

# Representations of Sherlock Holmes

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An analysis of Sherlock Holmes' trademarks and their ways of being represented



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## Abstract

This thesis is going to examine how different directors and actors have chosen to represent some of Sherlock Holmes' trademarks. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's consulting detective has been adapted numerous times ever since the first novel was published. The purpose of the thesis is to demonstrate that the trademarks surrounding this fictitious character can and have been treated differently throughout the adaptations.

In order to accomplish the analysis, it is essential to include concepts or theories to help analysing the adaptations. For this thesis, the theories that have been chosen deals with adaptation, representation, and semiotics since the trademarks can be read as a form of language, thereby letting audiences recognise the stories. The late Stuart Hall's theory of representation is a key concept and the thesis is based around his idea - a representation is something that stands for something else. Representations and their meanings are also tied together with the concept of culture. In this case, the actors who are portraying Sherlock Holmes in the adaptations are standing in for Conan Doyle's original character. Other theories such as Ferdinand De Saussure's theory of the sign that includes a signifier and a signified and Roland Barthes' theory of denotation and connotation have also been integrated into the thesis to view how the trademarks, or signs, of Sherlock Holmes can be viewed by the readers and viewers.

The trademarks, which are going to be analysed, are firstly trademarks and symbols that describes Holmes as a character - e.g. his name, minor characters in relation to him, his drug abuse, and his deerstalker. There is also a part about the setting and location and viewing his transformation into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The second part of the analysis will focus on Sherlock Holmes' sexuality or lack hereof. It is never clearly stated in the original stories what kind of sexual identity he has, but there have been numerous speculations to this trademark. This part will also highlight some of the relations that Holmes has – being that of the women in his fictional life or the one with Professor Moriarty. The most profound relationship is the one that he shares with John Watson. The third and final part of the analysis focuses on Holmes being the man of science and his embrace of the technology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the adaptations. Sherlock Holmes has been reduced to a number of trademarks which audiences can decode and recognise and link to the consulting detective - directors and actors have to take these trademarks into consideration when doing an adaptation and decide if the trademarks should be included or how they should be treated in their films or TV series.

The analysis also includes transcripts from a number of Holmes' adaptations which have been included in order to see how differently some of the trademarks have been represented. The thesis will work with transcripts from Paul Annett's TV series *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* from 1984-85, Guy Ritchie's two blockbusters *Sherlock Holmes* from 2009 and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* from 2011. These three adaptations all place Holmes within the Conan Doyle time period and setting which is the Victorian London. The next two adaptations have placed Holmes within a new setting - Mark Gatiss' and Steven Moffat's BBC series *Sherlock*, which started airing in 2010, has placed Holmes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century London while Robert Doherty's American series named *Elementary* that started running in 2012 has placed the consulting detective in 21<sup>st</sup> century New York.

The last part of the thesis consists of the conclusion where Holmes' transformation is clearly visible - some of Holmes' new trademarks, which have been added in the adaptations, as an action hero, a sex symbol, and as a comical figure will be highlighted in the analysis since directors and actors have incorporated them into their representations of Holmes. The thesis will show that despite the fact that the stories about Sherlock Holmes were written over 100 years ago, the fictive character has survived being modernised to the fans of the 21<sup>st</sup> century which have ensured that he is still a part of the British culture and loved by fans all over the world.

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## 1. Introduction

In 1887, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created and published his first story, *A Study in Scarlet*, containing the mastermind of the science of deduction, consulting detective Sherlock Holmes and his companion, a veteran war doctor, named Dr. John Hamish Watson (Porter, 2012, p. 5). It was not until the story was reprinted four years later that it received a higher appreciation within society, and the popularity ensured that Conan Doyle wrote a series of sequels (ibid., p. 5). The deerstalker, magnifying glass, and the pipe have since been a symbol of the famous consulting detective and these symbols, or trademarks, have made the character recognisable for people around the world. Despite the fact that the stories were published over 100 years ago, the popularity has not been reduced, and the stories have been adapted for both book publications and comics, theatre stages, radio programmes, video games, and TV-series and films (ibid., p. 6).

During his life time, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote an incredible amount of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson stories, writing 4 novels and 56 short stories (ibid., p. 145). The stories became a great inspiration for adaptations in many different genres over the years, and every actor, screen writer, or director has his or her own idea as to how the consulting detective and the doctor should be portrayed to the audience.

### 1.1 Sherlock Holmes' image

The character of Sherlock Holmes is believed to have been an inspiration of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's own professor Dr. Joseph Bell - he could describe patients' diseases based on minor observations (Lycett, 2008, p. 190) and this must have intrigued Conan Doyle when creating his fictitious character.

Sherlock Holmes has been portrayed numerous times, and still continues to be renewed for audiences throughout times. Sherlock Holmes has been one of the most portrayed fictive characters both in stage and cinematic productions (Porter, 2012, p. 6) and although Sir Arthur Conan Doyle never used much space in his novels to depict the character, Holmes was illustrated in *The Strand Magazine*. The assignment of illustrating the detective should have gone to Walter Paget, but by accident it went to his older brother, Sidney Paget. Some critiques believe that Sidney Paget used his brother Walter Paget as a model (ibid., p. 25); however others claim that he only based the



Source: Toronto Public Library

appearance of Holmes by the description which John Watson makes in *A Study in Scarlet* (1887):

*His 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. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch, as I frequently had occasion to observe when I watched him manipulating his fragile philosophical instruments.*

(Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 14-5)

It was Sidney Paget who is believed to have contributed the detective with his trademarks of the high collared coat, the deerstalker, magnifying glass and pipe through his illustrations. The symbols of the fictitious consulting detective have all become synonyms of him and are often included when doing representations and adaptations of Holmes either on paper, stage or in cinematic productions.

When adapting a fictional story such as the one of Sherlock Holmes to another media, such as the visual, it is sometimes necessary to reinvent the character. The recent adaptations have taken Holmes and Watson out of Victorian London and placed them in either modern London or even New York City. The plotline is still the same, Holmes solving cases with his companion Watson, but just placed within a modern time frame. With the modernisation, it will be interesting to study whether the great consulting detective's appearance and trademarks have been sustained even though he has undergone some transformation. However, as the creator Steven Moffat stated before season one of *Sherlock* (2010- ) premiered 'Conan Doyle's stories were never about frock coats and gas light; they're about brilliant detection, dreadful villains and blood-curdling crimes- and frankly, to hell with crinoline. Other detectives have cases, Sherlock Holmes has adventures, and that's what matters' (Jamie Block, 2010) which might suggest that some aspects have not changed even though the stories have been modernised.

## **1.2 Film adaptations**

The first film adaptation of Sherlock Holmes was in 1900 in a black and white edition. It was titled *Sherlock Holmes Baffled* and was made by an American company. It lasts about 35 seconds where Holmes is facing a disappearing villain (Barnes, 2011, p. 216). It was the first of its kind and it has since had actors from all periods give their views on how Sherlock Holmes could be portrayed - among these adaptations are the ones from actors such as Viggo Larsen, William Gillette, Clive Brook, Basil Rathbone, Peter Cushing, Jeremy



Brett, Robert Downey Jr., Benedict Cumberbatch, and Jonny Lee Miller (ibid., p.316-29). The ones included in this thesis are mentioned in the following section while the reasons for choosing these adaptations will be accounted for in the methodology chapter on page 14.

In 1980, the British copyrights to Sherlock Holmes expired and Michael Cox suggested that Granada Televisions, a British television company, should remake Holmes – there were two major reasons for his ideas. Firstly, money should no longer be paid to the Doyle estate and Cox wanted Holmes to be reborn for a new generation and it would now be in a colour edition (ibid., p. 24). Jeremy Brett was quickly casted as Sherlock Holmes along with David Burke as John Watson and the whole TV series, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, stayed true to the original source material. This was done with a 77 page dossier of facts from Conan Doyle's stories, but also by Sidney Paget's illustrations.

For instance, the first time the audiences see Holmes, Brett is standing in a particular way just as one of the illustrations depicted (ibid., p. 26).

Brett and Burke became beloved by audiences and managed to air 13 episodes as the crime solving couple even though Brett had a hard time with one of Holmes' trademarks, the drug abuse, which the analysis will elaborate later on.



Source: Screenshot from Youtube.com

Within the last couple of years, there have been some recent adaptations which have caused a newfound love for the characters from Conan Doyle's stories. One of these adaptations has made Sherlock Holmes into a more action based figure - Robert Downey Jr. depicted the detective in a bohemian style of a charming action man in the 2009 film *Sherlock Holmes* and its sequel from 2011 *Sherlock Holmes: A game of Shadows*, both from director Guy Ritchie. The first film was based on Holmes and Watson, played by Jude Law, battling black magic in the shape of Lord Blackwood while the second film focused on Irene Adler and the battle with Professor Moriarty.

The two films focused a lot on the relationship between Sherlock Holmes and John Watson, and the adaptations contained an element of bromance. According to the users on Urban Dictionary, bromance can be described as 'the complicated love and affection shared by two straight males' (Urban Dictionary). This was made even more obvious by a comment from Robert Downey Jr. during the promotion in 2009 where he stated that Holmes and Watson are 'two men who happen to be roommates, wrestle a lot and share a bed. [...] It's bad-ass' (Carroll, 2009). The two blockbusters have managed to view Sherlock Holmes as the action hero of the Victorian period since he is not afraid of going face to face and

fight. These films managed to incorporate elements from the original stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, as do the next adaptation.

The second adaptation is the British BBC production *Sherlock* with Benedict Cumberbatch as Holmes, and Martin Freeman as Watson. The series is created by Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat who many fans of *Doctor Who* will recognise due to their rewriting of that series. *Sherlock* is closely tied together with several of Conan Doyle's stories since the plot is almost identical, only modernised a bit. Sherlock Holmes is an asexual figure with a clear substance abuse. He has, at times, quit smoking and has turned to nicotine patches while still assisting the Scotland Yard with solving murders in 21<sup>st</sup> century London. John Watson, a doctor returning from Afghanistan, still tries to find a new existence after the war, and he wants to settle down. Even though many characters in the series still questions the relationship between him and Holmes, Watson keeps dating women and eventually ends up married to Mary Morstan. This TV series has tried to spin Sherlock Holmes as a comical figure since he is often doing jokes or behaving in a humorous manner due to his lack of social skills.

Another popular series is the American CBS interpretation *Elementary* which is created by Robert Doherty. The series stars Jonny Lee Miller as recovering drug addict Sherlock Holmes and Lucy Liu as the female Joan Watson, a former doctor who is now a sober companion. *Elementary* is set in 21<sup>st</sup> century New York City and displays Holmes after rehab. Holmes has become a sex symbol with a clear sexual orientation towards women - it is often indicated that he has had sex and he even encourages Watson to seek more male attention. Doherty wanted to create a series that did not contain a love affair between the two lead characters despite the fact that it is indicated that they could be together. Doherty wanted the relationship to remain professional (Roberts, 2012) and focused on solving crimes committed in New York.

Both of these latter TV series has renewed many pre-existing fans' love of the iconic figures, but they have also made others join the universe of deductions and crime solving. It is also the latter two TV series that will weigh heavily in the analytical part, later in the thesis. This is due to their popularity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

There are numerous subjects or themes within the adaptations of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson that have been much discussed due to different interpretations of the original stories - some of these themes have for instance been the portray of London as a labyrinth, the portray of women in the Victorian society,

or even Sherlock Holmes' use of technological devices and progress. This thesis will be based around three of these much discussed themes in relation to the difference between the original stories and the various adaptations. These three themes are:

- The development of the iconic and cultural characters.
- Sherlock Holmes and his sexual identity.
- How Sherlock Holmes can be seen as the man of science.

*By analysing selected film and TV adaptations of Sherlock Holmes, the core question to answer on this problem statement is how different directors and actors have chosen to represent certain symbols and trademarks of the consulting detective?*

In order to answer this problem statement, it is necessary to answer some smaller research questions:

- What are some of Holmes' trademarks?
- How has Sherlock Holmes' trademarks changed over the years and adaptations?
- Has Sherlock Holmes been given a sexual identity?
- How can Sherlock Holmes still be the man of science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the focus on modern society's technology?

## **1.4 Structure**

The thesis is structured as follows:

- **Methodology:** the chapter in which the theory and adaptations will be accounted for, including the reasons for choosing them for this thesis. The chapter will contain a part on how it is possible to compare two different genres – one being written literature and the other being the visual media. There will also be a part about some of the criticism that the chosen theorists has received in order to demonstrate the thoughts for choosing them for this thesis. There will also be a paragraph on this thesis' limitations and how this has influenced the structure since there has been a natural rejection of other theorists.
- **Theory:** The theory chapter will contain sections which are going to conceptualize the theories that will be used in the analysis chapter and the theories will be e.g. the theory of adaptation and Stuart

Hall's view on representation. In connection to Hall's theory of representation, Ferdinand De Saussure's theory of semiotics and signs and Roland Barthes' thoughts on denotation and connotation have also been chosen since it deals with images as signs and languages - each sign has a meaning to it which is constructed through shared meanings across societies. These three main concepts have all been conceptualised by the help of Stuart Hall's book *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* which was first published in 1997, but reprinted in 2013.

- Analysis: The next step in this thesis is to go into the analysis - as explained in the introduction; Sherlock Holmes has been 'reduced' to a set of recognizable trademarks which are present within many adaptations. He has now been reborn in the adaptations as an action hero, comedian, and as a sex symbol which does not correspond entirely with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original stories. These new trademarks will be highlighted while also viewing the representation of some of his other trademarks. These areas will firstly be Holmes' character and its development by viewing trademarks such as the name, setting, characters, and Holmes' behaviour and appearance. The second part of the analysis will research whether the original asexual literary character has been given a sexual identity either as a hetero-, homo-, or bisexual man. The third and last analysis will focus on Sherlock Holmes as the man of science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The question is whether Holmes has survived being modernised and can he work with the modern technologies such as internet, smart phones, and laptops?

The analysis will contain several close readings from a number of adaptations - the oldest adaptation has been Paul Annett's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* from 1984. Following this adaptation are Guy Ritchie's blockbusters from 2009 and 2011 which are named *Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*. The hugely popular BBC series from Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat, *Sherlock*, which has been running from 2010, is also included, just as the American *Elementary* from Robert Doherty which first aired in 2012.

- Conclusion: The conclusion chapter finishes this master thesis by answering the problem statement and the smaller research questions which were put forward in the introduction. Lastly, there will be some question which might be useful if doing a further research.

There is no doubt that Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson have undergone a huge transformation since their birth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but some elements and themes have remained, however, in a more

rewritten and modern aspect which this master thesis will show. This concludes the introduction of this master thesis and as Sherlock Holmes would have uttered:

"Come, Watson, come!" he cried. "The game is afoot."

(Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 711)

## 2. Methodology

This chapter contains the methodology section where the reasons for choosing the theories, films and TV adaptations are stated. In the study of Sherlock Holmes' possible development throughout the years, it is essential to view different adaptations in order to be able to compare the adaptations with the original source material, that being Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories. When comparing the adaptations, or empirical data, it is necessary to use concepts, or theories, which can show and underline how and if Holmes' trademarks have changed over the years.

### 2.1 Comparing two genres

The thesis is based on a comparative analysis between two different genres which are written literature and visual media which mean that naturally there are some obstacles when doing the analysis. The genres do not act identically; for instance, there are many different ways of doing a characterization in both genres which will be elaborated upon in the next paragraph. Despite the fact that these are two different genres, they have often been objects for adaptations and representations – going both from literature to the visual, but also the other way where a visual character has been turned into a piece of written literature.

Returning to the aspect of characterization, when an author is writing a characterization of a character in the literary genre, it can be done by telling. Since literature often lacks the visuals, a character can be described according to appearance or behaviour. An act is an important element that both genres share since actions can be a mean of helping to characterize a character. The character's thoughts and what is being said about them can also be included as main elements when doing a characterization. However, the characterization of a character within a visual media genre, e.g. film or TV series, can also be done by showing. It is easy to show a visual character with all of his trademarks since the audience is watching the screen and seeing the actor.

Yet, the visual media genre has a limitation since there are often time frames which must be kept. Another element is the fact that the media genre does not allow its viewers to imagine their own character since the characters are shown on the screen in the form of an actor. In the visual media, the narratives often disappear and directors have to use other methods of characterizing such as behaviours, lighting, or camera angles. The narratives of John Watson have disappeared in most of the adaptations in the visual Medias, and the stories are often told by actions or even through Sherlock Holmes.

However, there was a visual aspect within the stories from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle - the stories which were printed in *The Strand Magazine* were illustrated by Sidney Paget. He, as described earlier, gave Sherlock Holmes some of the trademarks, even though Conan Doyle never actually wrote about them. One of them is for instance the deerstalker. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote that Holmes wears a 'close-fitting cloth cap' (Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 159), but never mentions a deerstalker which later has been a recognizable synonym of the consulting detective.



Source: Stock, 2012

Returning to another main difference between the written literature and the visual media is actually the written words - the visual media can show objects and characters while each written word has a meaning which has been shaped through social interactions and since been culturally accepted. This is also what Stuart Hall has expressed as a main theme in his theory of representation which will be used within this thesis. Representation is 'the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the "real" world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events' (Hall, 2013, p. 3). For instance, the written word *CAR* needs some form of cultural and mental understanding while the picture or moving picture of a car does not. Yet again, the object of the deerstalker, pipe and magnifying glass is also culturally connected to Sherlock Holmes, and this aspect will be elaborated further within the thesis. These symbols or trademarks have transpired onto the visual media genre and have made Sherlock Holmes great for adaptations.

