

The influence of audiences on Sherlock Holmes

A discussion of Holmes's characteristics in Conan Doyle's stories and BBC series *Sherlock*

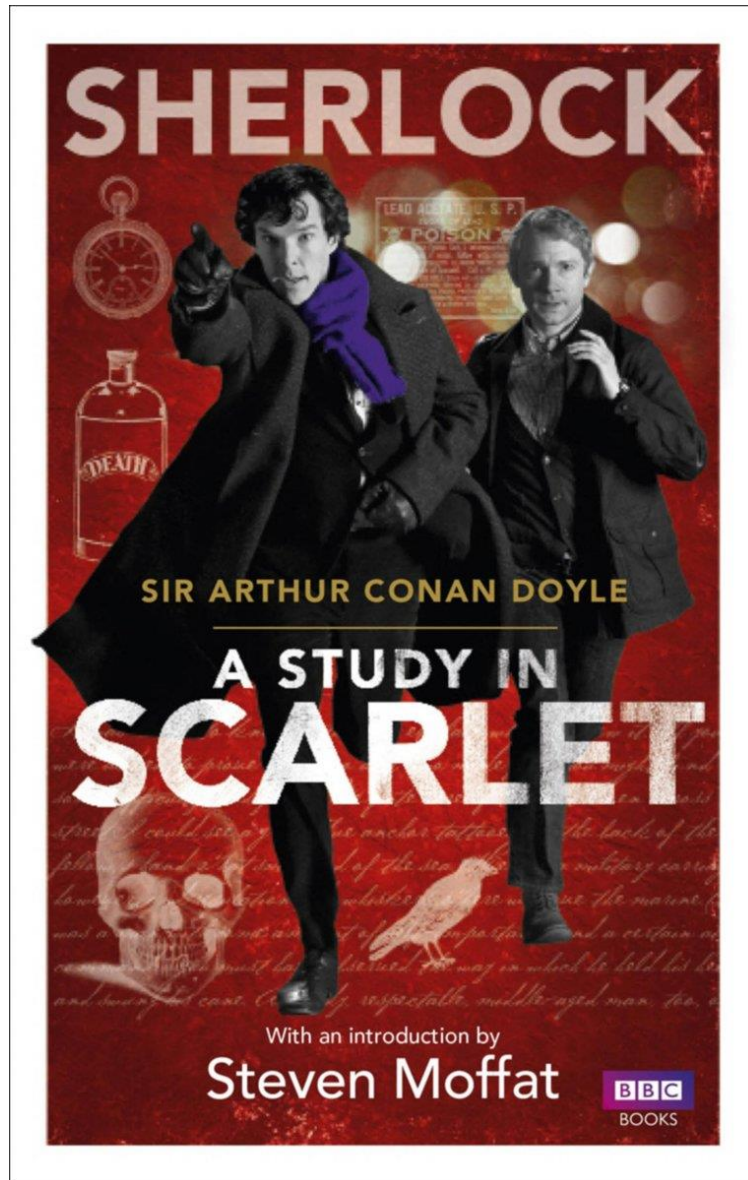


Fig. 1: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. *A Study in Scarlet*. London: BBC Books, 2011.

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Abstract

Sherlock is a modern adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories on Sherlock Holmes. In this thesis, I discuss the audiences' influence in causing a modern Sherlock Holmes adaptation to deviate from Conan Doyle's stories. I argue that Holmes's characteristics and the binary opposition between Holmes as the hero and Moriarty as the villain, as presented in Conan Doyle's stories, has changed in *Sherlock*. Therefore, I focus on answering the following question in this thesis: How are Holmes's typical Victorian characteristics and the binary opposition between Holmes and Moriarty as presented in Conan Doyle's stories adapted in BBC series *Sherlock*? In the first chapter, I discuss that Holmes's characteristics conform to the 'typical' Victorian hero of "A Study in Scarlet" and "The Final Problem". In the second chapter, I discuss Holmes's non-heroic and antiheroic characteristics through a discussion of "A Study in Pink" and "The Reichenbach Fall". The conclusion is that Holmes's characteristics have changed because the BBC series wants to adhere to its modern audiences. Also, Holmes does not conform to the 'typical' Victorian hero in *Sherlock*. Additionally, the binary opposition has disappeared in the BBC series. The main aim of this thesis is to argue that the audiences are an essential factor in causing a modern Sherlock Holmes adaptation to deviate from the original stories by Conan Doyle.

Keywords: Sherlock Holmes, James Moriarty, adaptation studies, binary opposition, metatheatre, audiences

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Introduction

“The history of the adaptation of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories is unrivalled in terms of the sheer number and diversity of adaptive works”¹ argues Neil McCaw in *Sherlock Holmes and a Politics of Adaptation*. Indeed, the stories by Conan Doyle about detective Sherlock Holmes are world-famous, as are many of the adaptations. However, compared to the sheer number of Sherlock Holmes adaptations that exist, there is a relatively little amount of research into these adaptations. This has now slowly begun to change with more recent Sherlock Holmes adaptations. One of these recent, and highly successful, adaptations is BBC series *Sherlock* (2010 – 2017). Janice Allen and Christopher Pittard argue that *Sherlock* is influential for future Sherlock Holmes adaptations, as they state that:

[d]ifferent generations will have their preferred image of Sherlock Holmes (...) [I]t looks likely, however, that the current televisual post-modern Holmeses of Benedict Cumberbatch (in BBC’s *Sherlock* (2010--)) (...) will exercise a significant impact on this composite image for the generations to come.²

This impact on the image of Sherlock Holmes is at least partly because of the BBC series’ conscious choice to transform Sherlock Holmes into a character of the twenty-first century, as opposed to the Victorian era in the original story. Updating the setting to a modern setting is a newly introduced idea from *Sherlock*, despite there being many Sherlock Holmes adaptations. The setting of *Sherlock* has thus been updated to the twenty-first century and it then follows that the characters themselves have been updated to the twenty-first century as well. For example, Holmes owns a phone in *Sherlock*, which he uses to determine where the victim had travelled from in the first episode: “A Study in Pink”.³ Svetlana Bochman argues that this

¹ Neil McCaw, “Sherlock Holmes and a Politics of Adaptation,” in *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle: Multi-Media Afterlives*, ed. Sabine Vanacker, Catherine Wynne (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 19.

² Janice Allan and Christopher Pittard, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 1, doi:10.1017/9781316659274.

³ “A Study in Pink.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 24 October 2010. Netflix.

adaptation of the characters to a modern setting has been successful as *Sherlock* owes part of its success to the choices they made in the characteristics of the main characters.⁴ Yet, Amanda Field argues that the success of Sherlock Holmes seems to lie in “Sherlock Holmes’s longevity as a character [which] was attributable to the way Arthur Conan Doyle hammered the detective’s idiosyncrasies into readers’ minds.”⁵ From this it follows that the characteristics of the main characters influence the long-lasting success of Sherlock Holmes and its many adaptations. The audiences, who read or view these Sherlock Holmes works, are one of the deciding factors that influences the characteristics of the main characters, since the story or adaptation attempts to conform to and influence its audiences.

