declaration that the characters were in the public domain so that they could create a Broadway musical using Amos and Andy. *Id.* at 43.

The court actually held that the characters in their television versions were protected even though the underlying written radio scripts were in the public domain. *Id.* at 50.

But in doing so, the court also held that the Amos 'n' Andy characters revealed in those radio scripts went into the public domain along with the first scripts. *Id.* This holding is factually appropriate for Amos 'n' Andy, who are flat entertainment characters created complete in the first few stories featuring them. (Woiwode Aff., ¶ 10.) A flat character is one "that is two-dimensional, without the depth and complexity of a living person; the opposite of a *round character.*" (*Id.*) Flat characters do not continue to change in each new story; they merely find themselves in different scenarios bringing about changes in dialogue, not character. (*Id.*)

In literary fiction, by contrast, characters continue to develop, frequently upsetting a reader's expectations. (Sayers Aff., ¶ 5.) Sherlock Holmes is such character, having all of the complex background and maturing emotions, thoughts, relationships and actions that characterize human development over time. (*Id.*) One of the reasons for Holmes's unique appeal is precisely that Sir Arthur created surprising new facets of the Holmes character throughout the Canon. (*Id.*)

To turn *Silverman* into a rule that *any* character in a series is completely created in the first work in that series—while it would accurately reflect the creation of flat characters in an entertainment series—would contradict reality for dimensional literary characters like Sherlock Holmes. Such characters are created continuously through many works, and such a rule would dismantle those characters into fragments their authors did not create. (Woiwode Aff., ¶ 17; Sayers Aff., ¶ 12.) Many of literature's most important characters were created over a series of works, from Sophocles' *Oedipus* trilogy to the Adam Dalgliesh novels of P.D. James, the Sherlock Holmes stories of Conan Doyle, to William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels and stories and their development of the characters in the Compson family, the Zuckerman novels of Philip Roth, the Rabbit novels of John Updike, and many others. (Woiwode Aff., ¶ 15; Sayers Aff., ¶ 11.) A rule that every character is created only in the first story about that character would be simply untrue as applied to Sherlock Holmes and many other literary characters. (Conan Doyle's Stmt. of Add'l Facts, ¶ 8.)

Although *Warner Bros. Entm't, Inc. v. X One X Prod.*, 644 F.3d 584 (8th Cir. 2011) followed *Silverman's* reasoning, its holding supports Conan Doyle. In *X One X*, film publicity posters, still photographs, and theater lobby cards for *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone With the Wind* had entered the public domain, and a company began using the film characters on a variety of products. *Id.* at 590. The court held that the fact that still photographs showing characters from the movies were in the public domain *did not* inject the entirety of the film characters into the public domain, because these still images did not anticipate "the full range of distinctive speech, movement, demeanor, and other personality traits that combine to establish a copyrightable character." *Id.* at 598.

2. *Pannonia Farms* Offered a Dictum Without Benefit Of Factual or Legal Development or the Proper Parties

Plaintiff cites *Pannonia Farms, Inc v. USA Cable*, No. 03-7841, 2004 WL 1276842 (S.D.N.Y. June 8, 2004), in which a court addressed an infringement claim asserted by a pretender to the Conan Doyle copyrights. The court held that the plaintiff, an entity called Pannonia Farms, Inc., did not "own[] the copyrights, trademarks and related rights in the works of Sir Doyle," and this was the holding that decided the case. *Id.* at *6. But the court went further and stated in a dictum that *Silverman's* rule about the Amos 'n' Andy characters applied to Sherlock Holmes. *Id.* at *9.

The court did so without benefit of factual development on the creation of the character or briefing on the legal issues. The plaintiff (owner of no Conan Doyle rights) told the court it was not arguing that the Holmes and Watson characters were protected by copyright. *Id.* at *9 & n.19. Conan Doyle, the true owner of the rights, was not a party to the case and had no opportunity to present the facts to the court. The court and parties even got the number of copyrighted Conan Doyle stories wrong, saying only nine are still copyrighted when in fact ten are, as Plaintiff Klinger concedes here. Plaintiff Klinger acknowledges Conan Doyle was not a party to *Pannonia Farms*, thus conceding there was no opportunity for true factual development. (Pl. Mem. at 10 & n.2.)

