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I, Simon Workman, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English & Comparative Literature.

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"A Criminal Strain Ran In His Blood": Biomedical Science, Criminology, and Empire in the Sherlock Holmes Canon

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“A Criminal Strain Ran In His Blood”: Biomedical Science, Criminology, and Empire in the Sherlock Holmes Canon

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by

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Abstract

Nearly a century and a half after their initial publication, it is clear that Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories and novels continue to be a cultural phenomenon throughout the world. However, less clear are the ways in which those works emerged in response to—and as an example of—cultural anxieties surrounding advancements in science, particularly in the fields of biology and medicine. Advances such as Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection not only called into question basic long-standing assumptions about man's relationship to the universe; they also promised to improve the investigation of crime, as well as potentially justify certain imperialist beliefs about racial difference—beliefs that themselves influenced the development of criminal investigation. This project demonstrates how the Sherlock Holmes novels and stories both respond to and participate in the ideological nexus of biomedical science, criminology, and British imperialism by examining the ways in which certain key texts in the Holmes canon deploy medical discourse, criminological theory, and imperialist assumptions in the creation of a rational and "scientific" worldview through the characters of Dr. John Watson and Sherlock Holmes.

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Introduction

Nearly a century and a half after their initial publication, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales continue to be a cultural phenomenon throughout the world. The four novels and fifty-six short stories that make up the Holmes canon have inspired countless adaptations and interpretations, from the works of Agatha Christie and films starring Basil Rathbone to modern-day sensations like the BBC's *Sherlock* television show. That Holmes, Watson, and the romanticized London they inhabit are here to stay seems clear. Less clear, however, are the ways in which those works emerged in response to—and as an example of—late-Victorian cultural anxieties surrounding advancements in science, particularly in the fields of biology and medicine. Advances such as Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection[1] not only called into question basic long-standing assumptions about man's relationship to the universe; they also promised to improve the investigation of crime, as well as potentially justify certain imperialist beliefs about racial difference—beliefs that themselves influenced the development of criminal investigation. This project seeks to demonstrate how the Sherlock Holmes novels and stories both respond to and participate in the ideological nexus of bio-medical science, criminology, and British imperialism by examining the ways in which certain key texts in the Holmes canon deploy bio-medical discourse, criminological theory, and imperialist assumptions

[1] These "advances" include (but are not limited to): the changing view of medicine as a science (rather than an "art"); increasing awareness of the importance of the brain in relation to a person's personality, demeanor, etc. (phrenology, psychology, psychiatry, etc.); experiments involving vivisection, which increasingly revealed humans' similarities to the animal kingdom; the development of anesthetics and other pharmacological advances, which allowed for more effective surgeries; the rise and general acceptance of germ theory, which led to more effective vaccinations, disease prevention, etc.; a deeper understanding of genetics and heredity (at a basic, but improved, level); the use of statistical methods for tracking outbreaks of diseases and viruses; better hygienic practices and awareness of how public health policies impacted the transmission of disease.

in the creation of a rational, "scientific" worldview through the characters of Dr. John Watson and Sherlock Holmes.

While there is a vast body of work written on the Holmes canon, surprisingly little of it has been scholarly in nature. Although there has been an increase in scholarly attention on the Holmes stories in the last fifteen to twenty years, most of the criticism on Doyle's works has been of the "armchair" variety, amateur texts largely published by societies and fan clubs such as The Baker Street Irregulars. True scholarly work on Holmes is not non-existent, however; since the late 1970s, and especially the 1990s, there have been numerous academic studies of detective fiction and related genres, many of which examine individual works or the canon as a whole. These include influential texts like Tzvetan Todorov's "The Typology of Detective Fiction," Ronald Thomas's *Dreams of Authority* (1990) and *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science* (1999), Rosemary Jann's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: Detecting Social Order* (1995), and Joseph Kestner's *Sherlock's Men* (1997) and *The Edwardian Detective, 1901-1915* (2000). More recent work on the Holmes canon has taken a variety of approaches, such as Pierre Bayard's psychoanalytic "re-examination" of the most famous Holmes novel in *Sherlock Holmes Was Wrong: Reopening the Case of* The Hound of the Baskervilles (2008), Emelyne Godfrey's pair of works on Victorian self-defense (*Masculinity, Crime and Self-Defence in Victorian Literature* [2010] and *Femininity, Crime and Self-Defence in Victorian Literature and Society* [2012]), James O'Brien's overview of Holmes' forensic techniques (*The Scientific Sherlock Holmes: Cracking the Case with Science and Forensics* [2013]), and Clare Clarke's *Late Victorian Crime Fiction in the Shadows of Sherlock* (2014). Additionally, since the debut of the BBC's *Sherlock* television series, scholars in both literary and film studies journals have published numerous articles on the program using a wide range of approaches. Thus, while it

took some time for the Sherlock Holmes tales to be accepted as a literary artifact worthy of study, in the last two decades scholarship has steadily increased in both quantity and academic rigor. The Sherlock Holmes stories' immense popularity with Victorian readers (*Strand Magazine* regularly sold around 500,000 copies when a new Holmes tale was published), as well as their continuing popularity with readers throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, means they are a significant set of source texts from which to read the Victorian cultural climate and how the legacy of that culture reverberates throughout the following decades.

A few critical texts have been especially important in helping shape my project, since they deal with parts of the ideological nexus I describe in relation to Victorian fiction (and detective fiction in particular). Barry Milligan's *Pleasures and Pains: Opium and the Orient in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (1995) studies the ways in which narcotics and imperial "Others" are continually associated with one another in Victorian culture, appearing simultaneously as threatening and as exotically attractive. This work, which examines both Charles Dickens' early detective novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and Sherlock Holmes (specifically "The Man With The Twisted Lip") among others, was instrumental in kindling my interest in the intersections between medical science and imperialism in Holmes canon and Victorian literature in general. Similarly important in shaping my perspective, Sander L. Gilman's 1985 article "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature" further cemented my interest in the overlap between Victorian science and imperial ideology, demonstrating the ways in which white male identity was constructed—at least in part—in opposition to the fabricated hypersexuality and physiological difference attributed to black female identity by the medical establishment. Additionally, Caroline Reitz's *Detecting the Nation: Fictions of Detection and the*

Imperial Venture (2004) provided me with additional context for the ways in which domestic policing and criminal investigation were influenced by techniques used to keep colonial native populations under control. My project extends the work of these scholars and others (e.g. Stuart Hall, Edward Said, Homi K. Bhaba, Michel Foucault) by considering many of their ideas as part of a more comprehensive interrogation of the Sherlock Holmes canon, and demonstrating the ways in which their respective arguments complement one another.

At the heart of my project are the traces in the Sherlock Holmes canon of an ideological complex that informed the dominant patriarchal culture of Victorian Britain, a framework that combined elements of medical science, criminology, and British imperialism to create a cultural perception of "the criminal type" as not only morally deviant, but physically and racially deviant as well. The work of Cesare Lombroso, Francis Galton, Havelock Ellis, and other nineteenth-century thinkers, as well as pseudoscientific theories like phrenology, posit a connection between a person's physical attributes and their psychological traits. This basic idea—that a person's appearance can be "read" in order to determine their character traits—influenced methods of investigating crime and classifying criminals throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Alphonse Bertillon's "Bertillonage" identification system and Lombroso's theory that criminal behavior is the result of biologically-determined factors. Because such criminological frameworks are often heavily influenced by (and mis-readings of) Darwin's theories of evolution, persons of other (non-Anglo-Saxon/Western European) races are often assumed to be more likely to be predisposed to criminal behavior because of their perceived lack of physical "refinement" (animal-like behavior, "rough" appearance, uncontrollable desires, etc.) and psychological inferiority (weak-willed, feeble-minded, morally bankrupt, etc.). Such ideas are used as a way to bolster (via contrast) the construct of conventional British masculinity and

justify imperialist notions about the "deviant" nature of non-English—particularly "Oriental" and African— peoples and cultures. The association between "criminal types" and exotic "Others" in the British cultural consciousness creates a sort of "feedback loop" in the literature of the period in which criminal (or potentially criminal) characters—regardless of their race or ethnicity—take on exotic, often threatening "Oriental" characteristics; and similarly, characters of other races or origins are often described in ways that emphasize their physical deviance (especially from ideal British masculinity) and cast them in a "criminal" light.

The stories and novels of the Sherlock Holmes canon provide critical readers with numerous opportunities for studying the discursive interactions described above, both in terms of how those interactions manifest themselves in the narratives and in how the works themselves function as part of the discourse. The first of these opportunities is Watson's position as both a medical doctor and the ostensible "author" and narrator of almost all the Holmes stories as well as his service in the Second Anglo-Afghan War, which enables critical examination of the ways in which his training and wartime medical experience shape the narrative lens through which these stories are told. Watson' perspective is an especially important framework to deconstruct because it is presented as the viewpoint of a typical upstanding middle-class British male citizen, and therefore allows for an examination of how such a figure positions itself in opposition to "Others," be they women, criminals, or people of another race (or some combination of the three).

Holmes' worldview and investigative methods offer another entry point for study, since both are rooted in an ostensibly rational approach to interacting with the world that has its basis in the disciplines of science (particularly biology and chemistry) and criminology. Holmes was famously based on Dr. Joseph Bell, one of Arthur Conan Doyle's professors at the University of

Edinburgh Medical School. Specifically, Doyle borrowed Bell's trick of being able to discern details about a person's occupation, personal life, and recent whereabouts based solely on visual inspection and expanded it into Holmes' seemingly supernatural observational skills. In Holmes' case, however, these abilities were often based in many of the same questionable scientific principles used by other criminologists to judge a person's predisposition to criminal behavior, principles that were (as I have already noted) based on racist assumptions and pseudoscience. While some might argue that these unscientific practices and concepts were accepted as "good science" at the time, they were not without their critics; and if Holmes is as brilliant as Doyle (through Watson) paints him to be, readers would at the very least expect the detective to be aware of such theories' questionable efficacy, rather than implicitly accepting them as he so often does.

The structure of Holmes' investigations is also similar to a medical examination, something that Doyle would have been intimately familiar with: most tales begin with the "patient" identifying a set of "symptoms" (i.e. the client recounts the story leading to the mystery), the testing of hypotheses (via Holmes' investigations), and a final diagnosis and remedy (the solution to the mystery and the deliverance of justice). Additionally, Holmes' store of knowledge regarding "sensational literature" (*Study* 35)—which seems to encompass criminal records, newspaper articles, works of fiction based on actual crimes, and works by criminologists such as Bertillon—suggests at least a partial reliance on the idea of "criminal types," since it suggests the belief that criminals behave in predictable ways and re-use established techniques in a way that an experienced observer can detect.

On a broader, canon-wide level, one of the primary roles Holmes plays is the protector of the British homeland, a role that he shares in an unofficial capacity with his older brother

Mycroft, who is an agent of the crown and, as Holmes tells Watson in "The Bruce Partington Plans," "occasionally he *is* the British government" (1302). This role might best be described as a defense of the status quo, especially in terms of Britain's self-proclaimed position as a moral, cultural, and political power. Throughout much of the canon, the crimes that Holmes investigates are perpetrated (or suspected to be so) by a character or characters that are in some way "Other," whether that be because of their race, nature (i.e. "criminal" nature), physical characteristics, or place of origin, and whose status as an "Other" threatens to upset the established social order. Holmes' investigations thus serve to reestablish the social equilibrium by containing or eliminating the threat posed by the "Other's" encroachment upon English soil. These tales, then, tell a story analogous to that of a disease (a "foreign invader") entering the body (the British social order) whose threat must be eliminated through a diagnosis (the investigation) and treatment (the rendering of justice). Watson's retellings of these cases in print, then, might be viewed as a set of case studies that track the success of Holmes' work as the "treatment" for the disease/dis-ease caused by foreign bodies entering the British body politic.

This is not to say, however, that Holmes and Watson are merely blustering, ignorant bigots who have a myopic view of the world. Indeed, the complex and often contradictory nature of their characters is part of what makes them such fascinating subjects to study. Their actions and dialogue often reflect views that would have seemed quite progressive at the time, such as the sensitivity with which interracial marriage is treated in "The Adventure of the Yellow Face" (1893), or Holmes' famous respect for Irene Adler, whose cunning ploys in "A Scandal in Bohemia" enable her to resist the strictures of patriarchy. But it is important not to emphasize their (or Doyle's) positive traits while glossing over the problematic aspects of their characters, the stories they take part in, and the culture they both participate in and are a part of. Both

Holmes and Watson embody a host of ideological contradictions; each may seem to hold extremely conservative socio-cultural views in one tale, only to act or speak in ways that belie a progressive bent in the next. Doyle's characters and tales may not emphasize hybridity and blurring boundaries like the sensation novels of detective-fiction forerunner Wilkie Collins, whose mysterious creations such as Ezra Jennings and Ozias Midwinter straddle the border between the familiar and the uncanny, and in whose novels the delineation between self and "Other" threatens to break down. However, the Holmes stories can still be read as a response to similar cultural anxieties about imperialism's deleterious effects on English cultural identity, and therefore as the literary successors to much of Collins' work. The aim of this study, then, is to highlight some of the ways in which these characters and tales are more complicated than they may first appear, not simply in order to criticize them for their faults (racism, xenophobia, sexism, etc.), but to better understand the ways they comment on, promote, and challenge the assumptions of the culture that they continue to embody for readers today.

My first chapter examines how Arthur Conan Doyle deploys these discourses in his first two Sherlock Holmes novels, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and *The Sign of the Four* (1890). This chapter discusses Conan Doyle's medical training and how that background influenced the creation of Holmes, Watson, and the narratives. I demonstrate that while advancements in medical science improved the wellbeing of patients, they also created the opportunity for deception and manipulation. Since most non-physicians would likely have only a basic understanding of the science involved, those with an imperialistic worldview were able to craft support for their arguments that utilized "scientific" rhetoric, in order that their views might seem (to the layman, or even the biased scientist) as credible as the other advances that were improving the average citizen's quality of life. This section includes a discussion of how

frameworks for investigating and prosecuting crime were influenced by both bio-medical science and imperialist ideology, particularly in the creation of a criminal typology. In addition to the historical, biographical, and sociopolitical contexts, this chapter focuses on how these novels establish a motif of the British body politic's status quo at risk from the "foreign bodies" of exotic, threatening "Others." In particular, I demonstrate how the novels suggest that British national identity is threatened by the immanent blending of its own culture with foreign ones, specifically America (in *Study*) and India (in *Sign*). The anxieties surrounding this loss of stable identity are embodied by the characters of Drebber, Strangerson, and Jefferson Hope in *Study* and Thaddeus Sholto, Jonathan Small, and Tonga in *Sign*, whose behavior and physical characteristics—both distorted and exaggerated—are meant to emphasize the danger posed by the loss of identifiable "boundary lines" between British and "Other." Both of these early Holmes novels, I suggest, function as a sort of "writing cure" (similar to a Freudian "talking cure") for the trauma caused by this breakdown of boundaries, using Watson's narrative as model for readers to navigate their own anxieties regarding the influx of foreign "Others" to English shores.

Chapters two through four focus on demonstrating how the main ideas developed in the first chapter are carried over into the short stories published in *The Strand* magazine from 1891 to 1927. Additionally, these chapters analyze more thoroughly the ways in which Watson's medical training and imperialist bias affect his behavior and narrative techniques, as well as how Holmes borrows techniques from biomedical science, incorporates contemporary criminological theories into his investigations, and attempts to maintain the stability of the empire.

Chapter two examines how Holmes and Watson interact with people, ideas, and objects from "The Orient," a term that was often used indiscriminately to refer to such diverse locales as

India, China, and most of Asia and the Middle East. This chapter further explores how the traces of the 1857 Indian Mutiny—as well as other British conflicts and interactions with "the Orient"—inform Holmes' and Watson's worldviews and investigative methodologies. My discussion of "The Man With The Twisted Lip" focuses on several important elements of the tale, including how Watson's medical background affects his sense of morality, the nefarious "Oriental" influence of the (fictional) opium den, and the complex ways the tale constructs a gendered framework for understanding Boone/St. Clair's crime. I then turn to "The Speckled Band," examining the link between exposure to "the East," hereditary traits, and criminality, as well as the gender dynamics between Dr. Roylott and his step-daughters, the significance of the Roma "band" on Roylott's estate, and the Eastern animals and objects he imports to England. Concluding chapter two is an analysis of how anxieties regarding bodily contamination and infection are placed upon "Eastern" biological agents in "The Dying Detective" and "The Creeping Man," emphasizing the ways that exposure to these contaminants physically transform their victims into more "primitive" and/or "Oriental" beings.

Chapter three looks at depictions of Africa, Africans, and African-Americans in the canon, interrogating the often-contradictory qualities of these depictions. Similar to the ways in which Eastern realms are seen as dangerous, primitive places full of "criminal types," Africa and its inhabitants are used as a way to contrast England and the English with the exotic "Other," also serving as sites upon which anxieties about the dangers of "foreign contamination" can be situated. After briefly examining Watson's depiction of a "mulatto cook" in "Wisteria Lodge" and the use of a dangerous African poison in "The Devil's Foot," I examine in more detail two Holmes tales that feature major characters of African descent and one tale in which Africa features prominently. In my discussion of "The Yellow Face" I argue that, although its

conclusion advocates a fairly progressive view of race relations, the bulk of the tale relies on anxieties regarding racial "Others" for its dramatic effects and demonstrates several problematic aspects of Holmes' investigative techniques. “The Blanched Soldier,” on the other hand, uses the context of the second Anglo-Boer War to posit a connection between race and masculinity while simultaneously reinforcing the idea that exposure to foreign lands (in this case, South Africa) makes one more susceptible to various kinds of contamination. I finish chapter three by analyzing Holmes and Watson’s depiction of racial “Others” in “The Three Gables,” a tale notorious for its incorporation of racist stereotypes.

Chapter Four turns to the European continent, arguing that the anxieties surrounding “Oriental” and African “Others” impact criminological theories of “the criminal type,” creating the perception that European criminals often share physical (and supposedly psychological) characteristics with the more “primitive” peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Additionally, this chapter traces the increasing anxieties that surrounded Britain’s European neighbors such as France, Germany, and Russia around the turn of the twentieth century, demonstrating that concerns about foreign invasion increasingly settled upon threats closer to home as Europe headed toward the First World War. In my discussion of "The Greek Interpreter,” I argue that Holmes’ and Watson's conversation about atavistic traits primes readers to read the tale in a way that foregrounds the inherited nature of criminal behavior and its physical signs. I then turn to “The Six Napoleons,” examining the ways in which Holmes and Watson deploy a combination of physiognomy, amateur psychology, anti-Catholic sentiment, and racial stereotypes to build their case against the Italian suspect Beppo. Pivoting from my discussion of Beppo’s potential ties to secret societies, I then turn to “The Golden Pince-Nez” and “The Red Circle,” demonstrating how each story uses criminal anthropology as a way to

bolster the concerns of secret societies and anarchist groups infiltrating British society. Finally, I conclude chapter four with a look at Holmes' arch-nemesis Professor Moriarty, analyzing the significance of his Irish ancestry as well as his physical resemblance to Victorian depictions of the compulsive masturbator. While these elements of his character may contribute to the "aura" of criminality that surrounds him, I argue that Moriarty's main threat is his ability to hide in plain sight, to control a massive criminal empire while maintaining the appearance of English respectability. I end with an epilogue discussing potential future chapters, particularly the rich opportunities for study provided by adaptations of Doyle's stories and pastiches featuring Holmes and Watson created throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The continued popularity of these characters and the stories they inhabit underscores the need for ongoing analysis and reevaluation of their literary and cultural significance.

Chapter 1: Doyle, Bell, Watson and Holmes

Sherlock Holmes' reliance on scientific techniques is one of the major distinctions that separates him from his literary predecessors and contributes to his ongoing popularity. Established in the first two Holmes novels *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of the Four*, the detective's "science of deduction" incorporates advanced forensic techniques and *tour de force* reasoning to solve crimes and catch criminals too difficult for the police to handle. However, while many of Holmes' methods are scientifically sound, just as many are based on pseudo-scientific stereotypes that reinforce imperial ideology and reveal deep-seated cultural anxieties about racial "Others" and the stability of English national identity. In this chapter I argue that these early Holmes stories establish a thematic concern with establishing and exploiting a criminal typology based on anthropometric and physiognomic ideas. That typology is inextricably linked to long-standing Victorian fears of racial "Others," and Holmes, Watson, and other characters frequently express such fears in medical or biological terms, identifying these "undesirables" as a disease that threatens to infect the British body politic. Rather than applying scientific techniques to his own observations (as he claims), Holmes all too often relies on fundamentally flawed criminological theories rooted in ideologically biased science, a strategy that may be historically accurate[1] but which problematizes his claims of empirical rigor. Rather than examining the data upon which these theories were built, which for a reasoner like Holmes would have revealed their inconsistencies and gaps in logic, the detective instead unquestioningly accepts them as valid investigative tools. This fact brings Holmes' critical faculties into question, or at the very least demonstrates intellectual laziness when it comes to

[1] While the criminological theories discussed below were embraced at the time, as Stephen Jay Gould and others have shown the evidence used to support them falls apart under even the most basic scrutiny. One would assume that Holmes, who demonstrates his scientific acumen in numerous ways throughout the canon, could easily see the inherent flaws in these ideas.

interrogating the methodology and ideology behind basic scientific practices like data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Criminal Anthropology in the Nineteenth Century

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the science of criminology was the science of human types. Heavily influenced by the 1859 publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, the field of criminal anthropology quickly developed theories to explain the biological basis—and heritability—of criminal tendencies. However, the idea of biological determinism[2] was hardly new: for example, the "science" of phrenology (mapping the features of one's head to determine their behavioral and personality traits) had been a popular pursuit since the beginning of the century, and prominent intellectuals and physicians such as David Hume and Charles White supported the theory of polygeny (that different races had their origins in separate species of human ancestors) (Gould 72-73). Mid-century comparative anatomists such as Louis Agassiz and Samuel George Morton attempted to support polygenism with detailed measurement and analyses of human skeletons, particularly skulls (craniometry), arguing that the evidence clearly showed the superior intelligence and physical development of whites over other races[3]. Darwin's notion of natural selection identified a biological mechanism by which traits pass from parent to offspring, and by placing humans at the end of the primate evolutionary chain it also seemed to

[2] Gould, in his critique of biological determinism *The Mismeasure of Man*, defines the concept as follows: "[biological determinism] holds that shared behavioral norms, and the social and economic differences between human groups—primarily races, classes, and sexes—arise from inherited, inborn distinctions and that society, in this sense, is an accurate reflection of biology" (52).

[3] Gould systematically debunks their findings throughout *The Mismeasure of Man*, demonstrating that a combination of selective data collection, rounding errors, and confirmation bias corrupted their conclusions.

indicate that "ape-like" features are a sign of inferiority[4]. However, what exactly constitutes ape-like features is highly subjective, and as a result racists and classists (including many working in scientific disciplines) latched onto this idea, claiming to detect ape-like physiognomy in people of non-white races and in the lower classes of all races. In other words, contingents of nineteenth century scientists in anatomy, biology, archaeology, medicine, and other spheres were intent on using anthropometry to prove the superiority of whites by demonstrating the inferiority of other races.

The bourgeoning field of criminology also joined the discussion, seeking to draw a link between the physical inferiority of other races and their propensity for criminal behavior. The most influential criminologist of the era, Cesare Lombroso, theorized that many criminals displayed atavistic "stigmata" that signaled their inherent (and inherited) criminal tendencies[5]. Building on Lombroso's work, English intellectuals such as Francis Galton and Havelock Ellis advocated not only the use of anthropometry and profiling for criminal investigation, but used Lombroso's underlying assumption about the inferiority of non-European races to justify their arguments for eugenics (Thomas, *Detective* 211). By actively participating in the construction of a criminal typology based primarily on racial, physiognomical, and anatomical markers, the Holmes stories reflect Victorian notions of English superiority and the racial anxieties that underpin it, masking those concerns under the veneer of rational, scientific investigation. The

[4] This idea was consistent with Ernst Haeckel's concept of recapitulation; summed up in his famous phrase "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny," recapitulation theory argued that an embryo repeated its entire evolutionary development in the womb. Because apes were a human ancestor, "ape-like" features were a sign of incomplete development and thus a sign of inferiority.
[5] According to Gould, Lombroso's "stigmata" included: "greater skull thickness, simplicity of cranial sutures, large jaws, preeminence of the face over the cranium, relatively long arms, precocious wrinkles, low and narrow forehead, large ears, absence of baldness, darker skin, greater visual acuity, diminished sensitivity to pain, and absence of vascular reaction (blushing)" (159).

irony of such a strategy is that Holmes himself is a sort of "Other," a one-of-a-kind figure whose intellect and eccentricities constitute a marked difference from the typical Briton. However, as we shall see, the Holmes stories dismiss any uneasiness caused by the detective's idiosyncrasies by playfully acknowledging their peculiarity, balancing them with Watson's ordinariness, and exploiting them to solve cases whose resolution largely reinforces the status quo.

Arthur Conan Doyle: Medical Man of Letters

The story of how Arthur Conan Doyle created the world's most famous detective and his narrator-companion—as well as the subsequent evolution of both the characters throughout the canon—contextualizes the Holmes tales' relationship to the medical sciences, criminal investigation, and the British imperial project. Events in Doyle's life, his professional background, and his views on certain topics shed light on both his literary productions and the worldview(s)—sometimes contradictory—that inform them.

Arthur Conan Doyle was born to Charles and Mary Doyle on 22 May 1859. Although he was raised in a large Irish Catholic family, Doyle had rejected his family's rigid faith by the time he began his studies at the University of Edinburgh. Influenced by Darwin, Thomas Huxley, John Stuart Mill, and others, Doyle "refused to accept any proposition that could not be proved and thus absolutely rejected the story of creation as presented in the Bible" (Miller 54). Doyle did not go so far as to label himself an atheist, however, and his agnosticism eventually led to his championing of the Spiritualist movement in the early twentieth century.

While studying for his medical degree at the University of Edinburgh, Doyle famously met the man who would later inspire the creation of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Joseph Bell. As Doyle biographer Russell Miller notes, "Bell gave frequent demonstrations of his own deductive powers, which, combined with inspired guesswork, enabled him to discover much about a patient

without asking a single question" (49-50). Similar to the way Holmes used his "powers" for a purpose—demonstrating his deductive skills to potential clients or suspected criminals—Bell's "performances" were also practical in nature: "A showman who loved centre stage, [Bell's] showmanship had a serious purpose: to alert trainee doctors to the wealth of information a patient provided before opening his or her mouth, much of it invisible to the untrained eye" (Miller 49). Bell's (and Holmes') techniques demonstrate the importance to both medical and criminal investigation of observing and "reading" outward signs in order to decipher their meaning. For Holmes and Bell (and Watson as well) the body is a text that is "authored" by the habits, experiences, and backgrounds of the people who inhabit them, and often those people are themselves unaware that they are "open books" to the eyes of the careful observer.

The character of Dr. John H. Watson was likely based on Doyle himself: both are middle-class Victorian gentlemen who practiced medicine and turned to literature as an alternative line of work. While Watson has his eccentricities, most critics read his perspective as fairly representative of the middle-class Victorian professional man (and might therefore also be a good indication of Doyle's own views). One significant difference between Watson and Doyle is the latter's medical specialization; while there is no indication that Watson's training was focused on any particular sub-field, Doyle worked at an eye hospital for a time and pursued studies in ophthalmology after graduating. This focus suggests an interesting parallel with Watson. Although he did not specialize in optical medicine, Watson's narration in the Holmes tales is full of description and imagery that emphasizes the visual, from the physical appearance of characters to the impressionistic way he depicts setting. Srdjan Smajic has recently written on the importance of Victorian optical theories for detective fiction (as well as the ghost story), arguing that ideas like eighteenth-century philosopher George Berkeley's "theory of vision"—

that sight is analogous to reading, since visual data as humans perceive it is not "real" but simply an interpretation of the mind—heavily influenced the way authors (such as Doyle) depicted the nature of criminal investigation. Smajic argues that

> the epistemology of nineteenth century detective fiction relies on . . . the *languification* of all meaningful content . . . The fetish of plain meaning in detective fiction thus depends on a double movement: the languification of the visual signifier and the elevation of visual clues into a category of fixed meaning where they safely hover above the pitfalls of subjective inferences. (122)

Thus, if what one sees only has "meaning" because of how one interprets it, then the visual clues "read" by the detective operate in a similar way. "The critical distinction between *observing* and *seeing* that Holmes repeatedly points out to Watson," Smajic notes, "is thus not a matter of looking carefully or carelessly, but looking with or without knowing *what* to look for and what one is looking *at* [emphasis in original]" (123). Smajic's contention helps clarify, then, why the practice of classifying people based on their physical appearance is such an attractive proposition to Watson (and Doyle): if one can work up a human typology, one can accelerate the process of determining who is more likely to be responsible for a particular crime.

Such a strategy (profiling based on physical appearance) is not always correct, as we shall see. Sometimes the criminal turns out to be the person who looks *least* likely to be one, and sometimes none of the suspects has a particularly "criminal" look about them; but quite often the most threatening or "Othered" character turns out to be responsible for the crime, or may in fact not be guilty of *this* crime but others revealed by Holmes' and Watson's investigations (such as the "rascally Lascar" in "The Man with the Twisted Lip"). My contention is not that Holmes and Watson profile characters in every single case, or that it works every time; rather, I argue that

evaluating a suspect's character based on appearance is regarded in the canon as a somewhat flawed—but, importantly, a perfectly *reasonable*—way of forming a "first impression" of a particular character. Watson in particular takes advantage of this "first impression" function of physical appearance in primarily two ways: foreshadowing (indicating early on that a particular character is the criminal) or as a form of misdirection (heightening the "surprise" reveal of the actual criminal). In terms of Todorov's "two stories" framework of detective fiction, these stories either run parallel (the "story" of why a character raises suspicion, and the story of how that initial suspicion is confirmed) or perpendicular (the story of the initial suspicion and the story of how it was proved incorrect) to one another. When an initial hypothesis based on a character's appearance is confirmed, it in turn confirms the power of "first impressions;" when the hypothesis fails, it is not a failure of the technique but a failure of observation—either Holmes or Watson has failed to see something that could have put them on the right path.

After graduating Doyle's medical practice suffered several false starts; a tour as a ship's surgeon on an African steamer and an ill-fated partnership with his friend George Budd in Plymouth left Doyle struggling to make ends meet, a problem he attempted to solve by supplementing his income through writing stories. Publishing a few stories in publications such as *London Society* and *The Boy's Own Paper*, his most famous creation was launched in *A Study in Scarlet*, the lead story in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* of 1887.

The Science of Deduction: *A Study in Scarlet*

As the initial Sherlock Holmes novel (and story in general), *A Study in Scarlet* contains many "firsts." It chronicles the first time Holmes and Watson meet; it marks the first appearance of many of the recurring motifs and characters, including the pair's lodgings at 221B Baker Street, detective inspectors Lestrade and Gregson, and Watsons' imagery-filled descriptions of

the swirling fogs and dingy streets of late-Victorian London. But perhaps most importantly *A Study in Scarlet* sees Holmes describing in detail the methods he uses as the world's only consulting detective. While Holmes offers slightly different accounts of his methods throughout the canon, the major elements are outlined in this first tale, which finds Holmes and his new roommate Watson being called in to investigate the puzzling murder of Enoch Drebber in an abandoned Lauriston Garden house.