These audiences, and the way that the story or adaptation conforms to its audiences, has changed over the years. In the Victorian era, the Sherlock Holmes stories by Conan Doyle were “the right format and the right genre for the right audience at the right time”⁶ Benjamin Poore argues. Poore elaborates on this by stating that “there was a vast range of detective fiction published in the late Victorian period”.⁷ Thus, Poore shows here that Conan Doyle’s stories adhered to the audiences of its time. The Victorian values and morals and the binary opposition that Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories presented, formed an integral part of the influence that the stories had on its Victorian audiences. This binary opposition was a typical element in many Victorian stories. Catherine Wynne names several influential “Victorian *fin-de-siècle*” works, among which are “Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde, She, Dorian Gray and Dracula”.⁸ *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, for example, shows a clear binary opposition within

⁴ Svetlana Bochman, “Sherlock Holmes, Tech-Geek: Uncovering New Media’s Significance in “Sherlock,” the BBC’s Modern Adaptation of Conan Doyle’s Stories.”, *The Victorian* 2, no. 1 (March 2014): 2.

⁵ Vanacker and Wynne, *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle*, 19.

⁶ Benjamin Poore, *Sherlock Holmes from Screen to Stage: Post-Millennial adaptations in British Theatre* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 33.

⁷ Poore, *Screen to Stage*, 33.

⁸ Catherine Wynne, “Introduction: From Baker Street to Undershaw and Beyond,” in *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle: Multi-Media Afterlives*, ed. Sabine Vanacker, Catherine Wynne (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 3.

the same character, namely: Dr. Jekyll represents the ‘good’ side, whereas Mr. Hyde represents all that is ‘evil’.⁹ A similar binary opposition can be found in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, where Dorian Gray himself represents the ‘good’ side and the painting absorbs all the ‘evil’ deeds of Dorian Gray.¹⁰ Thus, binary opposition was a typical element in the Victorian era that was present in nearly all Victorian stories. In chapter one of this thesis, I provide an in-depth discussion of the binary opposition between Holmes and Moriarty in Conan Doyle’s stories and the Victorian morals and values that are presented in these stories. Additionally, I discuss how these elements influenced its Victorian audiences and how they were integral to the Sherlock Holmes stories.

For a modern adaptation of Sherlock Holmes, however, adhering to predicted audience expectations is not so straightforward. One factor that any modern adaptation needs to consider, is the fact that the audiences already have knowledge on Sherlock Holmes. As Poore observes:

[N]ot only can we not go back and experience the canon as Victorian readers did, but the canon is not the same as it was before *Sherlock* or *Elementary*. The networked relationship changes the ‘source text’, rather than the source text being somehow distinct, bounded and impermeable. We cannot un-know our knowledge of previous Holmes adaptations¹¹.

Thus, the producer of any modern adaptation has to consider that their audiences already have an image of Sherlock Holmes in their head. Therefore, the modern adaptation needs to ensure that the Sherlock Holmes they depict is understandable to their audiences. Additionally, a part of the audiences of modern Sherlock Holmes adaptations consists of ‘traditional fans’, who “desire to preserve the fictional construct of Sherlock Holmes and his late-Victorian world.”¹²

⁹ James Eli Adams, *A History of Victorian Literature* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 374.

¹⁰ Adams, *History*, 374.

¹¹ Poore, *Screen to Stage*, 54.

¹² Poore, *Screen to Stage*, 55.

Similar to the wish of preserving the late-Victorian world, Wynne argues that the Victorian world is still present, as she states that “[i]n Britain, the Victorian past is omnipresent: physically through the remnants of its cities’ architecture, artwork, and literature, and psychologically through its representation of loss (Empire, global significance, industry).”¹³ Therefore, the challenge of Sherlock Holmes adaptations is to adapt the original Sherlock Holmes stories in such a way that the Victorian essence prevails, whereas the adaptation also needs to take its modern audiences into account.

As I discuss more extensively in chapter two of this thesis, *Sherlock* attempts to remain faithful to the original Sherlock Holmes stories by Conan Doyle to an extent. Yet, the BBC series also adheres to its modern audiences. Poore argues, for example, that in the BBC series “Sherlock Holmes also functions in some modern iterations as a wish-fulfilment figure for the combination of thought and action, of intellect and brawn that is so difficult to achieve in modern, sedentary societies.”¹⁴ Poore also argues that the BBC series conforms to its audiences because *Sherlock* shows the modern relationship that people have with their work.¹⁵ Poore expands on this by stating that:

Sherlock Holmes’ brilliance at his work is a facet of his life that appeals because it feeds a need we have to view our work as special and significant. At the same time, however, it allows us to slightly pity those who are so dedicated to their work that they have failed to develop other aspects of their life or personality.¹⁶

Thus, *Sherlock* adheres to its modern audiences in the series, which is one of the reasons why this Sherlock Holmes adaptation was chosen for this research. Moreover, I chose to research the BBC series since it is successful, because it conforms to “traditional markers of ‘quality’ in Britain” and because it adopts “familiar genre conventions”¹⁷. The final reason why

¹³ Wynne, “Introduction,” 7.

¹⁴ Poore, *Screen to Stage*, 28.

¹⁵ Poore, *Screen to Stage*, 32.

¹⁶ Poore, *Screen to Stage*, 32.

¹⁷ Poore, *Screen to Stage*, 50.

Sherlock was selected for this research, is that *Sherlock* consciously modernises the series in some respects, thus moving away from the original work. The series, for example, explores the field of metatheatre, a field in which the audiences are made aware that what they are watching is not real but an enactment.¹⁸ For instance, in “The Reichenbach Fall”, the final episode of the second season of *Sherlock*, Moriarty is presented as a highly successful actor, named “Rich Brook”, who was supposedly hired by Sherlock. This is an example of metatheatre in the form that Moriarty plays an actor, who is himself played by an actor, which could even be seen as a form of ‘breaking the fourth wall’.¹⁹ Additionally, the BBC series constantly seems to be switching between the Victorian elements and the twenty-first century setting, which can be seen as a form of metatheatre and ‘breaking the fourth wall’ as well.

My research on Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories and the BBC series *Sherlock* is not the first on the subject. In adaptation studies, the BBC series is quite a popular subject. However, much of this research, which belong to the field of adaptation studies, focusses on fidelity. Jorgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen argue that “[a] central — perhaps even *the* central — question of adaptation studies has been that of fidelity, or the relationship between what has been considered an original and the more-or-less faithful rendering of that form or content into a new product.”²⁰ In recent years fidelity has come to be discredited, but Kate Newell argues that adaptations continue to be measured by their differences and similarities.²¹ The problem with a focus on fidelity in the case of *Sherlock* is that the difference between the modern-day setting and the Victorian setting forms an essential part of the research. Therefore, I only consult research that discusses the series

¹⁸ Poore, *Screen to Stage*, 139.

¹⁹ Poore, *Screen to Stage*, 166.