3. Professor Nimmer's Opinion on this "Difficult Issue" is Based On Cartoon Characters and a Strained Analogy to Derivative Works

The late Professor Nimmer called the question Plaintiff presents a "difficult question":

> [M]ay the character depicted in all of the works be appropriated for use in a new story created by the copier? Assuming the character to be sufficiently developed as to be protectable, arguably such conduct would constitute an infringement of those works that remain in copyright. The better view, however, would appear to be that once a copyright in the first work that contained the character enters the public domain, then it is not copyright infringement for others to copy the character in works that are otherwise original with the copier, even though later works in the original series remain protected by copyright.

Melville B. Nimmer, *1 Nimmer on Copyright*, § 2.12, at 2.178.30-31. Out of the four cases Nimmer cited to support his view, only one involved literary characters—but in that case the entire original series had gone into the public domain. *Kurlan v. CBS, Inc.*, 256 P.2d 962, 968 (Cal. 1953) ("any property interest which [the original author] may have had in either the story or characters of "My Sister Eileen" has been lost by publication."). The case thus cannot shed light on the situation before this Court, where the Ten Stories are admittedly protected. In addition, the decision did not involve federal copyright law, but rather a state intellectual property statute. *Id.* at 805.

The three remaining cases Nimmer cited to support his view are all cartoon cases involving classic flat characters created in their entirety in a single work. *Gantz v. Hercules Pub. Corp.*, 182 N.Y.S.2d 450 (S. Ct. 1959) (comic strip character Melvin the Monster; again the entire original series of works was in the public domain); *CBS v. DeCosta*, 377 F.2d 315 (1st Cir. 1967) (Plaintiff tried to create a character named "Paladin" out of himself, by wearing black suit, mustache, and using calling cards saying "Have Gun Will Travel"; court found no copyright protection in the persona); *Grant v. Kellogg Co.*, 58 F. Supp. 48 (S.D.N.Y. 1944) (Snap, Crackle, and Pop, created on the back of a cereal box as mascots for Kellogg's Rice Krispies; again the figures' creator had transferred all his rights to Kellogg and had no remaining copyright interest at all, unlike Conan Doyle). None of these cases shed any light on the continuing creation of a single character in a corpus, with a number of stories critical to the character's development still protected by copyright.[1]

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[1] Nor do *Siegel v. Warner Bros. Entm't Inc.*, 690 F. Supp. 2d 1048 (C.D. Cal 2009) or *Burroughs*, 683 F.2d 610, both cited by Plaintiff. *Siegel* involved Superman, another flat cartoon character, and the issue was whether an incomplete termination notice was harmless error, not whether the character or character elements had fallen Behind Prof. Nimmer's view lay a faulty analogy to derivative works: he suggested that in a series about the same character, all stories after the first "are in a sense derivative works." *Nimmer*, § 2.12, at 2.178.31. The point of this analogy is that a derivative work only has copyright protection for its incremental additions to the original. *Id*. Nimmer thus suggested a rule that when a writer creates a series of works featuring a single literary character, the character was created only in the first work, and succeeding works are mere derivatives. But an author's original series of works about a character are in no sense derivative works. A derivative work is statutorily defined as a work that recasts or adapts a prior work: A "derivative work" is a work based upon one or more preexisting works, such as a translation, musical arrangement, dramatization, fictionalization, motion picture version, sound recording, art reproduction, abridgment, condensation, or any other form in which a work may be recast, transformed, or adapted. A work consisting of editorial revisions, annotations, elaborations, or other modifications which, as a whole, represent an original work of authorship, is a "derivative work". 17 U.S.C. § 101 (1978). The last 59 stories of the Canon are not derivative works under any fair reading of this statute; nor is it fair to call the last three of John Updike's Rabbit quartet "derivative works," or every Faulkner novel about the Compson family after the first a derivative. (Woiwode Aff., ¶¶ 15- 16.) The arc of the character exists complete only in the series, so no single work or subset of the series can be considered derivative of any other subset. Nimmer's only support for his theory to the contrary was *Salinger v. Colting*, 641 F. Supp. 2d 250, 254 (S.D.N.Y. 2009). But Salinger wrote only one book about his character Holden Caulfield, and an infringer then pirated the character in an unauthorized derivative work. There was no series at all by Salinger, and the decision offers no support the notion that an author's own original series is derivative. into the public domain. *Id*. at 1051–52, 1058–59, 1072–73. *Burroughs* also did not address whether Tarzan had entered the public domain. The majority opinion is that a film was "not substantially similar to plaintiffs' copyrighted work except to the extent permitted by [an agreement with the defendant]." *Burroughs*, 683 F.2d at 611 ("We express no opinion on whether the character of Tarzan is covered by copyright, but hold that MGM, in any event, had the right to use the character in its 1981 film.") *Burroughs* is not based even on an assumption that aspects of the Tarzan character were in the public domain. Judge Newman's concurring opinion relies on there being "no dispute that the delineation [of the Tarzan character] was complete upon the 1912 appearance of the first Tarzan title Tarzan of the Apes." *Id*. at 631. The facts here are the opposite: Sherlock Holmes was *not* complete in early stories.