The mystery and the story surrounding it provide plenty of opportunities for Holmes to discuss and demonstrate his techniques. While similar mystery-based stories had preceded *A Study in Scarlet*—Poe's Auguste Dupin tales, for example, as well as sensation novels such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* and Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*—Doyle's tale and its detective were unique, emphasizing a science-based approach to detection that its predecessors lacked. This "Science of Deduction" (the title of the novel's second chapter) is not, as that title suggests, based on a standardized system but instead on Holmes' own extensive yet highly idiosyncratic store of knowledge, which he has curated based on its perceived utility to his work. He lays out his rationale to Watson thus:

> 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 that 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 skillful 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 a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it

> there comes a time when for every addition of knowledge you forget something that you knew before. It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones. (*Study* 32-34)

Such a system means that Holmes' scientific knowledge is not comprehensive, but limited to those facts and techniques that will aid him in deducing causes from effects. Holmes' actual process for performing that deduction is clearly based on Joseph Bell's similar "trick," and consists of a combination of that knowledge carefully stored in the "brain-attic" and intense observation of the object or subject of interest. Watson relates the technique as described in Holmes' monograph "The Book of Life" (which the former found to be "ineffable twaddle" on first reading):

> "From a drop of water," said the writer, "a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other. So all life is a great chain, the nature of which is known whenever we are shown a single link of it. Like all other arts, the Science of Deduction and Analysis is one which can only be acquired by long and patient study nor is life long enough to allow any mortal to attain the highest possible perfection in it. Before turning to those moral and mental aspects of the matter which present the greatest difficulties, let the enquirer begin by mastering more elementary problems. Let him, on meeting a fellow-mortal, learn at a glance to distinguish the history of the man, and the trade or profession to which he belongs. Puerile as such an exercise may seem, it sharpens the faculties of observation, and teaches one where to look and what to look for. By a man's finger nails, by his coat-sleeve, by his boot, by his trouser knees, by the callosities of his forefinger and thumb, by his expression, by his shirt cuffs—by each of these things a man's calling is plainly

revealed. That all united should fail to enlighten the competent enquirer in any case is almost inconceivable." (Study 40-41)

According to such Holmesian deduction, everything one might learn about a person or object is plainly revealed through observation, and by interpreting the visual clues correctly one might reason backwards to their cause and meaning. This process—uncovering the origins of visual signs by carefully working "backwards" via a chain of reasoning—is highly reminiscent of another famous nineteenth century text, one which caused shockwaves in Victorian culture when it was published in 1859: Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

Frank Lawrence has noted the connection between Holmes' methodology and mid-nineteenth-century advances in investigating the natural sciences, arguing that in Doyle's stories as well as those of Poe and Dickens, there appear numerous "terms, figures of speech, and methodological practices indebted to nineteenth-century philology, geology and paleontology, archaeology and evolutionary biology, disciplines that by mid-century were to share common preoccupations about the nature of evidence and narratological reconstructions of a past unavailable to the observer" (4). Specifically, Lawrence points out that many of Holmes' investigations can be viewed as "archaeology," with Holmes "reading" the physical traces left behind by a crime and constructing a chronological narrative of cause and effect much the same way the scientist reads the traces left behind by biological and/or geological processes, and similarly putting together a coherent, linear narrative to explain the those traces. Lawrence concludes that Holmes' methodology was based in part on the detective's reading (and likely Doyle's) of Winwood Reade's *The Martyrdom of Man* (1872), which the former recommends to Watson in *The Sign of the Four*. But while Lawrence's contention is well-researched and argued (it also finds Holmes/Doyle being influenced by *Origins* as well as Darwin's *The Expression of*

Emotions in Man and Animals [1872] and ultimately Pierre Simon Laplace's "nebular hypothesis" of the origins of the universe), he mentions only in passing an important component of Reade's and Darwin's ideas, one that complicates Holmes' (and Watson's) own view of and interaction with the world around him: namely, the idea that western Europeans (and Britons specifically) represent the highest form of human evolution, while those of other geographical origins are less refined, inferior examples of the species. *Origin* in particular provides insights into Holmes' general investigation technique: Darwin uses widely accepted, observable facts about the nature of the relationship between individual members of a certain species, how those individuals adapt to changes in their environment, and how individuals inherit the traits of their ancestors to "reason backwards" and make the claim that all species arise as the result of natural processes rather than divine intervention. Much of Darwin's evidence is drawn from the fossil record, observing the impact of human-directed selective breeding, and other verifiable forms of evidence that can be studied in the present, which he then "reads" like a text to reason backwards and make assertions about the ways species have developed in the past. Holmes' "science of deduction" works in essentially the same manner: observations of what is left behind in the present are "read" in order to trace their causes back to their point of origin. Unfortunately, when Holmes and Watson extend this technique to the investigation of crime and apply it to the body, their findings display many of the same racist and xenophobic views as Lombroso and his fellow criminologists.

Evidence of Holmes' and Watson's cultural and racial bias—while not as blatant as in *The Sign of the Four* (as I will discuss)—appears throughout *A Study in Scarlet*, often in surprising ways. The first of these relates to Watson himself, who, as the novel begins, has just returned from a tour of military service in Afghanistan. As a consequence of this exposure to

"the tropics" (as Holmes calls them), Watson's physical appearance has changed enough for his friend Stamford to note it when they run into each other one afternoon: "'Whatever have you been doing with yourself, Watson?' he asked in undisguised wonder, as we rattled through the crowded London streets. 'You are as thin as a lath and as brown as a nut" (*Study* 17). Stamford's reaction indicates that Watson's appearance has altered significantly enough from his usual complexion as to make him nearly unrecognizable, and the implication is that his time in "the tropics" itself is responsible for the change. Such a formulation—that time in the more "tropical" or equatorial regions (which also happened to contain many of the nations colonized by European nations) would cause those from more temperate regions to gradually take on physical and psychological characteristics associated with the "less-refined" natives of those regions—was a fairly common one in the Victorian cultural consciousness, and appears in many of the Sherlock Holmes tales as well (most notably in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," discussed in a later chapter).

Significantly, Watson's change in appearance is accompanied by severe physical illness, and the text suggests that this illness is responsible for at least some of Watson's transformation:

> Worn with pain, and weak from the prolonged hardships which I had undergone, I was removed, with a great train of wounded sufferers, to the base hospital at Peshawar. Here I rallied, and had already improved so far as to be able to walk about the wards, and even to bask a little upon the verandah, when *I was struck down with enteric fever, that curse of our Indian possessions. For months my life was despaired of, and when at last I came to myself and became convalescent, I was so weak and emaciated that a medical board determined that not a day should be lost in sending me back to England*. I was dispatched, accordingly, in the troopship "Orontes," and landed a month later on

> Portsmouth jetty, *with my health irretrievably ruined*, but with permission from a paternal government to spend the next nine months attempting to improve it. (13-14; emphasis added)

This passage places the blame for Watson's altered condition squarely on his exposure to a foreign land; as long as Watson is engaging in service to the empire, he is "worn with pain, and weak from prolonged hardships," but not altered in any significant sense. It is only once he is convalescing at "the base hospital at Peshawar" that he is infected by the "curse of our Indian possessions" and becomes "so weak and emaciated" as to be in danger for his life. The association between Watson's illness and the Indian subcontinent is reinforced by the recommended course of treatment, which is not medical but geographical in nature: "a medical board determined that not a day should be lost in *sending me back to England*" (13). The only way to treat Watson's condition, it seems, is to physically remove him from its source (the colonies) and "[attempt] to improve it" by "sending [him] back to England."

This course of treatment, however, while partially restoring Watson's health, is not entirely effective. With "neither kith nor kin in England," Watson returns to that country and "naturally gravitated to London;" but rather than the teeming center of civilization, the doctor instead finds a "great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained" (14). Because London has already been infected by foreign invaders, it is not the cure that will restore Watson's status as a healthy, upstanding British gentlemen—instead, his social standing begins to deteriorate in addition to his physical condition: staying at a private hotel, he leads "a comfortless, meaningless existence," spending money "considerably more freely than [he] ought" and realizing that he "must either leave the metropolis and rusticate somewhere in the country, or . . . make a complete alteration in [his] style of living" (14). London, it seems,

with its influx of immigrants from the colonies and lack of cultural boundaries, is nearly as dangerous as "Eastern" regions like India or Afghanistan. By the time he runs into Stamford, not only is Watson "not strong enough yet to stand much noise or excitement" (18), he seems to have added financial mismanagement to his list of vices, whether it is simply due to a lack of attention or the gambling habits that are hinted at later in the canon. Whatever the cause, rather than recovering in London Watson has continued to deteriorate, regaining some small measure of his bodily health while simultaneously losing all sense of purpose or drive, suggesting not just illness but laziness, another effect often attributed to visiting or living in more "tropical" climates. His exposure to England's imperial possessions—far from reinforcing his cultural and physical superiority—has ruined him, and his return to the cosmopolitan capital has only further entrenched his downfall.

That is, until he meets Sherlock Holmes. Watson's new flat-mate not only gives him a purpose to draw him out of the "meaningless existence" he has fallen into, the budding partnership also seems to relieve most of Watson's physical ailments as well. As *A Study in Scarlet* continues, Watson's weakness and sensitivity to excitement seem to disappear as he develops his interest in Holmes and eventually the case of Enoch Drebber's murder. When the pair first meet, Holmes instantly diagnoses Watson's "condition" ("You have been in Afghanistan I perceive") solely based on his physical appearance, an occurrence that intrigues the latter, who—because of "the monotony of my daily existence"—"eagerly hailed the little mystery which hung around my companion, and spent much of my time in endeavouring to unravel it" (32). Soon Watson's monotonous existence is filled with singular occurrences, and his physical ailments almost disappear (he seems to have no trouble, for instance, accompanying Holmes to the site of Drebber's murder, carrying an old dog up the stairs when Holmes wants to

test out the pills found at the site of Strangerson's murder, or withstanding the shock of Jefferson Hope attempting to leap out a Baker Street window). But rather than return to medical practice[6] with the return of his health, Watson instead decides to publish an account of the case. In doing so, he enters the literary marketplace, an environment which allows him to reassert his status as a middle-class British subject by giving him a form of control over his relationship to non-British "Others." Watson's status as the narrative lens through which the cases are related to a receptive audience allows him to control how that audience "sees" the characters that populate the stories, both in a physical sense and more broadly in how those characters fit (or fail to fit) into the fabric of British society.

These two facets of description in the Holmes stories are often tightly intertwined, and *A Study in Scarlet* is no exception. Watson's depiction of Drebber is particularly noteworthy, as it is colored by idea that the physical characteristics of criminals betray their inferiority by reverting to a more ancient, less-evolved form of the species. Take Watson's initial perception of Drebber, when he and Holmes examine the body after its discovery by the police:

> [M]y attention was centred upon the single grim motionless figure which lay stretched upon the boards, with vacant sightless eyes staring up at the discoloured ceiling. It was that of a man about forty-three or forty-four years of age, middle-sized, broad shouldered, with crisp curling black hair, and a short stubbly beard. He was dressed in a heavy broadcloth frock coat and waistcoat, with light-coloured trousers, and immaculate collar and cuffs. A top hat, well brushed and trim, was placed upon the floor beside him. His hands were clenched and his arms thrown abroad, while his lower limbs were interlocked

[6] At least right away—Watson does, as we shall see, begin practicing medicine again after *A Study in Scarlet*—but devotes much of his time to assisting Holmes and chronicling their adventures.

> as though his death struggle had been a grievous one. On his rigid face there stood an expression of horror, and as it seemed to me, of hatred, *such as I have never seen upon human features. This malignant and terrible contortion, combined with the low forehead, blunt nose, and prognathous jaw gave the dead man a singularly simious and ape-like appearance, which was increased by his writhing, unnatural posture.* I have seen death in many forms, but never has it appeared to me in a more fearsome aspect than in that dark grimy apartment, which looked out upon one of the main arteries of suburban London. (54-56; emphasis added)

While the passage starts out plainly enough, describing the man's clothing and the position of his body, Watson soon starts to weave in particulars that are highly suggestive, directing readers' attention to contrast between Drebber's refined clothing and the inhuman (or more accurately sub-human) nature of his appearance. Despite the "immaculate collar and cuffs," the "well-brushed and trim" top hat, Drebber has an "ape-like" appearance, from his head with its "low forehead, blunt nose, and prognathous jaw" to his body's "writhing, unnatural posture" that also suggests an ape (with "arms thrown abroad" and "lower limbs . . . interlocked"). Watson's imagery recalls the way Underwood describes Mr. Hyde in Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a character whose ape-like appearance and savage behavior is blamed on his more primitive state. As Jekyll/Hyde himself puts it,

> The evil side of my nature, to which I had now transferred the stamping efficacy, was *less robust and less developed* than the good which I had just deposed. Again, in the course of my life, which had been, after all, nine tenths a life of effort, virtue and control, it had been much less exercised and much less exhausted. And hence, as I think, it came about that Edward Hyde was so much smaller, slighter and younger than Henry Jekyll. *Even as*

> *good shone upon the countenance of the one, evil was written broadly and plainly on the face of the other*. Evil besides (which I must still believe to be the lethal side of man) had *left on that body an imprint of deformity and decay*. (83; emphasis added)

Here in *Jekyll and Hyde*, then, as in *A Study in Scarlet*, the evil nature of the criminal is "written broadly and plainly on the face" and leaves an "imprint of deformity and decay" that is indicative of a "less robust and less developed" form of humanity. While Jekyll himself declines to describe the exact nature of Hyde's appearance, he twice comments on the "ape-like" behavior the latter exhibits, a phrase also used by the narrator and echoed by the butler Mr. Poole, who paints Mr. Hyde as a "masked thing like a monkey" (58). Base, transgressive behavior is thus identified in both texts as linked to man's ape-like, primitive state—a state that is plainly written on the body of the criminal.

There is a greater danger posed by Drebber (and Strangerson) in *A Study in Scarlet* that goes beyond the inherent evil of his character, however. The novel's two-part structure—giving an account of Holmes' investigation in part I and Jefferson Hope's back-story that led to the murders in part II—allows for an extended thematic meditation on the alien world of the Mormons, a world that poses a threat to the established institutions of western capitalism, marriage, and post-Enlightenment political philosophy. Part II (ironically titled "The Country of the Saints") paints the Mormons as a hyper-patriarchal, avaricious, and violent group whose representatives' presence in England Jefferson Hope (a non-Mormon) rightfully terminates before it has a chance to spread. Significantly, it is just such a sociocultural corruption that the Mormon leader, Brigham Young, hopes to prevent in his own community when he forces John and Lucy Ferrier to convert to the faith: "'If we take you with us,' [Young] said, in solemn words, 'it can only be as believers in our own creed. We shall have no wolves in our fold. Better

far that your bones should bleach in this wilderness than that you should prove to be that little speck of decay which in time corrupts the whole fruit'"(136). It is the Mormons themselves, however, particularly Drebber and Strangerson, whose violent tendencies pose such a threat to England. The pair's misdeeds have failed to be contained by the Mormon outpost at Salt Lake City, as "There had been a schism among the Chosen People a few months before . . . [the result of which] had been the secession of a certain number of the malcontents, who had left Utah and become Gentiles" (177). Cast out and identified as "Gentiles" by the Mormon establishment, Drebber and Strangerson's inherent criminality becomes even more apparent in England, an environment less sympathetic to their alternative religious practices. When Drebber and Strangerson arrive in England, the former immediately begins engaging in antisocial behavior, drinking to excess, threatening his landlady, and attempting to abduct her daughter with the intention of marrying her (demonstrating that his Mormon beliefs in polygamy are still intact, since he presumably still has several wives back in America). The pair's combination of criminal tendencies and religious "Otherness" thus represents an immanent danger to the status quo of English society, a danger that can only be remedied by their containment, expulsion, or elimination. Their presence within the British body politic is analogous to a disease in a physical body—the infection must be isolated before it has a chance to spread.

But even though Doyle's bias against the Mormons is clear, the "disease" that looms over the British Empire in *A Study in Scarlet* is not Mormonism, but rather the rise of the criminal type. It is not the Mormons' religious Otherness that comprises their primary threat (though that Otherness certainly contributes to that perception); instead, it is the criminal acts that they engage in as a result of their religious practices—the sexual perversion of polygamy, the intimidation tactics they practice, the violence and brutality of their regime—that is most

dangerous. Wrapped in the cloak of religious faith, Drebber and Strangerson's actions have the potential to attract as they repulse, as they appeal to the base and uncivilized impulses that patriarchy attempts to legitimize. It is not the theological differences, then, that make the Mormons in *A Study in Scarlet* hazardous to British society; it is the possibility that they may destabilize the status quo and disrupt law and order (or distort it beyond all recognition). Their religious trappings and foreign origins only serve to heighten the possibility of the Mormon's infiltration, increasing the mystique and exotic nature of characters. To see that Drebber and Strangerson—not Jefferson Hope—is the real source of danger in *Study*, one need only examine the way Watson describes the scene after Hope tells his story, including the details of the murders he commits:

> So thrilling had the man's narrative been, and his manner was so impressive that we had sat silent and absorbed. Even the professional detectives, *blasé* as they were in every detail of crime, appeared to be keenly interested in the man's story. When he finished we sat for some minutes in a stillness which was only broken by the scratching of Lestrade's pencil as he gave the finishing touches to his shorthand account. (194)

Instead of a simple confession by a criminal, Watson's prose here is that of a listener who has been completely enthralled with the teller's story and has taken his side; Hope's tale is not one of a murderer committing an evil act, but of a noble man enacting justice upon those who have both wronged him and have the capability of continuing to do wrong to others.

It is important to note, however, that even though it is Hope that renders final justice to Drebber and Strangerson, *A Study in Scarlet*—at least in its first half—is still very much the story of Holmes and Watson's investigation. As such, it positions Holmes as both diagnostician and cure, following the clues and symptoms related to a social ill in order to identify and contain the

cause in order to rectify the damage done and prevent further harm to society at large. That this threat comes from outside British soil is not unusual, as we shall see; throughout the canon even those criminals who are ostensibly English often have strong ties to foreign locales, making them all the more likely to bring with them some alien contaminant. As Diane Simmons points out,

> an examination of the first thirty-eight stories, published from 1888 to 1902, along with the novella *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, reveals that *approximately two thirds of the cases are the result not of professional criminal activity, but of some foreign pollution that, like a mysterious disease, has been carried into the country, frequently by returning Britons who have been corrupted during their years abroad.* The stories incessantly if indirectly intimate that there is an unwanted corollary to Britain's advance into all corners of the globe." (70; emphasis added)

Such a high ratio indicates that foreign bodies invading the British homeland was a constant concern of Doyle's, one that must have also been shared by the reading public who greeted the adventures of Holmes and Watson with rabid enthusiasm. And that anxiety would reach one of its highest points in the very next Holmes tale, 1890's *The Sign of the Four*.

Indian Mutiny and Stolen Jewels: *The Sign of the Four*

Largely responsible for catapulting Holmes and Watson into stardom, *The Sign of the Four* is also perhaps the most problematic work in the Holmes canon. Opening with a scene of Holmes injecting cocaine, the novel initially highlights Holmes' own status as an "Other," both through his drug use and his status as the world's "only unofficial consulting detective" (217). However, while this opening scene paints Holmes as a decadent idler, this initial impression is quickly swept away once the case is brought before him; he is still an "Other" in many ways throughout the novel (see his odd behavior while investigating Bartholomew Sholto's room,

described below), but his peculiarities are productive rather than the reverse, helping to bring the case to a close. Additionally, Watson uses the scene to reiterate Holmes' scientific approach to criminal investigation, allowing the detective to disparage the doctor's use of "romanticism" in *A Study in Scarlet* so that he can include Holmes' claim that "[d]etection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner" (217). However, Watson follows this exchange with another hinting that Holmes does not always follow his own rule: when Watson claims that he "could not tamper with facts," Holmes counters, "[s]ome facts should be suppressed, or at least a just sense of proportion should be observed in treating them" (217). A surprising admission coming from Holmes, such a stance mirrors the ways in which criminal anthropologists like Lombroso, Galton, and Ellis bent facts to suit their theories. While Holmes vocally condemns such a practice throughout the canon, his position at the beginning of *The Sign of the Four* calls into question the story that follows, especially when it comes to the "facts" about non-English "Others"; for his own part, Watson seems to have no trouble tingeing the narrative with "romanticism." The novel is permeated by an exotic, gothic atmosphere as it chronicles the journey of a stolen Indian treasure through the 1857 Indian Mutiny and its arrival in England, where it is pursued (and re-stolen) by a colonial ruffian and his native sidekick. Despite its fantastical elements, the story ostensibly reaffirms Holmes' science-based investigative techniques as the key to unraveling the mystery. However, throughout the novel both Holmes and Watson engage in practices that are based more in racial and cultural stereotypes than they are in rigid empiricism. Watson repeatedly paints "Othered" characters in a negative and/or suspicious way that emphasizes their difference and the disease-like threat they pose to the equilibrium of the British body politic, while Holmes makes assumptions that—even

though he is proved right—highlight the *un*scientific nature of much of his work and demonstrate his willingness to buy into biased "facts" when they fit his theory.

While these issues appear throughout the novel, they are particularly embodied by three characters, the first of which Thaddeus Sholto, the identical twin brother of Bartholomew Sholto and son of Major John Sholto (who stole the treasure from its original thieves, the titular "Four" that includes Jonathan Small). While Holmes and Watson never suspect him as his brother's murderer—the ostensible crime being investigated throughout the novel—they do regard him with some degree of puzzlement. The police and the press, however, suspect him from the outset, and it is only thanks to an alibi that he is freed from custody. Sholto's "Othered" status is the result of both his appearance and lifestyle, and the latter especially establishes him as an Englishman who has been colonized by the colonies, specifically India. A bachelor living in a deteriorating London neighborhood, Sholto announces his presence in *Sign* via a letter asking for an audience with Mary Morstan, who then consults Holmes and Watson on her course of action. Sholto has already created an air of mystery to the proceedings, refusing to name himself and sending a representative to accompany the trio to his lodgings; but the exotic nature of the man himself is only fully realized once they arrive at his doorstep.

Entering into Sholto's flat, Holmes, Watson, and Mary are instantly struck by its aesthetic, which is totally unlike the London neighborhood that surrounds it. Watson describes their first impressions of Sholto's residence (and his servant) thus:

> None of the other houses were inhabited, and that at which we stopped was as dark as its neighbours, save for a single glimmer in the kitchen-window. On our knocking, however, the door was instantly thrown open by a Hindoo servant, clad in a yellow turban, white loose-fitting clothes, and a yellow sash. There was something strangely incongruous in

> this Oriental figure framed in the commonplace doorway of a third-rate suburban dwelling-house. (245)

While Indian servants were not unheard of in Victorian Britain, the presence of this "Hindoo servant" signals (at least to Watson) the uncanniness of their escapade. Watson notes the "incongruous[ness]" of the sight, suggesting that he is not alarmed at the servant himself, but the presence of him in this particular place, the "suburban dwelling-house" that epitomizes the notion of English domesticity.

Sholto himself is even stranger. Watson's description paints him as both physically and sartorially deviant, with odd behavioral tics that recall one of literature's most devious antagonists, Dickens' Uriah Heep:

> A blaze of yellow light streamed out upon us, and in the centre of the glare there stood a small man with a very high head, a bristle of red hair all round the fringe of it, and a bald, shining scalp which shot out from among it like a mountain-peak from fir trees. He writhed his hands together as he stood, and his features were in a perpetual jerk—now smiling, now scowling, but never for an instant in repose. Nature had given him a pendulous lip, and a too visible line of yellow and irregular teeth, which he strove feebly to conceal by constantly passing his hand over the lower part of his face. In spite of his obtrusive baldness, he gave the impression of youth. In point of fact, he had just turned his thirtieth year. (246)

The writhing hands, jerking features, red hair, and irregular yellow teeth immediately call to mind Dickens' villain, but they function quite differently within their respective narratives. Heep's grotesqueness is an outward indication of his inner loathing, his false sense of humility and constant scheming calling attention to the class tensions and economic anxieties that

permeate *David Copperfield*. Sholto's peculiarities, on the other hand—though initially suspicious—are instead primarily used as a way to comically contrast the nervous Englishman with his "Eastern" surroundings[7] and serve as a parody of upper-class decadence. Indeed, Sholto's "oasis" is the primary cause of the doubts that initially surround him:

> We were all astonished by the appearance of the apartment into which he invited us. In that sorry house it looked as out of place as a diamond of the first water in a setting of brass. The richest and glossiest of curtains and tapestries draped the walls, looped back here and there to expose some richly-mounted painting or Oriental vase. The carpet was of amber and black, so soft and so thick that the foot sank pleasantly into it, as into a bed of moss. Two great tiger-skins thrown athwart it increased the suggestion of Eastern luxury, as did a huge *hookah* which stood upon a mat in the corner. A lamp in the fashion of a silver dove was hung from an almost invisible golden wire in the centre of the room. As it burned it filled the air with a subtle and aromatic odour. (248)

Filled with objects from the East, the flat's "astonishing" appearance strikes Watson as "out of place as a diamond of the first water in a setting of brass," a description that itself hints at the contrast between the "Eastern" (many famous British diamonds, such as the Kohi-Noor and the fictional Moonstone, originated from India and the surrounding regions) and the English (brass being a common material for household items of the English domestic interior).

As the scene continues, there are several other elements that sustain its unstable atmosphere. Sholto's first question, for example, is about his own health—he asks if Watson has

[7] In *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* edition of *The Sign of the Four*, editor Leslie Klinger points out that Randy Roberts has argued "Watson, in disguising the real identity of Thaddeus Sholto, deliberately caricatured Oscar Wilde" (248, note 80). While Roberts' argument is framed in a "great game" context, assuming that Holmes and Watson played a role in real-world events, the comparison is an interesting one, especially given Sholto's aesthetic choices and collection of French artwork.

brought his stethoscope and has the doctor perform an exam, as he "[has] grave doubts as to [his] mitral valve" (248). While there is no explicit attempt to link his health concerns with his "Eastern" lifestyle, such a connection would not seem far-fetched to Victorian audiences—the dangers of "exotic" activities such as opium-smoking were well-established in the public consciousness thanks to texts such as Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, and readers of *A Study in Scarlet* would no doubt have remembered Watson's own health issues caused by "that curse of our Indian possessions," enteric fever (*Study* 13). Even if Sholto's apparent heart troubles (Watson assures him "You have no cause for uneasiness" [248]) are not physiologically linked to India, his concerns are no doubt psychologically rooted there, the source of his anxiety being the Agra treasure and the ruffians who are in pursuit of it. Ironically, the way Sholto attempts to relieve his unease is itself an Eastern practice: "I trust that you have no objection to tobacco-smoke, to the balsamic odour of the Eastern tobacco. I am a little nervous, and I find my hookah an invaluable sedative" (249).[8] The ritual further defamiliarizes the scene, as the trio of visitors begin to be drawn into the exotic atmosphere Sholto has artificially created, especially Watson, who describes it in a romanticized manner: "He applied a taper to the great bowl, and the smoke bubbled merrily through the rose-water. We sat all three in a semicircle, with our heads advanced and our chins upon our hands, while the strange, jerky little fellow, with his high, shining head, puffed uneasily in the centre" (249). When the group leave the flat on their way to Pondicherry Lodge, Sholto dons a strange costume and again mentions his fragile health:

> Our new acquaintance very deliberately coiled up the tube of his hookah and produced from behind a curtain a very long befrogged topcoat with astrakhan collar and cuffs. This

[8] As Klinger notes, "Rodin and Key suggest that Sholto 'may have smoked opium in [the] hookah to calm his nerves'" (248, note 79).

> he buttoned tightly up in spite of the extreme closeness of the night and finished his attire by putting on a rabbit-skin cap with hanging lappets which covered the ears so that no part of him was visible save his mobile and peaky face.
>
> "My health is somewhat fragile," he remarked as he led the way down the passage. "I am compelled to be a valetudinarian." (258)

The overall impression Sholto creates is that of a British citizen totally enthralled with Eastern culture, an obsession that threatens to turn him (and those he comes into contact with) into a foreigner himself. While Holmes and Watson are convinced early on of his innocence in the murder of his brother and theft of the treasure, they still allow him to be arrested and held by the police, as if attempting to keep his Otherness under guard until they can be sure of their case. Athelney Jones, for one, makes it clear that Sholto's appearance is a large part of why he is suspicious: "Thaddeus is evidently in a most disturbed state of mind. His appearance is—well, not attractive. You see that I am weaving my web around Thaddeus. The net begins to close upon him" (280). Sholto does not seem to pose much of a threat in a physical sense, however, which is in itself threatening—rather than take on the aggressive, violent qualities associated with Indians in the rest of the novel, Sholto is an example of how English masculine identity is called into question when it comes into prolonged contact with "the East," a process that has turned the son of a British Army officer into a nervous, strangely Eastern figure.

Sholto's transformation reveals the contradictory nature of the anxieties surrounding "Eastern" infiltration of Western cultures: on the one hand, such exposure might be threatening because it appealed to the base desires inherited from man's more primitive ancestors, since non-Europeans were allegedly more "primitive" themselves. On the other hand, Eastern encroachment into the West might—as in Sholto's case—result in the general decay of

masculinity, turning the British male from an industrious, hardworking and confident leader of a household (which would "naturally" include a wife and children) into an effeminate, idle bachelor. Such a contradictory response to British contact with the East is also present in other literary works of the post-Mutiny period, such as Wilkie Collins' early detective novel *The Moonstone* and Dickens' *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.[9] Jaya Mehta has persuasively argued that *The Sign of the Four* is heavily influenced by Collins' novel, noting that both novels

> reveal how the idyll of Englishness both as nation and as home is dependent narratively as well as economically on the looting of the colonies; and reciprocally, how colonial ideology depends on an exportable myth of the national *domus*. Both narratives seek to discover a missing jewel; both narratives find instead an originary violence. Hence both novels are invested in a colonial strategy that displaces violence and theft onto the geographic and narrative periphery in order to preserve a central space for the pleasures of domestic romance. (647)

Mehta also notes the ways these novels of British India marginalize and suppress the natives' voices: these figures "never narrate; their infrequent voices register only as muffled, interpreted, and embedded in others' narratives. The perspective of the Indian margin disturbs but cannot dismantle the weighty English center" (468). While such an argument leaves out Collins' primary "Othered" figure in *The Moonstone* (Ezra Jennings), it is an apt description of Watson's/Doyle's narrative strategies in *The Sign of the Four* and the Sherlock Holmes canon at large. However, because of Watson's (and Doyle's) medical training and Holmes' work in the

[9] Collins' novel features the mysterious disappearance of its titular diamond, which—it turns out—has been stolen unknowingly by Franklin Blake in an opium-induced trance. The recovery of the gem is assisted by Ezra Jennings, whose dark complexion, "piebald" hair, and mysterious origins mark him out as a strangely "foreign" ally. Dickens' novel, unfinished at the time of his death, also contains its fare share of "Orientalized" characters who embody mixed responses to the East, including opium-addicted music master John Jasper and his supplier, "Princess Puffer."

natural sciences, their methodology for detecting the potential for deviance (whether in terms of race/ethnicity or behavior) almost always begins with the body itself. In the Holmes stories, it is the idea that body is able to act as a text, a collection of individual physical features that function as signifiers which together create a readable meaning, that enables Watson to "get away with" character descriptions that would otherwise seem ludicrous to modern readers (how can a nose, for example, give "an air of alertness and decision," or a chin "mark the man of determination" [*Study* 30]?), and allow Holmes to deduce all sorts of details about a person's habits, occupation, recent whereabouts, and—most problematically—their demeanor, predispositions, and their ancestry. While these techniques ultimately work out satisfactorily for Sholto, who is cleared of any wrongdoing and keeps his social standing intact, the same cannot be said for the two "true" villains of the novel, Jonathan Small and Tonga.