²⁰ Jorgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, “There and Back Again’: New Challenges and new directions in adaptation studies,” in *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions* ed. Jorgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, Eirik Frisvold (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 5.

²¹ Kate Newell, “We’re off to See the Wizard’ (Again): Oz Adaptations and the Matter of Fidelity,” in *Adaptation Studies: New Approaches*, ed. Christa Albrecht-Crane, Dennis Ray Cutchins (Cranbury: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010), 78.

Sherlock in its own right and not merely as a measurement of fidelity in this thesis. The most valuable article to my research is: “Surveying the Post-Millennial Sherlock Holmes: A Case for the Great Detective as a Man of Our Times” by Ashley Polasek. In this article, Polasek discusses four recent adaptations: *House M.D.*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Sherlock* and *Elementary*.²² Polasek argues, through a discussion of these adaptations, that Sherlock Holmes has turned into a twenty-first century antihero in modern depictions and that this transition into an antihero “is fundamental to the character’s journey into the twenty-first century.”²³ Polasek is well-known and revered in the field of adaptation studies, as much of the current research into Sherlock Holmes adaptations is based upon her work. Svetlana Bochman’s article “Sherlock Holmes, Tech-Geek: Uncovering New Media’s Significance in “Sherlock” is another influential article to my research since the twenty-first century setting of *Sherlock* is central to her work.²⁴ Bochman discusses the role of modern technology in *Sherlock*, arguing that Holmes’s technological adeptness causes discomfort to its audiences.²⁵

Whereas both articles are influential in Sherlock Holmes adaptation studies, they also leave room for further research. Polasek’s focus, in her article, is arguing that Sherlock Holmes possesses antiheroic characteristics. Since Polasek discusses four different adaptations in the span of one article, she discusses little else than that Holmes possesses these antiheroic characteristics. Therefore, Polasek hardly discusses the role of the audiences, for example. Additionally, Polasek only rarely refers to the original works by Conan Doyle, rather opting to compare the adaptations to each other. Bochman, on the other hand, leaves room for further research because her article is rather specific. Bochman discusses the role of both Victorian and modern audiences, but only in context to Holmes’s technological

²² Ashley Polasek, “Surveying the Post-Millennial Sherlock Holmes: A Case for the Great Detective as a Man of Our Times,” *Adaptation* 6, no. 3 (2013): 385.

²³ Polasek, “Surveying,” 392.

²⁴ Bochman, “Sherlock Holmes,” 2.

²⁵ Bochman, “Sherlock Holmes,” 3.

adeptness, thus failing to discuss the role of the audiences in a wider context. Similarly, Bochman only refers to Conan Doyle's stories regarding the technology Holmes utilizes. Moreover, both Polasek and Bochman hardly discuss Moriarty's role in their articles, who is essential to the binary opposition in Conan Doyle's stories that I discuss in my research.

In this thesis, I discuss the role of the audiences to a larger extent. I argue, through a discussion of Holmes's 'typical' Victorian heroic characteristics that have not been included in *Sherlock*, that the audiences influence the BBC series. Additionally, I argue that *Sherlock* incorporates distinct modern elements to adhere to its twenty-first century audiences, thereby deviating from Conan Doyle's stories. Therefore, my research will make a valuable addition to the field of adaptation studies, as I argue that the audiences are an essential factor in causing a modern Sherlock Holmes adaptation to deviate from the original source. Moreover, I argue that *Sherlock* cannot copy the characteristics of Holmes and Moriarty as created by Conan Doyle, since the Victorian biases, morals and values that these characters were built upon no longer exist in modern-day society. This means, that no modern Sherlock Holmes adaptation could copy Holmes's and Moriarty's characteristics without making changes. I thus argue that all modern Sherlock Holmes adaptations will deviate from Conan Doyle's stories regarding the characteristics of Holmes and Moriarty.

The question that I aim to answer in this thesis will thus be the following: How are Holmes's typical Victorian characteristics and the binary opposition between Holmes and Moriarty, as presented in Conan Doyle's stories, adapted in BBC series *Sherlock*? This question will be answered in two chapters. In the first chapter, I argue that Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes conforms to the 'typical' Victorian hero character that was popular in the Victorian era. Additionally, I discuss the binary opposition that exists between Holmes and Moriarty. In the second chapter, I analyse BBC series *Sherlock* and argue that Holmes, as depicted in the series, does not conform to the 'typical' Victorian hero character. Rather,

modern Holmes possesses antiheroic characteristics that prevent him from being a hero. In the conclusion of my thesis, I argue that the binary opposition between Holmes and Moriarty no longer exists in *Sherlock*. Additionally, I discuss the implications of my research and make suggestions for possible future research regarding modern Sherlock Holmes adaptations.

Comparing the entire works by Conan Doyle to the entire BBC series *Sherlock* would be quite the ambitious undertaking in the scope of this thesis. Therefore, I focus on two stories and their corresponding episodes. The stories that are discussed in this thesis, are: “A Study in Scarlet” and “The Final Problem”. “A Study in Scarlet” is the first Sherlock Holmes story and “The Final Problem” is the story where Sherlock defeats his arch-enemy Moriarty. There are many Sherlock Holmes stories written in between “A Study in Scarlet” and “The Final Problem”. Therefore, analysing these two stories should reveal Holmes’s characteristics and the binary opposition between Holmes and Moriarty. In the series *Sherlock*, the episode “A Study in Pink” covers a plot similar to “A Study in Scarlet” and will therefore be analysed as the comparison of the story in this thesis. Similarly, the episode “The Reichenbach Fall” follows the plot of “The Final Problem” most closely and will therefore also be analysed in this thesis.

Thus, in this thesis I argue, through a discussion of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories and BBC series *Sherlock*, that the audiences are an essential factor in influencing a modern Sherlock Holmes adaptation to deviate from the original work in terms of the characteristics of the main characters. Additionally, by continuously appealing to as well as challenging audiences’ expectations and their knowledge of Sherlock Holmes, BBC’s *Sherlock* continuously breaks the fourth wall when adding to or disturbing this knowledge, and thus metatheatrically reflects on the act of adaptation-making.

Chapter one: Victorian Sherlock

Sherlock Holmes portrays the role of the protagonist in the Victorian Sherlock Holmes stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The Victorian era was a time when Britain began to thrive, including economical advances, most significantly its industry and technology. Because of this rise in wealth citizens started to consume more literature and the idea was formed that books could serve as a way of showing Britain's population how to behave.²⁶ This role was soon endowed upon the main character of stories, whose role it was to be a hero and, in Sara Flores' words, whose role it was: "to ensure the prevalence of England's success and teach the right moral values to keep the country's status safe."²⁷ Thus, the Victorian hero character was created. In this chapter I argue that Sherlock Holmes, as created by Conan Doyle, conforms to the 'typical' Victorian hero character. I additionally argue in this chapter that as Holmes is a 'typical' Victorian hero, his adversary Moriarty is his binary opposite. In the next chapter, I argue that the character role of Holmes has changed over time and that Holmes no longer conforms to the role of the 'typical' Victorian hero in BBC series *Sherlock*. In the conclusion of this thesis, I then argue that the influence of the audiences has caused these changes in Holmes's characteristics. In this chapter Holmes's portrayal of the 'typical' Victorian hero will be considered through a discussion of "A Study in Scarlet" and "The Final Problem" by Conan Doyle. "A Study in Scarlet" is the first Sherlock Holmes story by Conan Doyle and thus provides the starting point to research how Holmes's character is depicted. "The Final Problem" is a considerably later story by Conan Doyle in which Holmes confronts his adversary Moriarty, and will be analysed to examine Holmes's character progression over time as well as allowing a discussion of Moriarty's character. In this chapter I argue that

²⁶ Sara Ortiz Flores, "On Heroes and Antiheroes: Visions of Resistance and Victorian Ethos Revisited," *Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research* 6, no. 1 (June 2018), 96.