II. EVEN UNDER SILVERMAN'S INCREMENTAL EXPRESSION TEST, PLAINTIFF'S PROPOSED USE OF HOLMES AND WATSON WOULD INVADE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN THE TEN COPYRIGHTED STORIES

If the Court applied the analysis in *Silverman*—despite Holmes's creation throughout a corpus of works rather than in the first work—and concluded that a partial version of the Holmes character was in the public domain, Plaintiff would still be barred from invading any original expression in the Ten Stories. *X One X Prod.*, 644 F.2d at 596 ("[F]reedom to make new works based on public domain materials ends where the resulting derivative work comes into conflict with a valid copyright"); *Silverman*, 870 F.2d at 50 (holding plaintiff "is entitled to use the public domain material from the pre-1948 scripts and may do so up to the point at which he copies original expression added to the pre-1948 radio scripts and protected by valid CBS copyrights").

It is impossible to make new uses of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson without having some relationship between the two men. The famous push-pull of that relationship and its development from coldness to close friendship is created in the Ten Stories. (Stmt. Add'l Mat. Facts, ¶ 6.) No matter what point in their relationship one chooses, the spectrum itself is protected. (*Id.*)

In addition, the non-linear creation of Holmes's and Watson's characters makes it impossible to use them at any given point in their fictional lives without invading copyrighted character development in the Ten Stories. Plaintiff himself admits that Watson's youth is partly created in a copyrighted story and his marital status created in another. Conan Doyle has set out many more copyrighted aspects of the integrated development of each character. (Pl. Mem., Ex. A, at 2; Conan Doyle's Stmt. of Add'l Mat'l Facts, ¶ 6.) Highly creative fictional characters and works are at the core of copyright's subject matter and are entitled to strong protection. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 900 F. Supp. at 1303 (holding James Bond entitled to strong copyright protection because "careful visual delineation of a fictional character as developed over sixteen films and three decades, requires greater protection of the fictional works at issue than that accorded more factually-based or scientific works.").

III. SUMMARY JUDGMENT SHOULD BE DENIED BECAUSE THERE IS NO CASE OR CONTROVERSY

A. An Actual Controversy Does Not Exist

In support of his claim of an actual controversy, Klinger relies on his efforts to publish *In the Company of Sherlock* (P.'s Stmt. Mat. Facts, ¶ 23), Conan Doyle's alleged interference with publication of the book (*Id.*, ¶ 21), and the question "whether the

publication of *In the Company of Sherlock* by Plaintiff, his co-editor and their licensees infringes any copyright of Defendant." (Compl., ¶ 39.)

"The declaratory judgment plaintiff must be able to show that the feared lawsuit from the other party is immediate and real, rather than merely speculative." *Hyatt Int'l Corp. v. Coco*, 302 F.3d 707, 712 (7th Cir. 2002). Plaintiff does not allege, let alone offer evidence, that Conan Doyle threatened litigation. Plaintiff relies on Conan Doyle's statement that if he proceeded with bringing out his infringing book, he should "not expect to see it offered for sale by Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and similar retailers," because Conan Doyle works "with those company[ies] routinely to weed out unlicensed uses of Sherlock Holmes from their offerings." (Compl., ¶ 31.) This statement merely indicates Conan Doyle will continue to police online retailers and remove online infringing works under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. It does not, as Plaintiff claims, establish "a reasonable" or any other "apprehension that Defendant will file suit against him." (*Id.*, ¶ 33.)