Jonathan Small occupies a strangely liminal space in *Sign of the Four*, existing on the border between respectable British citizen and savage colonial criminal. The event that precipitates this shift is the Indian Mutiny of 1857, for Small a traumatic experience that not only forces him to reassess his own moral framework, but which directly sets the plot of *Sign of the Four* in motion. Small's antecedents are "all steady, chapel-going folk, small farmers, well known and respected over the country-side," but Small himself "was always a bit of a rover" and becomes a soldier in the British Army (347). His time in India literally disfigures him: most obvious is his wooden leg, the result of a run-in with a crocodile. This incident not only affects his body but his social status—he can no longer serve in the army, and is forced to become a

plantation overseer instead,[10] watching over the native workers. His physical appearance is altered in other ways too, however: upon his capture, Watson describes him as

> a sunburned reckless-eyed fellow, with a network of lines and wrinkles all over his mahogany features, which told of a hard, open-air life. There was a singular prominence about his bearded chin which marked a man who was not to be easily turned from his purpose. His age may have been fifty or thereabouts, for his black, curly hair was thickly shot with grey. His face in repose was not an unpleasing one, though his heavy brows and aggressive chin gave him, as I had lately seen, a terrible expression when moved to anger. He sat now with his handcuffed hands upon his lap, and his head sunk upon his breast, while he looked with his keen, twinkling eyes at the box which had been the cause of his ill-doings. It seemed to me that there was more sorrow than anger in his rigid and contained countenance. Once he looked up at me with a gleam of something like humour in his eyes. (337)

The paradoxical nature of this description is clear upon closer inspection, and indicates Small's dangerous in-between status: his eyes are "reckless," yet are "keen" and "twinkle" with "a gleam of something like humour;" his face can move from a "not unpleasing" expression to a "terrible" one when moved to anger, but is at the same time "rigid and contained." His hair, too, seems to suggest an in-between state, its appearance ("black . . . thickly shot with grey") recalling Wilkie Collins' own (far more sympathetic) composite figure, Ezra Jennings, with his "piebald" hair. Unlike Doyle's tale of India, which champions Britain's heroic role in the mutiny and does not

[10] There is a surprising connection to Collins' *The Moonstone* here; the owner of Small's plantation is named Abel White, a name that is extremely close to the villain of Collins' novel, Godfrey Ablewhite. While there is no explicit connection other than the name, both attempt to make their fortunes by exploiting the natural resources of India (White indigo plants, Ablewhite the diamond).

question its imperial venture, Collins' novel not only critiques British imperial rule in India (using the theft of the diamond as an allegory for Britain's theft of India from its people), but does so, at least in part, by using Jennings' appearance to comment on the wrongfulness of judging character by racial (or other physical) characteristics. Jennings, by all appearances a dangerous racial Other, becomes the novel's hero and a reflection of the complex thematic concerns Collins tackles in the novel.[11] Jonathan Small, on the other hand, is a man whose characterization is more simply drawn, containing traces of his English refinement and civility but corrupted (both physically and morally) by his time in the colonies.

While most of the details above come from either Small himself or from Watson's depiction of him once he is captured, Holmes is able to put together a fairly accurate profile of the man from his initial inspection of Bartholomew Sholto's murder scene. Using the physical clues left behind, along with his store of criminological knowledge, Holmes is able to piece together a profile of Small that emphasizes his deviant characteristics while simultaneously placing most of the blame on his "associate." The first clue Holmes discovers is the marks left by Small's most distinguishing feature, his wooden leg:

> "Here is the print of a foot in mould upon the sill. And here is a circular muddy mark, and here again upon the floor, and here again by the table. See here, Watson! This is really a very pretty demonstration."
>
> I looked at the round, well-defined muddy discs.
>
> "That is not a footmark," said I.

[11] Initially distrusted by most of the other characters because of his obscure origins, Jennings becomes the hero of the novel when he solves the mystery of the gem's disappearance. In addition to the ways in which his character challenges cultural views on miscegenation, his mysterious illness and opium addiction reflect many of the novel's themes regarding the relationship between England and the East, biological determinism, gender roles, etc.

"It is something more valuable to us. It is the impression of a wooden stump. You see here on the sill is the boot-mark, a heavy boot with a broad metal heel, and beside it is the mark of the timber-toe."

"It is the wooden-legged man." (272-73)

The discovery is significant since it is an example of one of Holmes' most trusted modes of detection—the tracing of footprints—that yields more results than usual because of the outré features of the marks. Holmes emphasizes the study of footprints in *A Study in Scarlet* as well, and characterizes the technique not as a method of observation but as a "branch of detective science" that has become "second nature" to him, and in which "every mark . . . [has] a meaning" for his "trained eyes" (198). Like a physician examining the body of a patient, Holmes pores over the crime scene, using other physical evidence to build up his portrait of Small. He is able to determine that Small "though a fair climber, was not a professional sailor" by examining the rope he used with a magnifying lens and noting "more than one blood-mark, especially towards the end of the rope, from which I gather that he slipped down with such velocity that he took the skin off his hands" (274).

All indications, then, seem to point to Small as the murderer, especially since Holmes has linked him to the sighting of a man at the window that killed the Sholto brothers' father. The description Holmes gives Athelney Jones corroborates his status as a "criminal type": "He is a poorly educated man, small, active, with his right leg off, and wearing a wooden stump which is worn away upon the inner side . . . He is a middle-aged man, much sunburned, and has been a convict" (281). However, the presence of Tonga provides a convenient opportunity to shift the blame, all but removing it from Small and placing it on the former. As soon as the pair reconvene

to continue their investigation, Holmes begins painting Small in a less negative light, if not a positive one, by emphasizing the "savage" aspects of his partner:

> "Jonathan, with his wooden leg, is utterly unable to reach the lofty room of Bartholomew Sholto. He takes with him, however a rather curious associate, who gets over this difficulty but dips his naked foot into creosote [. . .]"
>
> "But it was the associate, and not Jonathan, who committed the crime."
>
> "Quite so. And rather to Jonathan's disgust, to judge by the way he stamped about when he got into the room. He bore no grudge against Bartholomew Sholto and would have preferred if he could have been simply bound and gagged. He did not wish to put his head in a halter. There was no help for it, however: the savage instincts of his companion had broken out, and the poison had done its work: so Jonathan Small left his record, lowered the treasure-box to the ground, and followed it himself." (292)

This passage highlights several key ways that Holmes revises his sketch of the crime to make Small seem less guilty (though not totally innocent) compared to Tonga. The first, and most unusual, is the shift in proper nouns: up until this moment in the text, Small is referred to either by his surname or (more often) by his full name. However, only here (and in one other sentence a few paragraphs later) is he referred to as "Jonathan" without his last name, an odd departure that—when considered alongside the other "revisions" taking place in the passage—seems designed to humanize and re-familiarize Small by emphasizing his conventional, western Christian name. Holmes also assumes his participation in the killing was unwilling: prompted by Watson's assertion that "it was the associate, and not Jonathan, who committed the crime" (notice Watson's adoption of Small's Christian name as well), Holmes points out Small's apparent "disgust" by "the way he stamped about" inferring from a set of footprints that he "bore

no grudge against Bartholomew Sholto" and did not want to murder him. Small's shrinking responsibility is further helped along by his contrast to Tonga, whose "savage instincts . . . had broken out," and the fact that Holmes still refuses to describe him in any detail allows that vacuum to be filled by whatever idea of savagery readers' imaginations can conjure. While Holmes is certainly not suggesting that Small is completely innocent, he is withholding judgment in a way he does not for Tonga, despite the former's more direct links to the treasure.

It is worth noting that Watson's perception of Small shifts back to the negative in the last chapter of the novel, in which Small narrates his own account of the story. He points out that, when talking about the treasure, Small "dropped his mask of stoicism, and all this [Small's claim to rightful ownership of the treasure] came out in a wild whirl of words, while his eyes blazed, and the handcuffs clanked together with the impassioned movement of his hands," and confides to his readers that "I could understand, as I saw the fury and the passion of the man, that it was no groundless or unnatural terror which had possessed Major Sholto when he first learned that the injured convict was upon his track" (347). Later, Watson admits, "I confess that I had now conceived the utmost horror of the man not only for this cold-blooded business in which he had been concerned but even more for the somewhat flippant and careless way in which he narrated it. Whatever punishment was in store for him, I felt that he might expect no sympathy from me" (362). This last comment is Watson's response to Small's account of his time in India, particularly in the aftermath of the 1857 Indian Mutiny. As Guatam Chakravarty points out, the Indian Mutiny was, "more than any other event in the British career in India," the "single favourite subject for metropolitan and Anglo-Indian novelists," since its repercussions "underscored a model of radical conflict between cultures, civilisations and races; a conflict that at once justified conquest and dominion and proved the impossibility of assimilating and

acculturating subject peoples" (3-4). Small's account of the Mutiny does just that, highlighting the violence of the conflict and using the inherent instability of the situation to justify his criminal acts. The specific context within Small's tale recounts his recruitment by a group of Sikhs who are plotting to rob and kill a servant of a East India Company-allied Raj. Watson, and ostensibly Holmes and Athelney Jones, are disgusted not by the details of the murder but rather Small's participation and lack of remorse. As Small tells the group

> In Worcestershire the life of a man seems a great and a sacred thing; but it is very different when there is fire and blood all round you and you have been used to meeting death at every turn. Whether Achmet the merchant lived or died was a thing as light as air to me, but at the talk about the treasure my heart turned to it, and I thought of what I might do in the old country with it, and how my folk would stare when they saw their ne'er-do-well coming back with his pockets full of gold moidores. I had, therefore, already made up my mind. (358)

Watson and the others' disgust, then, is directly related to the fact that Small abandoned his duty as a defender of British interests and aligned himself with a band of traitorous Sikhs, whose aggressive and violent actions are not much better than the native rebels they are charged with defending the fort against. As clearly negative as these opinions about Small are, however, they only appear after the case has been wrapped up—while investigating, the heaviest scrutiny remains on Tonga, a narrative decision that reveals numerous problematic underlying assumptions about how biology, race, and crime intersect.

The problems with Tonga's depiction in *The Sign of the Four* have been well-covered by other critics, who have pointed out issues with nearly every aspect of his character from his

physical description to his cultural practices.[12] Unlike Thaddeus Sholto and Jonathan Small, Tonga is in no way a hybrid figure, situated on the border between civilized British national and exotic imperial "Other"; he is entirely "Other" to the point of grotesqueness, a caricature of an Andaman Islands native whose guilt-by-association—not with Jonathan Small but with his fellow tribesmen—is never questioned but instead enthusiastically latched onto. Presented as an ape-like caricature, Tonga is an almost perfect embodiment of Lombroso's criminal type taken to the extreme, and in many ways he is the mirror image of the "Ourang-Outang" in Edgar Allan Poe's early detective story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841)—a creature who, like Tonga, comes from "the East" (specifically Borneo, during "a voyage to the Indian Archipelago" [397]). In Poe's tale, murders are committed by an ape whose human-like actions are a grotesque mimicry of his human keeper; in *The Sign of the Four*, Tonga murders because his animal-like instincts cannot be kept in check by his own "keeper" Jonathan Small. The latter story, horrifying as it is, unravels the puzzling layers of what is ultimately an accidental animal attack. No such absolution is provided for Tonga, however: despite his sub-human status in the novel, what little humanity he is attributed is enough to secure his guilt and justify his eradication.

Racist assumptions about Tonga's nature are bolstered in the novel by Holmes' pseudo-scientific investigative techniques and Watson's medical expertise, a web of "rational" evidence that falls apart under closer scrutiny, but which is presented as an air-tight case against him. Condemned for his "primitive" instincts rather than his role in the theft of the treasure (in which

[12] Shafquat Towheed, for example, in his introduction the Broadview edition of *The Sign of the Four*, notes that not only is Holmes' information in the Andaman islanders "inaccurate and outdated," but that "Doyle's depiction of the Andamanese in *The Sign of the Four* drew contemporary criticism, most notably from Andrew Lang (in the *Quarterly Review* in 1904) who pointedly commented that 'the Andamanese are cruelly libelled, and have neither the malignant qualities, nor the heads like mops, nor the customs, with which they are credited by Sherlock" (35).

he played no part), Tonga's depiction in *The Sign of Four* is not only based on the racist ideas of nineteenth century criminal anthropologists, but also reveals deep-seated cultural fears related to what Julia Kristeva calls "the abject," a term used to describe elements of the subject that are cast off and/or compartmentalized, but are not accorded the fully-separate status of objects. Lying somewhere in between, the abject breaks down the distinctions between self and other, refusing to fit the sociocultural order and triggering a type of physical revulsion or horror that Kristeva compares to coming into contact with a dead body, human waste, etc. (229-63). Holmes and Watson's encounter with Tonga, I argue, is an encounter with the abject, their terror an unconscious, and instinctual reaction to a figure whose liminal characteristics threaten to disrupt British society. This reading builds on Jaya Mehta's claim that "the project of detection [in *The Sign of the Four*] oscillates unstably between tracking and erasing, a process of discovering what has to be promptly suppressed, remembering what must be forgotten" (648). Presented through the "objective" lens of forensic techniques and reference works about the Andaman Islanders, as well as Watson's own subjective first-person accounts, Tonga's actual significance lies in between, as an abject horror whose presence compels Holmes and Watson to eliminate him at any cost.

The first indication of Tonga's presence is Bartholomew Sholto's body itself, which has been disfigured by its contact with the islander's deadly thorn-darts. Even before Holmes and Watson are able to examine Sholto's remains firsthand, they able to determine that his death is unnatural:

> Sherlock Holmes bent down to [the keyhole] and instantly rose again with a sharp intaking of the breath.

> "There is something devilish in this, Watson," said he, more moved than I had ever before seen him. "What do you make of it?"
>
> I stooped to the hole and recoiled in horror. Moonlight was streaming into the room, and it was bright with a vague and shifty radiance. Looking straight at me and suspended, as it were, in the air, for all beneath was in shadow, there hung a face—the very face of our companion Thaddeus. There was the same high, shining head, the same circular bristle of red hair, the same bloodless countenance. The features were set, however, in a horrible smile, a fixed and unnatural grin, which in that still and moonlit room was more jarring to the nerves than any scowl or contortion. So like was the face to that of our little friend that I looked round at him to make sure that he was indeed with us. (267)

The gothic atmosphere of this scene, complete with the uncanniness of Thaddeus Sholto's distorted doppelgänger, suggests some sort of supernatural event has occurred that resists any rational attempt to explain it. Its nightmarish character highlights the connections detective fiction like *The Sign of the Four* shares with gothic fiction, as Ronald R. Thomas points out in *Dreams of Authority*. Both, he argues, feature dreams (and dream-like states) in important roles, and the "paradigmatic plot" of much nineteenth century fiction (including gothic and detective fiction)—as well as Freudian dream analysis—"revolves around questions of authority" (2). Both genres ask whether or not sense can be made out of mysterious circumstances, whether those circumstances consist of a haunting or a murder; and the question of authority centers on what "rules" the universe as humans experience it—some outside force beyond our control or the self, the "individual control of psychic materials" (2). The tension these genres exploit, in other words, is the question of whether or not effects can always be traced back to verifiable causes,

and in the case of detective fiction in general, and *The Sign of the Four* in particular, the narrative becomes the story of the detective's attempt to explain an event that seems to defy explanation, much the same way the analysis of dreams relies on the *narrative* of how one translates the disjointed nature of dreams (the "event" that doesn't make sense) into a coherent chain of signifiers. The nightmare, in this case, is not the mere fact of the murder but the "unnatural" qualities it possesses; qualities, it seems, that can only be explained by the invasive presence of the exotic "Other" in its most "savage" and primitive form.[13] Framing this scene as a sort of "gothic nightmare," Watson is able to (at least temporarily) avoid encountering the abject by keeping Tonga "offstage," as a presence hovering in the background but which has not yet taken a definite form.

Even before they are able to examine the body, however, Holmes has already made up his mind that Jonathan Small—an Englishman, despite India's effects on him—cannot be responsible: pointing to "what looked like a long, dark thorn stuck in the skin just above the ear" (269), Holmes cautions Watson that "it is poisoned," and when the latter insists that the mystery "grows darker instead of clearer," Holmes replies: "On the contrary . . . it clears every instant. I only require a few missing links to have an entirely connected case" (270). Despite only glimpsing the body through a keyhole, Holmes assures Watson that he expected to find the poisoned thorn, rather than a syringe or other more "civilized" method of administering poison. The passage is also significant because of Holmes' intriguing use of the term "missing links," an

[13] One significant early example of this idea can be found in the brutal murders of Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue," the savagery of which is only explained once it is revealed that the murder is not human but is an orangutan; despite his "official" status as a human, Tonga is not much more sympathetically depicted.

idea that was already well-known in its paleontological/biological sense by 1890.[14] By establishing Tonga as a "missing link," Holmes simultaneously equates him with a pre-modern, transitional form of man and makes locating and containing him the key to solving the mystery. Undoing the trauma of Sholto's unnatural murder requires an unmasking of the primitive impulses that motivated it (i.e. developing a narrative that rationally explains the murder) and the subsequent renegotiation of its place within the cultural conception of "the Other" (making sense of how a figure like Tonga fits into the construction of British national identity).

Once the investigation gets under way, footprints again become a crucial element in the investigation. However, although Holmes and Watson do attempt to use the footprints to trace Tonga and Small, the most important information they glean from the marks is not their location (which they fail to determine), but confirmation of Holmes' theories about Tonga. Using a combination of criminological knowledge, anthropometry, and Watson's medical experience, Holmes is able to quickly work up a profile of Tonga based on a few shreds of ambiguous evidence. The first element is the nature of the crime itself, and once Holmes determines that the poison was administered via thorn, he instantly deduces the foreign origins of the criminal. As he tells Watson: "There are features of interest about this ally. *He lifts the case from the regions of the commonplace*. I fancy this ally *breaks fresh ground* in the annals of crime *in this country—though parallel cases suggest themselves from India* and, if my memory serves me, from Senegambia [emphasis added]" (274). But while at this point there is only the *suggestion* of a foreign culprit, the footprints in the attic are the key piece of evidence that corroborate Holmes' theory, but only when they are interpreted through an anthropometric lens.

[14] Charles Lyell uses the term as early as 1863 in his introduction to *The Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man*, and University of Wisconsin paleoanthropologist John Hawks has pointed out that the term was increasingly used in other scientific texts throughout the latter half of the nineteenth (and into the twentieth) century.

Upon entering the hidden attic room, Holmes and Watson discover Tonga's footprints as well as the fact that he has stepped in creosote, allowing them to track (with the aid of a dog) his departure from Pondicherry Lodge. However, while this verifies the presence of an additional assailant and the possibility of tracing his whereabouts, the most significant quality of the footprints is their appearance, the details of which Holmes reads in order to determine the origins of the accomplice. Watson notes Holmes' "startled, surprised look" upon discovering that "[t]he floor was covered thickly with the prints of a naked foot—clear, well-defined, perfectly formed, but scarce half the size of those of an ordinary man" (275-76), a detail which at first seems at odds with his apparent certainty about Tonga's characteristics up to that point. However, Holmes notes that even though he "was staggered for the moment," the size of the prints is "quite natural" and not inconsistent with the profile he is constructing (276). If anything, it only heightens the sense of Tonga's supposed physical inferiority, and Holmes' momentary incredulity might be alternately read as his reaction upon realizing that Tonga's physical difference is so pronounced.

Holmes is so convinced of his theory—and of its apparent obviousness—that he responds "with a touch of impatience" when Watson fails to come to any sort of conclusion: "You know my methods. Apply them, and it will be instructive to compare results" (276). Much like the fragmentary nature of the fossil record (full of "missing links"), readers only have access to Watson's fragmentary perceptions of the clues' significance, and the degree to which they arrive at the same conclusions Holmes does will depend upon their ability to "read" anatomical features in a similar manner. Holmes' insistence that Watson "particularly . . . notice these footmarks," paying attention to their proportions, size, and structure, indicate that he is pushing Watson toward an anthropometric reading of the prints. While Watson realizes that the footprints do not

belong to the typical criminal ("They belong to a child or a small woman" and "each toe [is] distinctly divided"), he is still unable to grasp the inferences Holmes is making about the prints' significance (287). It is not until they are well on Tonga and Small's trail, having traced them to Mordecai Smith's house and determined they fled in the *Aurora*, that Holmes guides Watson through the links in his chain of reasoning he has established in these last two scenes:

> "Now, do consider the data. *Diminutive footmarks, toes never fettered by boots, naked feet*, stone-headed wooden mace, great agility, small poisoned darts. What do you make of all this?"
>
> "A savage!" I exclaimed. "Perhaps one of those Indians who were the associates of Jonathan Small."
>
> "Hardly that," said he. "When first I saw signs of strange weapons, I was inclined to think so; but *the remarkable character of the footmarks* caused me to reconsider my views. Some of the inhabitants of the Indian Peninsula are small men, but *none could have left such marks as that*. The Hindoo proper has long and thin feet. The sandal-wearing Mohammedan has the great toe well separated from the others, because the thong is commonly passed between." (306-07; emphasis added)

If there were any doubts about Holmes' methodology, this passage lays them to rest, and in the section that follows the detective supports his claims by citing "the first volume of a gazetteer which is now being published," one which "may be looked upon as the very latest authority" (307). The entry he reads from ostensibly describes Tonga's tribe, bestowing upon them "the distinction of being the smallest race upon this earth," and making generalizations about their "fierce, morose, and intractable" demeanor.

It is the next passage that Holmes seizes upon, however, that is the most problematic. Ensuring Watson's attention with a dramatic "Now, then listen to this," Holmes reads from the gazetteer:

> They [Tonga's people] are naturally hideous, having large, misshapen heads, small, fierce eyes, and distorted features. Their feet and hands, however, are remarkably small. So intractable and fierce are they, that all the efforts of the British officials have failed to win them over in any degree. They have always been a terror to shipwrecked crews, braining the survivors with their stone-headed clubs or shooting them with their poisoned arrows. These massacres are invariably concluded by a cannibal feast. (308)

The article not only echoes some of the most prejudiced passages from nineteenth-century anthropological texts, it contains numerous inaccuracies[15] and suspiciously corroborates nearly every clue Holmes has pointed out thus far, from the "remarkably small" feet to the "stone-headed club" found on Bartholomew Sholto's desk. Watson himself notes the apparent unlikelihood of Holmes' theory, initially expressing his doubts to the reader ("He was likely, I thought, to fall into error through the over-refinement of his logic—his preference for a subtle and bizarre explanation when a plainer and more commonplace one lay ready to his hand") before trusting in the detective's deductive powers, particularly his ability to connect individual links in a chain of evidence:

> Yet, on the other hand, I had myself seen the evidence and I had heard the reasons for his deductions. When I looked back on *the long chain of curious circumstances, many of them trivial in themselves, but all tending in the same direction*, I could not disguise from

[15] See Klinger's note #177 (308)

myself that even if Holmes's explanation were incorrect the true theory must be equally outré and startling. (315-16; emphasis added)

The result of this collage-like composition of fragmentary "curious circumstances" is a complete picture of Tonga as a primitive savage that embodies the worst fears of Victorian readers, a cannibal colonial import that joins forces with an English criminal type who has "gone native" in order to wreak havoc upon London's civilized landscape.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Holmes and Watson's firsthand perception of Tonga exactly matches the abject portrait painted by the gazetteer entry. While the scene of Holmes, Watson, and the police in pursuit of the *Aurora* is the first (and last) "eyewitness" account of Tonga, its details match the picture Holmes has been putting together since his initial inspection of Bartholomew Sholto's room: what first appears as a "huddled bundle upon the deck" quickly "straightened itself into a little black man" with "a shock of tangled, disheveled hair" (332). The pair draw their pistols "at the sight of this savage, distorted creature" whose face "[is] enough to give a man a sleepless night" (332). As Watson elaborates, "Never have I seen features so deeply marked with all bestiality and cruelty. His small eyes glowed and burned with a sombre light, and his thick lips were writhed back from his teeth which grinned and chattered at us with half animal fury" (332). Firing their guns as "the unhallowed dwarf with his hideous face" raises a blow gun to his lips, the islander falls into the Thames, and Watson "[catches] one glimpse of his venomous, menacing eyes amid the white swirl of the waters" (333). The fear both Holmes and Watson experience at the mere sight of Tonga is apparent throughout the passage. Watson's reaction and description—along with Holmes' "shocks" related earlier—might be read as dramatic effects inserted by Watson to play up the suspense of the case, or simply surprise caused by the strangeness of scenes and details they encounter. However, the

fear Tonga elicits becomes clearer when considered within the framework of "the abject."[16] Representing a rupture in the distinction between the human and the animal, Tonga stands in the space between civilized, refined man and our more primitive ancestors. His grotesqueness is not, as Watson might claim, simply an aesthetic concern, but is rooted in the way Tonga's very existence (and especially his presence in London, the crown jewel of British urban modernity) threatens to break down the distinctions between civilized/uncivilized, human/inhuman, reasoning/instinct. Like a dead body that forces a confrontation with the materiality of one's own mortality (Kristeva 231), the encounter with Tonga's dwarf-like black body, "misshapen" head and "distorted features" destabilizes the sense of self, closing the gap between subject and object by presenting a subject as object, a human body so defamiliarized that it impresses upon the viewer their own fleshly materiality.

For Watson, making meaning of an encounter with the abject—with the possibility that there is no meaning—involves the act of writing, recording the case and filtering his experience through the framework of fiction, a process that allows him to both romanticize the encounter and remake the abject into an object that fits into a rational, scientific view of the world. And it is Holmes, with his rigidly empirical view of the world, who provides a method, breaking Tonga down into a set of signifiers (footprints, thorns, etc.) that—like the symptoms of a sick patient—can be recorded, interpreted, and treated. By observing, explaining, and tracing the abnormal, Holmes not only defends the borders of civilized society, but plays a role in determining how those borders are ultimately defined.

[16] See Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*

Chapter 2: Colonial Contamination—English Criminals "Going Native"

It is not surprising that references to India, Britain's most important colony in the late nineteenth century, regularly appear in the Sherlock Holmes canon. Numerous literary works produced in the second half of the nineteenth century, including Holmes precursors such as Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868), played on Victorians' anxieties surrounding the instability of national identity in an empire that included territories around the world.[1] As previously explored, Doyle wrote his own "Indian novel" with *The Sign of the Four*, using the Indian Mutiny of 1857 as the historical backdrop for the second Sherlock Holmes story. India and its geographical neighbors were a visible part of the cultural consciousness in Victorian England, as commodities (e.g. tea, textiles, spices, ceramics, opium, etc.) and news of imperial activities—such as the mid-century "Opium Wars"—in Asia and the Middle East made their way to English soil. People were another growing import from the colonies: beginning in the eighteenth century, Indian ("lascar") and Chinese sailors were increasingly employed by British shipping companies such as the East India Company, and the poor treatment they received often led to their relegation to London's worst slums (London Metropolitan Archives). The result was a vicious cycle that saw immigrants from "The Orient" associated with areas of the city notorious for criminal activity, which in turn created a perception of "Orientals" as criminal types. One of the most pervasive images that emerged from this cycle was the "opium den," a mythical site of vice and debauchery supposedly run by an underground network of Eastern immigrants. Despite being almost entirely fictional, the opium den frequently appeared in the

[1] Collins' interrogation of imperialism, "the East," and the "Other" is much more complex and nuanced than many other novels of the period, since his perspective on England's imperial presence in India (and the racist justifications for it) is much more critical than many authors of the period, especially Doyle;[briefly say why] I cite it here because of its close links to the Sherlock Holmes stories.

fiction of the period, including the Sherlock Holmes canon, utilized as a sort of "literary shorthand" for the threat posed by "the East" and the immigration of its inhabitants to England.[2] Part of the reason the opium den was so feared as an idea was because of the implication that British citizens (usually male) frequented these locations, resulting in a threat to British masculinity and identity, particularly related to the idea of "going native."

A familiar trope in English fiction of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the idea of "going native" has been thoroughly examined by Patrick Brantlinger, beginning with his book *Rule of Darkness* (1988) in which he examines imperialism in British literature during the Victorian period. The basic idea behind "going native" as formulated by Brantlinger is that of "backsliding" to a more "primitive" state of existence, brought on by exposure to native peoples who are already supposedly "primitive" (*Rule* 39, 229-33, 261-62). The most prominent example of this idea, which Brantlinger examines in some detail in *Rule of Darkness*, is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, in particular the character of Kurtz, whose reversion to barbarism is ostensibly caused by his encounters with natives in the Belgian Congo. Brantlinger goes into more detail about the idea in his more recent book *Taming Cannibals: Race and the Victorians* (2011), noting that although the basic framework is "what happens when supposedly civilized white people mimic 'the natives'" (65), there were many variations on the theme: "There was of course a spectrum ranging from positive to negative versions of going native. Many instances involved captivity and coercion, but others were voluntary, with all sorts of variations in between. And while going native could result in a permanent change of behavior and culture, it could occur as well on a temporary basis" (*Taming* 65). The thought of "going native" was so

[2] Thaddeus Sholto's "eastern oasis," examined in the previous chapter, is similar to many opium den descriptions; however, his upper-class status means that his flat is far cleaner, inviting, and less threatening than the typical opium den description.

horrifying, Brantlinger argues, because "for the Victorians to imitate the natives meant falling into the abyss that humanity was supposedly climbing out of, toward the light and toward perfection" (*Taming* 85). And it is this reasoning, I argue, that accounts for the motif appearing so often in Holmes stories that deal with foreigners and foreign lands, especially "Eastern" ones (where England had numerous colonial interests). Functioning as the voice of science and reason—both of which are the products of civilization—Holmes is placed in opposition to the threat posed by Englishmen[3] "going native," defending Britain (and by extension the Empire) against one of their most dangerous enemies: the "primitive" within themselves.

As some of the most popular works of literature in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Sherlock Holmes stories played no small part in perpetuating the related belief that nefarious forces from "The East" were on a constant campaign to invade British society. While the Holmes tales contain very few actual "Oriental villains" in the vein of Sax Rohmer's early-twentieth century creation Fu Manchu,[4] examples of the danger posed by Eastern influences (usually Eastern-*influenced* Englishmen) occur throughout the canon. Indeed, two of the most well-known and most frequently-discussed stories—"The Man With The Twisted Lip" (1891) and "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892)—center thematically around "going native," particularly the ways in which exposure to elements of "The Orient" results in both criminal behavior and a physical transformation, the latter specifically resulting in white British men taking on "Oriental" attributes. This motif is revisited in later tales as well, with stories such as

[3] While women can and did "go native," the majority of examples in Victorian literature (and the Holmes canon) are men, a fact that is perhaps best explained by the fact that men were much more likely to come into contact with native peoples while working for trading companies such as the East India Company, serving in the British military, etc.