²⁷ Flores, "Heroes," 96.

Holmes possesses the qualities that a 'typical' Victorian hero should have and I also discuss how Moriarty's character conforms to these qualities to form a binary opposite of Holmes. Additionally, these Victorian qualities provide an insight into the Victorian biases, morals and values that influenced the audiences of Conan Doyle's stories.

In the stories by Conan Doyle, Holmes represents the 'good' side whereas Moriarty represents the side of 'evil', Rolf Canton argues.²⁸ Canton expands on this argument by stating Moriarty is "an archetype — of satanic power", even going so far as to call Moriarty "Satan", as Canton explains that the word means "adversary" in Hebrew.²⁹ Thus, Moriarty fights for the side of 'evil' and Holmes for the 'good' side, which is reflected in Conan Doyle's stories. In "A Study in Scarlet" Holmes's case is to find a murderer. The plot of "A Study in Scarlet" is quite straightforward as Holmes solves the crime and finds the murderer. Therefore, the story is a clear depiction of Holmes fighting for the good side and does not require extra explanation. "The Final Problem" is considerably less straightforward in this respect. In "The Final Problem" Holmes's adversary Moriarty needs to be defeated. The seriousness of the threat that Moriarty poses, is immediately clear to Holmes as he mentions:

HOLMES

I tell you Watson, in all seriousness, that if I could beat that man, if I could free society of him, I should feel that my own career had reached its summit.³⁰

²⁸ Rolf J. Canton, *The Moriarty Principle: An Irregular Look at Sherlock Holmes* (Lakeville: Galde Press, 1997), 4.

²⁹ Canton, *Moriarty Principle*, 4.

³⁰ Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes Collection: Anthology of Classic Tales* (London: Flame Tree Publishing, 2017), 464.

Holmes clearly recognises that Moriarty is a force of evil that needs to be stopped. However, Holmes declines the immediate opportunity to seize Moriarty when he has the chance:

WATSON

Let us have him arrested on his arrival.

HOLMES

It would be to ruin the work of three months. We should get the big fish, but the smaller would dart right and left out of the net.³¹

Holmes explains here that even though Moriarty needs to be detained, he will not do so at the cost of other criminals escaping justice. Lauren Cameron, in her article “Popular Highlights in The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes”, argues that this is because Holmes’s primary concerns are “justice, reason and right.”³² Holmes will not apprehend Moriarty if it means letting the other criminals escape as he knows that they are evil too. All evil must be defeated, whether a bigger or smaller evil. Holmes does, however, realise that whereas he can manage the other criminals and outsmart them, Moriarty is Holmes’s true adversary and cannot be outmanoeuvred so easily:

HOLMES

The man pervades London, and no one has heard of him. That’s what puts him on a pinnacle in the records of crime.³³

³¹ Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*, 470.

³² Rosemary Jann, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: Detecting Social Order* (New York: Twayne, 1995), 126, quoted in Lauren Cameron, “Marginalia and Community in the Age of the Kindle: Popular Highlights in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*,” *Victorian Review* 38, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 88.

³³ Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*, 464.

Canton also mentions the seriousness of the threat that Moriarty poses in *The Moriarty principle: an irregular look at Sherlock Holmes*: “It is such an appetizing situation to contemplate: two titans in battle, one the genius for good and the other an equal genius for evil.”³⁴ Canton argues here that, unlike other criminals that Holmes has faced, Moriarty will not be taken down so easily. Also, Canton mentions here that Moriarty represents ‘evil’ and is the adversary of Holmes who presents the ‘good’ side. Additionally, they are each other’s binary opposites, as both are equally strong to represent their respective, opposing sides of ‘good’ and ‘evil’.

Holmes and Moriarty enjoyed a similar upbringing but are different in their characteristics because of their roles as hero and antagonist. In “The Final Problem” Holmes, when explaining Moriarty’s character to Watson, mentions that Moriarty had a positive upbringing:

HOLMES

He is a man of good birth and excellent education, endowed by nature with a phenomenal mathematical faculty.³⁵

Thus, Conan Doyle depicts Moriarty as an intelligent man with a pleasant youth, who has been raised as a gentleman. Similarly, Conan Doyle portrays Holmes as a well-educated man with good morals and values. This can, for example, be seen when Watson describes Holmes shortly after having moved in with him:

³⁴ Rolf J. Canton, *The Moriarty Principle: An Irregular Look at Sherlock Holmes* (Lakeville: Galde Press, 1997), 4.

³⁵ Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*, 464.

WATSON

Holmes was not a difficult man to live with ... his habits were regular ... he possessed the extraordinary delicacy of touch ... he appeared to have pursued any course of reading which might fit him for a degree.³⁶

These characteristics are at least partly due to a good upbringing. Thus, Moriarty and Holmes enjoyed a good and similar upbringing. However, if Moriarty is of such a good birth, equal to Holmes and perhaps even better, then why has Moriarty taken a turn for the 'evil' side? This is due to Moriarty's role as the adversary and Holmes's role as the hero. According to Ted Beardow in his article "The Empire Hero", it is Holmes's role as the Victorian hero to portray the characteristics of a "chivalrous English gentleman with special skills".³⁷ In Holmes's case, this means using his remarkable talent of solving mysteries to punish crime in London.³⁸ Beardow additionally argues that the hero serves Britain, but because of the hero's eccentric approach he is not fully integrated into society and may therefore break the law in order to achieve justice.³⁹ Whereas most of the people he works with are police officers, who are expected to follow the law, Holmes is not, which Holmes himself argues:

HOLMES

I have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the world. I'm a consulting detective⁴⁰.

³⁶ Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*, 17.

³⁷ Ted Beardow, "The Empire Hero," *Studies in Popular Culture* 41, no. 1 (Fall 2018): 66.

³⁸ Beardow, "Empire hero," 66.

³⁹ Beardow, "Empire hero," 67-68.

⁴⁰ Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*, 20.