## 2.2 Selected theory

The basis of this thesis is the theories from Stuart Hall, Ferdinand De Saussure, and Roland Barthes. They have been chosen since their theories all view images as language which have been shaped through social interactions. Another reason for choosing Hall's, Saussure's, and Barthes' concepts in the thesis is that the image of a man with a pipe and a deerstalker carries a lot of meaning and connotations and most people recognises the image of the iconic consulting detective. He is an image within the British culture which has survived and this is why he is one of the most recognisable images in literature.

Stuart Hall was a cultural theorist and his theory on representation has been selected since all of the directors and actors in the adaptations are creating representations – they have created their own versions of Sherlock Holmes. A representation is when something stands in for something else and in this case it is the actors who are portraying the iconic character since they are all standing in for Conan Doyle's original stories.

The late Stuart Hall is a natural choice for this kind of thesis since his point of views have been crucial and helped to shape cultural studies. His three approaches of representations are elaborated on in this thesis and especially one stands out since it deals with how representation can be a part of shaping meanings within a culture – just as it has been the case with Holmes. It is the constructionist theory of representation that is in focus since the meaning and cultural value of Sherlock Holmes has been shaped by the opinions of the public in the Victorian period when they read the stories and made them so popular.

Critics of representation argue that these previous models of representations, as Hall has helped to coin, were too narrow and must also focus on knowledge and power (Hall, 2013, p. 27). As Hall states:

*[...] representation was understood on the basis of the way words functioned as signs within language. But [...] meaning often depends on larger units of analysis - narratives, statements, groups of images, whole discourses which operate across a variety of texts [...]*

(ibid., p. 27)

This quote shows that representation previously functioned as words in a language - they could be understood as signs that could be read by viewers. However, language was not sufficient enough and other principles were taken into account. Representation should also be concerned with social interactions and how knowledge is created through these interactions which this thesis is trying to incorporate. Meaning is created through human interaction and can help to create an image which can be understood across the world without using language.

The second theorist is Ferdinand De Saussure, a semiotician, and his theory of semiotics and sign are included in this thesis – semiotics is a part of this thesis since it deals with the fact that cultures have shaped the meanings of an object or image and semiotics allows for images to be viewed as a language.

Hall has written a chapter in *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* about Saussure's critique in order to highlight some of the criticism that has surrounded Saussure's work. Some of the critique is based on the fact that Saussure did not pay much attention to the relations between the signifier and signified and how it could be used to refer to objects 'in the "real" world' as Hall states (Hall, 2013, p. 19) and he goes on by listing an example of the meaning of the word *BOOK* and how it can be used to refer to a particular book (ibid.). Another point of criticism is that Saussure tends to focus on the



formal language usage instead of incorporating the informal language as well. Language changes over time and it cannot be placed within a close system - meanings are always being produced in languages and these can change (ibid.).

Roland Barthes was also a semiotician and a critic and the reason for including his concept of denotation and connotation is the fact that Saussure did not pay any attention to the person reading the image. Barthes' has incorporated this aspect and it is important when having to deal with an iconic figure such as Sherlock Holmes. This character carries a lot of connotations for many people around the world and it is helpful when seeing how Sherlock Holmes' trademarks have changed over the years. However, one must keep in mind that Barthes' theory was first published in 1957 and it is therefore more than 50 years old (Egs.edu) – despite of this fact, denotation and connotation is still being used in research around the world and this is one of the reasons for including it here.

By selecting these three theorists, the focus of this thesis will be based on how an audience can interpret certain symbols, or trademarks, as some form of language and thereby recognise the underlining meaning behind them. Several other theorists could have been chosen, but a selection had to be made. The French critic Michel Foucault approaches and theories were rejected from the thesis. This is due to the fact that he focuses a lot on the bond between power and knowledge in society and how this can be used to control society by institutions in the same society (Hall, 2013, p. 33). However, this was not what this thesis is trying to highlight and his theories were rejected. Yet, one of the theorists that is included in the thesis, Stuart Hall, was fascinated with Foucault and was influenced by his ideas.

One of the initial ideas for the thesis was to view solely on Sherlock Holmes' sexuality and see how it changed over the years and adaptations - the idea was to use some of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's concepts and thoughts from her book *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) as a starting point; however, this approach was replaced since her work focuses on the queer aspect. This thesis tries to document that apparently Sherlock Holmes does not have a clear sexuality and that he could remain asexual in the adaptations. Sedgwick's ideas have influenced the thesis, but they will not be used as theories in the thesis.

The selection of the theorists has also got to do with the limitations of the thesis based on the fact that it cannot exceed more than 80 pages and that it has to be written in a certain amount of time. Naturally, there will be some theorists that are going to be discarded, but these small paragraphs will highlight the thoughts about not including them in the final version of the thesis.

### **2.3 Selected film and TV adaptations**

In order to make a comparative analysis, it is essential to incorporate adaptations of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories. Sherlock Holmes has been made into numerous adaptations and this thesis will focus on the TV and film adaptations - one could also have focused on radio programmes, video games, comic books, and other written literature, but this has not been a subject for this master thesis.

Since Holmes has been portrayed many times and over a long period of time, it is necessary to narrow the number of TV and film adaptations, which are going to be used in the analysis, down to a few pieces. The oldest of the adaptations is going to be Paul Annett's TV series from 1984-5 *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* with Jeremy Brett in the lead role. This adaptation stays incredibly close to the original source material and this is one of the reasons for choosing it. Another reason is the fact that each generation has their own Sherlock Holmes' actor and in the 1980s it was Brett. His iconic version of the detective and the fact that he committed and invested so much of himself in the role has made it to a great adaptation.

The next couple of adaptations are more recent and therefore made Sherlock Holmes gain a huge fan base in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - the older fans are being joined by youngsters and newer fans that have discovered their love to the consulting detective. The first adaptations which will be highlighted here are the two blockbusters from director Guy Ritchie. The first is named *Sherlock Holmes* and is from 2009 while the second is from 2011 and is titled *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*. These two films star Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law as the two iconic characters in Victorian London. The reason for incorporating them is the fact that Ritchie has stated that he wanted to avoid making a film which contains the clichés that surround Sherlock Holmes. He wanted to make a new representation of Sherlock Holmes and in it he has moved into the area of being an action hero - he is often in fights with his bare hands and he is not afraid of going face to face with the bad guys in the films. The thesis will naturally highlight if Guy Ritchie's plan of removing Holmes' clichés, or trademarks, have succeed or if he has maintained elements.

In 2010, Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat had aired the first episode of their TV adaptation *Sherlock* and it was a huge success. So much that they have just announced the planning of a fourth season which should air in 2016 (imdb.com, a). Benedict Cumberbatch plays Sherlock Holmes and Martin Freeman stars as John Watson and the characters have now been modernised for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but they still live at Baker Street 221B, London. The TV series has been chosen for this thesis since it is a frontrunner in creating moments of origins for certain visible trademarks and these moments are being worked into the stories. One example is the deerstalker which will be elaborated later. The series has also created Sherlock Holmes as a comedian where the character has been placed in comical situations either involuntarily or voluntarily.

It is for the amusement of the audiences who have received a new side of the serious crime-solving Holmes.

The last TV adaptation has been chosen since it has completely renewed Holmes, but it has also maintained some elements from the original stories. The series has given Holmes a sexuality and he has become somewhat of a sex symbol - he is sexually active, but only because his body needs it. This American adaptation of Sherlock Holmes is titled *Elementary* (2012- ) and it has been created by Robert Doherty. One of the other major changes has been the fact that John Watson has been replaced with a female character named Joan Watson. Holmes still resides in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but in this adaptation, London has been replaced with New York. *Elementary* is the most recent adaptation, but it is interesting to view whether the director has maintained some of the trademarks from the consulting detective, or if the character has been renewed completely.

This concludes the methodology section. The next part of the thesis will contain the conceptualization of the theories which are going to be used when analysing the trademarks of Sherlock Holmes.

### 3. Theory

In order to determine how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories about the consulting detective and the veteran doctor have influenced several media and cultures around the world, it is necessary to use the theories of representation and semiotics. Sherlock Holmes and John Watson have, over time, been 'reduced' to a few symbols or trademarks which people all over the world can decode, and this is why representation and the cultural meaning has been chosen as a part of the theory. The following part will deal with the concept of culture followed by a description of the late Stuart Hall's theory of representation and its basics. The cultural theorist, and professor, Stuart Hall has been chosen since his point of view has been essential for cultural studies and among others, he represents a constructionist approach which is applied later in the thesis in order to analyse how representation can shape meanings within culture. The two concepts of symbols and trademarks will also be introduced in this chapter.

The next section includes a chapter on semiotics which depicts the impact of signs in the world and how they can be viewed since concepts are formed by signs and language. Sherlock Holmes also used semiotics within his own detective work which will be illustrated later. The theory section then conceptualizes semiotician and linguist Ferdinand De Saussure's theory of the signifier and the signified. This theory has been chosen since it is useful when having an image of Sherlock Holmes and see how the image can be tied up with a constantly changing concept or idea. Roland Barthes's levels of denotation and connotations have also been incorporated since the image of Holmes and Watson carry a lot of connotations to people all over the world.

#### 3.1 *The theory of adaptation*

The first term to be conceptualised is adaptation since it will be used several times during this thesis. Adaptations are everywhere, and also in the case with Sherlock Holmes and John Watson - they have been the inspiration for a whole range of different genres and adaptations. Doyle's stories have been the source to comics, films, radio shows, stage performances, video games, and even museums and tourist tours in London. The empirical materials which will be used in this thesis are TV series and films based on books. In this case, it will be Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original stories in comparison to the various TV series and films that have been made on the basis of the original stories.

As Linda Hutcheon argues in her book *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), adaptations usually reveals their sources and have to define their relationship to the texts openly (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 3). However, this open relationship often creates a negative view on the adaptation since it, in some critics' eyes, is not as great as

the original book or source. This aspect makes adaptation more vulnerable to critique than their original source - this might be due to the fact that fans of the original books have an expectation as to the final product. The adaptations have to stay true to certain elements or parts of the book, and if these expectations are not met, fans might be disappointed (ibid., p. 4).

One of the more recent shows which have been heavily critiqued is *Elementary* (2012- ) since it does not stay as true to the stories as other adaptations (Roberts, 2013). Many key elements and trademarks of Sherlock Holmes have been thrown away in order to rethink the universe of Sherlock Holmes. This can be a frustrating idea for the many Holmes fans who love the original source material.

The British adaptation *Sherlock* (2010- ) has not received a lot of critique because it stays true to the original stories and only modernises them so they will work in 21<sup>st</sup> century London. Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat are loved for their show since they try to develop smaller stories about the origin of certain trademarks of Sherlock Holmes, for instance the deerstalker. They are developing a new angle on the moments of origin and are creating meta-moments. Other aspects such as the pipe has been modernised and substituted with nicotine patches due to the fact that smoking in public has been banned several places. The original three-pipe-problem has now turned in to a three-patches-problem.

Holmes and Watson have also been inspiration for other TV shows where the genre is detective work - one example would be FOX's *Bones* which have been running since 2005 (Porter, 2012, p. 84-5). The show is centred on the partnership of a forensic expert named Dr. Temperance 'Bones' Brennan, who has very little social skills, and Special Agent Seeley Booth. The pair work together in order to solve murders and are often tested on their relationship. Conan Doyle's Holmes and Watson have also done some forensic work and they are always trying to use the most recent scientific method in order to solve the case. This is also the case with *Bones* where the characters have the privilege of working at the Smithsonian (ibid.).

### **3.2 Culture and representation**

One key concept which is important to have conceptualised before moving further into Stuart Hall's view on representation, is the concept of culture. Representation is closely linked with culture, since representation falls within the category of cultural studies. However, culture as a concept shifts and it can therefore be difficult to define it. According to the online version of the Longman dictionary, culture is '[...] the beliefs, way of life, art, and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a particular society [...]' (Longman, a).

With this stated, Stuart Hall's traditional view on culture is that culture is supposed to be the best within society - the best idea which has been able to come across to the audience in many different genre such as painting, literature, and philosophy. A more modern approach to culture has been to have both 'high culture' and 'popular culture'. High culture being the best within the different genres, and popular culture being what is mass produced to its audience (Hall, 2013, p. xvii-xviii). However, Hall casts this aside and states that

*[c]ulture, it is argued, is not so much a set of things - novels and paintings or TV programmes and comics - as a process, a set of practices. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings - the "giving and taking of meaning" - between the members of a society or group.*

(Hall, 2013, p. xviii)

Hall saw culture as a concept that involves a power relation within society. He knew that politics is connected with culture, but he also established that culture can never be reduced to politics due to the social struggle in society in relations to culture (Procter, 2013, p. 2). This means that politics cannot define culture since it requires a social actor. Culture needs to be part of a struggle and this is necessary since culture is active and changeable (ibid.). Societies will always argue as to what culture is, and what culture should be, and politics cannot do this sufficiently. To sum up, culture is all about shared values, and this is essentially what representation deals with. Representation reflects cultural values and illustrates them.



Source: Hart, 2013

### ***3.3 The theory of representation***

Representation, as stated in the introduction of this thesis, connects a meaning and a language to a cultural phenomenon (Hall, 2013, p. 1). Representation means that something stands in the place of, and stands for something other - an example from Stuart Hall's book illustrates this by viewing a cross. It is just two wooden planks nailed together, but within a Christian belief system the cross stands for the crucifixion of Christ. This can furthermore be portrayed with words and symbols (ibid.).

Before moving on, the concepts of a symbol and a trademark need to be defined. They will both be used further on in the theory section and especially in the analytical part of this thesis. According to the Longman Dictionary, there are three definitions for the noun *SYMBOL*, the first definition being that a

symbol is 'a picture or shape that has a particular meaning or represents a particular organization or idea' (Longman, b) One example from the Sherlockian world would be that of the deerstalker as a symbol of Sherlock Holmes. The second definition is that a symbol can stand for something – for instance, a symbol can represent an amount or a chemical substance. The last definition states that a symbol can be 'someone or something that represents a particular quality or idea' (ibid.). Again, returning to the world of Sherlock Holmes, he as a character represents a certain set of qualities and ideas which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wanted to get across. These ideas have existed ever since, and are still present in some way in the adaptations which the analysis will display later.

A trademark can refer to either a specific name, word, or even sign which refers to a certain company - it could for instance be the word *Coca Cola* or 'The Golden Arches' from McDonald's. A second way of defining a trademark is to view it as something which has become recognizable to someone (Longman, c). In the world of Sherlock Holmes, it would for instance be his deerstalker, his magnifying glass, or even his good friend John Watson.

In connection to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novels and short stories, the representations can be the adaptations which have been made based on his work. The adaptations have been numerous, but they have all contained symbols and trademarks from their original source in order for the audience to know that, what they are about to hear or see, is actually a new interpretation of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson.

According to Hall, there are three different approaches to representation - the first being the reflective theory where there is a focus on how language can influence a pre-existing meaning. In this theory, language can function like a mirror to a certain person, idea or event. For instance, in order for a conversation to be fully understood by both participants, they both need to share the same concept of a word. Hall uses the example of a rose where both participants need to have a coded image of the plant in their culture otherwise the communication will break down (Hall, 2013, p. 10).

The intentional theory is the second approach where theorists can examine if language expresses the intended meaning of what is being said - opposite the reflective theory, the intentional theory argues for the fact that the speaker or author has the power of the words, and can get the specific meaning through. As a speaker, one will always convey an object or event which is specific and special to this person and does so by using a certain set of words (ibid.).

The latter approach is the constructionist theory and this approach is used to see if a meaning is constructed through language (Hall, 2013, p. 11). This last approach acknowledges that representation is based on a social activity, and that meaning is something that is constructed within

society by using representational systems such as signs. Constructivists believe that one must not mix the material world with the symbolic world meaning that people and events are placed within the material world, and the symbolic world contain representational tools and practices such as language and meaning. Again, the material world does not create meaning since this is done with representational practices and a social actor. However, Hall sees a flaw in this division since the symbolic world contains elements from the material world - for instance, an image is made with a camera, and sounds can be made with the human vocal cord (ibid.).

The next concept which will be described is semiotics – semiotics is a way of viewing the signs in our culture and their meanings. This connects with Sherlock Holmes and John Watson since they have been reduced to a few recognisable signs which audiences all over the world can decode. Stuart Hall coined the terms encoding and decoding since in order to interpret a sign, one needs the use of codes. Encoding means that one applies a code or meaning to something while decoding means that the interpreter decodes the meaning (Hall, 2013, p. 45). Semiotics has also been chosen since it can be helpful in order to view Sherlock Holmes and John Watson as cultural symbols and iconic figures. This is due to the fact that semiotics allows its users to interpret images and symbols as a form of written text, and the users can therefore translate it into meaning.

### **3.4 Semiotics**

The theory of semiotics is coined in such a way that 'since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices depend on meaning, they must make use of signs; and in so far as they do, they must work like language works, and be amenable to an analysis [...]' (Hall, 2013, p. 21). In other words, culture can be reduced to signs which are readable and able to be analysed. Ferdinand De Saussure was the founder of semiotics; however, his theory was criticised for not incorporating the reader of the sign. Roland Barthes, a French critic, further developed Saussure's thoughts and implemented the idea that there is an important element as to who is reading the sign. Barthes believed that semiotics were more than just the construction of words and their representations (ibid. p. 54). Barthes published his book *Mythologies* in 1972 where he used semiotics as a mean of analysing popular culture and saw the signs as meanings which were being shared and communicated across the world (Hall, 2013, p. 21-2).