[4] Dr. Fu Manchu, a caricatured "Oriental" super-villain, utilizes esoteric "foreign" methods to commit his crimes, playing heavily on xenophobia and fears of miscegenation to create his sinister reputation.

"The Adventure of the Dying Detective" (1913) and "The Adventure of the Creeping Man" (1923) including variations on the theme. By conflating deviant behavior and "Eastern" physical features, these tales demonstrate how the Sherlock Holmes stories perform the cultural work of reinforcing imperialist ideology that utilizes ideologically-biased Victorian bio-medical science in order to bolster assumptions about race and crime. Supporters of English imperial expansion, in other words, used the theories of biological determinism and anthropometrics popularized by such thinkers as Galton, Lombroso, and Ellis as a way of backing up claims of racial, cultural, and moral superiority. A strategy consistent with the science of the day, the same pattern is also detectable in the Holmes stories as well, particularly when Holmes and Watson are identifying potential suspects and/or attempting to prevent "Eastern" influences from infiltrating English citizens and spaces.

Opium Dens and Eastern Divans: "The Man with the Twisted Lip"

"The Man With The Twisted Lip," Doyle's sixth Sherlock Holmes short story, finds Holmes and Watson drawn into the case of the disappearance of Neville St. Clair, whose last known whereabouts were the second floor window of an East End opium den. Spotted there by his wife in a chance encounter, the respectable middle-class journalist is suspected to have been murdered by the disfigured beggar Hugh Boone who inhabits the room where St. Clair was last seen. After a night-long session of intense thought, Holmes reveals St. Clair and Boone to be one and the same: St. Clair's research into beggars led him to the conclusion he could make more money by joining them than by writing about them. In the end Holmes must let St. Clair go free; the latter's deception, while "a very great error" (190), is not illegal, and Holmes must be content with St. Clair's word that he will stop begging, threatening the scam artist with exposure should he continue to practice it.

The story's twist ending and the mysterious opium den have attracted their fair share of commentary, with many critics focusing their attention on the ways in which the story works to interrogate British masculine identity and/or break down the distinction between West/East, respectable/shameful, city/suburb, and the public/private spheres. Audrey Jaffe claims that the story problematizes social identity in the Victorian era because it "both constructs and disables detective fiction's fantasy of social control, performing its traditional task of establishing social identity only by disclosing the absence of the identities it seeks to expose" (97). Joseph A. Kestner's reading parallels Jaffe's but has a sharper focus on gender, arguing that "the tale raises massive questions about maleness as masquerade, in particular whether or not the category of 'gentleman' is nothing more than costume" (*Sherlock's Men* 96). Barry Milligan points out a similar dissolution of dividing lines, noting that the tale "draw[s] into question divisions between British and Oriental and between the imaged poles of the decadent East End and the morally sound suburbs" (*Pleasures* 111). Considering the story's relationship to others in the canon, Ronald R. Thomas places "The Man With The Twisted Lip" into a larger group of stories in which Holmes preserves the secrets of the guilty party in order to preserve social order, arguing that "[b]y deciding not to shatter the delusion of authentic subjectivity, [Holmes] preserves the law's authority to confirm or deny the legitimacy of identity" (89); similarly, Clare Clarke also groups the story with a set of other Holmes tales, pointing out that in several of them "[t]he clients [sic] all succumb to the temptation of the easy money and the stories offer a fascinating insight into the effects of greed in the context of certain dominant late Victorian moral and ethical codes of behavior regarding money and work" (87). But there are several important elements in this story that have so far gone un- or under-excavated—the role Watson's medical credentials play in the tale; the reliance on physical appearance as an investigative tool; and the

way that the opium den acts as a locus of social deviance and criminal activity, an "Eastern outpost" in the heart of London.

Watson's professional identity as a doctor is what sets the whole tale in motion, as he and his wife are interrupted late one night by Kate Whitney, a friend of the latter who "want[s] the doctor's advice and help" to retrieve her husband Isa, who "was to be found, she was sure of it, at the 'Bar of Gold,' in Upper Swandham Lane," an opium den (161). It quickly becomes apparent that Watson has experience dealing not only with opium addicts but with Isa Whitney in particular. In fact, the tale begins not with Kate Whitney calling upon Mr. and Mrs. Watson, but with the doctor's account of Isa Whitney's addiction, an inclusion that suggests his intimate familiarity with the case:

> Isa Whitney, brother of the late Elias Whitney, D. D., Principal of the Theological College of St. George's, was much addicted to opium. The habit grew upon him, as I understand, from some foolish freak when he was at college, for having read De Quincey's description of his dreams and sensations, he had drenched his tobacco with laudanum in an attempt to produce the same effect. He found, as so many more have done, that the practice is easier to attain than to get rid of, and for many years he continued to be a slave to the drug, an object of mingled horror and pity to his friends and relatives. (159)

The passage reveals several details about how Watson's medical experience influences his narrative techniques. His knowledge of Whitney's case in particular and of opium addiction in general allows him to speak with some authority, which he uses to move the discussion from the factual to the moral. He notes that the addiction started as the result of a "foolish freak," and describes him as a "slave to the drug," painting him as the opposite of his respectable brother.

The reference to De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* further paints Whitney in a negative light—not for having simply read the book (which was quite popular with Victorians, going through numerous printings and editions), but for being seduced by De Quincey's description of "The Pleasures of Opium" and ignoring his extensive warnings against "The Pains of Opium."[5] The invocation of De Quincey's text also hints at the ways in which the drug becomes a symbol in "The Man with the Twisted Lip," expressing cultural anxieties surrounding the blurring of boundaries between East and West. As Barry Milligan points out, while De Quincey's dreams are ostensibly a form of "self-torment," that torment is also the result of an unstable self in the process of fragmentation, unsure of where it ends and the Other begins. De Quincey's opium reveries are at once dangerous and seductive, "precisely because they erode the desired division between self and other even in the otherwise presumably inviolate sanctum of individual consciousness," demonstrating the ways "the East" is inextricably bound up in Western identity (46-48). While Watson's reference to the *Confessions* is no doubt meant to illustrate Whitney's moral degradation, De Quincey's ambivalent stance[6] on the drug and its effects mirrors the way East and West blur together throughout "The Man with the Twisted Lip."

Watson's moral pronouncements are not the judgments of a detached observer, however, since he makes sure to indicate his intimate involvement in Whitney's case by making clear his familiarity with the man ("The habit grew upon him, as I understand") and his social circle (the effect his addiction had on "his friends and relatives"). This authority is enhanced a few pages later when Watson decides to act:

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[5] These are the titles of the two major sections in *Confessions*. Responding to criticism that he painted the experience of taking opium in too positive a light, De Quincey added material on the medical aspects of the drug and withdrawal symptoms in his 1856 revision.

[6] While De Quincey discourages use of the drug in *Confessions*, and later revised the text to make that position clearer, many critics at the time argued that his description of the "pleasures" is more convincing than his condemnation of it.

> Might I not escort her to this place? And, then, as a second thought, why should she come at all? I was Isa Whitney's medical adviser, and as such I had influence over him. I could manage it better if I were alone . . . in ten minutes I had left my armchair and cheery sitting room behind me, and was speeding eastward in a hansom on a strange errand, as it seemed to me at the time, though the future only could show how strange it was to be" (162)

Some critics, such as Milligan, see this scene as evidence of Victorian masculinity's weakness in the face of an exotic temptation, since the opium den "exerts a consistent and corrosive influence over the distant domestic scene, drawing three middle-class husbands from their homes, leaving fretting wives next to empty easy chairs" (114). However, the scene is also an example of Watson's confidence in his own masculinity, in his role as moral authority and protector of the domestic sphere. Rather than simply accompany Kate Whitney, he decides to act alone, exercising his authority as both the head of a household and (in the form of "influence") as Isa Whitney's medical adviser. (The passage also demonstrates Watson's sexist view of these roles, since he claims that he could "manage it better if [he was] alone.")

When he finally finds Whitney and sends him home in a cab, we again see Watson acting as a medical and moral authority, confirming Whitney's degraded physical state ("I saw Whitney, pale, haggard, and unkempt, staring out at me . . . He was in a pitiable state of reaction, with every nerve in a twitter" [164]) and pointing out his guilt ("Your wife has been waiting this two days for you. You should be ashamed of yourself!" [164]). And though Holmes assumes the role of moral authority from this point forward (acting as judge and jury as the tale draws to a close), even he admits Watson has some claim to it, acknowledging the latter's disapproval of his drug use: "'I suppose, Watson,' said he, 'that you imagine that I have added opium-smoking to

cocaine injections and all the other little weaknesses on which you have favoured me with your medical views'" (166-67). In both of these cases, Watson's moral judgments are related to his medical training and are rooted in a conception of British masculinity that is compatible with that training. In other words, Watson's morality is at least partially based on the idea that criminality leads to physical degradation, meaning that his standard for determining one's relative fitness (medically and morally) is the healthy British male. And while many of the physical descriptions of characters are presented as Holmes's words, as the ostensible author of "The Man With The Twisted Lip" Watson maintains control over the narrative, meaning that the potential criminality of Hugh Boone (St. Clair's disguise), the "rascally Lascar," and the other opium-smokers is largely based on that same standard.

The physical inferiority of the suspects and other "criminal types" does not just take the form of a less-refined version of typical "Englishness," but is instead distinctly "Oriental" in quality. Isa Whitney, who as a middle-class British male should be at the peak of physical fitness, is instead reduced to a caricature of an "Oriental" drug fiend, both in Watson's memories and in the narrative present. Not only does Watson remember him "all huddled in a chair, the wreck and ruin of a noble man," but his friend's countenance takes on exaggerated Asiatic features as well, "with yellow, pasty face, drooping lids and pin-point pupils" (159). This pairing of descriptions associates Whitney with the supposedly dangerous immigrants pouring into the East London neighborhoods while simultaneously crediting that association with causing his social and economic ruin. The suggestion that associating with exotic foreigners and/or engaging in the cultural practices—especially opium smoking—would cause one's downfall was not uncommon, as Milligan has pointed out, noting that "[o]nce [Dickens' novel] *Edwin Drood* introduced the opium den as the portal between the halves of a middle-class Victorian's double

existence, it became a stock motif of the bourgeoning secret life genre," which reached its apogee in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Wilde's novel, Milligan argues, "helped to cement the opium den's image as the destroyer of seemingly respectable West Enders" ("The Opium Den" 122), an image that certainly informs Doyle's use of the opium den in "The Man With The Twisted Lip." Kate Whitney's plea to Watson lines up with this view almost exactly; she tells him that her husband "had, when the fit was on him, made use of an opium den in the furthest east of the City. Hitherto his orgies had always been confined to one day, and he had come back, twitching and shattered, in the evening. But now the spell had been upon him eight-and-forty hours, and he lay there, doubtless among the dregs of the docks, breathing in the poison or sleeping off the effect" (161). The descriptors she uses—fits, orgies, twitching, shattering, poison—align with the opium den's reputation as a place that ruins the middle-class British men who supposedly frequent it, and her husband's physical state when Watson finds him confirms those fears ("peering through the gloom, I saw Whitney, pale, haggard, and unkempt, staring out at me . . . He was in a pitiable state of reaction, with every nerve in a twitter" [164]). As a result, he is marked out as an "Other," a distorted version of his former self who has been transformed into a twitching, delirious "Oriental" type who threatens to destabilize English domesticity.

Isa Whitney is not the only character whose patronage of the opium den is presented as a threat to social order. Neville St. Clair's use of the opium den as a base of operations for his deception is another example of the nefarious influence the "Oriental" space exercises from within London itself. St. Clair's relationship with the Lascar proprietor is one cause of anxiety. He is only bound to keep St. Clair's secret because the latter pays him to do so, a fragile arrangement that is not much different than that of the den's other "customers." The Lascar

himself is painted as a stock villainous foreigner: Holmes tells Watson that "the rascally Lascar who runs [the den] has sworn to have vengeance upon me" and groups him amongst his "natural enemies" (167). He later elaborates, explaining that "The Lascar was known to be a man of the vilest antecedents," and labels him one of "the villains who seem to be immediately implicated in the matter" (173). Sydney Paget's accompanying illustration (fig. 1) completes the portrait of the Lascar as an exotic brute, depicting a large dark-skinned man with a scraggly beard, barefoot and in foreign clothing, who is physically 'man-handling' Mrs. St. Clair as she searches for her missing husband.

Fig. 1: Sydney Paget illustration from *The Strand*

The illustration presents an English wife and mother literally under attack from a savage foreigner, an image that further cements the danger posed by the opium den and its occupants. Its depiction of the Lascar reinforces the stereotype of the violent criminal from "the tropics," whose lack of physical and mental refinement manifest themselves in impulsive and potentially deadly behavior.

Neville St. Clair's connection to the opium den is also presented in a negative light. Despite the fact that he uses it as a staging area for his performance as the beggar Hugh Boone, which in turn enables him to provide for his family, the "Bar of Gold" acts as a sort of gateway into a world sharply divided from the respectable public/professional sphere. Like the opium smokers who patronize the den each day, St. Clair enters the den a respectable middle-class citizen and emerges in a deformed state, all the while refusing to act as a productive member of British capitalist society. While his disguise is no doubt partly a strategy to make himself "as pitiable as possible" (191), it also symbolizes the ethical issues of his scheme, physically illustrating his moral breakdown as a bodily defect. Described by Holmes as a "creature" with a "shock of orange hair" (possibly inferring Irish origins) and a "hideous face . . . disfigured by a horrible scar," he also takes on some of the typical "criminal" features as well, including a "bulldog chin," "very penetrating dark eyes," and is, despite his facial deformity, "a powerful and well-nurtured man," suggesting brute-like strength that could potentially be used for violence (173-75). Thus, while the features created by his disguise (the hair, scar, and twisted lip) identify him as one outside the traditional work economy, those that he cannot change (his chin, eyes, overall physical stature) make him "criminal-like" as well, forecasting that the man beneath the makeup is the guilty party. His ultimate guilt is further implied in the way Doyle lifts the details of the "unmasking" scene straight from Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, specifically a scene in which Godfrey Ablewhite, ostensibly a model English gentleman, is unmasked as the titular jewel's thief after disguising himself as a dark-complexioned sailor and attempting to flee the country. In Doyle's tale, Holmes washes away St. Clair's disguise, revealing the gentleman beneath the deformed visage:

> The sleeper half turned, and then settled down once more into a deep slumber. Holmes stooped to the water jug, moistened his sponge, and then rubbed it twice vigorously across and down the prisoner's face.
>
> "Let me introduce you," he shouted, "to Mr. Neville St Clair, of Lee, in the county of Kent."
>
> Never in my life have I seen such a sight. The man's face peeled off under the sponge like the bark from a tree. Gone was the coarse brown tint! Gone, too, was the horrid scar which had seamed it across, and the twisted lip which had given the repulsive sneer to the face! A twitch brought away the tangled red hair. (189)

Godfrey Ablewhite's unmasking in *The Moonstone* is extremely similar, the main difference being that Ablewhite is already deceased by the time the Holmes-like figure of Sergeant Cuff reveals the former's face beneath the disguise:

> "Mr. Blake!" he said. "Look at the man's face. It is a face disguised—and here's a proof of it!"
>
> He traced with his finger a thin line of livid white, running backward from the dead man's forehead, between the swarthy complexion and the slightly-disturbed black hair. "Let's see what is under this," said the Sergeant, suddenly seizing the black hair, with a firm grip of his hand. (520)

After pulling off the wig and false beard, Cuff washes off Ablewhite's dark makeup before recalling Blake to the scene and revealing "the sailor's" true identity, dramatically having Blake read Ablewhite's name from a sealed envelope Cuff had given him earlier in the chapter. While Boone's/St. Clair's unmasking is an inverse of this scene—revealing the disfigured beggar to be a suburban English patriarch—both scenes uncover unsettling truths about ostensibly respectable

gentlemen. Ultimately, the similarity to Ablewhite's unmasking still implies St. Clair's guilt; a criminal might masquerade as a gentleman, but would a true gentleman attempt the reverse?

Like Boone/St. Clair, not even Sherlock Holmes himself is free from the disfiguring influence of the opium den. In addition to his quip to Watson about the stigma ("I suppose, Watson . . . that you imagine that I have added opium-smoking to cocaine injections and all the other little weaknesses on which you have favored me with your medical views" [166-67]), Holmes is also forced to disfigure himself like St. Clair in order to enter the "Bar of Gold." Surprised by Holmes' ability to disguise himself as is often the case, Watson describes encountering an "old man" who "sat now absorbed as ever, very thin, very wrinkled, bent with age, an opium pipe clanging down from between his knees, as though it had dropped in sheer lassitude from his fingers" (164). While this instance of Holmes transforming himself into an "Oriental"-like figure has an ostensibly practical purpose (protecting his identity from his "natural enemies, or shall I say, my natural prey" [167]), the detective famously takes on similar characteristics when he is safely ensconced in an English domestic interior as well. While thinking through the problem at the St. Clair's home in Kent, Holmes engages in a strange ritual:

> It was soon evident to me that he was now preparing for an all-night sitting. He took off his coat and waistcoat, put on a large blue dressing-gown, and then wandered about the room collecting pillows from his bed, and cushions from the sofa and armchairs. With these he constructed a sort of Eastern divan, upon which he perched himself cross-legged, with an ounce of shag tobacco and a box of matches laid out in front of him. In the dim light of the lamp I saw him sitting there, an old briar pipe between his lips, his eyes fixed vacantly upon the corner of the ceiling, the blue smoke curling up from him, silent, motionless, with the light shining upon his strong set aquiline features. (184)

Several critics have noted the exotic qualities of the scene, with Milligan pointing out the way the scene blurs the lines between the "Oriental" opium den and the "English" domestic interior (115-16), while Clarke reads the scene as indicative of Holmes' own outsider status as one who works without appearing to (98). But while the scene does clearly mirror the opium den, it is also clearly (in Victorian minds) superior to it—the figure sitting cross-legged is an Englishman, in an English interior, wearing an English dressing-gown, perched on English pillows and cushions smoking English shag tobacco. And while St. Clair emerges from the opium den disfigured and ready to subvert the traditional economic structure, Holmes emerges with a solution to the mystery that ultimately restores that structure, ostensibly forcing St. Clair to find honest employment. Unlike St. Clair's begging, which generates income for him without any benefit to the other party (except perhaps a sense of their own charity), Holmes work does produce a tangible result (the return of St. Clair to his family and the workforce). Despite the novel solution to the mystery, Holmes' intuition is proved correct: Boone is responsible (despite the fact he is fictional), and the Lascar is complicit in the scheme, shielding him from Holmes and the police. Ultimately, the results bolster the criminological assumptions that underpin Holmes' line of inquiry, while at the same time adding credibility to Watson's opinions on the dangers of the opium den. Yet, although Boone is captured and revealed as St. Clair, his unsuitability for other sorts of work with comparable pay heavily implies that he will return to begging on the streets, an outcome that suggests that his criminal traits are inherent and will win out over societal (and legal) pressures to pursue "honest" employment. Just like Isa Whitney, who Watson implies will continue to return to the opium den, St. Clair's innate criminality has been enhanced by his contact with "Eastern" people, settings, and practices—and the pair are far from the only Englishmen in the canon to "go native" with negative results.

"Violence of temper approaching to mania": Dr. Grimesby Roylott and "The Speckled Band"

Singled out by Arthur Conan Doyle as his favorite Sherlock Holmes tale, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" has also proved extremely popular with readers and critics, being frequently anthologized, topping "best Holmes stories" polls of both general readers and critics (Stock), and attracting discussion. The story of doctor-gone-bad Grimesby Roylott and his impossible serpentine murder weapon is yet another tale of a Victorian father-figure attempting to exploit his (step-) daughter for his own gain.[7] Much of the discussion surrounding this tale has focused on the story's implicit critique of changing attitudes toward women's economic rights: Kestner, for example, argues that "The Speckled Band" and similar tales "are strong commentaries on the various Married Women's Property Acts of the nineteenth century, whereby women were increasingly permitted to retain control of monies" (*Sherlock's Men* 88), and Catherine Wynne also sees the story as (at least partially) a commentary on Victorian sexual politics, specifically reading Roylott's plot as the acting-out of an incest fantasy by an impotent patriarch (121). But it is the "exotic" elements of the story—the gothic atmosphere, Roma nomads, the deadly snake, the cheetah and baboon that roam the grounds of Stoke Moran—that make it stand out, and it is no coincidence that Roylott himself is so closely associated with the colonies, specifically with India. The story demonstrates medical, gender, and imperial discourses interlocking in Watson's narrative perspective, whereby Roylott is depicted as a "criminal type" because of his failure to adhere to the professional standards of the medical community, his failure as a father-figure and gentleman, and for his exposure to and embrace of "exotic" Indian culture.

[7] The theme was frequent in the Sherlock Holmes canon, with other prominent examples including "A Case of Identity" and "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches."

The imperial implications of "The Speckled Band" and its villain have not been lost on critics, many of whom view the story as paradigmatic of the canon's stance on empire. In *Sherlock's Men* Kestner highlights the way the story juxtaposes Roylott's "Oriental" masculinity with Holmes' and Watson's "English" masculinity, arguing that the story is "re-establishing a normative phallic order and underscoring the perversion of maleness by Roylott," a perversion that "originates from Roylott's contact with the colonies" (90-91). Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee advocates a more subversive reading of the figure of the dangerous "Oriental," positing that Doyle utilizes the "figure of the 'criminal' Indian, in stories like 'The Speckled Band' and novels like the *Mystery of Cloomber*, to disturb the seemingly comforting conclusions reached by his sleuth about the durability of the dominant ideology" (188), while Clare Clarke points out that in stories of tainted Englishmen returning from the colonies such as this one, "Holmes's work involves the identification of the invader and his attempts to minimize their threat to the existing social order" (157-58). However, it is not just Roylott's *exposure* to the colonies, but his *embrace* of certain aspects of the native culture—as well as his own genetic predisposition to criminal behavior, his behavior towards his stepdaughters, and his rejection of medical professional standards—that are largely responsible for his transformation.

Unlike Jonathan Small in *The Sign of the Four*, who, despite his long residence in India is still clearly a *British* criminal, Roylott's identity is far more unstable, vacillating between "English" and "Other" throughout "The Speckled Band." In her initial consultation with Holmes and Watson, Helen Stoner establishes his thoroughly English heritage: "I am living with my stepfather, who is the last survivor of one of the oldest Saxon Families in England, the Roylotts of Stoke Moran, on the western border of Surrey . . . The family was at one time among the richest in England, and the estate extended over the borders into Berkshire in the north, and

Hampshire in the west" (232). Those same deep English roots, however, are also what predisposes him to criminality: as Stoner tells Holmes, "[i]n the last century, however, four successive heirs were of a dissolute and wasteful disposition, and the family ruin was eventually completed by a gambler, in the days of the Regency" (232). In other words, part of what makes Roylott a criminal (in addition to his status as a decadent aristocrat) is a genetic predisposition to criminal behavior, something that eugenics advocates like Francis Galton and Havelock Ellis argued was a primary cause of crime and a major argument for selective human reproduction. It quickly becomes clear, however, that this family "curse" is not enough on its own to explain Roylott's behavior; in fact, it seems at first to have the opposite effect, inspiring the young heir to work hard and earn an honest living: "my stepfather, seeing that he must adapt himself to the new conditions, obtained an advance from a relative, which enabled him to take a medical degree, and went out to Calcutta, where, by his professional skill and his force of character, he established a large practice" (232). Thus "The Speckled Band" begins with a picture of Roylott as an enterprising young Briton setting out to make a name for himself through a medical practice, a picture that is immediately thrown into chaos when he is exposed to the colonies.

Once Roylott spends time in India his criminal traits are "activated" and he "goes native," his behavior becoming similar to the depiction of "savage" Indians: "In a fit of anger," his stepdaughter relates to Holmes and Watson, "caused by some robberies which had been perpetrated in the house, he beat his native butler to death, and narrowly escaped a capital sentence. As it was, he suffered a long term of imprisonment, and afterwards returned to England a morose and disappointed man" (232). While Stoner later admits that "[v]iolence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family" (234), the implication is that India is what has triggered the transformation, turning the promising young doctor with

"professional skill" and "force of character" into a raving murderer. Indeed, Stoner herself puts forward this theory, suggesting that his combative tendencies "had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics" (234). Because the problem is genetic as well as the result of exposure to the colonies, it cannot be solved by a return to England (unlike the "cure" proposed for Watson's time in "the East"); Roylott continues his violent behavior and settles into the same decadent lifestyle as his ancestors. However, his behavior begins to have repercussions beyond his own domestic circle: "[a] series of disgraceful brawls took place, two of which ended in the police-court, until at last he became the terror of the village, and the folks would fly at his approach, for he is a man of immense strength, and absolutely uncontrollable in his anger" (234). He even "hurled the local blacksmith over a parapet into a stream," and it is only his stepdaughter's resourcefulness that keeps him out of trouble with the authorities (234).

Holmes' and Watson's own encounter with Roylott only intensifies his reputation for savagery. Watson's description of the doctor's visit to Baker Street emphasizes Roylott's physical characteristics, particularly those that identify him as an unexpected and unwelcome presence in the heart of civilized London:

> "But what, in the name of the devil!"
>
> The ejaculation had been drawn from my companion by the fact that our door had been suddenly dashed open, and that a huge man framed himself in the aperture. His costume was a peculiar mixture of the professional and of the agricultural, having a black top hat, a long frock coat, and a pair of high gaiters, with a hunting-crop swinging in his hand. So tall was he that his hat actually brushed the cross bar of the doorway, and his breadth seemed to span it across from side to side. A large face, seared with a thousand wrinkles, burned yellow with the sun, and marked with every evil passion, was turned

from one to the other of us, while his deep-set, bile-shot eyes, and his high thin fleshless nose, gave him somewhat the resemblance to a fierce old bird of prey. (241)

This passage, the main firsthand account of Roylott readers are given, simultaneously identifies him as an "Oriental"/"English" hybrid and as a "criminal type." While Roylott is dressed in English clothing, it is an odd assortment that juxtaposes the urban (top hat, long frock coat) with the agricultural (high gaiters, hunting crop), suggesting his unstable identity. Additionally, his "large face, seared with a thousand wrinkles, burned yellow with the sun," his "deep-set, bile-shot eyes," and his "high thin fleshless nose" all align with period depictions of "Oriental" types, indicating that his time in India has changed him physically as well as psychologically. Some of those same features—especially the "bile-shot eyes," dark face "marked with every evil passion," and hawk-like nose—also line up with contemporary ideas of the criminal, whose evil nature would be clearly written on their features.

At the end of the tale, once Roylott has been bitten by the snake, Watson offers another description that emphasizes his "Oriental" qualities: with "his feet thrust into red heelless Turkish slippers," the doctor sits in a chair with his chin "cocked upward and his eyes were fixed in a dreadful, rigid stare at the corner of the ceiling," as if in a trance. "Round his brow he had a peculiar yellow band, with brownish speckles, which seemed to be bound tightly round his head," as if he is wearing a turban, and he "made neither sound nor motion," again suggesting a trance-like state (256). Such a "reading" of Roylott's physiognomy and body language is supported by his actions: the dashing-open of Holmes' door, swinging of the hunting crop, the predator-like looks from Holmes to Watson, and ultimately the murder of one stepdaughter (and attempted murder of the other) all reflect Roylott's threatening and aggressive presence. This already discordant image of Roylott is further complicated by his professional identity, as

doctors were expected to behave like gentlemen and foster a sympathetic, kind personality—the antipathy of Roylott's own conduct.[8] When considered as a whole, Holmes aptly summarizes Watson's depiction of his fellow doctor: "When a doctor does go wrong, he is the first of criminals" (253)—and, in this case, what made Roylott "go wrong" was clearly his exposure to the colonies.

A major component of what makes Roylott so threatening is his behavior toward and relationship with his stepdaughters, which demonstrates his failure to live up to the standard of the ideal English gentleman and patriarch. Helen tells Holmes and Watson that she would have liked to have seen her stepfather play the role of the respectable widowed patriarch, "making friends and exchanging visits with our neighbours, who had at first been overjoyed to see a Roylott of Stoke Moran back in the old family seat" (234). Instead, Roylott "shut himself up in his house and seldom came out save to indulge in ferocious quarrels with whoever might cross his path," thus failing in his social responsibility to restore the respectability of his family's name among his peers, echoing the degenerate behavior of his forebears (234). His failure to reestablish his medical practice is another strike against him: unable to provide an independent income for his family, Roylott lives off an inheritance from his deceased wife, a provision that Holmes later learns had already decreased in value significantly (and which would be further curtailed were either daughter to marry).

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[8] One example of these expectations is the introductory address given to medical students upon beginning their education. These addresses urged the future doctors to behave like gentlemen: Henry William Fuller, for example, entreats students to be "men in whom [their patients] can place confidence, whom they admit without fear into the bosom of their families, whose feelings and behaviour are those of gentlemen" (26); Benjamin Brodie notes, "a good moral character is not less necessary to your advancement in the medical profession than skill and knowledge. Nor is it merely a strict observance of the higher rules of morality that is required. You must feel and act as gentlemen" (30); and Charles West reminds students that "The essentials of a doctor's manners with his patient are that they be natural, cheerful, gentle, and sympathizing" (16).

The fact that the plot centers around Roylott's attempt to murder his stepdaughters (successfully in Julia's case) is a clear indication of his feelings toward these women, feelings that are complicated by his frustrated sexuality, his time in the colonies, and his genetic predisposition to crime. Despite the fact that he has been their family patriarch since the twins were two years old (232), there is no indication that Roylott has any sort of affection for them, primarily seeing them as obstacles (and objects) in the way of sustaining his lifestyle. There are indications of physical abuse, with Holmes noticing bruises on Helen Stoner's arm, scolding her for "screening" her stepfather when it is obvious to the detective that she has been "cruelly used" (239-40). While Roylott can certainly play the part of a father figure, apparently offering support for Julia's marriage, this role is very clearly an act, one which covers both his greed and his own frustrated sexuality. Numerous critics have noted the incestuous undercurrent in "The Speckled Band"; Catherine Wynne, for example argues that the story is "symbolic of destructive male sexuality," reading the scene where Roylott bends Holmes' fire poker (and Holmes bends it back) as a sort of sexual power struggle that Roylott loses, further suggesting that "the inept Roylott must act out his sexual fantasy by means of a snake and a ventilator shaft" (121). Joseph A. Kestner's interpretation is similar; he notes that "[m]ale desire in the figure of Roylott is a source of moral anarchy" in the story that points to Roylott's frustrated incestuous impulses, a fact made all the more clear by the phallic murder weapon. However, rather than simply contrasting a gentleman with a non-gentleman as Wynne does, Kestner argues that the colonial origins of the murder weapon and Roylott's savage behavior contrast two distinct types of masculinity: "In the tale, two forms of masculinity are juxtaposed: the colonial, eastern, aristocratic model of Roylott, and the middle-class gentlemanly nature of Holmes and Watson," a setup that Kestner argues "re-establish[es] a normative phallic order and underscor[es] the

perversion of maleness by Roylott" (90-91). Kestner's argument returns us to Roylott's exposure to the colonies; both Watson and Helen Stoner attribute much of his behavior to his time in India, and given that Watson had already recorded Jonathan Small's account of native savagery during the 1857 Indian Mutiny in *The Sign of the Four*, Roylott's behavior can easily be read as a parallel case. For an Englishman like Roylott, already predisposed to criminal behavior, "going native" would place him in the same category as the native rebels Small describes in *Sign*, embodiments of predatory (and foreign) masculinity that represent an immediate threat to vulnerable Englishwomen.[9] But while Roylott's aggressive behavior and criminal actions undoubtedly have sexual and "foreign" components, reading them only as the result of frustrated male desire and/or an Englishman "gone native" over-simplifies his character, ignoring the ways in which Doyle/Watson paints him as a "criminal type." The threat Roylott poses, both to his stepdaughters specifically and to England in general, is the result of not only impotence or contact with non-English people and objects, but also an inherited, biological predisposition to violence and crime.