Since Holmes is a consulting detective and not a member of the police force, breaking the law is not an issue for him. This thus enables Holmes to break the law when needed to bring justice as the hero. All these characteristics mentioned by Beardow are part of Holmes because of his role as the Victorian hero. This is because as the hero character “Holmes is ‘a benefactor of the race’ – the guardian of moral principles by which society should operate”.⁴¹ The hero thus provides society with the morals that should be followed, but Moriarty also plays a role in enforcing these morals. Namely, it is the antagonist’s role in this regard to provide the reader with morals that should be avoided while at the same time enforcing the superiority of the hero’s morals through this contrast.⁴² This is why even though Moriarty’s and Holmes’s upbringing are comparable, they differ. In “The Final Problem” Holmes seems to confirm this argument himself:

HOLMES

[T]he man [Moriarty] had hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind. A criminal strain ran in his blood, which instead of being modified, was increased and rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental powers.⁴³

Moriarty’s upbringing and characteristics might be similar to Holmes’s, but Moriarty’s role decides his character. His ‘evil’ is “in his blood”, it is in his genetics, something which upbringing cannot change.⁴⁴ This in turn means that the other characteristics of Moriarty become negative characteristics as well. Even intelligence, which is Holmes’s main force in

⁴¹ Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Red-Headed League,” *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Stories with Illustrations from The Strand Magazine* (Ware: Wordsworth, 2006), 468, quoted in Clare Clarke, *Late Victorian Crime Fiction in the Shadows of Sherlock* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 8.

⁴² Flores, “Heroes,” 98.

⁴³ Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*, 464.

⁴⁴ Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*, 464.

fighting for the ‘good’ side, becomes a force of ‘evil’ in Moriarty. Canton in *The Moriarty Principle* argues this by stating that “Moriarty can calculate with the best of them, as it were. Don’t readers tend to see calculating people as being colder people, people without a heart?”⁴⁵ Moriarty’s intelligence is called out here, not Holmes’s, even though Holmes’s intelligence is rather similar to Moriarty’s. This shows that the role the character plays is of influence as to what their characteristics are, but also how they are judged.

Holmes’s profession as a detective fits perfectly into his role of the Victorian hero as it allows him to protect society. The Victorian detective was a popular and upcoming figure in nineteenth century fiction. In her article *Late Victorian Crime Fiction in the Shadows of Sherlock*, Clare Clarke argues that “the late Victorian detective – Holmes in particular – emerged as a new kind of hero invented to assuage the types of fears common to a predominantly middle-class urban readership.”⁴⁶ Clarke additionally explains why this figure became popular: “[t]he emergence of the detective hero —Holmes in particular — is attributed by Mandel to a specifically Victorian desire, in the face of the changes attendant with burgeoning capitalist society, for social and epistemological order.”⁴⁷ The role of the detective as stated here is to influence Victorian society in such a way that they are reassured.⁴⁸ At the same time, this means that the Victorian detective can be used to reinstate Victorian values and morals. The Victorian hero role provides these Victorian values and morals that should be followed, which is why the roles of the Victorian hero and Victorian detective work so well together. Both roles want to reassure the reader and at the same time convince the reader how to act in society. To convince and make the reader change their behaviour, however, the reader needs to trust the Victorian detective. Clarke argues that

⁴⁵ Canton, *Moriarty Principle*, 2.

⁴⁶ Clare Clarke, *Late Victorian Crime Fiction in the Shadows of Sherlock* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 7.

⁴⁷ Clarke, *Late Victorian*, 7.

⁴⁸ Clarke, *Late Victorian*, 7.

reader did indeed trust the Victorian detective as they trust “the detective’s skill, moral code and conceptions of duty and justice.”⁴⁹ As Holmes’s role of the Victorian hero already requires him to possess the latter three qualities, adding the detective’s skill is no great feat. Additionally, these two roles can be combined well because they share their ultimate goal: protecting society. Holmes does indeed protect society and in “The Final Problem” he even shows that he will go to the extreme to accomplish this. “The Final Problem” is the story in which Holmes must face his adversary Moriarty. In the end Holmes sacrifices himself to defeat Moriarty, dropping them both down a waterfall. This act of self-sacrifice and thus protecting society reveals two things about Holmes, according to Philip Tallon and David Bagget in *The Philosophy of Sherlock Holmes*. First, it shows that an adversary can push the hero to the limits of their own abilities.⁵⁰ Holmes mentions this in “The Final Problem” when talking to Watson:

HOLMES

Never have I risen to such a height, and never have I been so hard pressed by an opponent.⁵¹

This again shows that in the stories, Moriarty is the binary opposite of Sherlock. They are equal and both must perform at the top of their abilities to not be overpowered by the other. This leads to the second point that Tallon and Bagget argue, namely that “unlike other forms of enemies, a foe cannot be turned into a friend. (...) a rival or a competitor can be

⁴⁹ Clarke, *Late Victorian*, 7-8.

⁵⁰ Philip Tallon, David Bagget, *The Philosophy of Sherlock Holmes* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 75.

⁵¹ Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes*, 465.

transformed into a friend of use, pleasure, or even of virtue. But a foe cannot.”⁵² Tallon and Bagget show here that characters who portray a rival or a competitor role can be befriended, because they are not binary opposites of Holmes. Therefore, they can eventually be turned into possible allies. As Tallon and Bagget also show, however, an adversary cannot be turned into a friend. This is because their respective roles do not allow this. Moriarty’s role as the adversary is often to contrast Holmes’s role as the hero. If Moriarty were to no longer be the binary opposition of Holmes, then this contrast and therefore certain Victorian morals, values and meanings would fall away. Thus, Moriarty cannot be turned into a possible ally, but must be defeated in order to protect society.

In this chapter, I argued that Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes conforms to the ‘typical’ Victorian hero role that was popular in the nineteenth century. I argued this through a discussion of several characteristics and Victorian qualities that are ‘typical’ to the Victorian hero. These Victorian qualities that Conan Doyle’s Holmes possesses, provide insights into Victorian biases, morals and values of Victorian audiences in Conan Doyle’s time. Additionally, I argued that Moriarty, his adversary, is his binary opposite, and that this binary opposition is important in reinforcing Victorian values and morals by providing a contrast to Holmes. In the next chapter, I discuss BBC series *Sherlock* and I argue that Holmes does not conform to this ‘typical’ Victorian character role anymore. In the conclusion, I argue that these Victorian values, morals and biases of the audiences have been replaced by modern values in the BBC adaptation, since the series adheres to modern audience expectations.

⁵² Tallon, Bagget, *Sherlock Holmes*, 75.