One of the reasons for choosing semiotics in this thesis can be found in a quotation from Saussure where he states that



*[l]anguage is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. But it is the most important of all these systems.*

(Saussure, 2011, chapter 3)

Hereby, he means that language consists of signs which can be read - signs can be anything, and this is why semiotics is useful. Semiotics can be used on more than words, signs or images, and can actually be placed on objects themselves - objects can function as giving a meaning. Semiotics can even be used on TV programmes or food. Barthes has analysed clothing and seen that they can be signifiers since they have a purpose of covering a body, but they can also signify a cultural coding. For instance, blue Levis jeans have a cultural code which relates to America and being American. Clothes therefore become signs which are readable (ibid., p. 37).

Sherlock Holmes also uses semiotics in his own work, yet he has named it the science of deduction. He can deduce elements and traces that other persons are too 'ignorant' or 'dumb' to see, as Holmes would state it. The objects which are available for Holmes' investigation, all contains a sign which can be decoded based on the information that the reader has. Holmes, as the reader of signs, has a lot of information which helps him to decode the message faster. He quickly deduces what others cannot and this is why he is a fantastic consulting detective. However, he has not yet been able to decode the social message when interacting with other people, but that is a whole other discussion.

The following concept which will be defined is tied together with semiotics, and the two concepts have the same founder – Ferdinand De Saussure. The concept is Saussure's way of interpreting a sign as having a signifier and a signified.

### 3.5 Sign

Stuart Hall has two definitions on a sign - one being the iconic sign which is a visual sign. The iconic sign holds a meaning which the reader can decode. The other definition is the indexical sign which can be either written or spoken (Hall, 2013, p. 7). Ferdinand De Saussure viewed a sign as containing two elements which would be helpful in analysing - the signifier and the signified. The two elements do always function together since the signifier is the form of the sign.



Source: Kiwicraig, 2014

The form can be a word, image, photo or even an object while the signified is a concept which is formed inside the reader's or interpreter's head based on the signifier (Hall, 2013, p. 16). The relationship between the signifier and the signified are unnatural since there is no obvious connection between the signifier and the signified (Berger, 2013, p. 9).

Saussure believed that signs do not have fixed meanings, and that the signs must be defined by using relatives and viewing the difference between these concepts - Hall lists an example of the concept of *FATHER* which cannot be fully understood unless seen in relations to concepts like *MOTHER* and *CHILDREN* (Hall, 2013, p. 16). The reason for incorporating the difference lies in the fact that '[t]his marking of difference within language is fundamental to the production of meaning [...]' (ibid.). In order to connect words with concepts, one needs to understand the meanings behind them, and this can be accomplished by using binaries - direct opposites such as black and white, or night and day.

Returning to signifier and signified, Saussure argued that the cultural codes are not fixed within the signified since words can change meaning – it can be done within one certain culture, but also between cultures. Stuart Hall lists, in his book, an example of the word *BLACK* which has undergone a form of transformation. Going from being associated with evil and dangers the word has been redeemed due to, among other initiatives, the slogan from the 1960s 'Black Is Beautiful' (ibid., p. 17). All meanings, the signified, are being produced and shaped through history and the culture which they exist within. Returning to Hall, he states in *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (2013) that

*This opens up meaning and representation, in a radical way, to history and change. It is true that Saussure himself focused exclusively on the state of the language system at one moment of time rather than looking at linguistic change over time. However, for our purposes, the important point is the way this approach to language unfixes meaning, breaking any natural and inevitable tie between signifier and signified. This opens representation to the constant "play" or slippage of meaning, to the constant production of new meanings, new interpretations.*

(Hall, 2013, p. 17)

What he means is that the meaning about a concept is not fixed, and alters with history and language usage and this is done by the readers - when reading a sign or an image, there is an active process done by a viewer who interprets the concept within his own mind. The next chapter is based on the theories from Roland Barthes named denotation and connotation. It has been chosen since he views the readers and their backgrounds which Saussure failed to incorporate, and this is helpful in relation to the representation of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson.

### *3.6 Denotation and connotation*

Moving further into Roland Barthes' view on semiotics, one must also take his theory of denotation and connotation into account. Barthes incorporated denotation and connotation when viewing the reader of a sign or image - he or she is trying to interpret the sign by using the cultural references that he or she has. The first level is denotation which refers to the physical aspect of the signal and it can be described as David Crow does: 'a photograph of a child represents a child. No matter who photographs the child and how they are photographed, in this first order of signification, they still just represent "child"' (Crow, 2010, p. 55).

Connotation is when the reader applies a system of coding to the sign in order to interpret the meaning of it. The coding system comes from the cultural background of the reader and they are personal conventions and can therefore vary depending on the culture. The conventions can be viewed as some form of agreement as to how the sign or image should be read and how the reader is supposed to respond (ibid.). An example from the Sherlockian world would be the deerstalker – when seeing this hat with ear flaps, most will automatically think of Sherlock Holmes due to the cultural value that is spread worldwide. However, connotations can be obtained manually and one example of this could be when taking a photograph or an image. The photographer can obtain certain elements of connotations by using different strategies of for instance soft or hard lightning, various framings, and different colours schemes (ibid. p. 55).

### *3.7 Partial conclusion*

This concludes the theory section of the thesis - all of the concepts which will be used in order to analyse and thereby answer the problem statement have been conceptualized. The concept of culture were included since Sherlock Holmes and his companion John Watson have become cultural icons while representation was included since actors from many different time periods have given their views on how to represent the two iconic figures. The school of semiotics will also be incorporated in the analysis that begins on page 28 since the adventures of Holmes and Watson have a lot of sign and trademarks which can be decoded by people and fans all over the world. These fans have, among others, made use of their denotation and connotations. This will now lead the thesis the analytical part where close readings of various adaptations in the genres of films and TV series will be analysed in order to answer the problem statement.

## 4. Analysis

Most of the trademarks that surround Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories have survived the numerous adaptations by various actors through a period of more than 100 years. These trademarks have made it possible for audiences to acknowledge or decode the fact that what they are about to witness is actually an interpretation of a Sherlock Holmes adventure. A trademark, as explained in the theory section on page 23, is a symbol, word or sign which can refer to a certain company or which have become recognizable to others. For instance, in reference to Sherlock Holmes and John Watson, a trademark could be Holmes' deerstalker, his magnifying glass, the pipe, or even Holmes' high collar Victorian coat. Sherlock Holmes has received some new trademarks such as him being an action hero, a comedian, and a sex symbol. These trademarks can be viewed as an attempt to steer away from the classical trademarks and clichés that surround Holmes, but have the directors and actors managed this or are some of the people behind the adaptations staying true to the original stories?

The following analysis will be split in three analyses that each focuses on a specific area or trademark. The first section will contain analyses that will focus on important aspects in the Sherlockian universe which are interesting and have been a part of many adaptations - the focus will be on central trademarks such as the cultural value in the name *SHERLOCK HOLMES* and his adventures, how the character of Sherlock Holmes has evolved in regards to his deerstalker, his drug abuse, and the sheer location of the adaptations. The next analysis will then focus on Holmes' sexuality or asexuality as some would name it. This section will be about how Holmes has been viewed as being everything from a hetero-, bi-, to being a homosexual man in the film and TV adaptations. The third part of the analysis will have a focus on Holmes as the man of science - how has Holmes been able to adapt to these modern days technologies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century such as laptops and smartphones which were not present when Conan Doyle wrote the stories?

### *4.1 Trademarks and locations of Sherlock Holmes*

The following chapters will contain analyses on some of the trademarks that surround Sherlock Holmes. The first is the actually written word *SHERLOCK HOLMES* and how the audiences can decode what the message and meaning behind the film or TV series is, based on their own cultural background. The second analysis will be focused on the lead characters and their development and how some of the trademarks have been altered when going from the original stories and into the many adaptations. The last aspect is

the locations of Holmes' adventures - he has always resided at a well-known address in London, but this has been changed in one of the newer adaptations where the setting has moved to New York, USA.

#### 4.1.1 *The sign and meaning of Sherlock Holmes*

As stated earlier, representation plays a key role when trying to understand film and TV adaptations - this is also the case with Sherlock Holmes which this thesis will illustrate. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote his novels and short stories in the period going from 1887 to 1927, and Sherlock Holmes still continues to be portrayed in the modern media despite the fact that the stories are more than 100 years old. This is due to the cultural value which has been placed upon the stories by the readers. Conan Doyle was not overly fond of his consulting detective and planned to kill the character in one of the short stories - however, the public demanded more (Thompson, 1993, p. 60).

The public had a shared interest in Sherlock Holmes, and it became a piece of literature that brought people together and they felt like they belonged to a certain society. They could talk about it together and await Conan Doyle's next anticipated adventure in *The Strand Magazine*. The adventures of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson had become a piece of British culture which has survived being modernised and made contemporary.

Earlier, Stuart Hall's three approaches to representation were explained on pages 23-24, and the approach which has significance in relation to this thesis is the constructionist theory. Theorists use this approach in order to see how a meaning is constructed through language and this form of representation takes into account that representation is a social and active way of thinking. A meaning was constructed around Sherlock Holmes when the stories of his adventures were published in *The Strand Magazine*. When subscribers to the magazine read the stories, they took an active part in letting the society know about the detective and they made the stories about him very popular. However, language is much more than just words - it can also be images and signs. Sidney Paget gave a face to Holmes and since then Holmes has been reinvented on screen and it is this image of Holmes that newer fans have made into a cultural value.



Source: Balcony, 2014

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle started to write the adventures of Sherlock Holmes in the Victorian Period which dates from circa 1837 to 1901 along with the reign of Queen Victoria (Black, 2012, p. 33). Ever since the Victorian readers placed a certain cultural value on Sherlock Holmes, the name has had a specific value to it, meaning that fans all over the world immediately can associate the written words with the characters from Conan Doyle's stories. Throughout the years, audiences of the adaptations have been able to decode the meaning behind the representations and are therefore able to make the connection between the name and the British cultural value. This is a fact that the producers and directors of the film and TV adaptations are aware of and they are using it in order to promote the meaning behind their representation.

For instance, all of the adaptations have had a title that refers back to Sherlock Holmes - examples of this could be Paul Annett's 1984 classic *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, or Guy Ritchie's adaptations *Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* from 2009 and 2011 right down to the popular BBC series *Sherlock* (2010- ) by Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat. The most recent adaptation has a name which can also be associated with Sherlock Holmes - Robert Doherty's CBS TV series *Elementary* (2012- ).

However, the latter show has quite an interesting title. It is clearly a reference to the phrase which many fans believe that Sherlock Holmes should have uttered: 'Elementary, my dear Watson, elementary', however; fans who have read the original stories will know that these exact words does not appear in any of the original Conan Doyle stories. Conan Doyle does make Sherlock Holmes state a sentence which is close, but not to the extent as many would think. It is present in *The Adventures of the Crooked Man* (1893) where it is stated that

*"I see that you are professionally rather busy just now," said he [Holmes], glancing very keenly across at me [Watson]. "Yes, I've had a busy day," I answered. "It may seem very foolish in your eyes," I added, "but really I don't know how you deduced it." Holmes chuckled to himself. "I have the advantage of knowing your habits, my dear Watson," said he. "When you round is a short one you walk, and when it is a long one you use a hansom. As I perceive that your boots, although used, are by no means dirty, I cannot doubt that you are at present busy enough to justify the hansom." "Excellent!" I cried. "Elementary," said he.*

(Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 378)

It is very difficult to find the origin of the entire phrase 'Elementary, my dear Watson', but in *Teller of Tales: The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (2014), the author Daniel Stashower does hint that the actor William Gillett might have been the first to say the words in 1899. It would have appeared in the play, *Sherlock Holmes*, which was based on several of Conan Doyle's stories, but the sentence does not appear in any of the scripts which are available (Stashower, 2014, chapter 15). Others claim that the phrase originated from

the 1929 film by Garrett Fort and Basil Dean, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, starring Clive Brook where Brook utters the sentence (Keyes, 2007, p. 54).

No matter who uttered the phrase first, it is still a part of the trademarks of Sherlock Holmes and it is a part of the Sherlockian universe which has fascinated a lot of loving fans and across many cultures for many years. The phrase has survived many adaptations and representations and *Elementary* (2012- ) is clearly referring to this fact. Doherty and the other people behind the series are trying to make a connection with the audience and let them associate their show with a phrase that has become a synonym with Sherlock Holmes.

All of the adaptations of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories have had a clear vision on how Holmes should be represented. Nevertheless, these adaptations have also contained new ideas as to how the consulting detective might have acted. Where Conan Doyle saw a Victorian modern man, other directors have added to that vision or modified it - Guy Ritchie has maintained the modern Victorian man, but he has added an action hero aspect which is new to the character. Holmes has become more violent and not afraid of going into a battle with his bare hands. In the films, Holmes is often involved in a fight where he draws from his knowledge as a boxer, just as the original stories.

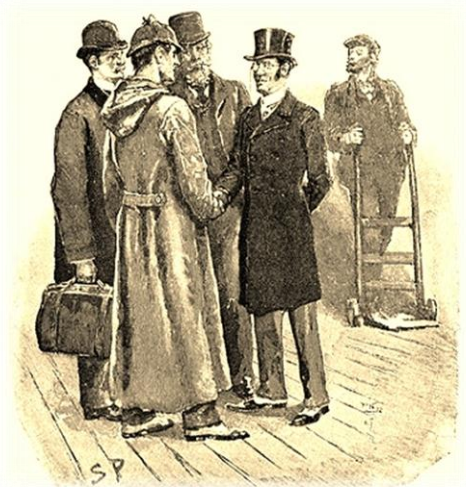
Ritchie has also tried to incorporate a comical aspect; however, he is not the only director to have done this. Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat have created a Holmes with a lot of humour - often the humour exists due to Holmes' lack of social skills and his interaction with other people while the third season of *Sherlock* (2010- ) has made a version of Holmes where he deliberately wants to be funny. The audience apparently love the humorous Holmes even though this aspect is not present in Conan Doyle's stories. The last, but also the most profound new aspect, is the sexual feature which has been present in the more recent adaptations. Yet, especially one adaptation has made the sexual Holmes a trademark and it is Robert Doherty's Americanised version of Holmes. This representation of Holmes clearly focuses on Sherlock Holmes having a sexual orientation and even having been in a long-term relationship with a woman.

All of these aspects are new to the character of Sherlock Holmes, but despite this fact, most of the recent adaptations have tried to incorporate them in one way or another. This is the new representation of Holmes and it has been used in several adaptations in some form. However, one aspect present in nearly all of the adaptations – since it is what makes a perfect Holmes' adventure- is the need for a case to be solved. Conan Doyle had a case for Holmes to solve in each of the 60 stories.

### 4.1.2 Characters

Ever since the stories were made into adaptations, Sherlock Holmes has been portrayed numerous times in many different genres, and the adaptations have insured that Holmes keeps on getting more and more fans. Representation means that something stands in the place of, and stands for something else, which is essentially what the adaptations do. An actor such as Jeremy Brett or Benedict Cumberbatch takes the place of the idea that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sidney Paget had of Sherlock Holmes and stands in for the character. Conan Doyle wanted to depict a modern Victorian man (Porter, 2012, p. 144), and this is one of the trademarks that still exists when Holmes is being represented and made into an adaptation.

Sidney Paget was the first to make a representation of Holmes since he was the one, although by mistake, that was tasked with the job of illustrating Conan Doyle's stories for *The Strand Magazine*. Sidney Paget is said to have based the look of Sherlock Holmes on his younger brother (Porter, 2012, p. 25), but he also gave Holmes a few trademarks on his own. Some of these are the high collar coat and the deerstalker. Other trademarks that Conan Doyle applied to Holmes were for instance the pipe, the magnifying glass, and the drug abuse. All of these symbols have become synonyms with the consulting detective and are ever present in many newer adaptations. Gene Wilder, Basil Rathbone, Jeremy Brett, Robert Downey Jr., Benedict Cumberbatch, and Jonny Lee Miller have all had one or more of these trademarks with them when portraying the detective on screen. It is these symbols that Sherlock Holmes has been reduced to, and that fans all over the world can decode as belonging to the consulting detective when the character is being portrayed by actors.



Source: Balcony, 2014

According to Ferdinand De Saussure, a sign, or image, consists of two elements - one being the signifier and the other the signified as explained on pages 25 and 26. In the case of Sherlock Holmes, both the stories and the newer media's visual images of him and John Watson are the signifiers. At the same time, these smaller trademarks such as the pipe, magnifying glass, and deerstalker are also signifiers which help to shape what is being signified. The concept of Sherlock Holmes is what should be signified, but this requires that the one who is reading the sign has an understanding and background-knowledge about Holmes. If the reader does not have the required knowledge, then these signifiers will give a whole new meaning which was not intended.



As Saussure believed, an interpreter of the signs can understand the meaning by seeing the signs in contrast to comparative concepts. For instance, Sherlock Holmes and John Watson's detective work is opposite to the crimes that the villains are doing in the stories - Holmes and Watson are working on catching the villains or solving the puzzle in order to help the clients. The villains are in the stories in order for the readers to know the contrast between good and evil and to decode who to trust inside the universe of Sherlock Holmes. This is one of the binary opposites which help to create a meaning of a concept, such as explained earlier in the thesis.