To bolster his position, Klinger references the earlier work he co-edited, *A Study in Sherlock*. (Compl., ¶ 26.) Although Plaintiff did not think that book required a license from Conan Doyle, his publisher disagreed and entered into a license agreement, mooting that controversy. (Compl., ¶ 26.)

B. The Court Should Decline Jurisdiction for Prudential Reasons

The Declaratory Judgment Act "has long been understood to confer on federal courts unique and substantial discretion in deciding whether to declare the rights of litigants." *MedImmune, Inc. v. Genentech, Inc.*, 549 U.S. 118, 136 (2007). Thus, even if an action for a declaratory judgment presents an actual controversy sufficient to pass constitutional muster, a court may refuse to grant declaratory relief for prudential reasons. *Alcan Aluminum Ltd. v. Dep't of Revenue of State of Or.*, 724 F.2d 1294, 1298 (7th Cir. 1984). The Seventh Circuit has cautioned that a "[d]eclaratory judgment should not be granted to try particular issues without settling the entire controversy, or to interfere with an action already instituted." *Sears, Roebuck & Co., v. American Mut. Liab. Ins. Co.*, 372 F.2d 435, 438 (7th Cir. 1967) (internal quotation marks omitted).

Prudential considerations counsel against exercising jurisdiction even if Plaintiff could establish an actual controversy. Conan Doyle learned of Plaintiff's proposed new book, *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes*, when one of the contributing authors indicated he intended to use a undisputedly copyrighted character from the Ten Stories. (Conan Doyle's Stmt. Add'l Mat. Facts, ¶ 12.) At this point in the litigation, it is at best unclear whether Klinger is asking this Court to determine whether his new book infringes Conan Doyle's copyrights or whether he merely seeks an advisory opinion regarding the status of various Holmes-related story elements. What is clear is that Klinger relies on his plans to publish *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes,* and Conan Doyle's alleged

interference with that publication, to establish an actual controversy. But Plaintiff has not offered the book to the Court or parties for an infringement determination to be made. In this posture the Court cannot resolve the claimed controversy—whether Plaintiff's planned new work infringes Conan Doyle's copyrights. *Sears, Roebuck & Co.*, 372 F.2d at 438 (Seventh Circuit has cautioned that a "[d]eclaratory judgment should not be granted to try particular issues without settling the entire controversy . . . .").

'The Elite Devotee Redux'

This is the full content of Philip Shreffler's 'The Elite Devotee' from March 1988 and 'The Elite Devotee Redux' from January 2013. The text was transcribed from a photocopy of the original document, and thus contains some imperfections. Word choices that were not certain appear in bold. Where words were impossible to discern, their places have been marked as "xxx" to indicate their absence. The structure of paragraphs has been maintained.

The Elite Devotee Redux

Phillip Shreffler, while editor of The Baker Street Journal, *devoted his March 1988 Editor's Gaslamp to the topic he called "The Elite Devotee." At that time, Jeremy Brett fandom threatened to overwhelm more traditional forms of Sherlockian sensibility, and Shreffler's acute observations offered a way to think about the vast gulf between the Holmes fan and the Holmes devotee. We seem condemned to repeat the past, as a new fan movement has emerged in circumstances all too similar to those that preempted his 1988 editorial, and so we have asked Prof. Shreffler to offer an up-date of his notion of the elite devotee. We start with his original column, from* The Baker Street Journal, *March 1988.*

The Elite Devotee

By Philip A. Shreffler

In all of my writing and speaking about the cult of Sherlock Holmes, I have scrupulously avoided using the word "fan" and have employed "devotee" instead. Though there is little practical differences in these words' definitions, there is, I think, a substantial difference in what they connote. "Fan," in fact, is an informal word (derived from "fanatic," as it happens, not that it matters); "devotee" is a word unto itself and is therefore by its very nature more formal. I like to think of Sherlockians—we ought to think of Sherlockians—as devotees, not fans.

"Devotee" suggests the Old World gentlemanly and ladylike milieu in which Sherlock Holmes lived and, later, from which the Baker Street Irregulars were born. "Fan" (regardless of when or by whom the word was early used) suggests the more casual, less propitious ambiance associated with life in the mid-to-late twentieth century. A Sherlockian's allegiance here should be clear.