Chapter two: BBC's *Sherlock*

BBC series *Sherlock* (2010 – 2017) is an adaptation of the Sherlock Holmes stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The series attempts to remain faithful to these stories, which Ann McClellan argues, stating that “*Sherlock* was, at heart, a faithful adaptation of Doyle’s hero.”⁵³ However, the series also clearly departs from the original, as it has updated the setting of Sherlock Holmes from the Victorian era to the twenty-first century. McClellan argues that Moffat and Gatiss, the creators of *Sherlock*, struggled in finding a balance between “adaptation and appropriation” in *Sherlock*.⁵⁴ The series reflects this struggle as each episode follows the plot of one of the original stories, but modifies it a considerable amount in order to fit the updated setting and appeal to its modern audiences. Benjamin Poore argues that therefore BBC’s Holmes cannot fully correspond to the original as Holmes has to “maintain cohesiveness” with his twenty-first century setting.⁵⁵ *Sherlock* thus remains faithful while also updating and changing the original stories, allowing for a research of Holmes’s characteristics that have changed in *Sherlock* as compared to Conan Doyle’s stories. In the previous chapter, I argued that Holmes corresponds to the ‘typical’ Victorian hero and that Moriarty represents his binary opposite. In this chapter, I argue that BBC’s Holmes does not correspond to the hero character, but rather shows characteristics which the ‘typical’ Victorian hero could never have. In the conclusion, I then argue that the audiences are an important factor in having caused this change in Holmes’s characteristics. In this chapter, the two episodes corresponding to the previous chapter’s stories are discussed. “A study in Pink” represents the story of “A study in Scarlet”. The most notifiable change in this episode as compared to the

⁵³ Ann McClellan, “All that matters is the work’: Text and Adaptation in *Sherlock*,” In *Sherlock Holmes in Context*, ed. Samantha Naidu (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 10.

⁵⁴ McClellan, “Matters,” 11.

⁵⁵ Benjamin Poore, “Sherlock Holmes and the Leap of Faith: The Forces of Fandom and Convergence in Adaptations of the Holmes and Watson Stories,” *Adaptation* 6, no. 2 (August 2013): 164.

story is the villain's motive, but as Holmes's and Moriarty's characters are the primary concern, this change is not significant for the current research. It should be noted here that Moriarty is not the primary villain in this story. Rather, the primary villain is a cabdriver. In "A Study in Scarlet" Moriarty's name is not even mentioned. In "A Study in Pink", however, the main villain of the episode reveals that Moriarty sponsored his kills.⁵⁶ Thus, *Sherlock* opts to already draw attention to Moriarty in the first episode of the BBC series. The second episode is "The Reichenbach Fall" corresponding to "The Final Problem". One point to remark here is that there is an episode called "The Final Problem" in the series, but it is "The Reichenbach Fall" whose story corresponds most to Conan Doyle's story. Even so, "The Reichenbach Fall" differs from the story, most significantly in its amount of content. Whereas "The Final Problem" covers 12 pages, "The Reichenbach Fall" spans 88 minutes, but both cover a roughly similar confrontation between Moriarty and Holmes. The longer span is therefore only helpful, as it provides ample opportunity to study Moriarty's and Holmes's characters. In this chapter, I argue that *Sherlock's* Holmes possesses several non-heroic characteristics and even possesses anti-heroic characteristics, which prevents his character from being a Victorian hero.

Ariana Scott-Zechlin argues that Holmes is established as an outsider in *Sherlock*.⁵⁷ Scott-Zechlin discusses BBC's Holmes's characteristics and argues that he does not fit into society because of his intelligence, which reaches far beyond those of the rest of society.⁵⁸ Scott-Zechlin continues this explanation by stating that Holmes is distant and does not possess human emotions at a normal level, if at all.⁵⁹ An instance of Holmes's inability to

⁵⁶ "A Study in Pink." *Sherlock*. BBC. 24 October 2010. Netflix.

⁵⁷ Ariana Scott-Zechlin, "But It's the Solar System!" Reconciling Science and Faith Through Astronomy," in *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom: Essays on the BBC Series*, ed. Kristina Busse and Louisa Ellen Stein (Jefferson: McFarland, 2012), 60.

⁵⁸ Scott-Zechlin, "Solar System," 60.

⁵⁹ Scott-Zechlin, "Solar System," 60.

fully understand human emotions is shown in “A Study in Pink”. The woman who was murdered has scratched “Rachel”, the name of her stillborn daughter, into the floor and Holmes discusses what this word might mean with Watson and Lestrade’s police force:

WATSON

Maybe he used the death of her daughter somehow.

HOLMES

Yes, but that was ages ago. Why would she still be upset.

(Room falls silent) Not good?

WATSON

Bit not good, yeah.⁶⁰

Here Holmes shows his inability to understand emotions. He cannot see how someone would be upset over the death of their child as it happened a long time ago, whereas the silence that follows, shows that all the other attendees think differently about this. Additionally, Holmes checks with Watson that he indeed made the mistake of being insensitive as he cannot understand the emotion himself. Moreover, Holmes is positively delighted by every difficult case, which is quite inappropriate at times. For example, in “The Reichenbach Hero” two children are kidnapped, and Holmes needs to find them:

WATSON

Having fun?

HOLMES

Starting to.

⁶⁰ “A Study in Pink.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 24 October 2010. Netflix.

WATSON

Maybe don't do the smiling. Kidnapped children?⁶¹

This shows that Holmes is distant and thus not part of society. He does not share the emotional level that the people around him possess. Ashley Polasek continues this argument of a distant Holmes in *Sherlock*, arguing that “writer Stephen Moffat takes pains to set up Sherlock as friendless and antagonistic”.⁶² She expands on this argument with an example from “A Study in Pink”, stating that “[m]embers of the official police force that use his services as a consulting detective call him ‘the freak’.”⁶³ Indeed the police force often shows its disliking towards Holmes, as becomes clear from a conversation between sergeant Donovan and Watson, for instance, where Donovan argues that Holmes will himself become a murderer some day:

WATSON

Why would he do that?

DONOVAN

Because he's a psychopath. Psychopaths get bored.⁶⁴

According to Svetlana Bochman, Victorian Holmes would never have been called a psychopath, let alone a murderer.⁶⁵ This is because of Victorian Holmes's hero role as he

⁶¹ “The Reichenbach Fall.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 15 January 2012. Netflix.

⁶² Ashley Polasek, “Surveying the Post-Millennial Sherlock Holmes: A Case for the Great Detective as a Man of Our Times,” *Adaptation* 6, no. 3 (2013): 389.

⁶³ Polasek, “Surveying,” 389.

⁶⁴ “A Study in Pink.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 24 October 2010. Netflix.

⁶⁵ Svetlana Bochman, “Sherlock Holmes, Tech-Geek: Uncovering New Media's Significance in “Sherlock,” the BBC's Modern Adaptation of Conan Doyle's Stories,” *The Victorian* 2, no. 1 (March 2014): 5.

“represented social order to Conan Doyle’s literary audience,”⁶⁶ which thus shows that BBC’s Holmes does not portray this hero role in the series.

Holmes is set up as an “unmanageable child” in *Sherlock*, according to Polasek.⁶⁷ In her article, Polasek discusses the film *Sherlock Holmes* and the series *Sherlock* and argues that in both of these portrayals Holmes possesses childish characteristics.⁶⁸ Polasek argues that Holmes’s childishness as depicted in *Sherlock Holmes* is quite innocent as his childishness “manifests itself as a relatively harmless adolescent petulance”.⁶⁹ However, Polasek expresses a different opinion of Holmes’s childishness in *Sherlock*, arguing that it is “much more destructive to himself and others.”⁷⁰ Polasek explains this by stating that Holmes “displays a type of arrogance that one would expect from an incredibly bright teenager who has yet to learn humility and cannot admit that he is ever wrong.”⁷¹ This is, for instance, shown in “The Reichenbach Fall” where Holmes is the key witness in court. Watson and Lestrade understand that one needs to be polite in court and repeatedly ask Holmes to not be himself.⁷² However, even in court Holmes cannot resist being arrogant:

JUDGE

Mr. Holmes! You’ve been called here to answer Miss Sorrel’s questions, not to give us a display of your intellectual prowess. (...) Do you think that you could survive for just a few minutes, without showing off!”⁷³

⁶⁶ Christopher Clausen, “Sherlock Holmes, Order, and the Late-Victorian Mind,” In *Critical Essays on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, ed. Orel Harold (New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1992), 66 cited from Svetlana Bochman, “Tech-Geek,” 5.