Holmes and Watson have, as signifiers, undergone some form of transformation since the time they were born in Arthur Conan Doyle's mind and to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Conan Doyle wanted to create a modern Victorian man, and most adaptations have stayed true to that fact, but in recent adaptations Holmes has been taken out of the Victorian milieu, and even out of London, in order for producers and scriptwriters to create their vision of a modern man in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yet again, meanings are not fixed within a concept and new cultural values have made it possible to make this transformation of Holmes. The underlying idea is still present of the consulting detective since fans all over the world have placed Holmes and Watson as iconic British figures and added cultural value to them. The signifier has changed slightly, but the signified remains - it is the shared cultural value that means a lot to the fans, and this can be what still makes the fictive characters popular and still elements for representation and adaptations.

The name *SHERLOCK HOLMES* has been kept in every adaptation and is, of course, a synonym for the famous consulting detective. In order to make a representation of Sherlock Holmes to work within a new setting, there is the need for a Sherlock Holmes character. In every adaptation, Sherlock Holmes has been the lead character and his name and his own job description as a consulting detective has also remained in the adaptations. He has not undergone some form of transformation in regards to gender or name.

However, the same cannot be said about his companion in Conan Doyle's stories, John Watson. Even though most of the adaptations have kept the veteran war doctor in the plot, the character has been altered in some of the newer adaptations. He is no longer an overweight elderly man with a moustache, as Paget portrayed him, but he is now



Source: [imdb.com](http://imdb.com), c, 2013

often a tall, lean and modern man. Yet, the newest Sherlock Holmes series has portrayed the character in a whole new manner. Dr. Joan Watson, played by Lucy Liu, has now become a female sober companion for a drug recovering Sherlock Holmes in New York. This new spin on the original male relationship comes from the American CBS series *Elementary* (2012- ) where the creator Robert Doherty has taken this bold risk - he has stated in an interview with Collider.com that

*Carl [Beverly, executive producer] initially was the one who brought up the possibility of developing a Sherlock show. I was very familiar with the character. [...] He [Sherlock] did not have a terrifically healthy relationship with women. He was a little suspicious of them. It just made me laugh when I read it because I was like what would make him crazier than if Watson was a woman. He's actually living with somebody who is monitoring him and is also a woman. [...]*

(Roberts, 2012)

Doherty and Beverly took an unusual spin on the Holmes' universe; however, they still wanted to incorporate elements which are essential for Conan Doyle's stories. They wanted to create a show which still kept Holmes and Watson's strange relationship where everyone around them, and the readers or viewers, are speculating as to what the meaning of their relationship really is. The creators know that audiences have a certain connotation when viewing a Holmes adaptation, but they have played with this fact. *Elementary* (2012- ) is a show that, in some ways, has revolutionized the stories of Holmes and Watson since the character of Watson is not the only aspect which is being reinterpreted.

It is not only the lead characters who have remained in the adaptations - representations of Mrs. Hudson, Mycroft Holmes, Detective Lestrade and Professor Moriarty have also been present in various forms in many of the adaptations. Mrs. Hudson is the land lady at Baker Street and in the adaptations she has had both a strained and a loving relationship with Sherlock Holmes. In *Elementary*, she comes late in season one and offers to clean the house after Holmes and Watson have solved a case for her while in *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), she and Holmes have a strained relationship as the transcript will show:

[...]

WATSON: A Mr. Louis...

HOLMES: There's only one case that intrigues me at present. The curious case of Mrs. Hudson, the absentee landlady. I've been studying her comings and goings and they appear most... sinister.

HUDSON: Tea, Mr. Holmes?

HOLMES: Is it poisoned, 'Nanny'?

HUDSON: There's enough of that in you already.

HOLMES: Don't touch. Everything is in its proper place. As per usual, 'Nanny'.

HUDSON: Oh, he's killed the dog... again.

[...]

(Ritchie, 2009, 9:40)

This is just one of their small disagreements throughout the two Guy Ritchie films. In the film from 2009, she does not want Watson to leave since she cannot stand Holmes' experiments and madness which is clear from the transcript. She often complains about him and she does not want to feed the animals for his experiments. Their relationship is very comical for the audience and it highlights the mood of the film. However, there is another loving relationship in *Sherlock* (2010- ) where Holmes often kisses Hudson on the cheek and protects her from dangers. Mrs. Hudson has become a woman in his life which he can trust and he relies on her - just as she helps him to hide evidence and it is perhaps not the first or last time that she has done so. She is risking her life for him and he knows that and this might be why they have such a special bond:

[...]

WATSON: She'll have to sleep upstairs in our flat tonight; we need to look after her.

HOLMES: No... She's fine.

WATSON: No, she's not, look at her. She's got to take some time away from Baker Street. She can stay with her sister, doctor's orders.

HOLMES: Don't be absurd.

WATSON: She's in shock, for God's sake, and all over some bloody stupid camera-phone... Where is it anyway?

HOLMES: Safest place I know.

HUDSON: You left it in the pocket of your second best dressing gown, you clot! I managed to sneak it out when they thought I was having a cry.

HOLMES: Thank you. Shame on you, John Watson.

WATSON: Shame on me?

HOLMES: Mrs. Hudson leave Baker Street? England would fall.

[...]

(Moffat, 2012, E01, 1:00:29)

The next section will focus on some of the symbols and trademarks in regards to appearance and behaviour that have made Sherlock Holmes recognisable in many of the adaptations. There are several symbols and it has been necessary to narrow down the options. The two symbols which will be analysed are firstly the deerstalker and secondly Holmes' drug abuse. Both symbols have undergone some transformation due to the various adaptations and this is what this section will highlight.

#### 4.1.3 *The deerstalker*

One of the trademarks which has become a synonym in regards to the appearance of Sherlock Holmes is the deerstalker even though Sir Arthur Conan Doyle never mentioned it in his stories. Conan Doyle made Holmes wear a cap in one of his stories, but it was Sidney Paget, who illustrated the stories, that drew a

deerstalker on Holmes' head. Since then, many actors have worn the deerstalker, with the exception of Robert Downey Jr. and Jonny Lee Miller, and it is often the most recognizable trademark that the audiences are familiar with if they have not read the stories.

In the BBC series *Sherlock* (2010- ), they even make a joke out of the deerstalker and they have created a meta-moment. Gatiss and Moffat have played with the origin of the deerstalker element and have come up with their own version of the episode. Earlier in the series Holmes has been photographed with the deerstalker and Watson has used this photo for his blog. Holmes is not fond of this which is showcased throughout the series. In the last episode of season two, *The Reichenbach Fall*, Sherlock Holmes, played by Benedict Cumberbatch receives a deerstalker from the police as a gift for his assistance in solving a case. When he and John Watson, played by Martin Freeman, return to Baker Street, Holmes discusses the deerstalker while Watson looks through the papers and tabloids – it gets to this funny conversation:



Source: Gore-Langton, 2014

[...]

SHERLOCK: [quotes from paper] 'Boffin'? Boffin Sherlock Holmes.

WATSON: Everybody gets one.

SHERLOCK: One what?

WATSON: Tabloid nickname. SuBo, Nasty Nick. Shouldn't worry. I'll probably get one soon.

SHERLOCK: Page five, column six, first sentence. Why is it always the hat photograph?

WATSON: [quotes from paper] 'Bachelor John Watson'

SHERLOCK: What kind of hat is it, anyway?

WATSON: Bachelor? What the hell are they implying?

SHERLOCK: Is it a cap? Why has it got two fronts?

WATSON: It's a deerstalker. [quoting from the paper] '...frequently seen in the company of bachelor John Watson'.

SHERLOCK: How do you stalk a deer with a hat? What am I going to do, throw it?

WATSON: [still quoting] 'Confirmed bachelor John Watson'.

SHERLOCK: Is it like some sort of death Frisbee?

WATSON: Okay, this is too much. We need to be more careful.

SHERLOCK: It's got flaps. Ear flaps. It's an ear hat, John. What do you mean, more careful?

WATSON: I mean, this isn't a deerstalker now. It's a Sherlock Holmes hat. I mean that you're not exactly a private detective any more.

[...]

(Moffat, 2012, E03, 3:13)

The deerstalker has become a symbol of Sherlock Holmes which dedicated fans or people with the knowledge of Sherlock Holmes can decode - a language without words. Even here, Watson can see the impact of fame and essentially of semiotics. The creators Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat have taken an iconic trademark and created a meta-moment where they have acted out how the trademark might have become a synonym of the consulting detective. The same goes with Watson's nick name 'bachelor Watson' where the origin might have been from a newspaper. At the same time, similar conversations between the characters throughout the series have created a comical spin on the whole situation.

Continuing along the path of Saussure's thoughts, semiotics can also be applied to Holmes and Watson. Again, the idea is that the reader of the sign, or in this case image, has enough cultural knowledge about Sherlock Holmes and John Watson that he or she can decode the message and understand the image. However, the message of Holmes and Watson might be easily decoded in the part of the world that knows about these characters while the part of the world that does not know these iconic figures does not have the tools to decode the message.

As stated earlier on page 24, semiotics make it possible to read a sign as a form of language and the signs can be words, images, or even objects themselves. This is what has happened to some of the trademarks - the deerstalker has become a synonym with Sherlock Holmes and his adventures.

#### 4.1.4 *The drug abuse*

It is no secret in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories that Sherlock Holmes was addicted to drugs and had a habit of shooting cocaine and morphine when there were no cases and he became bored. The first incident where it becomes public that Sherlock Holmes has a substance problem is in *The Sign of The Four* (1890):

*Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantel-piece and his hypodermic syringe from its neat morocco case. With his long, white, nervous fingers he adjusted the delicate needle, and rolled back his left shirt-cuff. For some little time his eyes rested thoughtfully upon the sinewy forearm and wrist all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks. Finally he thrust the sharp point home, pressed down the tiny piston, and sank back into the velved-lined arm-chair with a long sigh of satisfaction. [...] "Which is it today?" I asked, - "morphine or cocaine?" He raised his eyes languidly from the old black-letter*

*volume which he had opened. "It is cocaine," he said - "a seven-per-cent solution. Would you care to try it?"*

(Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 64)

Holmes is clearly addicted to drugs and it is not the last time that it is illustrated in the stories. His drug abuse has been present in many adaptations - Robert Downey Jr.'s representation of Holmes drinks a substance which Watson states 'is meant for eye surgery' (Ritchie, 2009, 19:38). It is an interesting subject in regards to Downey Jr. since he has been addicted to drugs himself and it almost destroyed his own career. It is also what could destroy Sherlock Holmes if he is not occupied around the clock - he does drugs when there are no cases and he gets bored. In *Sherlock* (2010- ), Cumberbatch's Holmes is also addicted to drugs and his flat at Baker Street is even the subject of several raids where the police and friends are trying to find the drugs and encourage him to quit his substance abuse. At some point, Watson even finds Holmes at a crack house and he is taken to Molly Hooper who is to check if he has done drugs. It is never mentioned in words, but Hooper ends up slapping Holmes which suggests that he has been on something. He explains that it is in regards to a case.

Another example from *Sherlock* is from the first season where Detective Inspector Lestrade finds out that Holmes is withholding evidence - Lestrade arranges a drugs bust in order to find both the evidence, but also the drugs. It is here that Watson and the audience finds out that Holmes has used drugs and might still be doing it:

[...]

HOLMES: You can't just break into my flat.

LESTRADE: You can't withhold evidence - and I didn't break into your flat.

HOLMES: What do you call this, then?

LESTRADE: It's a drugs bust.

WATSON: Seriously? This guy - a junkie? Have you met him?

HOLMES: John...

WATSON: I'm pretty sure, you could search this flat all day, you wouldn't find anything you could call recreational.

HOLMES: John, you probably want to shut up now.

WATSON: But come on... No...

HOLMES: What?

WATSON: You?

HOLMES: Shut up!

[...]

(Moffat, 2010, E01, 56:30)

In *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1984-85), Brett's Holmes also deals with a drug abuse. It does become clear in the episode *The Devil's Foot* which was directed by Ken Hannam in 1988 in the TV series *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (Hannam, 1988) where Holmes is seen shooting cocaine. However, the episode has a new turn of event - the show had come so popular with children that the actor Jeremy Brett did not want youngsters to follow in Holmes' footsteps and start doing drugs. Brett had written to a family member of the Conan Doyle family asking if it could be changed and she agreed - Brett's Holmes is

therefore seen burying his cocaine in the sand (Sleuthian). Jeremy Brett is not the only actor who has portrayed Holmes quitting his drug abuse even though the adaptations are years apart.

Jonny Lee Miller's Sherlock Holmes is stationed in New York after having been going through a rehab programme in order to deal with his abuse. The series keeps referring to this fact and it is present in many of the episodes. In the series, Holmes is by his father required to have a sober companion and he even gets a sponsor - at some point, he is asked to sponsor another individual which he is not so keen on. One of the more striking matters in the series is when Holmes has reached his one-year anniversary of his sobriety. He does not want the pin even though it is a ritual when going through rehab. One of the reasons for him not wanting the pin is the fact that he knows what it stands for - he is aware of the fact that the pin is a sign and that it comes with a lot of meaning and connotations. It stands for the fight that a person has had for a year; however, he acknowledges that he has not been clean for a full year. He has taken drugs the first day after completing rehab and this is the reason for him not wanting to receive the pin.

The producers of these Holmes adaptations are perhaps aware of the impact that film and TV series can have on fans, and especially youngsters, and the people behind the adaptations are therefore willing to change the course of the consulting detective. The society has changed from a time where cocaine and morphine were legal drugs to a modern society where drug abuse is frowned upon and many are seeking help for their addiction. Whatever the case might be, Holmes has previously been dealing with drug abuse in the original stories and it has been one of his trademarks. A newer trademark might then be the struggle of getting out of a substance abuse.

#### *4.1.5 Settings*

Another trademark which is also a synonym with Sherlock Holmes is the location of his adventures. 221B Baker Street, London is one of the most known addresses within the literary genre and fans of the stories are coming to London to try and find this fictitious address. Even the address of 221B Baker Street is a sign in itself and carries a lot of meaning to people who are familiar with both the Holmes from Conan Doyle's hand, but also the numerous adaptations. The actual Baker Street in London did not incorporate a 221B, but the street was later extended. Today, Baker Street now contains the Sherlock Holmes Museum who has marked the location of 221B Baker Street (Porter, 2012, p. 167).

The address is also an element which needs to be present in the adaptations since nearly every of Conan Doyle's stories starts out with a client interview at Sherlock Holmes' and John Watson's apartment. Nearly every adaptations are based around 221B, even the Disney animation from 1986, *The*



*Great Mouse Detective*, has contained this element where the mouse entrance is at a crack in the foundations of Baker Street (Clements, 1986). *Sherlock*, which first aired in 2010, has also stayed true to the fact that most of Holmes' adventures depart from 221B and most of the episodes feature client meetings at the location.

However once more, *Elementary* (2012- ) plays with a known trademark, and has placed Sherlock Holmes in New York due to his drug recovery. The adaptation has still contained Holmes' British accent and he does come to London on occasions, but is otherwise maintained in New York. The tag line for the show is even 'New Holmes. New Watson. New York.' (imdb.com, b) which basically reflects most of the changes that have been made in reference to the original stories. In the series, Holmes refers to his address as simply 'the brown stone'.

Even though the address still lives on, one of the more interesting subjects in regards to Sherlock Holmes is the fact that he has moved from the Victorian Period which dates from circa 1837 to 1901 (Black, 2012, p. 33), all the way up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most of the representations, such as Paul Annett's and Guy Ritchie's versions of Sherlock Holmes, are situated in Victorian London. In Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes* from 2009, Holmes and Watson even discuss the build of the London Bridge and they use horse carriages when moving across London. These kinds of adaptations are staying true to Conan Doyle's vision of a modern man placed in the Victorian London; however, the newer adaptations have felt a need to recreate Holmes to a more modern audience in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This was firstly done in Gatiss' and Moffat's *Sherlock* (2010- ) - the pair are famous for taking classic film and TV series and spinning them with a more modern appeal to fans all over the world. Besides working on Sherlock Holmes, they have also reinvented *Doctor Who* which also became a great success. Holmes is still placed in London on Baker Street, but he has access to modern technology and does not dress or behave as a Victorian man. He is a now modern man in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The second adaptation to place Holmes in a modern world is *Elementary* (2012- ) which, as already stated, places him in the 21<sup>st</sup> century New York. Here, he has also got access to modern day technology and he dresses more like an American.

#### 4.1.6 Partial conclusion

This concludes the first of three analyses and this has focused on how Sherlock Holmes has evolved from being a modern Victorian man into a more Americanised version - Holmes, as a literary character, has been placed in the British culture due to his popularity with the many fans. As a result of this, he has been



'reduced' to some symbols and trademarks that are visible in many of the adaptations that have been made over the years. Most of these symbols and trademarks are in relevance to him or his appearance; however, the location of the stories has also got an importance for the audiences when trying to decode the adaptations.

Holmes has evolved along with the evolution of the modern society which the next analysis will show. It will focus on Holmes' sexuality and demonstrate how he has evolved from an asexual character to a character which can be described, by many fans, as sexy. His sexuality is a trademark that also carries a lot of connotations which will be demonstrated.