And when the press labels organized Sherlockians as "elite," it does so because that refers not to one's financial status but to one's intellectual and behavioral devotion (hence, devotee) to that time "before the world went all awry." The Sherlockian cult as

an *elite of devotees* is envied precisely because it is capable of preserving in actual practice a gentler, more civilized world—in which the "fan" may acquire but which he has not xxx into his life.

The true Sherlockian devotee presents him- or herself as a gentleman or lady when representing Sherlockians publicly and, one hopes, at all other moments as well. The fan feels no such compulsion. The devotee is acutely aware of social etiquette; often, too often, the fan has only the vaguest awareness that there are such injunctions. The devotee, mindful of the earlier time that saw the genesis of Sherlock Holmes and of the Irregulars, turns out in a suit or a jacket and tie (depending upon the occasion)—or in commensurate attire if a lady; the fan **outfits** himself with his blue jeans and slogan tee-shirt. The devotee is a person of language, of words; the fan is more commonly a person of half-ideas, half-expressed. The devotee is comfortable in genteel, dignified Sherlockian surroundings; the fan (dare we suggest this?) is at home at a science-fiction convention.

Do Sherlockians (and should they) struggle uphill against the prevailing social tide of public behavior today? Yes, they do. And yes, they should. For the Sherlockian is devoted to the world where it is always 1895 and always 1934. As Basil Rathbone is quoted in this issue as having observed about early meetings of the BSI, such **commotions** were affairs of "protocol" at which members were on "their best behaviour." That rather expresses it.

The Elite Devotee Redux

During the course of the century just past (and it seems already an entire century since we lived in it), the mock-scholarly pursuit of Sherlock Holmes and Baker Street xxx was born and attained its lushest flowering. The men and women who engaged in this cerebral activity (for so it was), and engaged in it at its best, I have called "elite devotees" as opposed to Sherlock "fans." Now, in just the few years of this brave new millennium, the term "Sherlockian fandom" has entered the poorer and often Internet-inspired lexicon of public discourse to such a degree that even *The Baker Street Journal*, the publication of the Baker Street Irregulars, has embraced it. (To those fans an editorial in the Spring **2012** member of the Journal preferred an egalitarian if somewhat chilling "Welcome to your new home!")

I used "elite devotee" for the first time in print in The Baker Street Journal at a time when it was under my editorship. My suggestion was that elite devotion to Holmes does not refer to one's economic wealth, rather to one's intellectual wealth. After all, one doesn't need to own the silverware in order to know which fork to use. The elite devotee is one devoted to "that age before the world went all awry," to preserving in practice a gentler, more civilized existence, to bringing to bear upon the subject of the

Master of Baker Street superior education, **native** wisdom, social sophistication, verbal grace, reverence for the printed word, and a commitment to the principles of reason to which Holmes himself subscribed.

The term fan, of course, is derived from "fanatic." Its collective cousin "fandom" achieved its most widespread early cultural use with reference to science fiction buffs and those who **attend** upon comic book characters. Fandom gave rise to a subculture and jargon of its own, one of the most common examples of the latter being the use of "con" first as slang and then as colloquialism for "convention" as in, for example, the annual comic book convention, Comic Con. Troubling, however, is the conflation of Sherlockians as established in the twentieth century with its present practice by those whose primary adherence to Holmes is through the BBC's *Sherlock* television series and the kindred "I Believe in Sherlock" movement (slapping up signs to that effect willy-nilly in public places in the U.S. and Europe), commitment to both of which has flourished particularly on the Internet.

An April 2012 article by Jeanette Laredo, appearing in The Journal of Victorian Culture Online (where else?), is entitled "I Believe in Sherlock Holmes: Sherlockian Fandom Then & Now," and opens with an epigrammatic quotation from a "Sherlockian fanfic," which I take to mean "fan fiction" and not something vulgar in German. It then proceeds to discuss the adoration of Benedict Cumberbatch's modernized Holmes in Sherlock and the spirited conversation about the man and the series initiated by "internet fanboys… on Twitter and Tumblr," while referring, in the same breath, to the 1934 first formal meeting of the Baker Street Irregulars as one of the "fans" who first gathered at "The first Sherlock 'con'" thus suggesting an unbroken lineal descent (and descent is the right word) from essayist, critic and novelist Christopher Morley's BSI to the xxx of a TV program and Internet pop culture while, astonishingly, using the same terminology for both.