Perhaps Roylott's most threatening quality is that he both brings dangerous, "exotic" items back into England with him, and he works to maintain those aspects of "the East" that are already present within British borders. There are several examples of the former: "He has a passion also for Indian animals," Helen tells Holmes and Watson, "which are sent over to him by a correspondent, and he has at this moment a cheetah and a baboon, which wander freely over his grounds, and are feared by the villagers almost as much as their master" (234). The animals' presence on English soil makes them "invasive species" that threaten to destabilize the local

[9] Roylott's savagery might also be compared to that of John Herncastle in Collins' *The Moonstone*—an aristocratic Englishman who "goes native" in India during the 1799 siege of Seringapatam, killing at least one native and bringing an "exotic" object (the moonstone) back with him to England.

ecosystem, a parallel to Roylott's own presence in the neighborhood. Additionally, the existence of a foreign "correspondent" suggests that Roylott's ties to the colonies are deeper than simply being a former resident there; more significantly, the relationship points to the fact that those ties are still active and that Roylott, acting as a "vector" through which "foreign material" can enter England, presents an active threat to the homeland. The "speckled band" itself, the deadly "swamp adder" whose bite kills Helen Stoner's twin sister (and later Roylott himself), is also an Indian import, demonstrating that the fear the villagers express over the cheetah and baboon is not misplaced. The lack of a real-world equivalent to the swamp adder, as well as its impossible abilities, has drawn much critical attention, figuring into readings of the story—such as John A. Hodgson's—as a sort of meta-text on the detective fiction genre itself.[10] While such arguments have some merit, the snake's exaggerated characteristics can also be read in similar terms as contemporary descriptions of "Oriental types" (like the others mentioned in this chapter). Just as the natives of India, China, and other "Eastern" locales are misrepresented in the literature of the late nineteenth century, it is no stretch to posit that a potentially dangerous creature from the same area would be depicted in similarly erroneous, inflated terms. As the "master" of this mysterious animal, Roylott's already exoticized depiction takes on an additional dimension as he becomes the "snake charmer," keeping the adder locked up (in an iron safe rather than a basket) until it is time for its nightly performance, soundtracked by a "low whistle" rather than the traditional pungi gourd-flute.

Roylott's Roma connection is also an important element of his portrayal as an Englishman "gone native," as it paints him as an alien stranger in his own country of origin. When Holmes and Watson question Helen Stoner about her stepfather, she makes sure to

[10] See Hodgson's essay "The Recoil of 'The Speckled Band': Detective Story and Detective Discourse."

mention that "[h]e had no friends at all save the wandering gipsies, and he would give these vagabonds leave to encamp upon the few acres of bramble-covered land which represent the family estate, and would accept in return the hospitality of their tents, wandering away with them sometimes for weeks on end" (234). As George K. Behlmer has shown, throughout the Victorian era the Roma in England were viewed in conflicting, complicated terms, regarded variously as "noble savages" whose nomadic lifestyle and connection to nature in an increasingly urbanized England made them "the last bastion of rural resourcefulness" (239), while at the same time being viewed as social outcasts and racial "Others," an "underclass whose deliberate isolation made it an easy target for the agents of law and order" (236).[11] Roylott's association with the group of "gipsies" tends to reflect the latter view; when Holmes questions Helen Stoner about her sister's death, the conversation quickly turns to the Roma:

> "Were there gipsies in the plantation at the time?"
>
> "Yes, there are nearly always some there."
>
> "Ah, and what did you gather from this allusion to a band—a speckled band?"
>
> "Sometimes I have thought that it was merely the wild talk of delirium, sometimes that it may have referred to some band of people, perhaps to these very gipsies in the plantation. I do not know whether the spotted handkerchiefs which so many of them wear over their heads might have suggested the strange adjective which she used."
>
> Holmes shook his head like a man who is far from being satisfied. (238-39)

Despite Holmes' head-shaking here, he expounds a nearly identical theory despite being unable to fathom their motivation:

[11] Behlmer also points out that in the 1880s the famous English explorer Sir Richard Burton "helped advance the view that Gypsies were related to the Jats of Northwest India" (242), an idea that further links them to Roylott's Indian connections.

"When you combine the ideas of whistles at night, the presence of a band of gipsies who are on intimate terms with this old Doctor, the fact that we have every reason to believe that the Doctor has an interest in preventing his stepdaughter's marriage, the dying allusion to a band, and finally, the fact that Miss Helen Stoner heard a metallic clang, which might have been caused by one of those metal bars which secured the shutters falling back into its place, I think that there is good ground to think that the mystery may be cleared along those lines."

"But what, then, did the gipsies do?"

"I cannot imagine."

"I see many objections to any such theory."

"And so do I." (241)

Roylott's association with these nomads, then, solidifies in Holmes' mind his criminal status: the fact that he "[wanders] away with them sometimes for weeks on end" (234) and the fact that he allows them to camp out on his property confirms that Roylott is both deviant himself and is an ally of those already deemed deviant by society. Indeed, Holmes admits as much during his "debriefing" with Watson: "'I had,' said he, 'come to an entirely erroneous conclusion . . . The presence of the gipsies, and the use of the word 'band,' which was used by the poor girl . . . were sufficient to put me upon an entirely wrong scent'" (257-58). While the Roma ultimately have no direct bearing on the case, they do serve as a reliable indicator that Roylott has "gone native," thus serving as further evidence of his criminal tendencies.

As the infamous villain of one of the most popular Holmes tales, Dr. Grimesby Roylott offers a wealth of insight into Holmes' and Watson's assumptions about how criminal psychology is linked to ancestry, race, and place, and how those assumptions are flawed. It also

clearly thematizes the anxieties of nineteenth-century Britons regarding both the decline of aristocratic families and the threat of "foreign contaminants" destabilizing civilized society, particularly in terms of sexuality, economics, and race. In "The Speckled Band," Holmes and Watson again act as the scientific "cure" for the disease of crime carried back from the colonies, identifying the English criminal "gone native" by his deviant physical and personality traits and eliminating the threat by turning his own weapon against him.

Survival of the Least Fit: "The Dying Detective" and "The Creeping Man"

While the two stories discussed above appear early in the publication history of the canon, later stories continue to reflect cultural anxieties about people and things from "The East." Both "The Adventure of the Dying Detective" (1913) and "The Adventure of the Creeping Man" (1923) contain accounts of criminals who have direct connections to Asia (Sumatra and India respectively). However, in these later stories the threat has shifted from a combination of cultural, geographical, and biological factors to a strictly biological one. In "The Dying Detective," colonial planter Culverton Smith uses an "Eastern" disease to poison his nephew (and also attempts to poison Holmes with it), while Professor Presbury (who is a lecturer in Comparative Anatomy at "Camford" University) is found to be using a rejuvenation serum derived from the reproductive glands of an Indian monkey in order to woo a colleague's daughter, a treatment that results in disastrous side-effects. In each case, the primary threat comes from a biological agent with origins in "the East," and in both tales the antagonists take on exaggerated physical characteristics that are read by Holmes and Watson as signs of their physical and criminal deviance.

"The Dying Detective" begins with imagery of foreign invaders, as Watson describes the situation of Holmes' "long-suffering" landlady Mrs. Hudson: "Not only was her first-floor flat

invaded at all hours by throngs of singular and often undesirable characters, but her remarkable lodger showed an eccentricity and irregularity in his life which must have sorely tried her patience" (1341). 221B Baker Street, it would seem, is under constant barrage by "throngs of singular and undesirable characters," including the primary lodger himself, whose "eccentricity and irregularity"—which, incidentally, include "weird and often malodorous scientific experiments" (1341)—constitutes the bulk of her "suffering." This opening paragraph is yet another example of Watsonian foreshadowing, as he soon introduces the purpose of his visit: Holmes is close to death, struck down by a mysterious illness, which the detective assures him is of Asiatic origins: "I know what is the matter with me. It is a coolie disease from Sumatra—a thing that the Dutch know more about than we, though they have made little of it up to date. One thing only is certain. It is infallibly deadly, and it is horribly contagious" (1343). While it is eventually revealed that Holmes is merely feigning the disease in order to lure Culverton Smith into giving a confession, the possibility that such a disease has infected the detective seems all too plausible for Watson, suggesting that the fear of diseases from foreign sources is perceived as a realistic threat. Holmes' acting skills are also apparently quite realistic, and the symptoms he mimics echo those of the opium addicts in the "Bar of Gold" of "The Man with the Twisted Lip":

> He was indeed a deplorable spectacle. In the dim light of a foggy November day the sick-room was a gloomy spot, but it was that gaunt, wasted face staring at me form the bed which sent a chill to my heart. His eyes had the brightness of fever, there was a hectic flush upon either cheek, and dark crusts clung to his lips; the thin hands upon the coverlet twitched incessantly, his voice was croaking and spasmodic. He lay listlessly as I entered

the room, but the sight of me brought a gleam of recognition to his eyes. ("Dying" 1342)[12]

The overall impression given by these passages is of a foreign contagion that poses an imminent threat to the stability of the empire, since its debilitating effects are capable of reducing the country's greatest detective into a shell of his former self, with a broken body and a shattered mind that babbles on about oysters.

The man who has brought this threat with him back to England is yet another colonial import, this time from the Dutch colony of Sumatra. Culverton Smith is "not a medical man, but a planter," who is nonetheless the foremost expert on the mysterious disease. As Holmes notes, "An outbreak of the disease upon his plantation, which was distant from medical aid, caused him to study it himself, with some rather far-reaching consequences" (1348-49), which consequently turn out to be his use of the disease for criminal purposes. Like the other Britons who have spent time in the tropics, Culverton Smith's odd appearance is described in a way meant to immediately signal his criminal nature:

> With a shrill cry of anger a man rose from a reclining chair beside the fire. I saw a great yellow face, coarse-grained and greasy, with heavy, double-chin, and two sullen, menacing grey eyes which glared at me from under tufted sandy brows. A high bald head had a small velvet smoking-cap poised coquettishly upon one side of its pink curve. The

[12] Compare to Watson's impressions upon entering the "Bar of Gold": "Through the gloom one could dimly catch a glimpse of bodies lying in strange fantastic poses, bowed shoulders, bent knees, heads thrown back, and chins pointing upward, with here and there a dark, lack-lustre eye turned upon the newcomer. Out of the black shadows there glimmered little red circles of light, now bright, now faint, as the burning poison waxed or waned in the bowls of the metal pipes. The most lay silent, but some muttered to themselves, and others talked together in a strange, low, monotonous voice, their conversation coming in gushes, and then suddenly tailing off into silence, each mumbling out his own thoughts and paying little heed to the words of his neighbour" (163).

> skull was of enormous capacity, and yet, as I looked down I saw to my amazement that the figure of the man was small and frail, twisted in the shoulders and back like one who has suffered from rickets in his childhood. (1351)

The "yellow face," "sullen, menacing" eyes and odd costume recall Dr. Roylott of "The Speckled Band," while the "frail, twisted" body signals the physical degradation brought on by life in the harsh climate of Sumatra. The description is also full of visual contradictions—a "great yellow face" that is somehow paired with a "high bald head" with a "pink curve;" an "enormous" skull set on a "small and frail" body; "sullen" eyes which at the same time "glare" at Watson. These clashing descriptors do not make much sense as coherent imagery, but they do suggest a sort of in-between state that Todd Kuchta links to the in-between-ness of Victorian suburban spaces. Kuchta argues that " [t]he seclusion and lack of social cohesion . . . made suburbs vulnerable to crime [and] also worked in favor of criminals who were suburb dwellers themselves. Such representations suggest that the real threats to the suburb were those living within its very neighborhoods and homes" (66). Culverton Smith, he points out, lives "in the vague borderland between Notting Hill and Kensington" (66), and suggests that the villain's depiction is part of a larger trend that sees "the suburban home and its inhabitants . . . exoticized as foreign or savage threats to Britain from within" (69). While Kuchta's argument has merit, what is most threatening about Culverton Smith is not only that he lives in the suburbs, but that he is an ex-colonist, returning from an extended period in "The East" and bringing into the suburbs the threat (both figurative and literal) of contamination. The threat of the suburbs in this story, then, is not merely their liminal quality, but the fact that their secluded nature allows them

to act as a potential vector for contagion from "the East," demonstrating that even supposedly safe spaces far from the docks[13] and the East-End slums are vulnerable to foreign incursions.

The story of Professor Presbury's transformation into "The Creeping Man," while almost certainly a tribute to Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, also reflects British fears of "the East," but in this case that fear is rooted less in its role as the source of disease and instead centers around the way exposure unlocks man's bestial, primitive instincts (again bringing up Brantlinger's "going native" theme). Set in the college town of "Camford," the tale recounts Holmes' and Watson's attempt to unravel the unnerving behavior of Presbury, who has been found (by his soon-to-be son-in-law Mr. Bennett) "creeping" on all fours during the night. While the story can doubtless be read as a comment on changing ideas of British masculinity (as Joseph A. Kestner contends), the subtle connection to India that is eventually established—combined with the professor's behavior—recalls the problematic depiction of Tonga in *The Sign of the Four*. Much like Doyle's earlier novel, "The Creeping Man" is not (as Kestner suggests) a text that reflects a fear of science but is instead indicative of continuing concerns about how "Eastern" influences can unlock repressed impulses.

At the conclusion of "The Creeping Man," it is revealed that Presbury has been taking a serum derived from the black-faced langur, a species of monkey found throughout the Indian subcontinent, in order to rejuvenate himself so that he can woo a colleague's daughter. As soon as the professor begins his course of "treatment," both his personality and his physiology change: he becomes easily irritated and impulsive, with increased energy and agility. He seems a different man, as Mr. Bennett tells Holmes and Watson: "He became furtive and sly. Those

[13] When questioned by Smith how Holmes knew "that this disease which he has contracted is Eastern," Watson replies, "Because, in some professional inquiry, he has been working among Chinese sailors down in the docks" (1352), further demonstrating the association between London's dockyards, "Oriental" immigrants, criminal behavior, and disease.

around him had always the feeling that he was not the man that they had known, but that he was under some shadow which had darkened his higher qualities. His intellect was not affected. His lectures were as brilliant as ever. But always there was something new, something sinister and unexpected" (1641). This impression is only strengthened when Presbury's daughter catches a glimpse of him out of her second-story window one night, and Bennett encounters him shuffling down the hallway in an animal-like manner:

> I could see that something was coming along the passage, something dark and crouching. Then suddenly it emerged into the light, and I saw that it was he. He was crawling, Mr. Holmes—crawling! He was not quite on his hands and knees. I should rather say on his hands and feet, with his face sunk between his hands. Yet he seemed to move with ease. I was so paralyzed by the sight that it was not until he had reached my door that I was able to step forward and ask if I could assist him. His answer was extraordinary. He sprang up, spat out some atrocious word at me, and hurried on past me, and down the staircase. (1643-44)

The professor's behavior, which also includes the ability to quickly scale an ivy-covered wall (1657), is accompanied by an inability to control his temper, a symptom Holmes and Watson experience firsthand when they attempt to interview him: "'Hardly enough, Mr. Holmes!' the old man cried, in a high screaming voice, with extraordinary malignancy upon his face. He got between us and the door as he spoke, and he shook his two hands at us with furious passion . . . His face was convulsed and he grinned and gibbered at us in senseless rage" (1650). While these characteristics might be read as the result of "increased youthfulness," the similarities to Watson's depiction of Tonga in *The Sign of the Four*, the "Ourang-Outang" in Poe's "Rue

Morgue," and even Bram Stoker's *Dracula*[14] are striking: the ability to scale sheer walls; the hunched, ape-like posture; the senseless, gibbering rage; the "extraordinary malignancy upon his face." The serum, it seems, is transforming Presbury—not into an actual monkey, but into a monkey-like primitive man, much like the "villain" of the second Holmes novel.

The similarities between Presbury and Tonga (and the orangutan and Dracula) illustrate that associating deviant behavior and physical reversion to a more "primitive" state with "the East" remained a valid narrative move throughout the canon, signaling the likely guilt of the affected party. Regarding Presbury's depiction in particular, Virginia Richter has argued that "The Creeping Man" utilizes the motif of the "civilized ape," a liminal figure that she claims arose from travel narratives by European explorers in the early modern period. "From the beginning," she notes, "these reports forged a link in European consciousness between human and simian 'natives,'" and were necessary for the development of imperial ideology; "If colored peopled were alternately defined as human, sub-human or non-human," Richter claims, "they could be treated accordingly, i.e. missionized, subjected or killed, as need be" (114). This is the same strategy we have already seen employed by Lombroso, Galton, Ellis, et al, further establishing the link between "ape-like" physical features and inherent inferiority and serving as justification for policies and programs (whether domestically or internationally) to monitor, contain, and control such groups.

The reason Presbury's transformation in "The Creeping Man" is so threatening is because it is both an actual biological change (as opposed a mere change in appearance or dress), and because it is totally voluntary. Presbury seeks out the serum, the "Eastern" drug, much like the

[14] The well-spoken Dracula does not, admittedly, speak in a "senseless, gibbering rage;" however, the count's connection to the Roma recalls Roylott's own association with them in "The Speckled Band," and the clear gothic elements of Stoker's novel further suggest similarities between both of those works and "The Creeping Man."

opium addicts in the "Bar of Gold," injecting it into his body rather than simply being exposed to it as the result of outside circumstances. As Richter puts it, "[a]s a cross between a professor and a langur, Presbury is not, like Poe and Constable's apes, a purely metaphorical border figure, but a literal, biological hybrid. Consequently, the civilized ape as a representation of liminality is displaced from the symbolic level to that of biology" (122). The result is the most literal example in the canon of a British body being physically transformed by contact with "The East." While Holmes' concluding remarks on the idea of a "rejuvenating serum" can be read as a comment on aging, they can just as easily be read as a comment on the dangerous allure of the "primitive": "Consider, Watson, that the material, the sensual, the worldly would all prolong their worthless lives. The spiritual would not avoid the call to something higher. It would be the survival of the least fit. What sort of cesspool may not our poor world become?" (1663). Holmes' appropriation of Herbert Spencer's famous phrase ("survival of the fittest") is significant, since Spencer uses it as an alternative term for natural selection within a socioeconomic context, as an explanation for the formation of social hierarchies. The socially marginalized and economically disadvantaged, such thinking goes, are such due to their natural inferiority. Recalling the "cesspool" of London Watson describes in *A Study in Scarlet*, full of "all the loungers and idlers of the Empire" (14), the vision Holmes describes conflates the criminal and the primitive, the sensual and the decadent—a world in which the "least fit" members of society are those who inherit it. All the more reason why England needs a Sherlock Holmes to make sure that vision never becomes reality.

Chapter 3: Yellow Faces and Dangerous Places—Africa and Africans in the Holmes Canon

Black characters, whether African, African-American, or otherwise, appear infrequently in the Sherlock Holmes canon, but are not ignored altogether. In the two most oft-cited examples—"The Adventure of the Yellow Face" (1893) and "The Adventure of the Three Gables" (1926)—Doyle's depictions of characters with African ancestry appear on the surface to contradict one another in almost every way. "The Yellow Face" ostensibly offers a sympathetic and progressive view on race, demonstrating Holmes' and Watson's lack of prejudice when presented with the product of an interracial marriage; on the other hand "The Three Gables" is in all likelihood the most despised story in the canon, with modern readers and critics alike almost universally condemning Holmes' and Watson's explicit racism and the use of narrative clichés that rely on racial stereotypes. However, the distinctions drawn between these two tales are not as clear-cut as those surface details might suggest, and in both stories the detective and the doctor demonstrate a more complex (and at times more problematic) view of race and its relationship to the science of crime and detection.

While these two stories are the most explicit statements in the canon on peoples of African descent, they are not the only tales that are connected to the African continent. The most notable additional example is the 1926 story "The Blanched Soldier," which—despite never explicitly depicting a black character—identifies Africa as a dangerous colonial environment that is capable of infecting British subjects, transforming them into racial "Others" that threaten the power dynamic and stability of the empire. "The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge" (1908) and "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" (1910) offer additional glimpses into Holmes' and Watson's attitudes toward Africa and people of African origins: the former features a savage, beast-like "mulatto cook" who practices a form of voodoo, while in the latter a doctor who is also an

African explorer administers a deadly poison he acquired from that continent. When taken together, these five tales demonstrate that—much as with India and "The Orient"—Holmes and Watson view Africa as an exotic and primitive place, filled with dangerous poisons, fearsome beasts, barbaric religions, and unrefined people. While their behavior in "The Yellow Face" demonstrates that they are capable of a progressive perspective on race relations, the other tales featuring Africans or Africa (and, indeed, parts of "The Yellow Face" as well) suggest a skeptical and cautious attitude toward the continent and its people, one that is compatible with the criminal anthropology of Lombroso, Ellis, Galton, and others who suggest that Africans and other "lower races" are biologically inferior to white Europeans and are predisposed to criminal behavior.

In this chapter, I will examine the ways in which Holmes and Watson interact with, talk about, and depict characters of African descent, as well as English characters who are "exposed" to Africa. I begin with a brief discussion of "Wisteria Lodge" and "The Devil's Foot" before moving on to the three tales that constitute the primary focus of the chapter: "The Yellow Face," "The Blanched Soldier," and "The Three Gables."

"Wisteria Lodge" and "The Devil's Foot"

Doyle and his literary creations have a complicated and sometimes contradictory view of Africa, its natives, their culture, and their descendants. The ways in which they profile characters of African descent and characterize the continent itself demonstrate their subscription to the dominant criminal-anthropological framework of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, a perspective that views people of African descent as biologically driven to criminal behavior (a perspective that is sadly still all too prevalent in some corners of society). "Wisteria Lodge," for example, opens with Holmes and Watson discussing the nature of the word

"grotesque," with Holmes arguing that "often the grotesque has deepened into the criminal" (1232). This discussion is used later in the tale as a way to cast suspicion on Aloysius Garcia's[1] mulatto cook, a "half-breed" (1237) who—when spotted by a police constable standing guard over the crime scene—is described as a sort of ape-like devil: "It wasn't black, sir, nor was it white, nor any colour that I know, but a kind of queer shade like clay with a splash of milk in it. Then there was the size of it—it was twice yours, sir. And the look of it—the great goggle eyes, and the line of white teeth like a hungry beast" (1248). After the cook is arrested for Garcia's disappearance, the local newspaper report uses similar language, describing "a huge and hideous mulatto, with yellowish features of a pronounced negroid type," and emphasizing his animalistic nature by pointing out that the arresting constable was "badly bitten by the savage" (1255). While Holmes himself is unconvinced of the man's guilt, Watson constructs the narrative in such a way as to cast suspicion on the cook, beginning with the discussion of how "grotesqueness" leads to criminality before subsequently detailing the physical appearance of the cook and the exotic nature of his strange rituals.[2]

The continent of Africa is similarly demonized in "The Devil's Foot," which finds Holmes and Watson investigating the mysterious deaths of three siblings under mysterious circumstances. No Africans appear in the story, but the murder weapon is discovered to be a powder derived from the "devil's foot" root, obtained in Africa by Dr. Leon Sterndale, an explorer and lion hunter. While the motive for the killings is not in itself exotic (being financially motivated on one side, revenge on the other), the devil's foot poison—a dangerous foreign

[1] The tale, in fact, is full of dangerous "foreigners," who—much like the criminals in *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, and other stories—bring conflicts started in their home countries onto British shores, and with them the potential to destabilize the status quo.

[2] As Klinger points out in his introduction to this tale, "Wisteria Lodge" may be the first literary reference to voodoo ever published ("Wisteria" 1231), making it potentially highly influential for later depictions of the religion and its adherents.

material imported from Africa—can be read metonymically to represent the dangers of that continent itself. This is particularly evident when Sterndale describes the nature of the poison to Holmes and Watson, noting "it stimulates those brain centres which control the emotion of fear . . . either madness or death is the fate of the unhappy native who is subjected to the ordeal by the priest of his tribe" (1419). The negative effects described here—fear, madness, death—are reminiscent of symptoms of "going native" suffered by Europeans who have spent time in Africa, such as Conrad's Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* or even Doyle's own writing of his time as a ship's surgeon off the coast of West Africa. In this story, then, administration of this "ordeal poison" that is undetectable to "European science" (1421) stands in for exposure to the continent itself, suggesting the threat posed by importing people (such as Sterndale) and goods (the devil's foot) into Britain. Holmes even allows Sterndale to return to Africa despite uncovering his revenge murder of Mortimer Tregenis, a decision that he explains away to Watson: "if the woman I loved had met such an end, I might act even as our lawless lion-hunter has done" (1422). However, if Sterndale and the devil's foot are in fact stand-ins for the dangers of Africa itself, Holmes' action (or lack their of) can be read instead as a preventative measure, sending the dangerous foreign material back where it came from.

But while Holmes' and Watson's relation to Africa and its people differs from tale to tale, their perspective on both does not differ substantially from the dominant cultural narrative in nineteenth century Britain. These views may, as Jinny Huh suggests, be at least somewhat influenced by Doyle's own views and his interactions with Africans and people of African descent like Henry Highland Garnet (see discussion of "The Yellow Face" below). In a general sense Holmes and Watson profile those who are from and/or exposed to Africa using the same criminal-anthropological "tools" they utilize when interacting with those who are from and/or

exposed to India and/or "The Orient." It should not be too surprising, then, that a young black girl—one who has a white mother and appears set to receive a proper British upbringing—is treated more sympathetically than an African American who is a known thug and who uses his physical strength as an asset in his criminal behavior. While individual Africans may be redeemed, as we will see in "The Yellow Face," that redemption is the result of assimilation into the dominant culture—Africa itself in the Holmes canon is still a place filled with dangerous people, harsh conditions, deadly diseases and vicious animals, a place to be avoided, feared, and exploited so that Britain and its body politic might remain safe and strong.

"The Yellow Face"

One of the most famous Holmes cases dealing with racial politics, "The Yellow Face" only reveals that theme in its last few paragraphs. What appears on the surface to be a tale of an unfaithful wife turns out to be a narrative that challenges cultural attitudes regarding interracial marriage. Both Holmes and Watson express fairly progressive views on the matter once its true nature is revealed, but—as is often the case—these views are less progressive than they may seem, and are at least partially undermined by their actions earlier in the tale. As Watson notes at the beginning of the story, "The Yellow Face" is a testament to the fact that Holmes's investigative techniques are not foolproof, and the flaws that emerge as the case unfolds demonstrate the ways that Holmes and Watson are quick to formulate theories to explain outré events that rely on assumptions about the nature of the criminal (both in general and in this specific case). The result is a story that challenges dominant views of miscegenation and interracial family structures, but only does so as a sort of afterthought; Holmes and Watson instead spend much of the case misinterpreting clues and chasing down red herrings, directing readers' attention to a potentially dangerous foreign presence.

The tale of a husband (Grant Munro) who grows suspicious of his wife (Effie) after she begins visiting a nearby house where a mysterious "yellow" face has been seen in an upstairs window, critics have interpreted the case in a number of ways: Henry Cuningham suggests a possible psychoanalytic approach, arguing that "the yellow face readily serves as the vehicle for any number of psychological or other interpretations. The monstrous visage is for one thing the projection of Munro's inner turmoil . . . but this very adaptability to infinite meaning renders it virtually meaningless" (114). Kestner sees the tale, as many critics do, as a commentary on the changing gender dynamics toward the end of the nineteenth century; the story, he argues, "record[s] a transitional period in cultural history and male response to women's greater self-assertion and independence, both physical and financial" (111-12). Jinny Huh attempts a more in-depth psychoanalytic and biographical reading, arguing that the story's genesis—and, indeed, the genesis of Sherlock Holmes himself—can be traced to Doyle's encounter with black abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet during his voyage through west Africa in the early 1880s.[3] Huh's reading challenges its reputation as "progressive," suggesting that the story is actually a comforting myth for white readers, a sort of "shield that veils and displaces white, patriarchal anxieties of racial detection" (569). Although these readings offer several ways of interpreting both Doyle's and Munro's psyches and contextualize the story's gender and racial issues, they all tend to focus on a few key scenes (Munro's reactions to the face, the "unmasking"), keeping Holmes and Watson in the background where they appear to stay for much of the story. Holmes' theory that Effie's former husband developed "hateful qualities" and followed her to England

[3] Doyle was surprised at Garnet's intelligence and knowledge of literature, and the meeting undoubtedly helped shape the author's views on race. Huh claims that "the emergence of detective fiction, then [via the creation of Sherlock Holmes], is in direct response to the anxieties produced by a failed racial detection or, I would argue, a sort of racial passing" (354)—i.e. Doyle's surprise that Garnet did not fit his preconceived idea of "blackness."

proves to be incorrect in its fine details, but his ability to detect the presence of a "foreign body"—Effie's mixed race daughter—is ultimately confirmed, even if that presence is non-threatening. Watson's role is equally important: as the narrator, Watson acts as the filter through which Grant Munro's version of events passes, and his descriptive flourishes are used to bolster Holmes' suggestion of a threatening alien and/or criminal agent at work.