## 4.2 Holmes and sexuality

Sherlock Holmes is often referred to as a virgin since it is never stated that he has had sex or that he has been in any relationships. This part of the analysis will examine Holmes' sexuality and view how the trademark has been dealt with throughout the adaptations. The first chapter will be centred on the special bond that Sherlock Holmes and John Watson share – going further into the question of sexuality, Holmes relationship with the women in his life will be highlighted along with the bond that he has with his arch enemy Professor Moriarty. Moriarty has undergone a transformation of his own and this will be shown in the following chapters.

### 4.2.1 Holmes and Watson

In regards to Sherlock Holmes, one of the highly discussed trademarks is the question of his sexuality. Holmes is an iconic and cultural figure without any apparent sexual identity in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories. However, does the asexual figure still remain a virgin in the adaptations, or has one of the noticeable trademarks of the consulting detective disappeared? This is one of the questions which the next chapter will try to answer.

The special relationship between Holmes and Watson is essential to a proper adaptation - it is one of the trademarks which allows audiences to recognise the Sherlockian universe and allow them decode the adaptation. In the terms of semiotics, Holmes has been reduced to a sign which, on some level, bears the signifier of asexual - it is not possible to place a label of sexuality on him which might be what excites many fans. They are trying to decode his sexuality, but have failed to do so since there is no apparent answer to this search. However, each adaptation has tried to answer the question, or confuse the audiences more, with their own version and this is apparent in this chapter.

In 1885, the Criminal Law Amendment Act was passed and section 11, or the Labouchere Amendment, was added to the 1885 Amendment Act. Section 11 stated that

*Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is party to the commission of, or procures the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.*

(Cook, 2003, p. 42)

Previously, the amendment act had concerned sodomy which would occur between men, women and 'beasts', as it stated; however, now it was been targeted at homosexual men (ibid.). This meant that homosexuality was made illegal and a man could be sentenced with up to two years of hard labour if being convicted. This suggested that men in homosexual relationships would have tried to keep their relationships a secret and not out in the public. This must have created a lot of frustration for homosexual men and caused a lot of debate in the Victorian London. This is perhaps one of the reasons that the readers of Conan Doyle's stories have speculated about Sherlock Holmes and his close relationship with John Watson.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle never mentioned Holmes' sexuality in the stories; however, Holmes has a special connection with John Watson - they immediately bond and rent a flat on Baker Street together. In Conan Doyle's first novel *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), Watson writes about his fascination with Holmes while he tries to uncover what kind of person Holmes is - Watson even creates a list of the flaws that Holmes has. In the list, Watson describes that Holmes has no knowledge of literature, philosophy, or astronomy; however, Holmes does have a great deal of knowledge when it comes to subjects that are important when trying to solve crimes. Some of these are knowledge of geology, chemistry, and about the British law (Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 15-16).

In an older adaptation of Sherlock Holmes, Jeremy Brett plays the consulting detective along with David Burke as the doctor. The series, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, aired with 13 episodes where the two men captivated audiences in the 1980s. In the first episode, *A Scandal in Bohemia* (1984), the relationship between Holmes and Watson is being established. The first incident is about 10 minutes into the episode where Holmes makes a reference to James Boswell:

[...]

WATSON: Holmes, I think your visitor [the king of Bohemia] will want me out of the way.

HOLMES: Not a bit, Doctor, stay where you are! I am lost without my Boswell.

[...]

(Annett, 1984, E01, 9:32)

James Boswell was an admirer of the famous English scholar, Dr. Samuel Johnson, and Boswell wrote all he could about Dr. Johnson, just as the case with Holmes and Watson (YAHOO, 2011). Watson is the one who writes down all the adventures that he and Holmes have and share. The transcript further displays that Watson is very helpful and that Holmes does not want to be without him when on a case.

This reference cannot be understood without knowing about Johnson and Boswell; however, when viewing it through the eyes of a person with the right knowledge, the matter has another reference.

In regards to semiotics, James Boswell is a sign of affection and admiration and this cannot come across without one knowing the background knowledge. Yet, with another set of background knowledge, in regards to the discussion of Conan Doyle's stories and Holmes' sexuality, the audience can decode the message in another way and still get the signified; in this case that Sherlock Holmes could have feelings towards Watson and does not want to be without him.

*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1984-85) does not play with the homosexual aspect a lot and it has, apparently, no importance for the audience at its time. The director of the series Paul Annett has not felt the necessity to try and make a show that has a higher focus on the topic, but there are small and discrete conversations where it is possible to interpret it as dealing with homosexuality. However, in recent adaptation film and series, directors have begun to play a bit more with the homosexual aspect which the next part of the analysis will show.

In Gatiss' and Moffat's adaptation of *Sherlock* (2010- ), John Watson is more sceptical about the two bachelors moving in together, but does it out of necessity. All throughout the series, their relationship is questioned and there is an underlining joke about the two men being homosexual. Sherlock Holmes does not seem to mind, but John Watson always denies the fact and often states that he likes women. He has several girlfriends and ends up married to Mary Morstan, just as in the original stories.

In the first episode *A Study in Pink* (2010), there are several incidents where it is indicated that people around Holmes and Watson are questioning their relationship. The first example where Watson denies being homosexual is when Holmes and Watson arrive at Baker Street and are shown the flat by Mrs Hudson.

[...]

MRS HUDSON: What do you think then, Dr. Watson? [showing him the apartment]. There is another bedroom upstairs if you'll be needing two bedrooms?

WATSON: Of course we'll be needing two.

MRS HUDSON: Oh don't worry, there is all sorts round here. Mrs Turner next door has got married ones.

[Watson looking confused]

[...]

(Moffat, 2010, E01, 14:20)

This is the first incident and Dr. Watson is not entirely sure what has happened – he is left a bit confused, but does not comment further on the situation. However, Mrs Hudson has already decoded the sign. In her world and with her background knowledge, she decodes that those two men living together can only be a symbol of them having a relationship. She even questions whether they are going to need the spare bedroom in the flat. In regards to Barthes' theory of denotation and connotation, the denotation is two

men living together in a flat, but Mrs Hudson has made a connotation on her own about the fact that they must be in a sexual relationship. This is based on her cultural background which is personal conventions as explained on page 27 and they might be based on her knowing about Mrs Turners' pair next door, or other encounters that Mrs Hudson has had with homosexual men and women or it might simply be because that one of the two men is Sherlock Holmes. *A Study in Pink* (2010) contains one more example of people questioning Holmes' and Watson's relationship, and here they are on a stake out at a restaurant.

[...]

ANGELO: Sherlock! Anything on the menu, whatever you want, free! On the house, for you and for your date.

SHERLOCK: Do you want to eat?

WATSON: I'm not his date!

ANGELO: This man got me off a murder charge.

SHERLOCK: He's Angelo. Three years ago, I successfully proved to Lestrade, at the time of a particularly vicious triple murder, that Angelo was in a different part of town, house-breaking.

ANGELO: He cleared my name.

SHERLOCK: I cleared it a bit. Anything happening opposite?

ANGELO: Nothing. But for this man, I'd have gone to prison.

SHERLOCK: You did go to prison.

ANGELO: I'll get a candle for the table. It's more romantic.

WATSON: I'm not his date!

SHERLOCK: You may as well eat. We might have a long wait.

[Angelo returns, bringing a candle for the table]

[...]

(Moffat, 2010, E01, 49:24).

Angelo, the owner of the restaurant, has made his own form of deduction and has decoded based on his own personal conventions that since Sherlock Holmes is eating in Angelo's restaurant in the evening with another man, they must be on a date. To Angelo, this can only mean that they might be in a relationship and he wants to make it more romantic by putting a candle on the table. Watson does not want this since it enhances the image of Holmes and him having a romantic date – this creates one more of these funny moments which is incorporated throughout this show. The conversation continues and Watson wants to know about Holmes' dating life:

[...]

HOLMES: What do real people have, then, in their... 'real lives'?

WATSON: Friends? People they know, people they like, people they don't like... Girlfriends, boyfriends?

HOLMES: Yes, well, as I was saying, dull.

WATSON: You don't have a girlfriend, then?

HOLMES: Girlfriends? No, not really my area.

WATSON: Mm. Oh, right. Do you have a boyfriends? Which is fine, by the way.

HOLMES: I know it's fine.

WATSON: So you've got a boyfriend, then?

HOLMES: No.

WATSON: Right. OK. You're unattached. Like me. Fine. Good.

HOLMES: John, um... I think you should know that I consider myself married to my work and while I'm flattered, I'm really not looking for any...

WATSON: No, I'm... not asking. No.

[...]

(Moffat, 2010, E01, 50:21)

In this transcript, Holmes and Watson are talking about Holmes' sexual orientation, but he clearly does not have one and is considered to be married with his work. Holmes misinterprets Watson's questions and is thinking that Watson is attracted to him. This is actually what the whole discussion about their relationship is centred around and Moffat and Gatiss have managed to place it within the series. Watson is trying to figure out what Holmes' prefers and is making a deduction of his own - he figures that since Holmes does not have a girlfriend, he might be homosexual. However, this is not the case and Watson's semiotic work which is based on his own background knowledge has failed here.

This is not the last time during the three seasons of *Sherlock* (2010- ) that John Watson is standing up against the assumptions which people are putting forward of Holmes' and Watson's special bond. This bond is present in several adaptations, especially within the last ten years, and has become one of the trademarks when making an adaptation of the beloved stories from Conan Doyle. The representation of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson has generated a public meaning that the two might become a pair, but Watson is not convinced. This form of trademark is necessary and therefore present in many adaptations.

The newest American adaptation, *Elementary* (2012- ), has changed the character of John Watson into Joan Watson who is a former doctor who now works as a sober companion. As explained earlier in the analysis, Robert Doherty and Carl Beverly wanted to showcase that a man and a woman can work together without ending up in a relationship. This is stated in an interview at Comic-Con in 2012:

*[...] I knew that it would be inevitable that people would be fascinated by the 'will they, won't they'. That question came up. I like that the question is there and that it exists [...]. I don't want them to end up in bed together. That's just not what the show would go for. I don't think that would be true to the spirit of the original relationship between the two characters and that's important to me. I would like to show that a man and a woman can be friends and do this kind of work and live together and not end up romantically entangled. [...]*

(Roberts, 2012)

Beverly continues and states that 'Rob [Doherty] often calls it a bromance, but one of the bros just happens to be a woman' (ibid.). Doherty and Beverly wanted this new kind of relationship to be as close to the one from Conan Doyle's stories as possible – they have achieved this with their own kind of representation which incorporated bromance that was coined on page 9. Lucy Liu's character Joan Watson stands in the place of the old, overweight, male Watson. In the beginning, Lee Miller's Sherlock Holmes is a bit ambivalent with Watson due to the fact that she is employed by his father. However, as the show goes on, Holmes grows fond of Watson, but he never starts a relationship with her.

The question of Sherlock Holmes' sexuality is answered quickly in this series in the start of the first episode since Joan Watson discovers a woman leaving Holmes' house and starts questioning him about it:

[...]

JOAN WATSON: [...] I'll be available to you 24/7.

HOLMES: Do you believe in love at first sight?

WATSON: Um...

HOLMES: I know what you're thinking: the world is a cynical place, and I must be a cynical man, thinking a woman like you would fall for a line like that. [Moving closer to Watson] Thing is... it isn't a line, so please hear me when I say this. [Standing right in front of Watson] I have never loved anyone as I do you right now... in this moment.

[Holmes turns on one of the TV screens and this monologue is playing. He has been trying to memorize it completely]

HOLMES: Spot on. Sherlock Holmes.

[...]

WATSON: There was a woman leaving just as I got here. Did she get you high?

HOLMES: Actually, about six feet. [A pair of fluffy handcuffs is shown] I actually find sex repellent. All those fluids and all the sounds, but my brain and my body require it to function at optimum levels, so I feed them as needed. You're a doctor; you understand.

[...]

(Doherty, 2012, E01, 2:33)

At first, the audience is lead to believe that Holmes really is in love with Watson and this creates a new amusing spin on the whole speculation as to the Holmes-Watson relationship. The humorous aspect is also underlined due to the fact that Sherlock Holmes' lack of social skills makes him unknowingly funny. However, this is not the case and the special mystical bond between Holmes and Watson returns. Yet, the sexuality of Holmes is revealed and it might take the viewers by surprise. He admits having sex with women, but he has also rationalised it and made a form of excuse. Holmes does not like having sex, but since his mind and body need it in order to function at the optimal level, he feels obligated to engage in sexual actions. Nevertheless, this is not the first adaptation or representation from an actor where it is

showcased that Holmes is sexually active since in *Sherlock* (2010- ), he has a sexual relationship, but all in regards to a case. This will be explained later on page 55.

Carl Beverly used the word bromance when speaking about the relationship between Sherlock Holmes and the female Watson, but this is not the first time that this specific term has been used when dealing with an adaptation of Conan Doyle's stories. Guy Ritchie's films from 2009 and 2011 about Sherlock Holmes set in Victorian London became hugely popular due to the boyish element of Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law.

Director Guy Ritchie stated in the extra material on the DVD version of *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) that he had a vision of reinventing Sherlock Holmes and tried to make a representation of him that would not include the clichés, or trademarks, that have embodied Holmes (Ritchie, 2009). However, has Ritchie succeed or has he incorporated some of the signs and trademarks which are synonyms with the consulting detective?

Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law have the leading roles as Sherlock Holmes and John Hamish Watson. The previous adaptations and images of Dr. Watson have often depicted an overweight, middle-aged man, but Guy Ritchie has taken a gamble with Law who previously has been named the sexiest man alive in 2004 (People, 2004). Downey Jr. has been the bad boy of Hollywood for years due to his own drug abuse and jail time, and he has added some of the bad boy aspect to the character. Sherlock Holmes has become a bad boy and an action hero, and he is not afraid of using his martial arts when going into a fight and John Watson also often resorts to violence as well as firearms.



Source: Clegg, 2009

The bad boy and pretty boy aspect have created a special bond on screen, and off screen, between the two actors and the Holmes-Watson relationship has been maintained. Already within the first couple of minutes of *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), the two men have established the form of their relationship:

[...]

[Holmes and Watson are suffocating a man]

WATSON: I like the hat.

HOLMES: Uh, I just picked it up.

WATSON: You remembered your revolver?

HOLMES: Uh.. Knew I forgot something. I thought I left the stove on.

WATSON: You did!

[Man gets unconscious]

HOLMES: I think that's quite enough. You are a doctor after all.



[They both let go of the man]  
HOLMES: Always nice to see you, Watson.  
[...]

(Ritchie, 2009, 3:00)

In this transcript, the two men are picking on each other and they sound like a married couple - this is the first interaction between Holmes and Watson in the film and it sets the mood for their friendship. It is very humorous and at the same time it underlines the fact that Holmes has been represented as an action hero who is not afraid of getting his hands dirty – or in this case, suffocating one of the bad guys. In the Ritchie films, there are several discussions similar to this one that all question their bond and make the audience wonder if they are only friends. Throughout the film, the two male characters are often standing very close together or are even within their own personal spheres or spaces. One example comes at the end of the film from 2009 where Holmes is looking in a telescope, but he is leaned against Watson and places the telescope on his chest.



Source: WoDu Media, 2009

This next long example illustrates the fact that the two men could be married and that Holmes has high expectations of their relationship – it is also a mood setting moment in the film where the humour has been added. Holmes and Watson have both been placed in prison since they have destroyed a ship hanger where Holmes initiated a fight. Holmes had nearly got himself killed, but once again Watson rescues him.

[...]  
WATSON: I haven't slept all night. Not a wink. [Holmes yawns] Why I ever believed... that I would get to have tea with Mary's parents, ... is beyond me - having been talked into going with you.  
HOLMES: We were set upon a man, it was self-defence.  
WATSON: I've been reviewing my notes of our exploits over the last seven months. Would you like to know my conclusion? I am psychologically disturbed.  
HOLMES: How so?  
WATSON: Why else would I continually be led into situations where you deliberately, withhold your plans from me? Why else?  
HOLMES: You never complained about my methods before.  
WATSON: I'm not complaining.  
HOLMES: You're not? What do you call this?  
WATSON: How... How am I complaining? I never complain..., when do I ever complain about you practicing the violin at three in the morning? Or your mess, your general lack of hygiene, or the fact that you steal all my clothes.  
HOLMES: We have a barter system.  
WATSON: When do I complain about you setting fire to my rooms?  
HOLMES: Our rooms.

WATSON: The rooms. When do I ever complain that you experiment on my dog?  
HOLMES: Our dog.  
WATSON: On the... the dog!  
HOLMES: Gladstone is our dog!  
WATSON: But I do take issue, is your campaign to sabotage my relationship with Mary.  
[Holmes takes a moment to think.]  
HOLMES: I understand.  
WATSON: Do you?  
HOLMES: I do.  
WATSON: I don't think you do.  
HOLMES: You're overly tired.  
WATSON: Yes.  
HOLMES: You're feeling a bit sensitive.  
WATSON: I'm not sensitive.  
HOLMES: What you need is rest. My brother, Mycroft, has a small estate near Chichester. Beautiful grounds... There's a falling. We could throw a lamb on the spit...  
WATSON: We? Holmes, if I were to go to the country, it would be with my future wife.  
HOLMES: Well certainly, if we must...  
WATSON: No not you, Mary and I. You are not...  
HOLMES: What? Invited? Why would I be not invited to my own brother's country home, Watson? Now, you are not making any sense!  
WATSON: You're not human!  
[...]