Ms. Laredo does mention that some earlier Irregulars were "not merely fans but writers" and cites "such luminaries as Ellery Queen, Basil Rathbone, Isaac Asimov, T.S. Eliot and Franklin Delano Roosevelt," properly impressed with the catalogue of names—to which many more could be added. View from this twenty-first-century perspective, not all Irregulars were writers, but all Irregulars were fans. And the academic raiment with which the BSI clothed its writing, she argued, "irked" some scholars.* (This perception seems to posit that the author views "fandom" as of lesser importance than academia, or at least that the latter views the former that way, and presumably that it doesn't pay to be too articulate about it.)

"The uncomfortable relationship between fandom and academia," Ms. Laredo asserts, "is personified in *The Baker Street Journal…*" In addition to the misuse of the word "personified," this notion is a common neophyte's error. The Grand Game of Sherlockians never sought academic approval and was never intended to be

academically considered; it is a parody of scholarship and always has been—though many academics have indulged in it, including myself. It is opposite to xxx those both within and without the Sherlockian world that the Game is one of intellectual gymnastics performed with the minutiae of the Holmes xxx, practiced principally in essay form. Those few **dour** professors and critics outside Sherlockian xxx who have maligned the Game as illegitimate in a scholarly sense do not understand that. To misapprehend Sherlockians in this way is to be utterly xxx, to attack it for this reason is a waste of time. And "fans," especially those for whom Holmes exists primarily through the popular electronic media, do not at all represent the Grand Game as it has been practiced for a century, and they err when they assume that they do.

But it does seem to be a fact that the public edifice of Sherlockians, as it has been reconstructed in recent years, is indeed open to a probably justified disdain. When critic Edmund Wilson, in 1945, indicated the enterprise, and particularly The Baker Street Irregulars, as "infantile," he scarcely could have imagined the advent of the "fan" of today.

I wrote that the "fan," as opposed to the "elite devotee," is commonly an individual of half-ideas, half-expressed—or possibly only enthusiasm with few or no ideas at all. Since much contemporary "fandom" occurs on the Internet, I am reminded that Twitter allows only for communication limited to 140 characters, hardly a medium for a complex idea—even for a single idea. And because of the Internet's immediacy (one can bang out on the keyboard any ill-considered notion, even one substantially longer than a "tweet," and instantly flash it to many thousands), this can lead easily to the casual slovenliness of expression that contemporary electronic media engender. Indeed, the cyber-fan puts us in mind of the **aphoristic** Thoreau's caveat from the first chapter of *Walden*:

"Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at; as railroads lead to Boston or New York. We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate."

 To make this point, perhaps most grimly, consider a pair of statements. The first is from Edgar W. Smith, xxx of the Baker Street Irregulars from 194x to 194x, on his establishment of The Baker Street Journal. It appeared in the April 195x member of that periodical:

"…when the possibility of publishing a journal of Sherlockians was first discussed, back in 1945, there was much argument as to how often, and with what number of pages, such a periodical might be made to appear. Quite a few desirable items had been crowded out of [Smith's anthology] Profile by Gaslight, when it came out in 1944, and

these, it was felt, could for a nucleus around which an irregular annual, or even semi-annual, could safely be built."

Compare Smith's *lucid* pronouncement to the transcript of a "podcast" on the Baker Street Babes' website, featuring Kristina Manente (who was somewhat fawningly feted, to our surprise and discomfort, in the Spring 2012 BSJ) on her founding of the Babes, a fan group that dotes upon the Sherlock television series:

"Basically, I did a radio show in college, and I was like, I love podcasts, I want to do a podcast! So, I had all these friends who were Sherlock Holmes fans, and I made this Twitter list—I just called them the Baker Street Babes, and someone else was like 'that sounds like a group of something!' And I was like… 'Speaking of, do you want to do this with me?" [*sic*]

The comparison may be unfair in the sense that Smith was writing in his typically deliberate and articulate way, and Ms. Manente was speaking in an interview situation. Yet it is impossible to imagine Smith—or any of the Baker Street Irregulars of an earlier and better day—uttering the lines above. Sherlockians ought to be a temple to wit and wisdom and grace of expression, not a **potting** shed on which is scrawled **derogatory** graffiti.