⁶⁷ Polasek, “Surveying,” 390.

⁶⁸ Polasek, “Surveying,” 390.

⁶⁹ Polasek, “Surveying,” 390.

⁷⁰ Polasek, “Surveying,” 390.

⁷¹ Polasek, “Surveying,” 390.

⁷² “The Reichenbach Fall.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 15 January 2012. Netflix.

⁷³ “The Reichenbach Fall.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 15 January 2012. Netflix.

Holmes's arrogance is indeed harmful in this example as Holmes discards this warning, is consequently removed from court and thus unable to complete his role as key witness. Stephen Joyce continues upon this argument of Holmes's arrogance, taking it a step further by stating that the most radical change in *Sherlock* is not the twenty-first century setting but Holmes's rudeness.⁷⁴ These characteristics of arrogance and rudeness cause Holmes to disregard his own life and the lives of others, according to Polasek.⁷⁵ At the end of "A Study in Pink" Holmes is lured by the murderer into almost killing himself because he wants to know how the killer convinced the others to commit suicide.⁷⁶ Polasek argues that this is another trait of his arrogance as Holmes selfishly gambles "his own life simply because he has the pathological need to know that he is right."⁷⁷ This shows that *Sherlock's* Holmes cannot be a hero like Victorian Holmes is. Conan Doyle's Holmes can also be self-congratulatory at times, but he is much more subtle about it than *Sherlock's* Holmes, as can be shown when Conan Doyle's Holmes has caught the villain in "A Study in Scarlet"

HOLMES

And now, gentlemen," he continued, with a pleasant smile, "we have reached the end of our little mystery. You are very welcome to put any questions that you like to me now, and there is no danger that I will refuse to answer them."⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Stephen Joyce, "Authentic in Authenticity: The Evolution of Sherlock Holmes on Screen," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 45, no. 2 (2017): 82.

⁷⁵ Polasek, "Surveying," 390.

⁷⁶ "A Study in Pink." *Sherlock*. BBC. 24 October 2010. Netflix.

⁷⁷ Polasek, "Surveying," 390.

⁷⁸ Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes Collection: Anthology of Classic Tales* (London: Flame Tree Publishing, 2017), 47.

Conan Doyle's Holmes is the Victorian hero and a gentleman and does therefore not display the rude and arrogant characteristics that *Sherlock's* Holmes displays, as can be seen here. Additionally, Conan Doyle's Holmes is a hero who fights for society and would therefore never gamble his own life for personal interest. Thus, these negative characteristics of modern Holmes are again characteristics that Victorian Holmes could never possess as they clash with his hero role.

Holmes possesses several antiheroic characteristics, which lead to Holmes being regarded as an antihero in *Sherlock*, argues Polasek. In her article, Polasek asserts that the negative qualities shown in this chapter, such as Holmes being an outsider and him being an arrogant child, are characteristics of the antihero.⁷⁹ Joyce similarly argues that Holmes is an antihero because of the series' attempt to remain authentic which "naturally led to the emergence of a new kind of protagonist, the antihero, and it is in this tradition that the modern Sherlock Holmes belongs."⁸⁰ These anti-heroic characteristics of Holmes are natural throughout the series, and enable Holmes to be regarded as the villain in "The Reichenbach Fall".⁸¹ In "The Reichenbach Fall" Moriarty makes the world believe that Holmes is a murderer and a fraud who was only able to solve all his cases because he was the one who committed the crimes. Holmes discusses why this lie of Moriarty is so believable to society:

HOLMES

Everybody wants to believe it. That's what makes it so clever. A lie that is preferable to the truth. All my brilliant deductions were just a sham. No one feels inadequate.

⁷⁹ Polasek, "Surveying," 389.

⁸⁰ Joyce, "Authentic," 86.

⁸¹ Polasek, "Surveying," 390.

Sherlock Holmes is just an ordinary man.⁸²

As can be seen here, Holmes does not regard himself as “an ordinary man”.⁸³ *Sherlock's* Holmes thus seems to be commenting on the ‘typical’ Victorian hero here, arguing that he cannot portray that role in modern society. Modern society would rather regard Holmes as a normal man who is equal to the rest of society than as a hero, because if Holmes were a hero, it would mean that Holmes is more special than the rest of society. Therefore, it seems that the BBC series suggests here that Holmes cannot portray the role of the ‘typical’ Victorian hero in *Sherlock*, because modern audiences of *Sherlock* are not as accepting of a hero in their midst as Victorian audiences were. Additionally, Holmes can be turned into the villain in *Sherlock* because of his anti-heroic qualities. In “The Reichenbach Fall” Moriarty explains to Holmes how he framed him by telling Holmes a fairy-tale story about how he framed Holmes, in which he refers to Holmes as “Sir Boast-A-Lot”⁸⁴:

MORIARTY

Sir Boast-A-Lot was the bravest and cleverest knight at the round table. But soon, the other knights began to grow tired of his stories about how brave he was and how many dragons he'd slain. And soon they began to wonder: are Sir Boast-A-Lot's stories even true?⁸⁵

⁸² “The Reichenbach Fall.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 15 January 2012. Netflix.

⁸³ “The Reichenbach Fall.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 15 January 2012. Netflix.

⁸⁴ “The Reichenbach Fall.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 15 January 2012. Netflix.

⁸⁵ “The Reichenbach Fall.” *Sherlock*. BBC. 15 January 2012. Netflix.

As shown here, Moriarty highlights Holmes's arrogance. As I have argued, BBC's Holmes possesses this arrogant characteristic, whereas Conan Doyle's Holmes does not, or is at least much more subtle about it. Thus, Moriarty can turn Holmes into the villain in *Sherlock* because of Holmes's antiheroic qualities. Moreover, Conan Doyle's Holmes represents society and thus it is unlikely that society would have turned on him as quickly as society turned on *Sherlock's* Holmes. Since BBC's Holmes can be turned into a villain so easily, this then leaves the conclusion that Holmes is not portrayed as a hero in *Sherlock*.