(Ritchie, 2009, 53:22)

Downey's Holmes clearly has an illusion about him and Watson and they are some kind of couple that share certain aspects in their lives. He is ignorant and makes the whole situation awkward by being so delusional. He believes that it is *their* rooms and *their* dog, even though Watson does not share that view. This is a comical feature which is present in many scenes between Holmes and Watson where they often bicker. However, this is not the only adaptation that has chosen to make comical features when making a representation of Holmes - this has been elaborated upon earlier in this analysis on page 31.

Guy Ritchie has stated that he wanted to reinvent Sherlock Holmes and not incorporated the clichés that are so identical with the character (Ritchie, 2009) and in some ways, he has done so. He has created the most prominent bromance on screen between Holmes and Watson which has been used in the adaptations following this one. He has kept some kind of illusion as to the sexuality of Holmes, but Holmes still has his eyes on Irene Adler. Despite, Ritchie not wanting to make an adaptation that included any of the clichés or trademarks, he has still incorporated some of them.

The second film, *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011) includes a new character in the form of Mycroft Holmes played by Stephen Fry. The two brothers have a love-hate relationship, but there is also another funny twist to the situation - even though the film has a lot of elements which

suggests that Sherlock Holmes is a homosexual man, Mycroft Holmes' sexuality is never put forward. Yet, Stephen Fry is a famous homosexual, but he is also very comfortable with his body and shows it to both men and women in the film. In one scene, he surprises Mary Morstan by walking around naked and the whole scene is a bit awkward since a nearly blind butler is also present (Ritchie, 2011). However, Mycroft does not flirt with any of them and the film continues with the adventure.

#### 4.2.2 *Holmes and women*

There has only been one 'the woman' in Sherlock Holmes' literary life; however, many more have surfaced in the adaptations. When seeing the women in the adaptations, they are always beautiful and attractive which makes good sense since the people behind the film or TV series are trying to sell a product. However, there is also another angle to it which Holmes might have preferred. Seeing it from a biological perspective, sex is necessary in order for the human species to function and survive and this is an aspect that one of the adaptations has adopted. Others have stayed clear from letting Sherlock Holmes engage in a relationship which the next part of the analysis will show.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's short story *A Scandal in Bohemia* (1892) is the first short story to be published after two successful novels with Sherlock Holmes and John Watson and it is the first one to feature a form of love interest to Holmes. In this written adventure, Irene Adler appears and she deceives Holmes and he ends up referring to her as *The Woman*. Holmes finds Adler fascinating and he cannot let go of her.

In the adaptations of Conan Doyle's stories, there is certain to be a representation of Irene Adler in some way or another. She has, just as Holmes and Watson, undergone a form of transformation throughout the adaptations which will be put forward here. However, one aspect which all of the adaptations fulfill is the fact that Holmes and Adler will not be together and he will lose her.

Both Conan Doyle's and Jeremy Brett's Sherlock Holmes encounters a Ms. Adler who Holmes finds fascinating and when she deceives him, he is even more compelled and perhaps more torn between her and Watson. The two male friends in Paul Annett's adaptation discuss Miss Adler and they state the following:

[...]

HOLMES: She is a lovely woman, Watson, with a face that a man might die for.

WATSON: A face that a man might die for - unusual language for you, Holmes.

HOLMES: A metaphor, Watson, nothing else.  
[...]

(Annett, 1984, E01, 29:00)

John Watson stresses that Holmes does not normally showcase emotions of any kind and especially not towards women. Holmes has clearly been watching her, studying her face and deducing that she is a beautiful woman who men would die for. After Watson questions his statement, Holmes states that the previously was meant as a metaphor which could also be the case. However, as a viewer, one can see the small signs and then deduce or decode for themselves that Holmes has a love interest in Adler.

In Guy Ritchie's two Holmes adaptations, Irene Adler is present in both of them. In the beginning of the 2009 version, *Sherlock Holmes*, Irene Adler is a mystery, but it is clear that Downey Jr.'s Holmes is fascinated with her. He has a case file on her with articles where he suspects that she is involved and he keeps a picture of her on the table - throughout the film, they share a couple of kisses and are flirtatious. Adler even double-crosses Holmes and he ends up naked in a hotel room, only with a pillow to cover the private parts. The two clearly have a history together, prior to the films, since Adler refers to her hotel room at the Grand Hotel as 'our old room' (Ritchie, 2009, 29:20).

Another prime example from the film which shows both the relationship between Holmes and Adler and the homosexual relationship between Holmes and Watson is when Holmes and Watson are rescuing Adler. Adler has been taken captive by Lord Blackwood and the detective and doctor are trying to save her from being cut open by a band saw. The scene is action packed while they are trying to save Adler, but Holmes still got time to come with a few small comments. The first one is where he is inches from Adler's face and the two of them are covered with a blanket - they are clearly within each other's personal space. Later, when he tries to grab his tools from Watson's belt, he states that 'the old boy' Watson should not get excited due to the fact that he is close to his private parts (Ritchie, 2009, 1:19:30). This illustrates what the whole film plays on - the love triangle and jalousie that surrounds the friendships between both Adler, Watson, and Holmes.

In *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011), Irene Adler is also present, but it is only for a short amount of time since she is killed by Professor Moriarty. Of course, Holmes is by shocked the news and he clearly has emotions towards her.

Robert Downey Jr. and Guy Ritchie have created yet another Sherlock Holmes with feelings towards a particular woman, even though she is a woman who does business with the wrong kind of people. She and Holmes date and they share a strange relationship. She is a woman that Holmes finds

fascinating since she tricks him over and over again and has the ability to manipulate him. He has followed her every move and tried to save her many times; however, he could not save her from Moriarty.

In the hugely popular BBC series *Sherlock*, Irene Adler has undergone a huge transformation in which she has turned out to be a dominatrix. Holmes is intrigued with her from the start even though he denies it. When he first sees her in *A Scandal in Beigravia* (2012), she is naked and he cannot seem to deduce anything from her. This throws him off a bit, but he is still trying to solve the case of the missing pictures.

In Conan Doyle's stories, Irene Adler had a certain power over Holmes and he could not seem to get his mind of her – this might be the reason for making this representation of her into a dominatrix. A dominatrix is, according to the online version of Longman Dictionary, 'a woman who is the stronger partner in a sadomasochistic sexual relationship' (Longman, d). Even though, they are not involved in a sexual relationship, she is still the stronger partner and has a certain power relation to Holmes. She also underlines the fact that the virgin Holmes, or Benedict Cumberbatch, does not know where to look when he first sees her naked. However, later it turns out that the combination to her safe box is actually her measurements and that Holmes has deduced those numbers by looking at her.

[...]

ADLER: Do you know the big problem with a disguise, Mr. Holmes? However hard you try, it's always a self-portrait.

HOLMES: You think I'm a vicar with a bleeding face?

ADLER: No, I think you're damaged, delusional, and believe in a higher power. In your case, it's yourself. Hmm, and somebody loves you. If I had to punch that face, I'd avoid your nose and teeth, too.

WATSON: Ha-ha! Could you put something on, please? Er, anything at all. A napkin?

ADLER: Why? Are you feeling exposed?

HOLMES: I don't think John knows where to look.

ADLER: No, I think he knows exactly where. I'm not sure about you.

HOLMES: If I was to look at naked women, I'd borrow John's laptop.

WATSON: You do borrow my laptop.

HOLMES: I confiscate it.

[...]

WATSON: You like policemen?

ADLER: I like detective stories. And detectives. Brainy is the new sexy.

[...]

HOLMES: Any moment now something is going to happen. What?

ADLER: The hiker is going to die.

HOLMES: No, that's the result. What's going to happen?

ADLER: I don't understand.

HOLMES: Oh, well try to.

ADLER: Why?

HOLMES: Because you cater to the whims of the pathetic and take your clothes off to make an impression. Stop boring me and think. It's the new sexy.

[...]

ADLER: I'd tell you the code [to the safe] right now, but you know what? I already have. Think.  
[...]

ADLER: You know, I was wrong about him. He did know where to look.

WATSON: For what, what are you talking about?

ADLER: The key-code to my safe.

WATSON: What was it?

ADLER: Shall I tell him? My measurements.

[...]

(Moffat, 2012, E01, 25:32)

This rather long transcript has been included since it demonstrates the game that is going on between Miss Adler and Holmes. She is the dominating one who can play around with Holmes, almost as she pleases. In the beginning of this transcript, she starts out by highlighting the fact that Watson loves Holmes in some way – Watson was to punch Holmes and has avoided certain parts of the face. This is a tribute to the special relationship that they have and this has been illustrated earlier in this thesis. The discussion then goes towards the fact that Holmes, an alleged virgin, might never have seen a naked woman before and might be uncomfortable in her present. However, this is not the case and he solves the mystery of the code.

Going back to the representation aspect of Irene Adler, she even states that she wants to be remembered as 'the Woman who beat you' (Moffat, 2012, E01, 33:55). This is clearly taken from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story *A Scandal in Bohemia* (1892) where she is referred to as the woman who had beaten the great Sherlock Holmes (Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 131).

The last couple of adaptations and representations of Sherlock Holmes have tried to answer, or mislead, in regards to the question of Holmes' sexuality by trying to connect him with several female characters. In *Elementary* (2012- ), Lee Miller's Holmes is in numerous sexual relationships and it is often implied that he has had sex recently. However, sex repels him, but he feels the need for it since his body craves it in order to function at the highest level. Nevertheless, he has had one relationship with Irene Adler, but the TV series has made a certain twist on it which will be explained in the next chapter on page 56.

Cumberbatch's Holmes has one great admirer in the form of his lab assistant Molly Hooper – she is in love with Holmes and tries her best to flirt with him and get his attention. However, every attempt fails and she is often humiliated by him. Holmes' lack of social skills does not allow him to see what she is up to and the situation is often awkward. Since his background knowledge does not include sexual relationships, he cannot decode the signs and receive the meaning or message that Hooper is trying to get across. The first incident occurs in *A Study in Pink* (2010):

[Holmes beats a corpse with a riding crop]

HOOPER: So, bad day, was it?

HOLMES: I need to know what bruises form in the next 20 minutes. A man's alibi depends on it. Text me.

HOOPER: Listen, I was wondering. Maybe later, when you're finished...

HOLMES: You're wearing lipstick. You weren't wearing lipstick before.

HOOPER: I, er... I refreshed it a bit.

HOLMES: Sorry, you were saying?

HOOPER: I was wondering if you'd like to have coffee?

HOLMES: Black, two sugars, please. I'll be upstairs.

[...]

HOLMES: Ah, Molly, coffee, thank you. What happened to the lipstick?

HOOPER: It wasn't working for me.

HOLMES: Really? I thought it was a big improvement. Your mouth's too small now.

HOOPER: OK.

[...]

(Moffat, 2010, E01, 8:50)

Molly Hooper desperately tries to get Holmes to go out on a coffee date with her, but due to his lack of social skills, he cannot decode the message and it ends up being an awkward situation, but still amusing to the audiences who does understand the message.

Another love interest from the same TV series is Janine who Holmes is in a relationship with at the last episode in season three, *His Last Vow* (2014) - it is clearly indicated that she and Holmes are having sex and Holmes even asks if she wants to get married. However, the whole act is a set up in order for Holmes to get close to his enemy Charles A. Magnusson. Again, this goes to show that sex is not important for Holmes and that he could have managed a life without if only he had enough adventures to keep him busy.

All in all, the representations of Sherlock Holmes that have been made throughout the years have all featured a love interest for him and it is often in the shape of Irene Adler. Returning to concept of signs, the names Irene Adler and Sherlock Holmes have some coded message for the audiences to decode and thereby let them know that what they are about to witness is actually an adaptation of the great stories from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Audiences and fans, who are familiar with the original stories, know that Adler and Holmes share a certain relationship and the directors are, in some ways, obliged to create this bond between the two characters. The same goes with Holmes' arch enemy Professor Moriarty which the next chapter will show. He has also been renewed in the newer adaptations and some would argue that he, too, is a love interest when it comes to Sherlock Holmes.

### 4.2.3 *Holmes and Moriarty*

Previously, Professor Moriarty was regarded as a masculine man who had an elaborate plan which incorporated many criminals. He is only mentioned a few times in Conan Doyle's original stories, but he is memorable and has become a great villain for Sherlock Holmes to beat. As Holmes describes him in *The Final Problem* (1894):

*“He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He has a brain of the first order. He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them. He does little himself. He only plans. But his agents are numerous and splendidly organized. Is there a crime to be done, a paper to be abstracted, we will say, a house to be rifled, a man to be removed – the word is passed to the Professor, the matter is organized and carried out. The agent may be caught. In that case money is found for this bail or defence. But the central power which uses the agent is never caught – never so much as suspected. This was the organization which I deduced, Watson, and which I devoted my whole energy to exposing and breaking up. [...]*

(Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 437)

However, the newer adaptations and representations of him have tried to make a new angle on Moriarty, but Holmes is still fascinated with him. The two newest adaptations, *Elementary* and *Sherlock*, are the most intriguing and innovative and therefore the ones that have been chosen for this chapter.

The American Sherlock Holmes, Jonny Lee Miller, is trying to capture the mysterious M who is responsible for the disappearing and apparent death of Holmes' girlfriend Irene Adler. However, as it turns out, Adler is not dead as presumed, but she is actually Jamie Moriarty and Irene Adler is an alias that she uses. This means that besides Holmes having a sexual relationship with Adler, he has also been sleeping with Moriarty. This creates a whole new relationship between them, but the power balance is also out of place.

The female Moriarty has more power over Holmes in the beginning until Holmes discovers through the development of the TV series that she actually has a daughter who was giving away. Here, the power balance tips in Holmes' favour and he can solve the case yet again. It is an interesting aspect that the director has placed on such an iconic arch enemy as Moriarty and it is risky. However, as everything else in the TV series, there is a higher focus on the sexual aspect and this is an element where other directors have not entered yet.

Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock Holmes also starred a more feminine version of Professor Moriarty - when Holmes first sees him, Jim Moriarty, played by Andrew Scott, is pretending to be Molly Hooper's boyfriend who clearly is gay and has a crush on Holmes.



[...]

MORIARTY: Oh, sorry. I didn't...

HOOPER: Jim, hi! Come in! Come in! Jim, this is Sherlock Holmes.

[...]

MORIARTY: Hi. So, you're Sherlock Holmes. Molly's told me all about you. You on one of your cases?

HOOPER: Jim works in IT, upstairs. That's how we met. Office romance.

HOLMES: [mumbles] Gay.

[...]

HOOPER: What do you mean, gay? We're together.

HOLMES: And domestic bliss must suit you, Molly. You've put on three pounds since I last saw you.

[...]

HOOPER: He's not gay! Why do you have to spoil...? He's not!

HOLMES: With that level of personal grooming?

WATSON: Because he puts a bit of product in his hair? I put product in my hair.

HOLMES: You wash your hair, there's a difference. No, no - tinted eyelashes, clear signs of taurine cream around the frown lines. Those tired, clubber's eyes. Then there's his underwear.

HOOPER: His underwear?

HOLMES: Visible above the waistline. Very visible. Very particular brand. That plus the extremely suggestive fact that he just left his number under this dish. I'd say you'd better break it off now and save yourself the pain.

[...]

(Moffat, 2010, E03, 18:07)

In this transcript, Holmes believes that he has figured out who this character Jim is; however, he is wrong about him. Moriarty comes to Holmes, clearly pulling off being homosexual, and then throws Holmes off his game and Moriarty can then mislead and manipulate Holmes nearly as he pleases. This is also one of the few incidents where Holmes is completely wrong in his deductions and it will haunt him in the end. Returning to Barthes' theory of denotation and connotation, the denotation level of Moriarty is that he is a homosexual man since he is dressed in a certain way. The level of connotation is made by Holmes based on his own background knowledge where he previously has encountered homosexual men dressing and behaving this way. Yet, Moriarty is the master of disguise and knows how to trick Holmes. However, as the episode continues Moriarty reveals his true colours and he wants to display Holmes as a fraud, not merely kill him. He has that opportunity a number of times, but he does not go through with it.

This representation of Moriarty is portrayed by Andrew Scott and he has given the character a more feministic touch. He has a feminine voice which is very quirky and in a high pitch where Cumberbatch's Holmes has a deep masculine voice. The first time Moriarty speaks to Holmes, it is through the voice of a woman as will be explained on page 66, but Moriarty starts out by calling Holmes 'sexy' (Moffat, 2010, E03). Moriarty moves a bit like a snake and he is often standing very close to Holmes or even in his personal

space (Porter, 2012, p. 19). The two characters are each other's opposites and they are very attracted towards their opposite. Holmes is fascinated with Moriarty and he even thinks that the bombing plan is very well thought out and executed. This is to the amazement of the police force and Watson, and Holmes, due to his lack of social skills, cannot see that what he is thinking is regarded as wrong since he does not show empathy towards the innocent people which people normally would.

#### *4.2.4 Partial conclusion*

One of Sherlock Holmes' trademarks has become his sexuality, or lack hereof. Audiences of the newer adaptations are intrigued with finding out whether Sherlock Holmes is homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, or even asexual. This analysis has incorporated small sections from many different films and TV series that all showcase that Holmes does not have one clear sexual identity. There are a lot of speculations and this is what the directors and producers have tried to incorporate in their adaptations and representations.