It is this difference, largely, that distinguishes those intellectually elite devotees (as well as the ones who still exist to carry the torch) from the "Sherlock fandom" of today. However, it would be erroneous to perceive the subversion of the best of what Sherlockians is as being limited to those who obsess over a television series or who live their lives through the Internet.

Organized, Sherlockiana itself seems to be devolving when it should be evolving, growing in size but shrinking in influence. Once, The New York Times covered annual dinners of the Baker Street Irregulars not infrequently. Today this is far less likely to occur, even though—or possibly because of the fact that—the BSI's former simple and simply-compelling annual dinner has now expanded into a five-day Sherlock Holmes convention—a "con"—and the structure of the organization has become a corporate octopus, in Frank Norris's sense of the word, with so many grasping arms that the wittily perspicacious examination of Holmes and Watson's lives and world, the BSI's presumed *raison d'etre,* seems secondary to the frenzy of activity occasioned by the organization's escalating size and physical complexity, and the product lines its members and would-be members are exhorted to buy.

Precisely because of its publishing (of books that are not always necessary or desired or even particularly scholarly in the most rigorous sense of the word), its committees, its Trust, its endeavor to establish an idiosyncratic and uneven "archive" at a prestigious university, its mini-"cons" outside the traditional New York homes, its huge membership and its pursuit of international society status, the BSI is very far from the

intellectual intimacy afforded to those lucky, earlier elite Irregular devotees who could actually share ideas over dinner and engage in disputation over essayed Sherlockian hypotheses. The organization, which was once dedicated principally to affable celebration, has become too much a leviathan for that.

This is what led a member of the Irregulars to invoke a provision of the society's Constitution in order to form small Special Meetings as mandated by that puckish document. For some, attendance at one of the two Special Meetings that now exist comprises the only BSI event they attend during the larger "con" weekend, because they believe it to be Baker Street Irregularity in its truest and most quintessential form. It is certainly more intimate than hundreds of people crammed into a ballroom at the BSI-Con's banquet. So once again, elite devotees possessed of those qualities that I have already enumerated are able to adventure together, purely, into the Victorian and Edwardian byways and countryside in the company of the Master Detective, the canonical Holmes, unencumbered by machinations too vast for human comforts. That more Special Meetings may arrive is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

It is not, however, only those who may be perceived as dissidents who seem to apprehend deficiencies among the deep ranks of the larger Baker Street Irregulars. Within the past few years, in an effort to shore up the organization's public image—and maybe get it back in the *Times*—the BSI's official position regarding the admission of new members has come to be based less on a candidate's manifest intelligence and significant contributions to Sherlockian literature and more on his or her "exceptionality." Non-Sherlockian exceptionality, evidently, derives from an individual's accomplishments outside the realm of Sherlockiana. In other words, is this person noteworthy enough to attract flattery to the BSI? Possibly, it is only necessary to point out that one's can't buy dignity for one's self, but one certainly can attempt to hire it in the persons of others.

Since I may be liable to the charge of falling into the same trap that I identified earlier, and conflating the BBC *Sherlock* crowd with the Baker Street Irregulars, I should note that these two are not precisely the same order of beast, though there does seem to be occurring a sort of molecular recombination between the two that wants discouraging. The Island of Dr. Moreau is not a very pleasant place.

So let me argue then that there exist at least two substantial forces that stand at odds with the settled certainty of the elite devotee. One, the lightest-weight popular culture, brings far too little to the table to be seriously contemplated or intellectually welcomed. The other crushes the brightest and best under a tonnage of a rococo complexity from beneath which they cannot shine.

Perhaps it is too late. But we owe it to ourselves, we owe it to our progenitors, we owe it to future generation of genuine kinspirits we hope will follow us, to infuse what we

insist is devoted elitism—not the increasingly labyrinthine, complicated and top-heavy corporate structure of the current BSI and very certainly not any species of "fandom"— into our Sherlockian undertakings.

*Ms. Laredo does not identify which scholars.