In order to build suspense and deepen the mystery, throughout the story Watson deploys a set of imagery—both in his descriptions and via the dialogue of the other characters—that positions the figure with the titular "yellow face" (a mask used to hide Lucy Hebron's African ancestry) within the cultural/criminological framework of the foreign criminal body. From the initial description by Grant "Jack" Munro, the face takes on a sinister quality that threatens to destabilize Munro's marriage in particular and symbolizes the broader threat of foreign bodies invading the British domestic sphere. As Munro passes a cottage near his residence, he "suddenly became aware that a face was watching me out of one of the upper windows" (457), and already unnerved by a strange request for £100 from his wife Munro "reads" in that face a vague, undefined threat:

> I don't know what it was about that face, Mr. Holmes, but it seemed to send a chill right down my back. I was some little way off, so that I could not make out the features, but there was something unnatural and inhuman about the face. That was the impression that I had, and I moved quickly forward to get a nearer view of the person who was watching me. But as I did so the face suddenly disappeared, so suddenly that it seemed to have been plucked away into the darkness of the room. I stood for five minutes thinking the business over, and trying to analyze my impressions. I could not tell if the face was that of a man or a woman. It had been too far from me for that. But its color was what had

impressed me most. It was of a livid dead yellow, and with something set and rigid about it, which was shockingly unnatural. (457)

Munro is unable to define what causes his uneasiness, even after "five minutes" spent "analyzing his impressions," but his description repeatedly emphasizes the "Otherness" of the face—its "livid dead yellow" color, the "set and rigid" features, the way it is "plucked away into the darkness." All of these details, vague as they are, give the impression of something "shockingly unnatural" and "inhuman," and its image haunts Munro, whose "mind would still turn to the apparition at the window" "all the evening" (457). While it could be argued that Munro is merely spooked by the presence of a masked figure in the window of a previously unoccupied cottage, it is clear at this point that he is unaware that the face he sees is that of a mask; his own description notes that "what had impressed [him] most" was the color of the face, the "livid dead yellow" that suggests some sort of foreign, possibly "Oriental" presence in the neighborhood[4] and also recalls the disease (yellow fever) that supposedly caused the deaths of Effie's husband and child. That ostensibly foreign presence becomes even more threatening when Munro connects it to his wife's secret, as when he catches her leaving the cottage he spots "that yellow, livid face watching us out of the upper window" and asks, "What link could there be between that creature and my wife?" (463). When he rushes into the cottage, "determined to end the matter once and for ever" (463), he tells Holmes and Watson "all my suspicions rose into a fierce, bitter blaze when I saw that on the mantelpiece stood a full-length photograph of my wife, which had been taken at my request only three months ago" (464). The presence of the photograph—a format that, unlike a painting, purports to provide (like the detective) the most scientifically accurate image of that person possible, capturing their true essence (Thomas, *Detective* 111-14)—reveals

[4] Despite the fact that the "yellow face" clearly suggests a possible "Oriental" component to the tale, criticism on "The Adventure of the Yellow Face" has so far ignored this angle.

to Munro that his own perception of his wife is flawed or incomplete, as well as symbolically demonstrating that her affections do not fully belong to him. The panic created by the sight of the face in the window is intensified by the fact that Munro now links it with his wife's secret, confirming in his mind that some "foreign" threat is now literally invading his own domestic sphere.

Holmes and Watson are also quick to believe that the mask represents some sort of foreign invader's presence in the neighborhood. Holmes theorizes that the face in the window belongs to Effie Munro's first husband, who she claims died in America a few years before. The detective tries to guide Munro's description in this direction ("could you swear that this was a man's face which you saw in the window?" [465]) before confiding to Watson that the "creature who lives in the only comfortable room in the place, and [who] has her photograph above *his* fireplace [emphasis added]" must be "[t]his woman's first husband" who is attempting to blackmail her (466). While Huh has pointed out the pun on "black male" (as we later find Effie's husband to be) implicit in this theory (569), Holmes' line of reasoning posits John Hebron's slide into criminal behavior is accompanied by a bodily disfigurement or disease, again attributing physical inferiority to the criminal body: "The facts, as I read them, are something like this: This woman was married in America. Her husband developed some hateful qualities, or, shall we say, he contracted some loathsome disease, and became a leper or an imbecile" (466). Significantly, Holmes does not clearly delineate between the "hateful qualities" and the "loathsome disease," raising the possibility that they are the same or at the least related in some way. While Watson points out—correctly, for once—that Holmes' idea "is all surmise," Holmes argues that "at least it covers all the facts" (467), and Watson seems (if only for an instant) to buy into a different sort of startling possibility, playing up the drama of the unmasking: "As [the little girl] whisked

around to us, I gave a cry of surprise and horror. The face which she turned towards us was of the strangest livid tint, and the features were absolutely devoid of any expression" (469). In this brief instant it is still not clear that the face is a mask, suggesting either physical deformity or some sort of supernatural explanation; but once Holmes removes the mask it becomes clear that the strange figure is Effie Munro's daughter, "a little coal-black negress with all her white teeth flashing in amusement at our amazed faces" (469).

The range of responses this unmasking elicits from Holmes, Watson, and Grant Munro is the main component of the tale by which its "true perspective" on race is usually gauged. Mirroring Watson's initial reaction, Grant Munro "stood staring, with his hand clutching his throat" (469) at the sight of Lucy. An important detail that is normally ignored, this action—combined with the "long two minutes" he stands silent (473)—suggests that his acceptance of Lucy is (understandably, for the time) not as instant nor as easy as one might hope. Holmes and Watson, meanwhile, laugh out of relief and "out of sympathy with [Lucy's] merriment" (469), and Munro's eventual embrace of both Lucy and Effie is the ending on which Watson, and many readers, "love to think" (473): "He lifted the little child, kissed her, and then, still carrying her, he held his other hand out to his wife and turned towards the door," saying, "I am not a very good man, Effie, but I think that I am a better one than you have given me credit for being" (473). Readings of this story that champion its "progressive" perspective on race relations view this scene, and Holmes' instruction to Watson ("if it should ever strike you that I am getting a little over-confident in my powers, or giving less pains to a case than it deserves, kindly whisper 'Norbury' in my ear, and I shall be infinitely obliged to you" [473]), as evidence of this interpretation. And for a late-Victorian story with the guarantee of a wide readership, the tale does promote a progressive view of racial harmony, at least within the middle-class domestic

sphere. However, despite the family's reconciliation the scene is still problematic in a number of ways. Holmes and Watson's tolerance for example, as laudable as it is, would likely be limited were John Hebron a native African rather than an African American, especially one who was "a lawyer with a good practice" (455) and who was "strikingly handsome and intelligent-looking" (470). As an American with a high level of education and a pleasing demeanor, he poses less of a threat than he would were he an uncivilized and physiognomically-threatening African. (Effie also notes that her daughter is "darker far than ever her father was" [470], suggesting the possibility that John Hebron was only partially of African descent.)

Additionally, as Ronald R. Thomas notes, despite the truth being eventually discovered, Holmes' inability to correctly forecast its solution is damning evidence of his reliance on racist criminological theories:

> The idea of miscegenation never occurs to Holmes: this is the crime that even he cannot (or will not) imagine, the crime of transgressing racial barriers. It violates the fundamental assumptions that he must share about racial difference and that form the basis of the criminal anthropology he practices. So Holmes imagines a tale of illness, deception, and blackmail to take the place of the unimaginable crime, and he gets it all wrong. ("Fingerprint" 677)

The tale, according to Thomas, is just one example of several in which Watson's record of the case "bring[s] [social] problems to light, seeming to critique them, only to end by repeating or reconfiguring them—by excusing imperial plunder, reinstating aristocratic privilege, deceiving or detracting from a woman's struggle for freedom, reinforcing racial prejudice" (678). To modify Thomas's argument slightly, I would argue that perhaps Holmes can in fact imagine "the idea of miscegenation"; however, he sees it as a less likely explanation than that of some sort of

criminal invader, especially when presented with the evidence of a disguise in the form of the "yellow face" (and especially when the evidence for such an explanation is provided by a white middle-class man). Further, even though the case "end[s] by repeating or reconfiguring" the idea of miscegenation to make it more palatable, even a positive act, for Victorian readers, in the process it repeats and reconfigures patriarchal ideology by re-casting Munro's reaction as an act of chivalry (a theme we will see Doyle tackle in depth in "The Blanched Soldier"). In a tale supposedly about the bravery of a white American woman who sacrifices everything to marry a black man, it is Grant Munro—the British patriarch—who becomes the "hero" for forgiving his own wife and accepting her daughter, reestablishing the domestic power structure that the mystery threatens to topple.

The revelation that Holmes' theory is wrong also points to two problematic trends in Holmes' investigation style: assuming a crime has taken place on the word of his client (in particular a male client), and relying on theories based on inherently-flawed criminal-anthropological ideas. Despite the fact that Holmes' only indication that something criminal has occurred is Grant Munro's assurance that his wife is keeping secrets, Holmes instantly concludes that "There's blackmail in it, or I am much mistaken" (466). Based on little but Munro's annoyance that his wife is not acting as he expects her to, Holmes advises that they illegally enter the residence where the yellow face has been spotted: "Any truth is better than indefinite doubt. We had better go up at once. Of course, legally, we are putting ourselves hopelessly in the wrong, but I think that it is worth it" (468). Thomas argues that "Holmes's failure to read this case as successfully as he [reads others] is explained, presumably, because he was not able to examine the body in question, to see 'the unmistakable signs' of 'African descent' that the mask was designed to cover [470]" (677). But the forced-entry is based not on any investigation

Holmes has conducted; in other words, the problem is not that Holmes is "fail[ing] to read this case," but that he does not have enough data to "read" in the first place. As a result, Holmes defers to Munro's patriarchal rights as Effie's husband and determination to discover the truth, as well as his own desire to clear up confusing clues, a decision that indicates not an incorrect interpretation but instead a "short-cut" to the case's resolution. Holmes' willingness to accept a secret blackmailer as the most likely cause also stems from the scant clues he finds that back up the idea of a criminal at work. Firstly, Holmes attempts to lead Munro to a version of events that would support the hypothesis of a foreign male blackmailer:

> "Tell me," [Holmes] said at last, "could you swear that this was a man's face which you saw at the window?"
>
> "Each time that I saw it I was some distance away from it, so that it is impossible for me to say."
>
> "You appear, however, to have been disagreeably impressed by it."
>
> "It seemed to be of an unnatural color, and to have a strange rigidity about the features. When I approached, it vanished with a jerk" (465).

Holmes first tries to establish the strange figure as an adult male, something Munro has not hinted at previously. When this fails to be conclusive, Holmes attempts to read the "disagreeabl[e] impress[ion]" the face gives Munro, also asking if he has ever seen a photograph of Effie's first husband. Both lines of questioning demonstrate Holmes' attempt to lead Munro to confirm his "husband theory" at best, and at worst demonstrate Holmes attempting to fit the face in the window into a criminal-anthropological framework in order to identify it as the visage of an adult male "criminal type" with the attendant facial features. Additionally, Holmes' readiness to infiltrate the house occupied by the mysterious figure indicates his belief that the house is a

"front" for criminal activity rather than a legitimate domestic household. Were this residence occupied by a respectable British family, it is highly unlikely Holmes would advise breaking in; however, since the house seems only to contain the mysterious figure and a housekeeper ("a tall, gaunt woman with a harsh, forbidding face" [457]), its status as a real domestic space is questionable (in Holmes' eyes, at least).

Even if Holmes' investigative techniques demonstrate his reliance on racial assumptions about criminals, the question of the ending (is it as progressive as it seems?) remains. Thomas argues that Holmes' course of action in this case "perfectly recapitulates the blindness of the culture he represents by seeing what the culture sees behind racial difference": a sort of "disease" or "inhumanness" that is dangerous and predisposes one to criminal activity (Thomas 678). For Thomas, Effie's first husband is, in a way, "blackmailing her" by leaving traces of his African descent visible in their daughter which threaten to destabilize the British home, thereby reinforcing racist assumptions about the nature of racial difference. However, while Thomas views Munro's reaction as a sort of displacement, "transform[ing] the problem of race into an issue imported from America, a problem that the unscrupulous woman improperly projects upon English culture" (678), I would argue that Munro's characterization shifts from the problematic portrait his wife fears (a racist who condemns miscegenation) to an only slightly less problematic one (a benevolent father figure who will take care of the disadvantaged child). While the former is certainly more instantly deplorable, the second recalls the "white man's burden" argument many imperialists used to justify ruling over natives in the colonies. Lucy Hebron is not condemned for the color of her skin, but she is also not an African native, does not come from a lower-class background, and despite her "coal-black" complexion she is half-British and will be

raised by two (white) British parents, a fact that minimizes the anxieties surrounding her character.

Holmes and Watson, on the other hand, do emerge as quite progressive for the time period, with a few caveats. Holmes' directive to Watson, for example—to whisper "Norbury" in his ear "if it should ever strike you that I am getting a little over-confident in my powers, or giving less pains to a case than it deserves" (473)—seems less evidence of a progressive view on race than simply a reminder against theorizing without enough data. Further, there is no indication that Holmes will abandon his flawed criminal-anthropological frameworks or give up certain ideas about the inherent qualities of racial groups. However, the pair's relieved laughter, and especially Watson's sympathetic description of the scene and Munro's answer to his Wife on which Watson "love[d] to think" (473), end the story on a hopeful note that paints Holmes, Watson, and Doyle himself as relatively forward-thinking individuals. But Doyle and his fictional creations' views on race are neither as simple nor as liberal as the ending of "The Yellow Face" suggests, a fact that is more than borne out in the complex interweaving of race, gender and illness in "The Blanched Soldier" and the shockingly crude depiction of "Othered" characters in "The Three Gables."

"The Blanched Soldier"

Compared to "The Yellow Face," which reveals its racial component only in its last few paragraphs, "The Blanched Soldier" (1926) simultaneously places its racial anxieties on the surface while declining directly to address them. The story involves Boer War veteran James Dodd, who has lost contact with his fellow soldier Godfrey Emsworth and fears the Emsworth family is covering up his fate. Like *The Sign of the Four*, "The Blanched Soldier" sets its mystery against the backdrop of a significant colonial moment in the history of the British

Empire, the Boer War of 1899-1902, in which British forces clashed with the Dutch-descended settlers in South Africa over a complex set of political tensions in the area. In her book *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire* (1999), Paula Krebs examines the ways in which the press influenced (and created) public opinion on the war, in particular the controversy surrounding the use of concentration camps to house displaced Boer women and children and African natives. Krebs also devotes a chapter to Arthur Conan Doyle's attempts to defend British soldiers against charges of raping Boer women, focusing on his two pro-war books (*The Great Boer War* [1900] and *The War in South Africa - Its Cause and Conduct* [1902]). Krebs argues that Doyle's position on the war was heavily influenced by his views on gender, especially the concept of chivalry that had regained cultural currency in the wake of Victorian medievalism. For Doyle, war was a man's game, and as such it should be conducted chivalrously; he dismissed claims that British soldiers were raping Boer women in the concentration camps, arguing instead that the establishment of the camps themselves was a chivalrous act meant to protect the vulnerable Boer women from dangerous natives (Krebs 106-07). When revisiting the war and the men who fought it two decades later in "The Blanched Soldier," Doyle thematizes the masculinity of Dodd and Emsworth, connecting gender to both racial identity and physiological superiority.

Contextualizing the case of "The Blanched Soldier" within a conflict between European powers on African soil, the gender issues that conflict created, and Doyle's writing on and experience serving in the war, establishes an identifiable vector for the contamination at the heart of the story (Africa) while allowing the racial and sexual implications of the tale to be hidden beneath the "war story" that ostensibly involves solely European actors. Despite being narrated by Holmes himself the tale is primarily medical in nature, drawing connections between race, gender, disease, and crime that point to Africa as another place where prolonged exposure can

result in a kind of infection that both emasculates and "Others" its victims. This disease leaves physical traces on the body and carries the potential to infect the homeland, a situation that prompts immediate medical and social efforts to contain and conceal its presence. As a result of the numerous layers of secrecy and misdirection needed to make this quarantine effective, the narrative takes on many characteristics drawn from the traditions of gothic literature, a narrative strategy that further complicates the tale's gender dynamics and enhances Godfrey Emsworth's status as "Other," making his "transformation" all the more terrifying.

Early on in the tale, Holmes begins to set up an opposition between the physically and mentally fit British male and the "Other," in this case a category that includes Boer combatants, leprous hospital patients, and Godfrey himself (at least initially). When James Dodd consults Holmes upon his return from South Africa, the detective notes that the soldier is "a big, fresh, sunburned, upstanding Briton" (1483), and subsequently dazzles him with a demonstration of his ability to read physical features:

> "From South Africa, sir, I perceive."
>
> "Yes, sir," he answered, with some surprise.
>
> "Imperial Yeomanry, I fancy."
>
> "Exactly."
>
> "Middlesex Corps, no doubt."
>
> "That is so. Mr. Holmes, you are a wizard." I smiled at his bewildered expression. (1483)

This show of "wizardry," like Holmes' other demonstrations, is accomplished by "reading" details of Dodd's appearance that indicate his background: his "virile appearance" and tanned complexion, along with details of his dress, grooming habits, and bearing, make it easy for

Holmes to "place him" as a member of the military (1483). As Dodd tells his story, Holmes notes that "[h]is blue eyes were stern and his square jaw had set hard as he spoke," additional details that lead Holmes to conclude that "Mr. James M. Dodd appeared to be the sort of person whom it would be better to have as a friend than as an enemy" (1487). This judgment is confirmed by Dodd's perseverance in investigating his friend's disappearance, a fact that Col. Emsworth (Godfrey's father) describes as his "infernal pertinacity" (1489) after Dodd makes several unsuccessful attempts to learn the truth.

Dodd's highly active role in attempting to unravel the layers of secrecy protecting Godfrey underscores the way their characters are constructed as opposite poles: Dodd represents the ideal British masculinity, an active force whose exposure to the colonial enterprise only heightens his sense of duty to his fellow countryman and drives his conduct throughout the tale; Godfrey, meanwhile, is transformed into a passive, sickly, and emasculated creature whose contact with South Africa has left him both physically damaged and socially isolated, a ghostly presence which haunts the narrative. Dodd's role as the British ideal is noted by Susan Canon Harris, who argues that "Holmes's reading of Dodd is an over-emphatic disavowal of the central anxiety driving 'The Blanched Soldier'—the fear that the Empire is actually corrupting and enfeebling Britain" (461-62). Citing the change in public opinion in the twenty-plus years between the war and the publication of "The Blanched Soldier,"—that the war "had come to represent the physical and moral corruptions to which the Empire was exposing Britain"—Harris sees the tale as a sort of "medicine" which "Doyle uses . . . to allow Holmes to 'cure' Godfrey and the army he serves" (462). But while Harris attributes the "cure" to Holmes' "investigation," it is Dodd—the "upstanding Briton"—who is responsible for the outcome, revealing Godfrey's presence so that its "Otherness" can be interrogated and "cured," restoring the degraded body to

its “true” (non-leprous) state. Dodd’s role in this “cure” reflects Doyle’s views on the British soldiers serving during the Boer War, particularly in relation to the concentration camp controversy. As a model of British manliness, Dodd’s resolution to save his weakened, vulnerable friend aligns with the chivalrous values Doyle championed in his defense of the Boer War. While chivalry is often thought of in gendered terms (i.e. men defending women’s sexual honor), Krebs notes that “[t]he aspect of medievalism that survived from Scott through to Ruskin and then to Doyle was the notion of chivalry as primarily a sense of the protection of the weak by the strong” (106), a conception of chivalry that tallies with Dodd’s actions in “The Blanched Soldier.” Additionally, although Godfrey Emsworth ostensibly identifies as male, his exposure to Africa has weakened him in ways that resemble Victorian ideals of femininity. For example, his family (in particular his father) hides him away in an outbuilding on the family estate, creating a cover story to deflect attention from his predicament in a way that recalls gothic narratives in which women are sequestered by men (it also recalls several such stories in Holmes cases, such as “The Copper Beeches”). His enforced isolation calls up images of the Boer concentration camps as well, sites in which British men exercised control over Boer women and children; Emsworth’s position as a captive patient ironically places him in the position of the victims interred in the camps, rather than with his fellow British soldiers. Emsworth’s physical condition is also feminized: his skin turns a “fish-belly white,” causing Dodd to proclaim Emsworth “very unlike the frank, manly lad that I had known” (1493). Pale white skin was a marker of feminine beauty in Victorian culture, further pointing up Emsworth’s emasculated condition. And while the psychosomatic nature of his disease bodes well for his physical and social recovery, it simultaneously calls into question his mental state, suggesting a “weak mind” that his male peers would have viewed as unmanly. Dodd’s mission to save his friend, then, clearly recalls

narratives of chivalrous knights rescuing imprisoned damsels in distress, a theme that was part of the resurgence of medievalism during the Victorian period.

In addition to the ways in which Godfrey is painted as a feminized gothic prisoner in his own home, his eerie depiction simultaneously casts him in the role of a mysterious "Other," a status that was often racially coded in gothic narratives, as H. L. Malchow points out in his book *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Not only does "The Blanched Soldier" demonstrate nearly all of Malchow's criteria for a late-Victorian gothic tale,[5] the African origins and physical symptoms of Godfrey's transformation reflect Malchow's argument that the language and tropes of both gothic fiction and the discourse of racial difference were tightly intertwined and mutually influenced one another (2-5). The "gothic" characteristics that mark Godfrey as "Other"—his pale, patchy skin; his strange behavior; his loss of masculinity; etc.—create a sense of anxiety that parallels eighteenth- and nineteenth-century anxieties raised by British and European contact with racial "Others." As Malchow argues, gothic literature and the discourse of racial difference become entangled because "both dwell on the chaos beyond natural and rational boundaries and massage a deep, often unconscious and sexual, fear of contamination, both present the threatened destruction of the simple and pure by the poisonously exotic, by anarchic forces of passion and appetite, carnal lust and blood lust" (5). Godfrey's presence in the narrative demonstrates how the "gothic" elements that make his character unsettling can also be read in racialized terms: his illness, while psychosomatic, is until the very end presumed to originate in Africa, and even if the disease is not a contagion that physically infects him in Africa, it is the exposure to that continent that triggers his condition. Additionally,

[5] Malchow notes that the typical late-nineteenth century gothic narrative "revolves around the problem of confused, vulnerable, or secret identities, fear of exposure, evil masquerading as respectability, or respectability built upon a hidden corruption" (127).

the "leprosy" directly affects the appearance of his skin, the primary physical marker used to identify racial difference, and, though he does not take on African racial characteristics, it is again his exposure to Africa that literally changes the appearance of his skin and threatens to destabilize his racial identity. James Dodd's sighting of Godfrey also highlights this gothic/racial connection: on first glimpsing his friend through the window, Dodd combines the supernatural ("I reckon ghosts may look like that") with language that recalls racist suspicions of racial "Others," particularly those of African origin ("It was . . . something slinking, something furtive, something guilty"), all while emphasizing the unnatural color of his skin (1493). Thus, while Godfrey is never depicted as becoming more "African" as a result of his exposure to the continent, the ways in which his character becomes a sort of gothic specter are also racially coded, emphasizing his difference from the typical Anglo-Saxon Briton and suggesting an African contagion.

A crucial component of the tale's racial/imperial undertone, Godfrey's leprosy is racially coded and directly linked to the African continent. Eventually identified as "pseudo-leprosy or ichthyosis, a scale-like affection [sic] of the skin, unsightly, obstinate, but possibly curable, and certainly non-infective" (1506-07), for all but the final paragraph of "The Blanched Soldier" Godfrey is believed to be suffering from leprosy contracted by stumbling into a leper's hospital after being wounded in action. Waking up in the hospital the next morning, Godfrey is confronted with a nightmarish scene that reads like a passage from a gothic novel:

> it seemed to me that instead of coming out into a world of sanity I had emerged into some extraordinary nightmare. The African sun flooded through the big, curtainless windows, and every detail of the great, bare, whitewashed dormitory stood out hard and clear. In front of me was standing a small, dwarf-like man with a huge, bulbous head, who was

> jabbering excitedly in Dutch, waving two horrible hands which looked to me like brown sponges. Behind him stood a group of people who seemed to be intensely amused by the situation, but a chill came over me as I looked at them. Not one of them was a normal human being. Every one was twisted or swollen or disfigured in some strange way. The laughter of these strange monstrosities was a dreadful thing to hear. (1502)

While the race of these figures is not explicitly mentioned, details of the passage emphasize their physical "Otherness" while also foregrounding the African setting: the "African sun" floods unobstructed through "curtainless windows"; the "dwarf-like man" waving hands that are compared to "brown sponges" and who possesses a "bulbous head" recalls descriptions of African natives in travel narratives from previous centuries; and the "strange monstrosities" with "twisted or swollen or disfigured" features that fill the barren room highlight the disparity between the physically "normal" English soldiers and the aberrant "Others" that fill the hospital (be they Boers, natives, or a combination). Rod Edmond suggests that in this story "the main problem is not with native subjects but colonial rivals" (514), and examining Doyle's description of the Boers in *The Great Boer War*, it is clear that he thought of Britain's opponents in racial terms:

> Take a community of Dutchmen of the type of those who defended themselves for fifty years against all the power of Spain at a time when Spain was the greatest power in the world. Intermix with them a strain of those inflexible French Huguenots who gave up home and fortune and left their country forever at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The product must obviously be one of the most rugged, virile, unconquerable races ever seen upon the earth. (1)

Much like criminologists' obsession with tracing the hereditary origins of a criminal's disposition, Doyle casts the Boers as a formidable opponent (which Krebs attributes to his need for chivalrous British soldiers to have worthy foils), but one drawn from a different racial stock. Thus even though the Boers are white Europeans, they are still racially "Other" to the British, a fact that is enhanced by their long exposure to the African continent. However, their presence in Africa, just like the British, is the result of colonial expansion, and as Yumna Siddiqi points out the specter of their exploitation haunts the narrative. Noting that, as in other tales, "Native Africans are similarly elided in 'The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier,'" Siddiqi argues that

> Such repeated elisions suggests that Doyle allows no space for the native inhabitants in his imaginary representations of settlement colonies and little more in those of other colonies. Yet in the maimed and sometimes racially degenerate European characters who inhabit his stories, Doyle presents hybrid figures of the poor whites and the natives who have been agents and subjects of colonial violence. The insistent presence of these abject bodies suggests that though the imperial subject has become a pariah, he haunts the metropolitan society, like Conrad's 'secret sharer.'(242-43)

The inhabitants of the leper hospital, with their twisted, distorted figures, present in physical terms the horrors of colonization on the African continent—but while Godfrey initially seems to also be a victim of those horrors, he is saved at the last minute by a trio of figures that represent the pinnacle of British physical (Dodd), intellectual (Holmes), and medical (Dr. Saunders) aptitude. This diagnosis rescues Godfrey from his outcast status and restores him to his "rightful" place (and race) among his fellow countrymen, rather than identifying him with the patients in the leper hospital. But even the possibility that he has been infected is enough to cause detectable

physiological symptoms, physical signs that Holmes "reads" in order to theorize about the causes of Godfrey's retreat from the public eye.

Once Godfrey is convinced that he has contracted the disease, he begins to exhibit outward symptoms that visually separate him from "normal" Britons and suggest his contamination as a result of his time in Africa. But in addition to his skin tone, Godfrey takes on characteristics that suggest his transformation into a "criminal type," suggesting a link between his physical deterioration and his moral faculties. When Dodd spies Godfrey through the window of his room at the Emsworth estate, the description he gives Holmes focuses at first on his skin color: "The window came down to the ground and I could see the whole length of it, but it was his face which held my gaze. He was deadly pale—never have I seen a man so white. I reckon ghosts may look like that; but his eyes met mine, and they were the eyes of a living man" (1492). In a later conversation he similarly fixates on the pale skin color, describing it as "bleached" and "of a fish-belly whiteness" (1498). Holmes, too, is struck by it, noting that "[Godfrey's] appearance was certainly extraordinary. One could see that he had indeed been a handsome man with clear-cut features sunburned by an African sun, but mottled in patches over this darker surface were curious whitish patches which had bleached his skin" (1500-01). This "mottled" appearance highlights his "Otherness," as the contrast between the darker skin "sunburned by an African sun" and the albino-like "patches" both differ from "normal" British whiteness and draw attention to each other, marking him as racially deviant. That "Otherness" is reinforced by the repeated use of the word "segregation" throughout the narrative to describe Godfrey's confinement, a term that by 1926 had acquired the connotation of racial segregation as practiced

in the American Reconstruction-era south.[6] Godfrey uses it when describing his possible fate ("The alternative was a dreadful one—segregation for life among strangers with never a hope of release" [1503]), and Holmes uses it three times during the case's resolution (1503, 1505, 1506). The usage also again recalls the English concentration camps, which segregated Boer women and children in one set of camps and native Africans in another, a fact that parallels Godfrey's simultaneous feminization and racial transformation.

But this physical "Otherness" is also associated with criminal activity: when describing his initial sighting of Godfrey, Dodd admits that "It wasn't merely that ghastly face glimmering as white as cheese in the darkness. It was more subtle than that—something slinking, something furtive, something guilty—something very unlike the frank, manly lad that I had known. It left a feeling of horror in my mind" (1492-93). This admission recalls a similar theory Dodd had professed earlier in his narrative. When Dodd questions the Emsworth's butler as to whether or not Godfrey is dead, the latter replies, "I wish to God he was!" (1490), leading Dodd to suspect the worst: "The old man's words seemed to me to bear only one interpretation. Clearly my poor friend had become involved in some criminal or, at the least disreputable transaction which touched the family honour. That stern old man had sent his son away and hidden him from the world lest some scandal should come to light" (1490-91). Apparently Dodd was able to detect Godfrey's "criminal" potential even when they were friends in the Army: as he relates to Holmes, "Godfrey was a reckless fellow. He was easily influenced by those around him. No doubt he had fallen into bad hands and been misled to his ruin" (1491). Dodd's admittance later in the narrative that it was not simply Godfrey's skin tone that shocked him, but his body language and behavior as well, suggests an implicit connection between criminal behavior and

[6] The OED lists examples of the term "segregation" referring to the separation of races as early as 1903.

racial "Otherness." Godfrey's "fish-belly" whiteness is somehow connected to a dark, criminal secret, one that no doubt originated with his time in Africa. This link suggests that exposure to the more "primitive" and extreme environment of the colonies is capable of activating latent criminal tendencies—this is why Dodd, who represents the ideal Briton, is able to escape the war unscathed while Godfrey Emsworth (whose criminal potential was not yet developed, but was nonetheless detectable) undergoes a dramatic physical transformation.

Because it is narrated by Holmes himself, "The Blanched Soldier" initially promises a more in-depth explanation of the detective's methods; he admits that, "having taken my pen in my hand, I do begin to realize that the matter must be presented in such a way as may interest the reader" (1482), and his "reading" of Dodd's appearance includes the same sort of explication he gives Watson in other tales after similar demonstrations. But as the story unfolds the narrative is largely taken over by Dodd and Holmes does very little actual detection: he is able to narrow down the reason for Godfrey's seclusion to three possible reasons, and he takes advantage of a fortuitous situation (proximity to the butler's "disinfected" gloves) to confirm his favored theory. It is not so much his knowledge of crime in this case, but his knowledge of medicine, that provides him with the answer to the mystery. Critics have pointed out this emphasis on the medical over the criminological in the tale: Catherine Wynne argues, for instance, that Holmes' "talent" in this case is "to reveal the medical diagnosis that the Colonel fears by writing a word on a page in his notebook and showing it to him. Holmes's diagnosis allies criminal and medical detection. The word functions as a passport to Godfrey as Holmes emigrates to the sphere of imperial infection located in the English home" (45). Holmes' "technique" here, in other words, is essentially blackmail, demonstrating his possession of "special knowledge" that threatens the family's reputation, but a knowledge that they already possess themselves. Harris suggests that a

major problem with the tale is not so much with the ending, but with the idea of Holmes-as-narrator in general, which reveals his "skills" to be little more than an illusion. Harris argues that "[w]hat appears to us through [the] 'transparent' devices" of Holmes' narration "is not the solution of the mystery. Holmes manages to keep that under wraps until the reader can be confronted with the disfigured Godfrey in a traditional Watsonian dénouement. What Holmes complains about is the fact that his own methods are exposed to scrutiny—and debunked as the fictions they are" (461). While Harris takes issue with Holmes' use of "magic-like" displays as a form of power, I would suggest that these are less "fictional"—and less problematic—than the pseudoscientific ideas about race that underpin the tale's construction, ideas that suggest a connection between colonial exposure, criminal behavior, and physical degradation. The "illusion" is not the power Holmes holds over his clients—his ability to "read" their appearance, illusory or not, does have a verifiable effect on them—but is instead the fiction that crime, disease, or madness are the only outcomes possible when a "reckless" or "easily influenced" fellow like Godfrey is exposed to the colonies.