One can never know if Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had written the adventures of the consulting detective with the possible discussions of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act in his mind, but one thing is certain - the adventures have created a lot of questions as to the sexuality of Holmes in the recent adaptations. Even though, there are speculations with Holmes', and in some cases Watson's, sexual orientation, it is still a part of the representations and adaptations of the characters. It is a trademark of the stories and the consulting detective and an element which helps the audiences to decode the message and the theme of the story.

### 4.3 Holmes - The Man of Science

Sherlock Holmes was meant to be portrayed as a modern Victorian man with access to modern technology which is the case in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories where he often knows about new methods of crime solving or has invented one in his own. He always manages to solve a case by using the technology and by the help of his 'science of deduction'. The deduction skills have become a trademark for Sherlock Holmes and it is often what he is recognised by since he can solve a case nearly without looking at the evidence just as Conan Doyle's own professor as explained earlier. The next chapters will focus on the man of science and show how his techniques and equipment have evolved through the numerous adaptations and through the years.

The chapter will focus on especially the BBC TV adaptation *Sherlock* (2010- ) since it has embraced the modern 21<sup>st</sup> century technology the most - it is one of the newest representations of Sherlock Holmes and therefore the one with the most access to the 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies. The other adaptations have not had as easy access or even as modern devices as the society does today due to the fact that the technology was not invented and the directors have also wanted to portray Holmes as a Victorian man. However *Sherlock* and *Elementary* (2012- ) have moved Holmes out of the Victorian setting and placed him in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and that is why these TV series are the focus point in this chapter.

#### 4.3.1 The old versus new Sherlock Holmes

Even though it appears that Sherlock Holmes is only just beginning to embrace the modern technology, this is not entirely the case. The Victorian Holmes, both from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, but also in the recent adaptations such as Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), Holmes has access to modern Victorian technology and he tries to use it. One example is that Victorian Holmes frequently uses the telegraph in order to send telegrams (Porter, 2012, p. 147) and this also appears in many of the older adaptations. This is also present in Ritchie's adaptations.

However, in the recent representation of Holmes, Cumberbatch's character has begun texting and prefers doing so. The first time is in the first episode *A Study in Pink* (2010) where Holmes texts a lot of media people at a police press conference in connection to a series of apparent suicides. Detective Inspector Lestrade is giving his version of the case, but according to Holmes this is wrong and Holmes texts this to the audience. This showcases a Holmes who has adapted to the technological advantages and who is using the modern version of the telegraph.

Holmes has also gone from an offline person to a person being online all the time due to his smartphone and advantages that comes from the technologies. In Conan Doyle's stories, Holmes had access to the newest editions of newspapers in order to get a lot of information and he has case files on a number of people in which he saves articles where he believes there is a connections and which might be of further interest for him (ibid., p. 148). This is also displayed in one of the Guy Ritchie adaptations *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) where Holmes has a case file on Irene Adler which she finds. In it, Holmes keeps articles on crimes where he believes she is connected somehow. In *Sherlock* (2010- ), Holmes still uses the newspapers, but he has access to all kind of information via the online accessibilities. In the episode *The Great Game* (2010) where Holmes and Watson tries to catch a mysterious bomber, who turns out to be Moriarty, Holmes and Watson are each checking their own sort of information bank - Watson is checking the papers as in the Victorian setting while Holmes goes online to try and find information about the case.

The original stories and the representations of Holmes have portrayed a Sherlock Holmes character with a passion for forensic work. In the original stories, the first experience is when Stamford explains to Watson that he does not know what Holmes is doing at the chemical laboratory at the hospital:

*[Stamford:] "Oh, I didn't say there was anything against him [about Holmes]. He is a little queer in his ideas - an enthusiast in some branches of science. As far as I know he is a decent fellow enough." "A medical student, I suppose?" said I. "No - I have no idea what he intends to go in for. I believe he is well up in anatomy, and he is a first-class chemist; but, as far as I know, he has never taken out any systematic medical classes. His studies are very desultory and eccentric, but he has amassed a lot of out-of-the way knowledge with would astonish his professors."*

(Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 12)

This aspect is taken to the extreme in *Sherlock* (2010- ) where Holmes first starts by beating a corpse with a riding crop in order to examine the bruises post mortem and later keeps a head in his refrigerator in order to see the state of decomposition and human eyes in the microwave oven. This demonstrates that Holmes has a passion for forensic and that he knows a lot about the subject. Cumberbatch's Holmes can be described as a modern day tech-geek (Porter, 2012, p. 153) while others have labelled him as a technician-hero (ibid., p. 147) and some have even gone as far as stating that Holmes is a freak, which will be illustrated in the following chapter.

### 4.3.2 Anxiety and modern technology

In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, Dr. John Watson describes how others view Sherlock Holmes as '[...] a machine rather than a man' (Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 378) since he does not function as an ordinary man. Holmes shows his remarkable intelligence through his method of deduction, his forensic knowledge, and the newest medical equipment (Porter, 2012, p. 144) and this point of view has remained for the numerous film and TV adaptations.

The BBC TV adaptation *Sherlock* (2010- ) and the American *Elementary* (2012- ) have placed Holmes in a modern milieu in either London or New York and he has access to modern 21<sup>st</sup> century technology such as laptops, smartphones, and modern medical devices which allows him to assist the police in solving crimes. In her article *Detecting the Technocratic Detective* (2012), Svetlana Bochman argues for the fact that there is a significant importance in viewing the usage of technology in Holmes' adaptations since it can illustrate a shift in the popular culture in regards to technology and worries toward the technological progresses (ibid.). She is arguing for the fact that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century societies, people are more aware of their daily usage of technology and there is a higher focus on how the daily technology is used - e.g. the usage of smartphones, accessibility around the clock, and the need for being online all the time. When the same people are watching a TV series as *Sherlock* (2010- ) they can get uneasy since they are watching a clearly psychologically unbalanced man gaining access to ordinary technology that can cause damage in our society (ibid.). Again, this fact is highlighted when Jim Moriarty tries to undermine Holmes and his work by exposing certain elements to the public.

However, it is not possible to create a representation of Sherlock Holmes without him using technology in order to solve his cases. He has been called the man of science and it has become one of his trademarks and what makes him unique. The term deduction has become a sign which audiences and fans connect with Sherlock Holmes and it contains a lot of connotations - for some, the connotation of the word deduction might mean something that has to do with taxes while others think of the great consulting detective. This has something to do with the interpreters' cultural background and cultural values as explained on page 27.

Returning to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original stories about Holmes and Watson, their usage of technologies were more acceptable since the field of medical science was more open and one did not need a medical degree in order to research the area which is not the case today. The modern society apparently does not have amateurs performing within the field of medicine since doctors are going to universities and earning their medical degree. Yet, Holmes has still remained an amateur in the adaptations and he still does research and assists the police - this can cause people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be more uneasy with Holmes

and his methods than what was the case with the readers in the Victorian period (Porter, 2012, p. 144-45). However, there is another side of the matter with amateurs working within the medical field. Just as Watson, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a doctor himself and he could appreciate Holmes' fascination with the medical trade and his interest in it. Conan Doyle could understand that it might benefit the field of medicine that amateurs did a bit of research on their own and in that way could contribute to the medical field. However, not all shared the same admiration for Holmes' amateur medical background as Conan Doyle and Watson and this aspect is also present in *Sherlock* (2010- ) in the first episode where Watson has been taking to a crime scene with Holmes who demonstrates his methods of deduction. The transcript takes place after Holmes has disappeared from the crime scene and left Holmes with Sergeant Donovan and the rest of the police force.

[...]

DONOVAN: He's gone.

WATSON: Who, Sherlock Holmes?

DONOVAN: Yeah, he just took off. He does that.

WATSON: Is he coming back?

DONOVAN. Didn't look like it.

WATSON: Right. Right... Yes. Sorry, where am I?

DONOVAN: Brixton.

WATSON: Do you know where I could get a cab? It's just, er... well... my leg.

DONOVAN: Er... try the main road.

WATSON: Thanks.

DONOVAN: But you're not his friend. He doesn't have friends. So who are you?

WATSON: I'm... I'm nobody. I just met him.

DONOVAN: OK, bit of advice, then. Stay away from that guy.

WATSON: Why?

DONOVAN: You know why he's here? He's not paid or anything. He likes it. He gets off on it. The weirder the crime, the more he gets off. And you know what? One day just showing up won't be enough. One day we'll be standing round a body and Sherlock Holmes will be the one that put it there.

WATSON: Why would he do that?

DONOVAN: Because he's a psychopath. Psychopaths get bored.

[...]

(Moffat, 2010, E01, 31:04)

Sergeant Sally Donovan does not trust Holmes very much and she has embodied the anxiety that the modern society has towards a man like Sherlock Holmes which was explained earlier in this chapter. He is a genius who cannot be understood by many people and this creates a kind of fear. He is, by Donovan, automatically labelled as a psychopath and she has certain prejudices towards people with that diagnosis and even refers to him as freak in the episode. In the later episodes, Jim Moriarty helps to falsely confirm these anxieties by framing Sherlock Holmes as a man who has gone mad due to his high intelligence.

Donovan's statement about Holmes being a freak can be understood in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where Holmes' behaviour is not considered normal. Yet, freak is not a label which the Victorian era would have placed upon the consulting detective. As Bochman writes in her article:

*[c]haracters within Conan Doyle's popular stories were more receptive to a Holmes who was technologically adept and extremely intelligent in a machine-like way. In the Victorian period, his stoic detachment was more acceptable by society's more reserved behavioral standards; forensics was an emerging field still open to an amateur like Holmes.*

(Porter, 2012, p. 145)

Holmes' high level of intelligence and lack of social skills have led to him being named a freak right down to psychological analyses of him being a man who suffers from autism, but the vision of the character that Gatiss and Moffat have portrayed sheds these analyses of away. Cumberbatch's Holmes is aware that he has a label, but portrays it in a different way:

[...]

ANDERSON: Never mind that, we found the case. According to someone, the murderer has the case, and we found it in the hands of our favourite psychopath.

HOLMES: Not a psychopath, I'm a high-functioning sociopath. Do your research.

[...]

(Moffat, 2010, E01, 57:46)

This representation of Holmes is more self-aware and is more educated about what he is (Porter, 2012, p. 151). He is portrayed as a machine-like character without many social skills, but still he understands that he is not at the degree of mentally ill that forensic expert Anderson suggests.

Svetlana Bochman has a point in her article that the creators of *Sherlock* (2010- ) did intend for their representation of Sherlock Holmes to be a weird person and an outcast who had to be on the borders of the outside of society due to his intelligence; however, he had to remain within the circle of acceptance in order to appear appealing to the audience of the TV series. In order to achieve this aspect, they had to create new characters that are not present in the original source material, and one of them is Molly Hooper, the lab assistant. As explained on pages 54-55, she is attracted to Holmes and adores his every move and by doing so, she adds her own descriptions of him showing his human side - both in the series, but also in her online blog which is available for audiences in real life (Porter, 2012, p. 146).

In the American *Elementary* (2012- ), Holmes has also embraced the newer technology and uses smartphones and laptops. However, he does not have access to a fancy laboratory such as Cumberbatch's Holmes. On the other hand, he does not need it since he uses the police force and their forensic team - he can deduce a lot of clues from the crime scenes, and he confirms the forensic report when dealing with

evidence that need to be processed. When it comes to medical knowledge, he often turns to Joan Watson since she has a medical degree, but it is almost entirely to be confirmed with his own assumptions and speculations.

#### 4.3.3 *The Science of deduction*

One aspect that the film and TV adaptations share is the fact that Holmes still uses his science of deduction. Deduction can be coined as a process where, in order to understand a meaning, one needs to use the knowledge and information that is available. In *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), John Watson reads an article named *the Science of Deduction and Analysis* and exclaims that he has '[...] never read such rubbish in my life' (Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 17). He does not believe in this science and dismisses it until Holmes, the author of the article, demonstrates the processes of his new science.

His methods of deduction can be compared with the method of semiotics that is described on pages 24-25. He can deduce elements and traces that other persons are too 'ignorant' or 'dumb' to see, as Holmes would state it. The objects which are available for Holmes' investigation, all contain a sign which can be decoded based on the information that the reader has. As the reader of signs, Holmes has a lot of information which helps him to decode the message faster. He quickly deduces what others cannot see, and he is therefore a fantastic consulting detective. However, he has not yet been able to decode the social message when interacting with other people, but that is a whole other discussion.

In the later original adventures from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes allows John Watson to have a go at the method of deduction. In *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle* (1892), Watson is given a hat where Holmes tells him to deduce all the facts. Watson does not do as well and Holmes can deduce a lot more fascinating things which are one of his trademarks that lead to the case being solved. This incident from the original Conan Doyle's stories has been a part of several adaptations where directors have made their own versions of it.

The earlier adaptations have stayed close to Conan Doyle's version, whereas the newer adaptations and representations have tried to place a more modern aspect on it. *Elementary* (2012- ) has had Holmes teaching Watson and she even gets cases on her own. Holmes has tried to teach Watson his science of deduction and has even assigned her with homework in the form of articles on e.g. dirt.

*Sherlock* (2010- ) is a front runner when it comes to the usage of 21<sup>st</sup> century technological progress and daily devices. The creators have also created their own version of the incident with the hat



where they have chosen that Sherlock Holmes should allow John Watson to do his own deduction on a pair of trainers.

[...]

HOLMES: Go on, then [hands Watson the shoe],

WATSON: Hmm?

HOLMES: You know what I do. Off you go. [Holmes types on his phone]

WATSON: Oh... No.

HOLMES: Go on.

WATSON: I'm not going to stand here so you can humiliate me while I try and disseminate...

HOLMES: An outside eye, a second opinion. It's very useful to me.

WATSON: Yeah, right.

HOLMES: Really!

WATSON: Fine. Oh, they're just a pair of shoes. Trainers!

HOLMES: Good.

WATSON: Um... They're in good nick. I'd say they were pretty new, except the sole has been well worn, so the owner must have had them for a while. Er, very '80s. Probably one of those retro designs.

HOLMES: You're on sparkling form. What else?

WATSON: They're quite big. A man's.

HOLMES: But...

WATSON: But there's traces of a name inside in felt-tip. Adults don't write their names inside their shoes, so these belong to a kid.

HOLMES: Excellent. What else?

WATSON: Er.. That's it.

HOLMES: That's it?

WATSON: How did I do?

HOLMES: Well, John. Really well. I mean, you missed almost everything of importance, but, you know... The owner loved these. Scrubbed them clean. Whitened them where they got discoloured. Changed the laces three... no, four times. Even so, there are traces of his flaky skin where his fingers have come in contact with them, so he suffered from eczema. The shoes are well worn, more so on the inner side, which means the owner had weak arches. British-made, 20 years old.

WATSON: 20 years?

HOLMES: They're not retro, they're original. Limited edition, two blue stripes, 1989.

[He shows Watson the phone where a picture of the shoes is visible]

(Moffat, 2010, E03, 19:55)

In this transcript, Holmes demonstrates that by his usage of knowledge, and by the help of modern 21<sup>st</sup> century technology, he can deduce a lot of elements from just a simple pair of trainers and his smart phone. His semiotic work is magnificent and, in his own way, he tries to teach Watson. Watson should be able to think in the line of semiotics since he works as a doctor who also tries to connect a symptom with a disease or illness just as Conan Doyle's own professor as described on page 7. However, he does not do it as well as Holmes and fails to live up to Holmes' standards and level of deduction.

#### 4.3.4 Moriarty and 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies

Sherlock Holmes is not the only one who has embraced technology in order to do his job properly - Moriarty has also evolved and is taking advantage of the modern technologies. In *Sherlock* (2010- ), Jim Moriarty texts a lot and when the audience is first presented with a part of his plan, it is not through his own voice. He has taken people captive and is texting them what they must say to Holmes through a telephone conversation. This allows for Moriarty to carry out his plan without Holmes knowing what he sounds like and who he is.

Holmes is fascinated with this and exclaims this a number of times throughout the episode *The Great Game* (2010) to the astonishment and amazement by the others around him. In one incident, Holmes and Watson are discussing the fact that lives are at stake and Holmes shows his true nature as a machine while Watson speaks to him as the reasoning man.

[...]

WATSON: So, who do you suppose it was?

HOLMES: Hmm?

WATSON: Woman on the phone - the crying woman.

HOLMES: Oh, she doesn't matter, she's just a hostage. No lead there.

WATSON: For God's sake, I wasn't thinking about leads.

HOLMES: You're not going to be much use to her.

[...]

WATSON: Try and remember there's a woman who might die.

HOLMES: What for? There's hospitals full of people dying, DOCTOR. Why don't you go and cry by their bedside and see what good it does them?

[...]

(Moffat, 2010, E03, 16:48)

Holmes, being a crime solving machine without any apparent social skills and empathy, does not understand that the crying woman is a human being who could die in the fight that he has with Moriarty. He has treated her as a lead, but since she is about to die, she is of no further use to him. Returning to the Barthes' theory of denotation and connotation, the crying woman can be viewed in several ways. The denotation level remains the fact that she is a woman while there is mixed meanings between Holmes and Watson when it comes to the level of connotation. Holmes just sees her as a soon-to-be dead lead since this is what his background allows him to do. He does not have the social skills to decode her in any other way and since she is going to die, he cannot use her in the case and she becomes uninteresting. Watson's point of view is the fact that she is a woman who could die a terrible death in the fight between Holmes and Moriarty. Watson's connotation lets him see her as a woman who should not die in this way and that it must be horrible for her experiencing this. Watson tries to share his connotation with Holmes, but since the

two of them does not have the same background knowledge and social codes, it does not work and Holmes is portrayed as a technological machine without emotions.