In this chapter, I have argued that *Sherlock's* Holmes possesses several non-heroic and even antiheroic characteristics, which prevent him from portraying the 'typical' Victorian hero role. Holmes is regarded as an outsider in *Sherlock* and, as shown, society noticeably has trouble accepting Holmes, often reminding Holmes that he is not part of society, for example by referring to him as a "freak". Additionally, Holmes displays the characteristics of an arrogant child in the BBC series, usually with negative repercussions as a consequence of his rude behaviour. Holmes's arrogance in *Sherlock* also leads him to risk his life for selfish reasons, such as in "A Study in Pink". These characteristics are what enable BBC's Holmes to be regarded as an antihero, allowing *Sherlock's* Holmes to be turned into the villain in "The Final Problem", thereby showing that Holmes is not a 'typical' Victorian hero in the BBC series. In the conclusion of this thesis, I argue that Holmes's and Moriarty's characteristics cannot be the same as Conan Doyle's Holmes and Moriarty because of their audiences. Additionally, I argue that *Sherlock's* Holmes possesses these antiheroic characteristics to adhere to its modern audiences.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have discussed Holmes's characteristics and the binary opposition between Holmes and Moriarty in Conan Doyle's stories. Also, I have discussed the change in Holmes's characteristics in BBC series *Sherlock*. I first provide an overview of my results and discuss the implications of these results. Then, I discuss possibilities for future research regarding my thesis. Finally, I suggest that the audiences of Sherlock Holmes adaptations are an essential factor in causing a Sherlock Holmes adaptation to deviate from the original stories by Conan Doyle. In this conclusion, I argue that the modern audiences of *Sherlock* influenced the BBC series to change Holmes's characteristics. Additionally, I discuss the binary opposition between Holmes and Moriarty and argue that this binary opposition no longer exists in BBC series *Sherlock*, due to its modern audiences. Finally, I argue that the modern audiences are an essential factor in influencing the BBC series to include distinct modern aspects in *Sherlock*, such as metatheatre.

First, I argue that based on my results it can be implied that no modern Sherlock Holmes adaptation could copy Holmes's characteristics as they were presented in Conan Doyle's stories. I argued, in the first chapter, that Holmes was a 'typical' Victorian hero because he adhered to Victorian values and morals that were important to its Victorian audiences. However, this also implies that Conan Doyle's Holmes was a 'typical' Victorian hero because the Victorian reader understood which Victorian values and morals were implied. In other words, Victorian Holmes was written for Victorian audiences. Therefore, any modern adaptation, in this thesis BBC series *Sherlock*, struggles with the problem that they cannot copy these Victorian morals and values without adapting them. This is because the audiences that watch *Sherlock* are modern audiences, who will need extra information and explanation in order to understand what a 'typical' Victorian hero is, and which morals and values were important to Victorian audiences of Conan Doyle's stories. Therefore, I imply

that the BBC series could never copy the characteristics of Sherlock Holmes exactly the same as they were depicted in the stories by Conan Doyle. This would then explain why *Sherlock* changed several characteristics of Holmes. Namely, *Sherlock* could choose to either explain all of Holmes's Victorian characteristics and the morals and values that were expressed through them, or the BBC series could choose to implement certain characteristics that are more understandable to modern audiences.

Similar to Holmes's characteristics, I imply that the binary opposition in Conan Doyle's stories cannot be copied in the BBC series and actually no longer exists in *Sherlock*. The binary opposition in the Sherlock Holmes stories relies on the opposition between Holmes as the hero and Moriarty as the villain. In the BBC series, Moriarty is still the villain, so this part of the binary opposition could still work, theoretically. However, I argued that *Sherlock's* Holmes is no longer a 'typical' Victorian hero in the BBC series. The binary opposition, however, relies on the opposition between the hero and the villain. Since no 'typical' Victorian hero role exists in *Sherlock*, the conclusion can be drawn that no binary opposition is possible in *Sherlock*. Additionally, since I argued that the 'typical' Victorian hero cannot easily be replicated in a modern Sherlock Holmes adaptation, this would imply that binary opposition could not be possible in any modern adaptation of Sherlock Holmes. Moreover, this implies another argument in favour of Victorian Holmes's inability to be replicated. I argued in the first chapter that the binary opposition between Holmes and Moriarty helps to establish the hero's morals and values. Namely, Moriarty represents the morals and values that should be avoided and provides a contrast with Holmes. However, since the binary opposition is not present in the BBC series, neither is this contrast, thus showing another reason why not all of Holmes's characteristics can be replicated in *Sherlock*.

In this section of my conclusion, I discuss opportunities for further research regarding my thesis. First, this thesis and all its arguments and implications are based upon BBC series

Sherlock. Therefore, similar research, as was conducted in this thesis, could be performed on other adaptations. Additionally, the BBC series has updated its setting to the twenty-first century. However, there are also modern Sherlock Holmes adaptations who maintain the Victorian setting. Therefore, researching such a modern Sherlock Holmes adaptation that attempts to replicate the Victorian setting of the stories by Conan Doyle could provide insight into the results presented in this thesis. It could thus be researched if retaining binary opposition and retaining Holmes's Victorian characteristics is possible in adaptations with a Victorian setting, or whether these cannot be replicated anymore due to the influence of modern audiences.

Moreover, the research in this thesis was based upon "A Study in Scarlet" and "The Final Problem" by Conan Doyle and the episodes: "A Study in Pink" and "The Reichenbach Hero" from *Sherlock*. Therefore, this leaves room for a more extensive research into Conan Doyle stories and BBC series *Sherlock*. Future research into other stories and episodes could provide new and expanded insights into the results and implications as discussed in this thesis.

Finally, I argue that the audiences form an essential factor in influencing a Sherlock Holmes adaptation to deviate from the original stories by Conan Doyle. Both the change in Holmes's characteristics, and the binary opposition which no longer exists in *Sherlock*, can be explained through the audiences' influence on the BBC series. Holmes's characteristics in Conan Doyle's stories depended on its audiences' understanding of the Victorian morals and values. Similarly, the binary opposition depended on these Victorian morals and values and the audiences' understanding of the role of the 'typical' Victorian hero. As can thus be argued, Conan Doyle heavily leaned on its audiences' understanding of the Victorian biases, morals and values that he conveyed through his stories. *Sherlock*, I argued, attempts to replicate the Victorian essence of the stories into its adaptation, but the BBC series also chose

to deviate from the original in order to conform to its modern audiences. Antiheroic characteristics, for example, were not that common in the Victorian era, but they are common in the twenty-first century, as discussed in chapter two. Additionally, modern society seems to have more of an issue with heroes existing in society, rather wishing people to be equal, as discussed in the second chapter. Thus, Holmes possessing non-heroic and antiheroic characteristics in *Sherlock* can be explained through the audiences' influence on the BBC series, as the BBC series turns Holmes into a more obviously flawed character. Additionally, *Sherlock* has incorporated other modern elements into the series, such as metatheatre, likely to conform even more to its modern audiences. As argued, metatheatre allows the audiences to reflect on the adaptation by switching between Victorian and modern elements. Thereby, *Sherlock* seems to include its modern audiences into the process of adapting an original story by showing the reader the choices they made in Victorian elements they retained and modern elements which deviate from the original. Thus, I argued in this thesis that Conan Doyle's stories and *Sherlock* are influenced by and adhere to its audiences, causing modern Sherlock Holmes adaptations to thereby deviate from the original Sherlock Holmes stories by Conan Doyle.

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