"The Three Gables"

"The Adventure of The Three Gables" (1926) is perhaps the most controversial—and universally derided—story in the Sherlock Holmes canon.[7] Published toward the end of Doyle's life, the story features some of the most racially-charged narration and dialogue in the Holmes tales. Coming largely from Holmes and Watson themselves, these racist stereotypes are directed at the boxer and African-American caricature Steve Dixie, who has been employed as a thug by the story's main villain. That latter character, Isadora Klein, is herself something of an

[7] Commentators who engage in the "great game" of Holmes studies (i.e. "armchair" scholarship) have often gone so far as to claim that the story is a "forgery" and is not actually written by Watson.

exaggerated figure in terms of race, a Spanish beauty whose wiles have charmed English attaché Douglas Maberley. The case focuses on a mysterious offer to Mrs. Maberley, Douglas's mother, seeking to purchase her house and everything in it after her son's death—Klein is eventually discovered to be the source of the offer, as she is attempting to acquire and cover up Douglas's unpublished novel about their affair before her own impending marriage. Despite some interesting elements that make the story worthwhile—including a network of criminal thugs and a Mycroft Holmes-like character named Langdale Pike who is London's foremost expert on social gossip—virtually all the criticism on the story automatically condemns it for its treatment of Dixie. While the racist dimension of the story is certainly inexcusable, the outright dismissal of "The Three Gables" is excessive, especially when one considers that other critically-lauded works like *The Sign of the Four* are equally problematic in their depictions of race. While more blatant than many of its fellow tales, "The Three Gables" demonstrates that both the influence of criminal anthropology and the theme of the foreign "Other" invading English soil are still at work even in these late Holmes stories.

The portrait Watson paints of Steve Dixie in this tale is exaggerated to the point of caricature, a narrative decision that clashes with the fairly sympathetic portrayal of Lucy Hebron and her family in "The Yellow Face." One interpretation of the change in Doyle's tone is simply laziness—in need of a villain, the author falls back on the stock character of a black thug, neglecting to flesh out his character in favor of the "easy" strategy of appealing to stereotypes about African Americans' propensity for criminal behavior. In such a reading, Doyle relies on culturally-constructed anxieties surrounding black masculinity to convince readers of Dixie's criminal status, confirming those anxieties by pairing the boxer's imposing physical appearance with Holmes' knowledge of his exploits. Henry Cuningham suggests a slightly more complex

variation on this argument, positing that Doyle created Dixie as "a minstrel figure, a caricature of the American black," noting that "Holmes refers to his encounter with Steve Dixie as a 'comic interlude' [1537], and Watson's description of the bruiser's flamboyant attire places the black character securely within the minstrel tradition" (123). Cuningham surmises that such a depiction is an implicit criticism of the famous American boxer Jack Johnson, and hypothesizes that "Doyle may have shared [Booker T.] Washington's disapproval for Johnson, who distinguished himself through brawn and audacity rather than learned accomplishments" (124). Ultimately, though, Cuningham concludes that Doyle "was simply going out of his way to be funny" (123).

However, what these interpretations fail to acknowledge is that Dixie's portrayal in "The Three Gables" is only the most blatant example of racial stereotyping in the canon, and that both Holmes and Watson have expressed similar views—albeit often in more subtle terms—in many of the stories including some of the earliest Holmes cases. Both their dialogue and Watson's descriptions focus on Dixie's physical features, implicitly connecting them to his criminal nature by emphasizing their negative qualities. Holmes' racially-charged quips are some of the most famously scandalous in this story, as they poke fun at features typically exaggerated in stereotyped portrayals of African Americans. The first calls attention to the boxer's smell: "'I've wanted to meet you for some time,' said Holmes. 'I won't ask you to sit down, for I don't like the smell of you, but aren't you Steve Dixie, the bruiser?'" (1536). While not necessarily tied to Dixie's race, the jab is only one of several that follow in quick succession:

> "That's my name, Masser Holmes, and you'll get put through it for sure if you give me any lip."
>
> "It is certainly the last thing you need," said Holmes.
>
> [. . .]

> "I am glad you weren't forced to break his wooly head, Watson. I observed your maneuvers with the poker. But he is really rather a harmless fellow, a great muscular, foolish, blustering baby, and easily cowed, as you have seen." (1536-37)

The comments on Dixie's smell, lips, and "wooly" hair align with racist descriptions of African Americans in literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but Holmes' claims to recognize in Dixie's "great muscular" figure a criminal type who is both "harmless" and "foolish," a "blustering baby" who is "easily cowed." Holmes reinforces this impression in a later encounter with Dixie while punning on the boxer's race: "'I've got him thoroughly frightened *for his own skin*, Watson,' Holmes remarked as we walked on. 'I think he would double-cross his employer if he knew who he was' [emphasis added]" (1544).[8] While Holmes' remarks might be read, as mentioned, as a reference to the boxer Jack Johnson, they are still notable for their blatant racism; at the same time, however, they also clearly align with the ideas of fin de siècle criminal anthropology, which viewed people of African descent as more likely to engage in criminal behavior as a result of their "less-evolved" brains and more "primitive" physiology.

Watson's narrative also reflects similar racial prejudice, especially in his crude attempt to transcribe Dixie's speech and the language used to describe the boxer's appearance and behavior. The former is infamous enough to be called "a poor example of dialect writing" by Huntington Lyman and Margo A. Figgins in the "Teaching Suggestions" section of their article "Democracy, Dialect, and the Power of Every Voice" (which otherwise has nothing to do with Sherlock Holmes), and essentially consists of repeated clichéd words and phrases (e.g. "Masser") as well

[8] During this encounter, Holmes again pokes fun at Dixie's scent:
> "Lookin for your gun, Masser Holmes?"
> "No, for my scent-bottle, Steve." (1544)

as convoluted grammatical constructions (e.g. “I was trainin’ at the Bull Ring in Birmingham when this boy done gone get into trouble” [1537]). Cuningham argues that Watson’s method of constructing Dixie’s dialogue is another factor that places the character within the minstrel tradition (123), especially when combined with Watson’s description of Dixie’s “very loud grey check suit with a flowing salmon-colored tie” (Doyle 1534). However, Watson’s descriptions go beyond Dixie’s dress and speech, and the physical and behavioral characteristics he emphasizes are much closer to the “criminal type” than the black minstrel. When Dixie bursts into the room at Baker Street, Watson describes him as a “huge negro” whose “broad face and flattened nose were thrust forward, as his sullen dark eyes, with a smoldering gleam of malice in them, turned from one of us to the other” (1534-35). Dixie’s immense physical stature, combined with the “broad face and flattened nose,” play heavily upon depictions of African Americans as ape-like brutes, while the focus on his “sullen” eyes with “a smoldering gleam of malice” suggests that Watson immediately reads his presence as a threatening one. Watson even directly compares him with an animal, noting: “If I had said that a mad bull had arrived, it would give a clearer impression of what occurred” (1534). Encountering Dixie outside The Three Gables later in the tale, Watson relates how he and Holmes “came on [Dixie] quite suddenly, and a grim and menacing figure he looked in that lonely place” (1543), a line that paints the boxer as an out of place element in this quiet English neighborhood.

While these initial impressions are fairly explicit (and might be explained by the violent nature of Watson’s initial encounter with Dixie), there are several other more subtle indications of Watson’s racial prejudice. For example, he attributes some of Dixie’s dialogue as the “growl” of a “savage” (1535), and when Holmes makes his quip about Dixie’s lip Watson notes that the detective was “staring at our visitor’s hideous mouth” (1537). Additionally, he describes Dixie’s

fist in a way that emphasizes its rough appearance, and combined with Holmes' comment the lines suggest that Dixie's lack of physical "refinement" might be explained by his African heritage: "[Dixie] swung a huge knotted lump of a fist under my friend's nose. Holmes examined it closely with an air of great interest. 'Were you born so?' he asked. 'Or did it come by degrees?'" (1535). Watson's prejudice is further illustrated by the way he continuously refers to Dixie as "the negro" rather than using his name, a strategy that both dehumanizes Dixie and suggests a link between his race and his criminal activities. In some ways Watson's reaction to Dixie might be read as a reaction to the boxer's "unrefined" social graces (and thus as a form of class prejudice rather than racial prejudice), but the frequent references to Dixie's anatomy suggest a deeper bias likely influenced by the anthropometric and criminal-anthropological theories of Galton, Lombroso, Ellis, and Bertillon. His minstrel-like appearance may, as Cuningham suggests, also indicate some level of influence from depictions of African Americans in the popular culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, especially in the way Watson attempts to transcribe Dixie's speech. Such a reading does not necessarily negate Holmes' and Watson's progressive views of race relations in a story like "The Yellow Face," but it does show that those views may break down when a threat is presented—especially when that threat aligns with a dominant cultural framework which directly connects race and social deviancy.

Because the little attention this tale has received has almost entirely focused on the depiction of Dixie, it is important to note that he is not the only character who faces racial prejudice in "The Three Gables." The actual villain of the piece, Isodora Klein, is also depicted and discussed in ways that suggest a racial component to her criminal behavior. In her character especially, the idea of the "foreign influence" corrupting the Englishman and threatening the

social order is at work, once again constructing a narrative in which Holmes plays the role of defender of British masculinity. When Holmes first describes Klein to Watson, he emphasizes her Spanish heritage: "But does the name Isadora Klein convey nothing to you? She was, of course, *the* celebrated beauty. There was never a woman to touch her. She is pure Spanish, the real blood of the masterful Conquistadors, and her people have been leaders in Pernambuco for generations [emphasis in original]" (1549). Attempting to convey the power she wields, Holmes calls attention to the fact that she carries "the real blood of the masterful Conquistadors" in her veins, making sure to note that that blood is not diluted as Klein is "pure Spanish." When Holmes and Watson finally gain an audience with her, Watson emphasizes the "exotic" aspects of her character and her surroundings, which are described in a similar manner to those of Thaddeus Sholto in *The Sign of the Four*:

> A minute later we were in an Arabian Nights drawing-room, vast and wonderful, in a half gloom, picked out with an occasional pink electric light. The lady had come, I felt, to that time of life when even the proudest beauty finds the half-light more welcome. She rose from a settee as we entered, tall queenly a perfect figure, a lovely mask-like face, with two wonderful Spanish eyes which looked murder at us both. (1550)

In addition to the misogynist comment on her age, Watson again calls attention to her race, specifically the "wonderful Spanish eyes" that betray a criminal intent. Setting this description against an exotic "Arabian Nights drawing-room" heightens the sense of Klein's foreignness, while the "half gloom" points to her illicit activities, hidden amongst the shadows. Additionally, her surname is foreign in other ways—her deceased husband was a "German sugar king," and his

last name suggests that he may have been Jewish as well, a fact that further associates the seductress with dangerous non-English "others."[9]

The sense that Klein is a villain is enhanced by the qualities with which Watson imbues her depiction, but her actions also bring her in line with the canon's other foreign threats. The first danger she poses is her ability to seduce the upstanding Englishman and entice him away from establishing his own domestic sphere at home. While Douglas Maberley is just one of several lovers Klein takes after the death of her husband, Holmes notes that he is a particularly shining example of British masculinity, "a strong, proud man who gave and expected all" (1549). In her role as Maberley's seducer, Holmes describes Klein to Watson as "the 'belle dame sans merci' of fiction. When her caprice is satisfied the matter is ended, and if the other party in the matter can't take her word for it she knows how to bring it home to him" (1549). The method by which she "brings it home" is intimidation tactics provided by "the Spencer John gang," a group of thugs (including Steve Dixie) who "specialize in assaults, intimidation, and the like" (1537), a strategy that points to the depth of her criminal connections. That Klein is capable of tempting Maberley, who was "so vitally alive" and "lived intensely—every fibre of him!," and reducing him to a "moody, morose, brooding creature" and "a worn-out cynical man" who rapidly succumbs to pneumonia (1538) illustrates the danger she poses to the respectable British gentleman.[10] Even more scandalous is the fact that Maberley's seduction was never a serious

[9] The story's anti-German and anti-Jewish sentiment would have been especially apparent to contemporary British and American readers, as the story was published in the wake of both the end of World War I in 1918 and the first English publication of the anti-Semitic forgery *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in 1919. H. L. Malchow also discusses prejudice against Jews and its connection to gothic tropes in *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, particularly in relation to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (ch. 3).

[10] Klein, for her part, tries to blame Maberley's decline on another foreign influence: the dangerous "air" of Italy, where their affair takes place. As she tells Holmes and Watson, "It was

relationship, but instead part of "an interval of adventure when she pleased her own tastes" before becoming engaged to "the young Duke of Lomond, who might almost be her son" (1549). This revelation not only reflects late-Victorian anxieties surrounding the increased agency of women, it also emphasizes the fact that the impending marriage will result in Klein—a dangerous femme fatale and foreign criminal—infiltrating British high society.

While Steve Dixie's portrayal in "The Three Gables" is rightfully derided for Doyle's blatant use of racial stereotypes, his depiction of Isodora Klein is similarly (though more subtly) flawed. That Holmes and Watson are the source of many of the racist statements and views complicates the image of them constructed in "The Yellow Face," showing that their fairly progressive views on race could be and were subject to suspension or modification depending on the circumstances. When no crime is actually committed, as in "The Yellow Face," their perspective on race is laudable; but when a character with exotic or foreign attributes is suspected of criminal activity, that perspective often shifts, attributing at least some part of the suspect's "criminal nature" to their race. Such an inconsistent, subjective view of race undermines Holmes' claim to a scientific, rational worldview, since the determination of who is innocent and who is guilty is itself often based on Holmes' investigation and contemplation, a process that creates a sort of self-fulfilling system in which race is not the cause of criminal behavior, but enhances the depth of criminality and leaves clearer traces of deviance upon the "foreign" body that it does the English body. Thus, Steve Dixie is not a criminal because he is black, nor is Isodora Klein a criminal because she is Spanish—however, Dixie's blackness magnifies his criminality and vice versa, as does Klein's Spanishness. Their social deviancy is

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as if the air of Italy had got into his blood and brought with it the old cruel Italian spirit" (1553), again suggesting a connection between geographical location/climate and behavior.

made more legible because of their physical deviancy, and it takes an astute reader of the body—like Sherlock Holmes—to correctly "read" the signs imprinted there by the pen of biology.

Chapter 4: "Look at the magnificent types!"—English and Continental Criminals

The suspicious characters that populate the Sherlock Holmes canon provide an excellent opportunity to study what Victorians and Edwardians thought about criminality and its origins. While most of the villains examined so far are from "Eastern" locales such as India, the African continent, or have spent a significant amount of time in one of these regions, many of the culprits Holmes and Watson pursue are either British or are of European extraction. The most famous of these is Holmes' arch nemesis, Professor Moriarty, a criminal mastermind whose popularity and cultural recognition has nearly reached the heights of Holmes himself. Yet, while English criminals sometimes take on the same characteristics as their Asian or African counterparts (such as Jonathan Small in *Sign of the Four*), the tendency to portray a character as dangerous or somehow inferior to the typical Briton is far more commonly found when European immigrants appear as a major character. As with the other criminals examined so far, these characters' deviant behavior has a biological component, an inherited quality that drives them to criminality and which manifests itself not only in their actions, but in detectable anatomical signifiers. Holmes uses these features to identify suspects while Watson extracts their narrative value, using them as a way to add descriptive texture to his account of the cases. This chapter will examine four Holmes tales in varying degrees of detail: "The Greek Interpreter," "The Six Napoleons," "The Golden Pince-Nez," and "The Red Circle" all provide examples of how Holmes' investigative philosophy (and Watson's narrative one) position European immigrants as biologically inferior to, and more likely to commit crimes than, their English counterparts. As such, they demonstrate the ways in which cultural anxieties about English national identity in the late Victorian era were rationalized through ideas of anatomical typology and the biological origin of criminal behavior. Popularized by criminal anthropologists like Galton, Ellis, and

Lombroso, these ideas extend not only to non-European foreigners but to (non-English, often lower-class or otherwise inferior) European "criminal types" as well. Even Professor Moriarty, who largely fails to fit the "criminal type" (which is part of why he is so threatening), displays signs of inherent criminality to the observant gaze of Sherlock Holmes.

"The Greek Interpreter"

Published in 1893, "The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter" is perhaps most notable to Holmes's readers as the first of only two stories in which Sherlock's older brother Mycroft appears.[1] The titular character and neighbor of Mycroft, Mr. Melas, engages Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson to investigate a mysterious incident in which he was bundled off in a carriage and taken to a secret location in order to translate for a pair of kidnappers attempting to force their captive to sign some legal documents. While Mycroft does very little in the story besides introducing Holmes to his client, the case provides a rare opportunity to examine Holmes' family background and his relationship with his brother, and it is upon these aspects of the tale that most scholars have focused. However, the opening scene at 221 B Baker Street establishes an underlying subtext that runs throughout the story and until now has been little examined. Centering on a version of the "nature vs. nurture" debate, the questions raised by Holmes and Watson at the beginning of the story regarding hereditary traits—especially "atavisms"—and their effect on behavior and personality inform Watson's depiction of Mycroft, Mr. Melas, and (especially) the criminals, suggesting that inherited physical characteristics are directly related to one's disposition. Further influenced by pseudoscientific theories about cranial development, physiognomy, and race, "The Greek Interpreter" provides further evidence of Holmes' and

[1] Mycroft also appears in "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans," and he is mentioned in "The Final Problem" and "The Adventure of the Empty House."

Watson's reliance on biased, unverified ideas that undermine their ostensibly rational approach to criminal investigation.

In addition to the novelty of Mycroft's presence in the tale, the main narrative of "The Greek Interpreter"—the story of a woman duped by a disingenuous lover who kidnaps her brother in order to force him to sign over both his sister and their property—is rich for analysis in terms of how it reflects the patriarchal culture of Victorian England, but there has been little written on it from any angle. Lesli J. Favor examines the story in some depth in "The Foreign and the Female in Arthur Conan Doyle: Beneath the Candy Coating," arguing that it is a prominent example of the ways in which Doyle "others" characters which are non-British, non-male, or both. Favor points out the central yet vague presence of Sophy, the woman whose brother has been kidnapped, contending that—despite her crucial role in the tale—she has been relegated to the margins of the narrative, appearing only briefly and even then as a figure relayed third hand, "from the Greek interpreter to Holmes and Watson and then from Watson to his readers" (401). "The Greek Interpreter," she concludes, as well as other tales such as "Charles Augustus Milverton" and "The Dancing Men," "illustrates how a society's patriarchal ideology infiltrates its fiction with results similar to those of imperialism" (400), relegating women to the periphery and reinforcing the dominant cultural narrative. More often, however, the story is mentioned in passing or as part of a larger argument covering several stories: Nicki Buscemi, for example, highlights "The Greek Interpreter" as a notable instance of Watson emphasizing his life-saving medical skills, a quality that she suggests contrasts with Holmes' cold, analytical approach (which she compares to a "performer of an autopsy") (228). Susan Canon Harris, writing on Holmes' role as a "doctor" who can treat the contagions of Empire, refers to "The Greek Interpreter" in her discussion of "The Blanched Soldier" as an example of how Holmes is

able to detect the traces of military service on the body of the returned soldier, as he does in his "game" with Mycroft (Harris 461). These various approaches, however, ignore Holmes' and Watson's discussion of atavistic traits and its implications for the case that follows, namely the insights it provides into Holmes' investigative philosophy and the effect it has on how Watson depicts the other characters in the story.

Ostensibly used as a plot device to provide Sherlock with a reason to introduce Mycroft Holmes to Watson, the debate between the detective and the doctor at Baker Street which opens "The Greek Interpreter" also functions as an epistemological framework that informs Holmes' and Watson's perception and depiction of the other characters in the story. While only a brief moment in the scope of the tale, the key concepts under discussion reappear in various guises throughout. Watson describes how their conversation touched on various topics before it "came round at last to the question of atavism and hereditary aptitudes. The point under discussion was, how far any singular gift in an individual was due to his ancestry and how far to his own early training" (635-36). When Watson suggests that Holmes' "faculty of observation and [his] peculiar facility for deduction are due to [his] own systematic training" (636), Holmes surprisingly (to Watson) demurs and admits that some of his talent may be inherited: "My ancestors were country squires, who appear to have led much the same life as is natural to their class. But, none the less, my turn that way is in my veins, and may have come with my grandmother, who was the sister of Vernet, the French artist. Art in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms" (636-38). "Art in the blood" is as subjective and unverifiable a trait as "criminality in the blood," since both concepts are culturally constructed and not biological in nature, being instead dependent on historical and socio-political factors. Holmes' view that his own abilities are partly hereditary demonstrates his confidence in the underlying ideas of

criminal-anthropology: that psychological and behavioral traits can be passed down along with (sometimes corresponding) physical features to one's descendants. When Watson asks for an example that backs up this theory, Holmes provides the example of his own brother:

> "But how do you know that it ['art in the blood'] is hereditary?"
>
> "Because my brother Mycroft possesses it in a larger degree than I do." (638)

While Holmes' own argument here is flawed—since, from all accounts, he and Mycroft grew up in the same environment (and, thus, had a similar upbringing)—Watson's account of Mycroft's mental powers and his description of the elder Holmes' physical features seem to confirm Sherlock's conjecture.

When he first meets Mycroft, Watson illustrates the former's intellect by recounting a "competition" between Mycroft and Sherlock in which the pair attempt to glean as many details as they can from a pair of men passing by on the street. Significantly, in addition to being another example of how Holmes (and his brother) can detect the traces of military service in India as Susan Canon Harris points out, Mycroft also indicates his own belief in the idea of anthropometric "types," commenting on their vantage point from the Diogenes Club: "'To anyone who wishes to study mankind this is the spot,' said Mycroft. 'Look at the magnificent types!'" (643). Watson's own description of Mycroft reflects a compatible view as it emphasizes his similarity to Sherlock, further reinforcing the belief in hereditary traits manifesting themselves in both physical and mental features that can be easily "read" by the trained observer:

> Mycroft Holmes was a much larger and stouter man than Sherlock. His body was absolutely corpulent, but his face, though massive, had preserved something of the sharpness of expression which was so remarkable in that of his brother. His eyes, which were of a peculiarly light watery grey, seemed to always retain that far-away,

> introspective look which I had only observed in Sherlock's when he was exerting his full powers. (643)

In particular, Watson points to both visually confirmable features (the large frame, facial resemblance, the eyes) and qualitative impressions of the elder Holmes' demeanor (the "sharpness of expression," the "far-away, introspective look," etc.). These types of details are fairly typical Watsonian narrative devices, but when considered in the context of the opening conversation with Holmes regarding hereditary and atavistic traits, they signify a reification of those concepts that places Holmes himself, as well as his family members, squarely within the same ideological framework that informs the detective's investigative and cogitative methods. Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes (and Watson), in other words, do not excise themselves from the machinations of genetic inheritance; they simply make sure that their worldview places them at the pinnacle of the biological and intellectual pyramid, representative examples of both British masculinity and Western post-enlightenment scientific thought. Such a view is complicated by their ancestry, however, since it has been established that the Holmes brothers are descendants of the sister of a French artist. Both French nationality (Varouxakis 117-30) and art as a profession[2] carried with them associations of femininity for nineteenth-century Britons, a fact that along with the French ancestry itself furthers Holmes' own "Otherness" compared to his fellow British subjects. However, by contrasting Sherlock with Mycroft, particularly in terms of physical fitness and energy, Watson is able to emphasize the detective's masculinity by demonstrating his comparatively more active lifestyle. Additionally, Holmes repeatedly describes his work as a

[2] The association of femininity and art was no doubt enhanced by the public attention garnered by Oscar Wilde, famous for his connections to the art world and his "dandy" lifestyle. The "Wilde trials" of 1895, approximately eighteen months after the publication of "The Greek Interpreter," would have likely cemented the association between art and femininity for many. good

kind of "art," but by aligning art with science and philosophy (i.e. "the science of deduction") he places his work in the realm of intellectuals and academics, a sphere Victorians generally coded as masculine. While the brothers' French ancestry does complicate their identities as Britons, England and France's long history of contact with one another means that such ancestry is fairly unsurprising (though it does call many of the ideas about an "English race" into question). In any case, "The Greek Interpreter," populated by other characters whose origins are far more plainly written upon their features, pushes into the background any concerns about the Holmes brothers' ancestry.

The superior position the English characters occupy is especially apparent when compared with the depictions of the other characters that populate "The Greek Interpreter," particularly the titular character, Mr. Melas, and the criminals who abduct him. Described as "a remarkable linguist" by Mycroft (645), Melas is also immediately associated with non-English "others"—despite his perfect English speech—both because of his Greek ancestry and because of his role "as a guide to any wealthy Orientals who may visit the Northumberland Avenue hotels" (645). Watson's description of Melas foregrounds the contrast between his "Southern" features and his English mannerisms: "we were joined by a short, stout man whose olive face and coal black hair proclaimed his Southern origin, though his speech was that of an educated Englishman. He shook hands eagerly with Sherlock Holmes, and his dark eyes sparkled with pleasure when he understood that the specialist was anxious to hear his story" (645). However, despite his English-like qualities, throughout the case Melas demonstrates both physical and mental inferiority compared to the English characters. He is kidnapped twice, once by an Englishman (Latimer) who is physically superior to him and once by another Englishman (Kemp) who—despite being physically "insignificant" (653)—intimidates Melas through thinly

veiled threats and force of character alone. In fact, Melas is more or less powerless throughout the entire case, his agency seemingly limited to asking Paul Kratides questions to learn who he is and reporting his concerns to Mycroft and Sherlock. While his impotence is not explicitly linked with his race, all of the Greek characters (Melas, Paul Kratides, and his sister Sophy) are at the mercy of the English criminals: Melas is easily kidnapped and forced to do the criminals' bidding, Paul Kratides—though he does not give in—is imprisoned, starved, and eventually killed by them, and Sophy Kratides, despite eventually getting revenge, is duped by Latimer until it is too late to save her brother. Unable to save himself from the English criminals, Melas is forced to rely on other Englishmen (the Holmes brothers, Watson, and the police) to defeat them, a situation that further underscores his inferiority. Read once again within the context of Holmes and Watson's opening conversation regarding heredity and atavistic traits, the inability of Melas and the Kratides to escape the control of the English criminals on their own suggests an inherent/inherited weakness that aligns with the pseudoscientific concept of evolutionary/racial hierarchy underpinning criminal-anthropology, anthropometry, and other related fields of "scientific" criminal investigation.

As in many other Holmes tales, the descriptions of the criminals in "The Greek Interpreter" reflect the belief that deviant tendencies are written on the body in ways that can be read by the careful observer. When the first of the pair we see, Harold Latimer, engages Mr. Melas' services, he is described as "a very fashionably dressed young man" (646). It is quickly revealed, however, that his appearance is nothing more than a disguise: first tipped off by the rich but frayed fittings and paper-covered windows of their cab, Melas quickly realizes that Latimer has criminal intentions, "drawing a most formidable-looking bludgeon loaded with lead from his pocket, and switching it backward and forward several times, as if to test its weight and

strength" (646). It is only after this realization that Melas sees through Latimer's disguise, telling Holmes and Watson that "[his] companion was a powerful, broad-shouldered young fellow, and, apart from the weapon, [he] should not have had the slightest chance in a struggle with him" (647). Latimer's dangerous qualities are also reflected in the way his voice changes once he relaxes his "costume" of the respectable young man: as Melas notes, "His words were quiet, but he had a rasping way of saying them, which was very menacing . . . it was perfectly clear that there was no possible use in my resisting, and that I could only wait to see what might befall" (648). Latimer's transformation not only alerts Melas that he is in the presence of a criminal—it also establishes the latter's inferiority by highlighting his inability to resist the criminal's actions. Latimer's large frame, growling vocalizations, and club-like weapon suggest Victorian conceptions of pre-historic man, drawing a link between the criminal's primitive physique and his nefarious behavior.

Wilson Kemp is even more intimidating to Melas despite being physically less threatening than Latimer. Kemp is "a small, mean-looking, middle-aged man with rounded shoulders" (648), but though his stature is unimpressive and described by Melas as "insignificant-looking" (653) his criminal tendencies are plainly written on his facial features and expressions. As Melas tells it, "[Kemp] spoke in a nervous, jerky fashion, and with little giggling laughs in between, but somehow he impressed me with fear more than the other" (648). Additional description slightly later in the story expands on this initial impression, and interprets the appearance of Kemp's face and his bodily (especially facial) movements in much the same way as a criminal anthropologist might:

> His features were peaky and sallow, and his little pointed beard was thready and ill-nourished. He pushed his face forward as he spoke and his lips and eyelids were

> continually twitching like a man with St. Vitus's dance. I could not help thinking that his strange, catchy little laugh was also a symptom of some nervous malady. The terror of his face lay in his eyes, however, steel grey and glistening coldly with a malignant, inexorable cruelty in their depths" (653).

The impact Kemp has on Melas is not directly due to any action or violence the former does to him, at least not in this passage; instead, it is a series of inklings, based solely on his appearance and body language. Melas' interpretation of these "signs" indicates that he, like Watson and the Holmes brothers, buys into criminal anthropological theories that posit the physical detectability of criminality via anatomical features and behavioral tics. That such features are hereditary (recalling Holmes' and Watson's opening conversation) is suggested at the end of the tale, when Watson—summing up the outcome of the case—notes that Kemp was "a man of the foulest antecedents" (662).[3]

Also of significance is the way "The Greek Interpreter" demonstrates why "correct" detection/interpretation of criminal features is such an important motivating factor for Holmes and Watson: when those features go undetected or are interpreted incorrectly, the result is an increased likelihood that a crime will take place. Once Melas is re-kidnapped, Holmes and Watson's exchange with the woman who answers his door (presumably a housekeeper or other servant) highlights the danger of misinterpreting the physical appearance of a villain like Kemp:

> It was almost dark before we found ourselves in Pall Mall, at the rooms of Mr. Melas. A gentleman had just called for him, and he was gone.

[3] Intriguingly, several elements of Wilson Kemp's description recalls that of Professor Moriarty, including the rounded shoulders, odd movements, and foul ancestors. As I will show in my discussion of Moriarty, many of these same descriptors suggest the figure of the compulsive masturbator, a fact that further ties Kemp's (and Moriarty's) physical appearance to their "immoral" actions.

"Can you tell me where?" asked Mycroft Holmes.

"I don't know, sir," answered the woman who had opened the door; "I only know that he drove away with a gentleman in a carriage."

"Did the gentleman give a name?"

"No, sir."

"He wasn't a tall, handsome, dark young man?"