Martin Freeman's representation of John Watson is not the first to have illustrated that Holmes is an intelligent man who can be viewed as a machine. The father of the consulting detective, Conan Doyle, often described Holmes as an intelligent machine through his writing. For instance in *The Adventure of the Crooked Man* from 1894, the phrase '[...] composure which made so many regard him as a machine rather than a man' (Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 378) is uttered underlining the fact that Holmes can be viewed as a machine due to his intelligence and lack of social skills.

The aspect of the machine is illustrated further by the help of Holmes' mind palace or brain attic as it is described in the novel *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) by Conan Doyle. As the original Sherlock Holmes state

*I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skilful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. [...] It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones.*

(Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 15)

To Watson's astonishment, Holmes does not know anything about the solar system and is totally oblivious to the fact that the Earth goes around the Sun. He actually wants to forget it. In *Sherlock* (2010- ) the creators have made the brain attic into a large mind palace which Holmes can enter and find useful things that he has stored away. He enters his mind palace several times throughout the TV series and to the audience in front of the TV screen Holmes becomes somewhat of a search machine that throws subjects away and deciphers others. Again, he is made into a technological machine and he does not have an unlimited number of gigabytes. He cannot hold everything and has to throw some of the information out of his hard drive.



Source: Riggs, 2014

Another example where Moriarty is shown to have embraced the 21<sup>st</sup> century technology in order to control his web of criminals is when he apparently has developed a couple of apps to his

smartphone that firstly allows him to break into the Tower of London and let security fail. Inside the Tower of London, he activates the last two apps which opens the vault at the Bank of England and opens the cells at the Pentonville Prison (Moffat, 2012, E03). This demonstrates that he is intelligent and that he does know how to let technology work in his favour. However, it is later shown that he had not created the apps, but that he got help by people on each location. Nonetheless, it demonstrates the anxieties which people might be having with daily technology and if in the wrong hands it can cause a lot of harm in society as described on pages 61-62.

The TV series *Sherlock* (2010- ) is especially good at incorporating technology and the creators must do so since they have placed Sherlock Holmes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where modern technology is available and being used every day. However, as the next part will show, Gatiss and Moffat have taken it one step further allowing their technological-hero to be a part of the daily lives of many fans.

#### *4.3.5 New technology for fans*

Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock Holmes and Martin Freeman's John Watson have embraced modern 21<sup>st</sup> century technology and they have even gone online in order to become a part of the virtual world and being one step closer to the many fans of the TV series. One way of doing this is by letting the audiences be a part of the technological process - in the original stories and many other adaptations, Watson is writing his adventures down and he is narrating them. This is also done, in some way, in *Sherlock* (2010- ) since Watson has gone online and is writing on a blog. The blog was firstly meant as a way of processing his own pain from his trip to Afghanistan, but it has now become a way of writing down and sharing his adventures with Sherlock Holmes. The blog that he is writing in the series is actually an active blog that audiences can read online and in that way join the adventures for themselves.

His blog is named [www.johnwatsonblog.co.uk](http://www.johnwatsonblog.co.uk) where one can read a lot about the cases and see what other characters from the TV series has written as comments. BBC has actually created an entirely online world around their series with blogs from characters such as Molly Hooper, Mycroft Holmes, and Sherlock Holmes. Holmes has his own blog, [www.thescienceofdeduction.co.uk](http://www.thescienceofdeduction.co.uk), where he writes a bit about his cases and actually allows audiences to try and solve some games and cases online on their own.

As explained earlier, in the original stories from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Sherlock Holmes is writing articles; however, he has gone online to publish his research. Both Watson's and Holmes' blogs are being referred to a number of times throughout the series, but one interesting incident is where Watson criticises the content on Holmes' blog:

[...]

[Watson writing on his blog]

HOLMES: Geek Interpreter, what's that?

WATSON: That's the title.

HOLMES: What does it need a title for?

WATSON: Do people actually read your blog?

HOLMES: Where do you think our clients come from? I have a website.

WATSON: In which you enumerate 240 different types of tobacco ash. Nobody's reading your website.

[...]

[Watson writing on the blog again]

HOLMES: No, no, no, don't mention the unsolved ones.

WATSON: People want to know you're human.

HOLMES: Why?

WATSON: Because they're interested.

HOLMES: No, they're not. Why are they?

WATSON: 1895.

HOLMES: Sorry, what?

WATSON: I reset the counter last night. This blog has had nearly 2000 hits in the last eight hours. This is your living, Sherlock, not 240 different types of tobacco ash.

HOLMES: 243.

[...]

(Moffat, 2012, E01, 5:17)

Audiences who have read the original stories know that one of the first articles that are being mentioned in connecting to solving a crime is the one with the analysis of the many types of tobacco ashes which leads the pair to solve the case. However, tobacco ashes are not an interesting aspect in the 21<sup>st</sup> century since there are a lot more awareness on smoking and smoking is being banned several places, so this aspect has gone out of date. In general, people are quitting smoking and Holmes has also stopped and is now using nicotine bandages as mentioned on page 21. On the level of denotation and connotation, the denotation of smoking is a cigarette; however, on the level of connotations, there are many negative elements attached since many societies have banned smoking in public. The producers and creators are aware of this and have made fun of this. Another fun fact is that after this episode aired on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2012, the article on tobacco ash was deleted from Holmes' blog on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January. Again, the blogs are being maintained and it is possible to follow the progress of them as the show evolves.

Returning to the transcript, Watson, once again, touches the fact that audiences, clients and people in general want to know that Holmes is actually a human being and not a consulting-detective-machine without social skills. Watson wants the audience to know another side of Holmes and illustrate that he is human. Moffat and Gatiss have once again made a moment with a lot of humour which underlines the fact that Holmes can be viewed as a comedian in this adaptation.

Another argument which the Holmes and Watson have over the blog is the fact that Watson has posted the picture where Holmes is wearing a deerstalker and this does not go well with the consulting detective. They have a discussion about it as seen on pages 36-37 and this is where the downside of being on the internet and online is displayed. In the episode *The Reichenbach Fall* (2012), the fame has reached to Holmes and Watson and they are being followed everywhere by the paparazzi. This is the episode where the famous picture with the deerstalker has been snapped by a member of the paparazzi. The interesting aspect to the episode is the fact that it showcases that the couple have become famous, but it is also their downfall. One of the consequences of being famous online is that everybody wants to know you; all about you and that you can become famous overnight. It almost destroys Holmes, but again it displays one of his trademarks and how the deerstalker might have become a part of Holmes' look.

#### *4.3.6 Partial conclusion*

The new adaptations and stories of Sherlock Holmes have embraced the modern technology and he has evolved in order to fit within this 21<sup>st</sup> century modern society and its progress. Even though the older versions of the adaptations still keep to the fact that he is a Victorian man, Holmes still has access to technology and uses it for his advantage in order to solve cases. A new spin on the technology is the fact that the audiences and fans are being asked to join the virtual society and can follow their hero when he uses his blog. He is accessible all the time which is also the case with many youngsters today. Most of them have Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts where they can be online with their friends and join a certain society.

One aspect is certain - Holmes continues, despite the fact that he is over 100 years old, to embody the technology and that is despite the fact that there are some anxieties connected with it. He will always use technology in order to solve his cases and help his clients.

## 5. Conclusion

As described in the introduction on pages 10-13, the thesis has been dealing with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories of Sherlock Holmes and some of the trademarks that have become synonyms with the consulting detective. The purpose of the thesis was to view how directors and actors have chosen to represent certain trademarks and symbol of Sherlock Holmes. The trademarks that were chosen were dealing with Holmes' appearance and his location, his sexuality, and lastly the aspect of science. Sherlock Holmes' trademarks are the deerstalker, the pipe, the violin, but there are also trademarks which have nothing to do with his appearance. Those trademarks are John Watson, 221B Baker Street, and Holmes' science of deduction, and they have also been analysed in the thesis.

To complete the comparative analysis that focused on the various trademarks, it was an essential choice to incorporate theories that concerned themselves with adaptation, representation and semiotics. The chosen theories came from theorists such as Stuart Hall, Ferdinand De Saussure, and Roland Barthes and the theories have been chosen since they all deal with images and symbols and how these symbols can be decoded by people who are able to read the message behind the representations and adaptations.

Stuart Hall's theory of representation, and especially the constructionist approach, has been the way of viewing Sherlock Holmes in this thesis. The first novel *A Study in Scarlet* was published in 1887 and several novels and short stories followed shortly after. The popularity from the Victorian public ensured that Conan Doyle kept writing stories and the public maintained the detective's popularity. The public generated a meaning of Holmes and his companion Watson and shared it between different groups of societies, thereby ensuring his popularity.

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson became so popular that they have become cultural icons in the British culture. They have over time been 'reduced' to a number of small symbols and trademarks which have become recognizable for fans and audiences all over the world. These symbols, or images, can be described as some form of language as Ferdinand De Saussure's semiotic theory of the sign has implied. A sign consists of a signifier and a signified which in the case of Sherlock Holmes would be the deerstalker, just to name one. As a signifier it is only a hat, but as a signified the deerstalker is a symbol of the famous detective.

Continuing with the image of the deerstalker, Roland Barthes' denotation and connotation can also be applied here. On the level of denotation, the deerstalker is still just a hat, but when viewing the deerstalker on the level of connotation, the matter is based on the knowledge that the readers or viewers have. In most people's minds the deerstalker represents Sherlock Holmes and his adventures, but this

requires that the reader has background knowledge in the Sherlockian world. The connotations can also be obtained manually, but this is not the case here.

Sherlock Holmes, despite being written over 100 years ago, is a part of the British culture and his popularity has ensured that he still carries a lot of cultural value which the readers have helped to place upon him even throughout the years. As a result of his popularity, the character and trademarks of Sherlock Holmes are recognizable to fans all over the world. Some of these trademarks involve his appearance and the setting in which he is placed.

First of all is the name *SHERLOCK HOLMES* – it holds a lot of connotations for people around the world and it is recognizable. It is not possible to make an adaptation or representation of Sherlock Holmes without incorporating the name, or even some of the other characters from Conan Doyle's stories. However, there has been a change since characters such as John Watson and Mrs. Hudson have undergone a transformation. Yet, they are still present in the adaptations just as Holmes. Especially, Watson is essential in order to create a representation which holds the same cultural value and can be recognized by audiences.

The fictitious character of Sherlock Holmes has evolved from being a modern Victorian man placed in London to a 21<sup>st</sup> century version in which he has managed to survive being americanized. However, one certain trademark has remained in many of the adaptations. It is the address of 221B Baker Street in London – this address is a sign which holds a lot of connotations for fans and it is recognizable, just as Sherlock Holmes himself.

Holmes' trademarks have certainly changed during the years of being adapted and one aspect is the most prominent - the Victorian London has been replaced with the 21<sup>st</sup> century London or New York. Another trademark is John Watson who has also undergone a huge transformation. He is no longer Sidney Paget's chubby, old man, but he is more frequently a tall, lean man - however in *Elementary* (2012- ), he has become a woman as explained on page 56. Holmes' drug abuse has also been present in the adaptations that constituted the analysis, but the directors and actors are portraying the abuse in different ways. Two of the adaptations, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1984-85) and *Elementary* have chosen to let Holmes quit the drugs since Jeremy Brett's Holmes buried his equipment and Jonny Lee Miller's American Holmes has just returned from rehab while the other adaptations have incorporated it and allowed his abuse to go on despite the fact that other characters in the adaptations are fighting against this.

The second part of the analysis focused on Sherlock Holmes' sexuality – this has become one of his trademarks since the fans and scholars have speculated a lot on the subject. Especially the latest



adaptations have touched the subject since directors and actors have chosen to treat the manner in very different ways. In regards to the homosexual aspect, Holmes and Watson have kept the special relationship where the audience can speculate as to whether the pair is only friends. Gatiss' and Moffat's *Sherlock* (2010- ) has often several incidents in each episode where one can wonder if Holmes is homosexual – Watson most certainly is not, as he often points out. Another interesting aspect is between Holmes and Moriarty and the speculations as to the pair's fascination with each other.

Heterosexuality is the case in Doherty's *Elementary* (2012- ) where it is often indicated that Holmes has had sex and he has even been in a relationship with a woman who turns out to be Moriarty as pointed out on page 56. Holmes is sexually active and there are no speculations to the trademark except for the fact that Watson is a woman and they could perhaps end up sleeping together despite Doherty not wanting this to happen. In *Sherlock*, Holmes also has a relationship to a woman, but it later turns out to be in relations to a case which he is trying to solve.

Irene Adler still has a place in Holmes' heart and she is present in all of the adaptations that have been incorporated in this thesis. In Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), she and Holmes indicate several times that they have had a relationship and she still manipulates him in many situations. He is clearly in love with her, but she works with Moriarty which unfortunately ends poorly for her in the second film *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011).

Even though Holmes, in some adaptations, has received a sexual identity, the speculations surrounding the topic are elements which directors and actors have to take into consideration when doing adaptations and representations of the great consulting detective. The sexuality or lack hereof has become a trademark which helps the audiences to decode that what they are viewing is a Holmes' story or an adaptation of one.

The thesis provides no unambiguous answer to the smaller research question in regards to whether Sherlock Holmes has been given a sexual identity. The adaptations are dealing with this trademark in many different ways - Paul Annett's *Sherlock Holmes* does not focus on the aspect while Doherty's version often has sex in order for his mind to function at the highest level. Sherlock Holmes from *Sherlock* (2010- ) is named a virgin, but eventually has sex due to the fact that it can help him to solve a case while Guy Ritchie's Holmes clearly has got a previous relationship to Miss Adler. All the adaptations hint the special relationship between Holmes and Watson, and one can only question as to whether the two are merely friends.

The last part of the analysis contained a view on how Sherlock Holmes has embraced the modern 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies. Conan Doyle wrote the stories of Holmes in such a way that he had access to the modern Victorian technology such as the telegraph. In the modern adaptations such as *Sherlock* and *Elementary*, Holmes still has access to modern technology, but just modernised the technology in order to fit within a present 21<sup>st</sup> century timeframe. Especially Gatiss' and Moffat's Holmes has also got to deal with the anxieties that are attached in this present time. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1984-85) and the two blockbusters from Guy Ritchie, *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011) are all staying true to the Victorian timeframe and the technologies are fitting to the period.

In relations to whether Holmes can still be named a scientist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to the fact that the modern society technological progresses, one has to look at Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's description of the detective. Conan Doyle wanted to create a modern man in the Victorian London who had access to modern technology and who could use it in order to solve crime. Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss have done the same in their version of Sherlock Holmes - Benedict Cumberbatch has portrayed a modern man in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in modern London who has got access to modern technology. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Sherlock Holmes had access to technology such as the telegraph while the 21<sup>st</sup> century Holmes can use laptops, smartphones, and x-rays. This is why Sherlock Holmes still is the man of science in the adaptations.

A new aspect is that audiences and fans are being asked to join the technology and join the virtual society where Holmes takes centre stage. Fans can join by viewing the online blogs that both Sherlock Holmes and John Watson manages in *Sherlock* (2010- ) and the fans can even help and solve their own crimes just as Holmes would do when solving his own cases.

All in all, these trademarks carry a lot of value and can be represented in some way or another in order for the adaptation to be recognised by the audience as a representation and an adaptation of Sherlock Holmes. Directors and actors must take them into account and decide how they want to portray these trademarks. Trademarks in relations to his appearance, sexuality, and the aspect of science have been treated differently by directors and actors over the years. Some adaptations have chosen to follow Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original stories very closely while others have stirred a bit away from the original stories in order to modernise them for the audience of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This nearly draws this conclusion to an end; however, during the process of writing this thesis interesting questions for further research have surfaced. Another approach which could have been explored was to research why the fictive character of Sherlock Holmes has gained so much popularity within the last couple

of years - there has been made many adaptations within the recent years and the consulting detective has received a lot of new fans. It would have required doing a survey, but again this would not have kept the focus of this thesis. Yet, another research question could have been to focus entirely on Holmes' sexuality and see why an asexual character has been given a sexual identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Why is it necessary to give a representation of Holmes with a sexual identity - could it be that there is a higher focus on sexuality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and this is why it is present in many of the adaptations?

The subject of Sherlock Holmes has been truly inspiring and there are many interesting themes and subjects that could be included in an analysis or project. This thesis has focused on the symbols and trademarks of Sherlock Holmes and how these have been portrayed differently by various directors and actors.

To sum up, this thesis has showed that Sherlock Holmes and John Watson consist of a series of trademarks which are present in many of the adaptations - the trademarks have been represented differently in the adaptations, but essentially they are tools for decoding the Sherlockian universe. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wanted to depict a modern Victorian man and this is one of the trademarks that has sustained the adaptations and representations throughout the years. Sherlock Holmes is still a modern man, but now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He has kept his name, question of sexuality, and even the aspect of him being a man of science. Some of the new trademarks are the action hero, the sex symbol, and the comedian which are beginning to have a place in the newer adaptations. No matter what, a trademark such as these allows the audience to acknowledge that what they are about to see is a representation or an adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's loved stories about the great consulting detective and his war veteran doctor.

*[...] Let me run over the principle steps. We approached the case, you remember, with an absolutely blank mind, which is always an advantage. We had formed no theories. We were simply there to observe and to draw inferences from our observations. [...]*

(Conan Doyle, 1992, p. 313)

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