"Oh, no, sir. He was a little gentleman, with glasses, thin in the face, but very pleasant in his ways, for he was laughing all the time that he was talking." (658)

Finding Kemp's features and behavior "very pleasant in [their] ways," the housekeeper's inability to read the signs of the man's inherent criminal nature gives Kemp access to Melas (who, had he seen who was at the door himself, likely would never have answered it), eventually leading to the death of Paul Kratides, the near-death of Melas, and the (temporary) escape of Kemp and Latimer with Sophy. Melas's own misinterpretation of Latimer's appearance is similar and is the mistake that sets the whole case in motion. While these results apparently show the importance of correctly identifying criminal features on the body, it actually demonstrates the fallibility of such an approach: if criminality can be so easily confused with respectability, as it is in the case of both Latimer and Kemp, the distinctions between types—between the ideal "norm" and the inferior deviant—break down, rendering such anatomical signifiers meaningless (and, in this case, ineffective) as an investigative tool. Despite all of Holmes and Watson's talk about hereditary traits and atavisms, "The Greek Interpreter" illustrates that aberrant tendencies can lurk undetected beneath even the most outwardly refined English facade.

"The Six Napoleons"

Published in 1904 soon after the return of Holmes to print, "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" follows Holmes and Watson's investigation into a mysterious string of incidents involving burglary and vandalism. Specifically, plaster busts of Napoleon Bonaparte are being stolen and destroyed, and, while the incidents seem benign enough at first, they eventually escalate to murder after a man is found dead at one of the crime scenes. As an example of how biomedical science, criminology, and imperial ideology intertwine in the Holmes canon, "The Six Napoleons" is noteworthy in several ways. The character of Beppo demonstrates how profiling based on physiognomy and assumptions about the criminal body are not limited to those of African or "Oriental" descent, but are also employed when dealing with European "criminal types" as well. Additionally, Beppo's Italian heritage and links to Catholicism play on longstanding English and American prejudices against "popery" and its links to dangerous secret societies. Physiognomic profiling techniques that attempt to "read" the body are also used on at least two other characters in this story (the murdered man, Pietro Venucci, and the German manager at Gelder & Co. where the plaster busts were manufactured), further indicating Holmes' and Watson's reliance on the practice. Additionally, Watson's medical expertise is used to "diagnose" Beppo before he is positively identified, suggesting an explicit link between criminal behavior and physical body. Holmes also uses a photograph found on the dead man as part of his investigations, using the medium's ability to "scientifically" capture and preserve the physical appearance of the suspect—much in the same way Alphonse Bertillon attempted to do with his Bertillonage system—as a way to confirm not only the identity of the suspect but his innate criminal nature as well.

Despite its popularity with readers and adaptors, "The Six Napoleons" has attracted limited critical attention. Considering the tale in relation to William Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris; or,*

the New Pygmalion, Sonia Hofkosh focuses on the way Holmes ascribes value to the nearly worthless plaster busts, arguing that "rather than dismiss them, as Lestrade does, as 'nothing,' Holmes understands that it is as such, hollow as they indeed are, that they can accrue or acquire what amounts to substantial value, what we might call depth or interiority or identity" (29). Ultimately, Hofkosh contends, "[w]hat is crucial about the busts . . . is that they can convey meanings distinct from their relation to a specific referent . . . in various, not to mention 'queer,' 'novel,' or 'very strange,' ways" (29-30). Citing the "increasing evidence of the disruptive power of the irrational and the unconscious," Rosemary Jann sees the criminal typing and profiling in "The Six Napoleons" as part of a trend in the canon, in which the stories "strive to preserve the unified, fully intelligible self of realism by insisting that people remain totally predictable, or that at least among those deserving of social power, the desire that could undermine logic and predictability would be self-policing" (705). Joseph Kestner has argued that the story reveals several sorts of cultural anxiety, including fears about anarchist plots, foreigners, and male sexual degeneration, embodied in the character of Beppo (and, to a lesser extent, the German manager) (142-43). But, while Jann does point out the ways in which Beppo's depiction is tied to criminological theories that over-extrapolate evolutionary principles, her argument is primarily focused on understanding how such strategies are tied to class distinctions and the preservation of social order (700), and Kestner's reading—while briefly mentioning the Italian sculptors' atavistic traits—is part of his larger argument about anxieties surrounding the decline of Victorian masculinity (143). My argument is that Beppo's depiction, along with Holmes' and Watson's analytical strategies and the assumptions that undergird them, are extensions of the same racist and/or imperialist ideological formations that inform more plainly problematic representations of "Others" like Tonga in *Sign of the Four* or Steve Dixie in "The Three Gables."

Beppo, the Italian sculptor-turned-criminal of "The Six Napoleons," in many ways recalls both Enoch Drebber (*A Study in Scarlet*) and Tonga (*Sign of the Four*). Like these other social and anatomical deviants, he is depicted as more ape-like than human, with regressive traits both physical and behavioral dominating the impression he leaves on other characters. Before he even sees Beppo's photograph, Holmes deduces his savage nature by "reading" the crime scene he has left behind and the crowd that it has attracted: "By George! It's attempted murder at the least. Nothing less will hold the London message boy. There's a deed of violence indicated in that fellow's round shoulders and outstretched neck. What's this, Watson? The top steps swilled down and the other ones dry. Footsteps enough, anyhow!" (1037-38). This crime scene, the location where Pietro Venucci has been murdered, is where the investigators discover a photograph of Beppo, and Watson's description of it emphasizes its subject's ape-like features: "It [the photograph] was evidently taken by a snap-shot from a small camera. It represented an alert, sharp-featured simian man with thick eyebrows and a very peculiar projection of the lower part of the face, like the muzzle of a baboon" (1040). This description tallies almost exactly with the description of Enoch Drebber in *A Study in Scarlet*, whose "low forehead, blunt nose, and prognathous jaw" collectively give him a "simious and ape-like appearance" (56) that instantly marks him as a Lombrosoan criminal type. Examining the crime scene, Holmes also attributes Tonga-like agility to Beppo (who, like the Andaman islander, is only ever given one name), noting that "[t]he fellow had either very long legs or was a most active man" (1040), a judgment confirmed later when they encounter him in person. Lying in wait for the culprit, the group observes "a lithe, dark figure, as swift and active as an ape, rush[ing] up the garden path" (1050-51), and when they restrain him Watson is again startled by his "hideous, sallow face, with

writhing, furious features glaring up at us," making sure to add, "I knew that it was indeed the man of the photograph whom we had secured" (1052).

However, even though there is no way of knowing that its subject is the vandal/murderer at the time the photograph is discovered, Holmes positively identifies him as such: parting ways with Lestrade after examining the murder scene, Holmes tells the Inspector he "should like to keep this photograph found in the dead man's pocket" (1043), and much of his subsequent investigation involves using the photograph to gain more information about Beppo and building a case against him. Lestrade even comes to the same conclusion, reasoning that Venucci intended to kill Beppo and carried the photograph "so that he may not knife the wrong person" (1048). Watson's revulsion to the man in the photograph, Holmes' retention and utilization of it, and Lestrade's conclusions, combined with the reactions it gives Holmes' interviewees (who remark on the face's ugliness and idiosyncrasy[4]), all point to Beppo's physical appearance as the primary "evidence" against him. When taken together with the visual motif of the tale—identical, mass-produced faces of Napoleon that are shattered into nothingness—Beppo's "singular" face takes on additional meaning, as does Holmes' tracing of the busts' provenance. Hofkosh argues that Holmes is interested in "the history of these objects as objects," and that "they can accrue or acquire what amounts to substantial value" (29); but Holmes' "excavations" are focused more on unearthing details about Beppo himself rather than the busts, and their systematic destruction means that a single face—Beppo's—is the one which acquires "substantial value" via its physical features that provide Holmes with the identity of the criminal.

[4] For example, the German manager at Gelder & Co. admits that the trouble Beppo caused "Serve me right [sic] for engaging a man with such a face" (1046), while the manager at Harding Brothers, when questioned about the man in the photograph, replies, "No I have never seen this face which you show me in the photograph. You would hardly forget it, would you sir—for I've seldom seen an uglier" (1047).

There is some value, however, in "reading" these Napoleonic faces as well: Watson's initial diagnosis that Beppo may be suffering from some sort of "monomania" suggests Napoleon's own imperial drive, the uncontrollable nature of which resulted in his eventual demise. Additionally, like Beppo Napoleon is a foreign "Other," one who, as Stuart Semmel puts it, "unsettled the traditional contrasts, and even the revised revolutionary ones. He seemed to defy categorization, or to inspire contradictory classifications" (735). Napoleon's resistance to easy classification mirrors the way the busts complicate the initial attempts to classify the crimes Beppo commits, and the numerous interpretations his image elicits in the story (and throughout nineteenth-century British popular culture) demonstrate the irony in attempting to read a face, or in this case its likeness, as a way to detect criminality.

Holmes, Watson, and Lestrade also read the appearance of the murdered man (Pietro Venucci) and the manager at Gelder & Co., albeit with less significant results than their readings of Beppo. At the crime scene Lestrade notes that Venucci is "a tall man, sunburned, very powerful, not more than thirty" (1040), a collection of attributes that are similar to several other ruffians in the canon (such as Dr. Roylott in "The Speckled Band," for instance). Noting again "his colour" along with "some Catholic emblem" found round his neck, Lestrade concludes that the victim "was from the South" and as a result directs his attention to the Italian Quarter of Saffron Hill[5], subsequently identifying the man as "Pietro Venucci, from Naples . . . one of the greatest cut-throats in London. He is connected with the Mafia . . . enforcing its decrees by

[5] In Klinger's accompanying note, he cites Adolphe Smith's *Street Life in London* (1877), pointing out that according to Smith Saffron Hill was "a uniquely self-enclosed society that was noisy with the bustle of the ubiquitous 'ice men' who sold Italian ices throughout the rest of London. Matter-of-factly labeling some of these men 'the worst characters that Italy produces,' Smith charged that those who claimed to be Neapolitan had likely never even seen Naples, and were merely covering up for a more unsavory background" (1048, note 28). Directing his investigation toward that neighborhood suggests that Lestrade buys into similar stereotypes.

murder" (1048). As minor a detail as this correlation between body type and criminality seems, it is further confirmation of criminal anthropology's efficacy in the eyes of one of Scotland Yard's chief inspectors, a view that Holmes and Watson do not challenge. More significant, however, is the presence of the "Catholic emblem," a detail that would have raised the specter of anti-Catholicism that spread through Britain in the mid-nineteenth century. As Albert Pionke has noted, a combination of the Act of Union with Ireland in 1800, loosened restrictions on Catholics (particularly the 1829 Catholic Relief Act), and the rise of the Oxford Movement in the 1830s created a wave of anti-Catholic sentiment in the (largely Protestant) British public (51-54). As both Pionke and Susan M. Griffin have shown, Catholics became a popular target for allegations of conspiracy and secret society membership. By suggesting that Beppo's criminal activity is somehow connected to both organized crime and the Catholic church, Doyle, despite his own Catholic origins, resurrects cultural fears of both the cultural and religious "Other" to further highlight the danger Beppo's mysterious plot poses to British society.

Watson attempts his own application of physiognomic profiling when he reads the manager at Gelder & Co. Noting that he is a "big blond German," when the manager is shown Beppo's photograph, Watson makes sure to mention how the man's "brows knotted over his blue Teutonic eyes" (1044-45). These details, while vague, are an example of Watson appealing to (and leaning on) the idea of a "German type" as a stand-in for a more thorough visual description of the manager. There is also a subtle, implicit hierarchy to the workshop—the manager, the only German mentioned in the story, is in a position of authority within the company and his actions and responses appear to be motivated by a sense of professional integrity; his workers, on the other hand, are primarily Italian, and the manager suggests that they are more prone to criminal connections and conduct (suggesting, for instance, that one of Beppo's cousins in his employ

could easily locate him). Joseph Kestner reads the dynamics of the Gelder & Co. workshop as an important key to unlocking the story's sexual politics: arguing that Watson's theory of Beppo's monomania (a "hereditary family injury [received] through the great war' [179]) suggests venereal disease, Kestner points out that "concern about male sexuality and castration is suggested by the name Gelder, that of the firm making the plaster busts," further noting, "The fact that the busts are of Napoleon might also suggest massive power drives and fantasies of the men who purchase them" (143). Focusing on the German foreman, however, he underscores the role nationality plays in scene: "That the manager of Gelder's is 'a big blond German' with 'blue Teutonic eyes' ([1044], [1045]) evokes the fear of Germans in Edwardian society, here German potency commanding a company in Britain named Gelder" (143). The nationalist undertones of the scene demonstrate that even when Watson crafts depictions of seemingly neutral characters such as witnesses interviewed in the course of an investigation, his perceptions are informed by a sense of cultural identity that further problematizes the already questionable criminal-anthropological techniques he and Holmes utilize. As such, Watson often negatively portrays secondary or background characters in much the same way he does "criminal types," even when he has no artistic or rhetorical reason (such as foreshadowing) for doing so.

In addition to demonstrating Holmes' and Watson's continued reliance on the principles of criminal anthropology, "The Six Napoleons" also reflects the increasing awareness of how psychological traits have an influence on behavioral patterns, especially those of the criminal. As psychology became a more rigorous scientific discipline around the end of the nineteenth century, its concepts and methods were increasingly invoked in the investigation and prosecution of crime. Foucault has argued that this phenomenon is the result of shifts in the role of the medical professional and the subsequent creation of psychiatry as an autonomous discipline

towards the end of the nineteenth century. He suggests that as "[t]he social 'body' ceased to be a simple juridico-political metaphor . . . and became a biological reality," it became "a field for medical intervention," transforming the doctor into "the technician of this social body" and medicine into "a public hygiene" (6-7). Psychiatry and its practitioners, he argues, gained social currency because of their perceived value as a defense against (and explanation for) the "social dangers" of insanity, the most threatening of which was crime, particularly homicide (7). While Foucault's generalizations are problematic, his argument does highlight the fact that medical science (including psychiatry) was beginning to "invade" the disciplines of criminology and law enforcement at the turn of the century as a way to better understand the mechanics of criminal deviancy.

Beppo's crimes are ultimately attributed to his greed (as well as the implied importance of his status as a criminal type), but Watson initially theorizes that a psychological disorder may be the source of his behavior. When Holmes asks for his opinion, the doctor notes that "[t]here are no limits to the possibilities of monomania" (1036), the exact term Foucault highlights as the "entirely fictitious entity" psychiatrists "invented" as a way to "take their place in the legal machinery" (5-6). Watson elaborates, suggesting:

> "There is the condition which the modern French psychologists have called the 'idée fixe,' which may be trifling in character, and accompanied by complete sanity in every other way. A man who had read deeply about Napoleon, or who had possibly received some hereditary family injury through the great war, might conceivably form such an 'idée fixe' and under its influence be capable of any fantastic outrage" (1036).

While Holmes dismisses this possibility, arguing that "no amount of idée fixe would enable your interesting monomaniac to find out where these busts were situated" (1037), Watson's

preliminary diagnosis demonstrates the potential value of the medical man to detect the "social danger" posed by a psychological deviant, who displays "complete sanity in every other way" except for the 'idée fixe' the medical man has the ability to recognize. In this way the criminal body is still being read like a text—rather than a visual inspection of the physical body and its characteristics, the traces left behind at the crime scene constitute a "record" of the criminal's mental instability that can be read and interpreted by the knowledgeable expert, providing both an explanation for and confirmation of their inherent criminality.

Holmes, however, uses a far more permanent and scientifically up-to-date record of the criminal's identity as his primary tool in the case—the photograph found in Pietro Venucci's pocket. Beyond providing a likeness that allows the detective to identify the physical features that label Beppo a criminal, the photograph also provides an "incorruptible" document[6] that can be used as a tool to locate him. As Ronald R. Thomas has argued, the invention of photography changed the study of crime by allowing for the "perfect" likeness of the criminal to be captured and preserved in all of its details, superseding language as the primary way by which identity could be positively established (*Detective* 111-12). With Beppo's criminal body transcribed in all its detail and transformed into a text, Holmes is able to instantaneously interpret that text, bypassing potential gaps or errors in human knowledge and perception, resulting in a more accurate understanding of the suspect he is pursuing. But, as Thomas points out, this scientifically "perfect" method of capturing of individual identity creates a paradox when the detective also uses that image to determine the physical signs of criminality—"the attempt, on the one hand, to isolate the deviant individual from everyone else by inscribing a unique identity

[6] "Incorruptible" in quotes because it is only perceived as such—the practice of editing and modifying photographs was well-established by the end of the nineteenth century, with Frances Galton going so far as to create photographic composite images of the "criminal type" by blending portraits of several different offenders (Thomas 125-26).

on the body, and, on the other, to recognize a generalizable criminal type that can be made visible in a set of bodily traits" (126). This paradox also extends to the motif of the story—six identical busts constitute a general "type," but only a single bust conceals the evidence of a crime (the theft of a Borgia black pearl). Holmes's "process of elimination" technique in determining which bust holds the pearl indicates his own resolution to the apparent paradox of establishing criminal identity: the physical indicators of criminality can be used to identify a set of individuals who are most likely to have committed a crime, while more specialized scientific techniques (like photography) can be used to reveal the guilty party.

The complex ideological strands at work in "The Six Napoleons" demonstrate an attempt to incorporate entrenched beliefs about the nature of criminality, race and the physical body with developments in psychology, forensic science, and investigative methodology. The use of psychiatric diagnosis (amateur as it is) and photographic technology is used not only to solve the crimes under investigation, but also to confirm the physical, racial, and psychological deviance of the culprit, who is portrayed as inferior in all of these categories compared to the British males who prove their superiority over him by tracing, identifying, and capturing him. While the story is not explicitly imperialist in nature, the case positions British citizens and the society they live in at the peak of a hierarchy, a position threatened by anarchists, criminals, and foreigners, who are sometimes (even often) the same individual. The imperative that motivates Holmes, Watson, and Lestrade is the continuation of British eminence on the European (and world) stage, and their ability to recognize criminality and keep it in check both demonstrates their dominance and furthers that purpose.

"The Golden Pince-Nez" and "The Red Circle"

The threat of anarchist activities was a major source of English sociopolitical anxiety in the closing years of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century. Originating in the 1830s with anxieties surrounding the Oxford Movement and the threat of Catholic "secret societies" like the Society of Jesus (Pionke 57-63), these concerns gradually shifted focus to similar political/revolutionary threats on the continent throughout the late nineteenth century such as the Paris Commune of 1871, as well as such home-grown groups as the Fabians and other socialist organizations. The turn of the century saw an increase in works of fiction that played on these fears of social anarchy, such as Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907) and G.K. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), along with more "mainstream" efforts appearing in the pages of popular magazines such as *The Strand*. At the same time, Britain's comparatively lax immigration policies created an influx of refugees from other countries, many from places where anarchist terrorism was a much more common occurrence.[7] As a result, by the close of the nineteenth century the threat of anarchy and the increase in immigration became linked in the public and literary imagination, as Elizabeth Carolyn Miller has pointed out:

> Anarchism could be said to represent a genuine threat to "Englishness" in that it actively opposed the nation state as a political and social formation . . . literary accounts of this genuine anarchist threat to Englishness are tinged with xenophobic fears about the dilution of English national identity by way of immigration. The political danger and security risk anarchism appeared to pose was thus projected onto London's entire immigrant population, feeding suspicions about immigrant's supposed predisposition to vice and criminality. (267-68)

[7] As Pionke points out, increased Irish immigration in the "hungry forties" was one such influx, and was partly responsible for the increased suspicion targeted toward Catholics (69).

As Miller goes on to demonstrate, anarchists in fiction often had a double function, reflecting real social fears about terrorist activity while simultaneously placing those fears on the non-English "others," who take on physical and behavioral characteristics associated with both the "under-evolved" and more primitive criminal type and the exotic foreigner.

Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories also participated in this practice,[8] most notably in "The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez" (1904), in which a Russian Nihilist attempts to infiltrate the English home of her ex-husband in order to steal some papers that could free her new lover and fellow revolutionary, who has been imprisoned in Siberia. In the process, she accidentally kills his English secretary, prompting an investigation by Holmes and Watson. Two other stories contain similar narrative frameworks that feature a foreigner immigrating to England, in the process bringing a dangerous pursuer onto English shores and forcing Holmes to intervene in order to restore social order. In "The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge" (1908), briefly discussed in the previous chapter, a brutal South American dictator flees to England, attracting a group of revolutionaries bent on revenge, while "The Adventure of the Red Circle" (1911) finds Holmes and Watson investigating a landlady's mysterious lodger, who turns out to be a married couple on the run from a New York Mafioso for their resistance to the organization. While the latter tale is not as explicitly political in nature as the other two, it continues the trope of the foreigner whose flight to England brings with it the wrath of some dangerous group whose activities threaten to destabilize English society. And, as Miller's argument suggests, many of these foreigners are depicted as sub-human, or at the very least in terms that emphasize their inferiority and align them with the "criminal type." In this section, I will examine "The Golden Pince-Nez"

[8] In addition to the examples discussed in this section, it is worth noting that in "The Six Napoleons" (examined earlier in this chapter), the picture-dealer Morse Hudson (who sold several of the statues) suspects anarchists: "Disgraceful, sir! A Nihilist plot—that's what I make it. No one but an anarchist would go about breaking statues" (1043-44). good

and “The Red Circle,” arguing that, like the depiction of the “huge and hideous mulatto” cook in “Wisteria Lodge” (1255), the primary non-English foreigners in each are given much the same descriptive treatment by Holmes and Watson as foreign threats from “The Orient” and Africa, despite their European origins.

While the true “criminal” in “The Golden Pince-Nez” turns out to have killed accidentally for apparently noble reasons, and both Holmes and Watson find admirable features in her, the overall impression of the professor’s estranged wife tallies with other depictions of criminals in the canon. Like Tonga in *The Sign of Four*, many of these features are “read” by Holmes via physical traces before she is actually identified, and when she emerges from a secret passage at the story’s climax, her appearance, like Tonga’s, contains “the exact physical characteristics which Holmes had divined” (1116). These characteristics are quite ape-like, matching many of the criminals in the canon: based on nothing but her titular eyewear, Holmes deduces that “[s]he has a remarkably thick nose, with eyes which are set close upon either side of it. She has a puckered forehead, a peering expression, and probably rounded shoulders” (1102-03). While Holmes points out that “A lady whose vision has been so extremely contracted all her life is sure to have the physical characteristics of such vision, which are seen in the forehead, the eyelids, and the shoulders” (1103), this is after he has identified her as the murderer; while her features may have a mundane explanation, their capability of broadcasting her potential criminality remains unchanged. The fact that she has such an apparent physical handicap (her eyesight) only provides more evidence for the idea that moral degeneracy is accompanied by a detectable, bodily manifestation of that degeneracy. Her “strange foreign voice” and face “streaked with grime” (1116) further bolster the negative image Watson paints of her, despite his admission that “in spite of all these disadvantages, there was a certain nobility in the woman’s

bearing—a gallantry in the defiant chin and in the upraised head, which compelled something of respect and admiration" (1116-17).[9] And while she has admirable qualities, the fact remains that she has (accidentally or not) killed a promising young Englishman (Willoughby Smith) who had been acting as her husband's secretary. This act not only throws the professor's (mostly) English household into disarray, its perpetration by a confirmed Russian nihilist (despite her claims of non-violence) makes the crime even more disturbing as a violation of Britain's borders.

The professor himself is also revealed to be a kind of criminal, and his physical features also point to this fact—but in a decidedly different way than those of his wife. Rather than resembling an ape, Professor Coram takes on exotic "Oriental" qualities that foreshadow his exposure as the true villain of "The Golden Pince-Nez." Initially the professor seems to be a fairly typical retired academic: "an invalid, keeping his bed half the time, and the other half hobbling round the house with a stick or being pushed about the grounds by the gardener in a Bath chair. He was well liked by the few neighbours who called upon him, and he has the reputation down there of being a very learned man" (1096). However, he quickly becomes a mysterious figure, locked in his room much of the day; when Holmes and Watson finally meet him in person, he is described in terms that emphasize his exotic appearance:

> I have seldom seen a more remarkable-looking person. It was a gaunt, aquiline face which was turned towards us, with piercing dark eyes, which lurked in deep hollows under overhung and tufted brows. His hair and beard were white, save that the latter was curiously stained with yellow around his mouth. A cigarette glowed amid the tangle of white hair, and the air of the room was fetid with stale tobacco smoke. As he held out his hand to Holmes, I perceived that it was also stained with yellow nicotine. (1107-08)

[9] This admission, I would argue, does not negate her strange foreignness, and is reminiscent of the Victorian conception of the "noble savage."

The descriptive elements in this passage— the "tangle" of white hair and beard, yellowed skin, "piercing dark eyes," glowing cigarette, the smoke-filled chamber—recall Thaddeus Sholto's "eastern oasis," as well as the opium den and some of its inhabitants, creating an "Oriental" atmosphere that complements the professor's appearance.

This aura is quickly reinforced by other aspects of his character: his "well-chosen English, with a curious little mincing accent," imported Alexandrian cigarettes, and side table piled high with "documents found in the Coptic monasteries of Syria and Egypt" (1109). As Watson describes the effect, "He was, indeed, a weird figure as he turned his white mane and his glowing eyes towards us. The eternal cigarette smouldered in his mouth" (1113). The exotic characterization of the professor forecasts the revelation of his true identity, suggesting his foreign origins as well as signaling his duplicity; like his hidden past, the professor's professional exterior hides a criminal nature, one which is reflected in his physical appearance. As with his wife, perhaps the most frightening aspect of the professor's criminality is his ability to infiltrate England without detection, and in his case he is even able to pass as an Englishman for a significant period of time. The importance of Holmes' role, then, is not the solving of Willoughby Smith's murder, but his ability to detect foreign invaders and expose them, a point that Holmes' final lines demonstrate: "Well, Hopkins, here we are at Charing Cross, and I congratulate you on having brought your case to a successful conclusion. You are going to headquarters, no doubt. I think, Watson, you and I will drive together to the Russian Embassy" (1122). By separating from Inspector Hopkins, who is no doubt departing to write up a report on the murder, Holmes and Watson head for the Russian Embassy, presumably to deliver "Mrs. Coram's" packet of information as well as to expose the professor's whereabouts. The intent behind this course of action is not just the fulfillment of a dying woman's request. By visiting the

embassy, Holmes and Watson demonstrate the ability (and duty) of the English to expose foreigners hidden in their midst, as well as their potential to affect a foreign power's political affairs. "The Golden Pince-Nez" thus reinforces the power dynamic that runs throughout the canon: the superiority—biologically, intellectually, and geopolitically—of England, a superiority that is reflected in Holmes' ability to read and interpret foreign bodies and their traces. A reassurance of England's ability to maintain its sovereignty in uncertain times, such a thematic applies the theories of criminal anthropology to ostensibly "Western"/European bodies, interpreting physical traces and anatomical features as signifiers decipherable by a trained scientific observer like Holmes.

"The Red Circle" recapitulates many of the same themes found in both "The Six Napoleons," and "The Golden Pince-Nez," elaborating on the racial theories regarding Italians in the former and relying on the cultural suspicions present in both tales about clandestine groups of foreigners on English soil. Little has been written on this late-era Holmes tale, but the few who have examined it include Joseph Kestner in *The Edwardian Detective*, where he argues that Emilia Lucca is the main point of interest in the tale because of her active role in telling the story: "It is she who explains the political context to Holmes at the story's conclusion, proving herself a daring, dauntless and defiant variant of the New Woman . . . Unlike many women in the canon compelled to silence, Emilia Lucca, because she is not British, can show defiance" (217). While Kestner's point is well taken, his analysis is just a single example in a larger argument and thus is fairly insubstantial, at least in terms of examining "The Red Circle" in any real detail. A more in-depth analysis is provided by Mary Frances Williams, who argues that the story (along with "Wisteria Lodge") is patterned after "the dramatic and literary conventions and the essential themes of English Renaissance and Jacobean revenge drama" (418). While she draws some

interesting parallels between these tales and the revenge drama genre, her conclusion about "The Red Circle"—that in this tale "Conan Doyle shows that the world of revenge tragedy, exotic though it is, is present all about in the everyday world of Edwardian Britain and is neither foreign nor uncommon" (433)—is flawed: in both tales, the originating conflict and the players in it are all inherently "foreign" and threaten to disrupt (ostensibly stable) British society, a fact that directly contradicts Williams' claim. While it begins as an apparently domestic mystery, as the case unfolds thematics of xenophobia become increasingly clear. The story is divided into two distinct halves, both literally and thematically: the first part follows Holmes and Watson as they attempt to discover the identity of their client's mysterious lodger, while part two finds the pair collaborating with Inspector Greyson and an American Pinkerton detective, Mr. Leverton, to capture a dangerous Mafioso named Gorgiano who is pursuing the "lodger," actually the married couple Gennaro and Emilia Lucca. While the couple are eventually cleared of any wrongdoing, both parts of the tale rely on Victorian xenophobia and fear of secret societies for their effects, and the actual villain (Gorgiano), as expected, conforms to the criminal model predicted by criminal anthropology, both in his ape-like physique and his insatiable primitive drives.

Part one utilizes Gothic elements[10] to cast suspicion upon Mrs. Warren's lodger, a strategy that once again plays on the threat of foreign agents invading Britain. Beyond the general uneasiness caused by the lodger's mysterious behavior, one element that repeatedly

[10] These elements include the dark and mysterious foreign figure presumed to be the lodger, disembodied footsteps, the locked room on the second floor, strange "printed" notes, etc. Also of note is the way Watson describes Holmes' effect on Mrs. Warren's shattered nerves: "Holmes leaned forward and laid his long, thin fingers upon the woman's shoulder. He had an almost hypnotic power of soothing when he wished. The scared look faded from her eyes, and her agitated features smoothed into their usual commonplace" (1274). As Ronald R. Thomas has noted (in *Dreams of Authority*), dreams often play a significant role in both gothic and detective fiction. Mrs. Warren's account—under Holmes' guidance—of her lodger's mysterious behavior suggests the recounting of dream details under the hypnotist's influence, further increasing the gothic atmosphere of the tale's first half.

recurs in the unraveling of the mystery is the figure's foreignness. During Mrs. Warren's account of her lodger's mysterious behavior, Holmes asks for a more detailed description: "Now, Mrs. Warren, you say that the man was of middle size, dark, and bearded. What age would he be?" (1276). Significantly, nowhere in the tale has Mrs. Warren described her lodger thus, and the opening lines of the story do not suggest any point in their conversation where she might have.[11] It seems, then, that based solely on the mysterious behavior (particularly on the printed notes, which Watson suggests and Holmes confirms are meant to conceal the lodger's identity) Holmes has constructed a profile of the criminal that generally fits the "criminal type," even though no obvious details have pointed to such an appearance. When pressed for more details, Mrs. Warren confirms the description and adds: "He spoke good English, sir, and yet I thought he was a foreigner by his accent" (1276).

Holmes is quickly convinced that the lodgers have been switched out, but is also certain that the true inhabitant of the room is also a foreigner, one even more obviously non-English than the original:

> We have no proof that the person who came back was the person who went out. Then, again, the man who took the rooms spoke English well. This other, however, prints 'match' when it should have been 'matches.' I can imagine that the word was taken out of a dictionary, which would give the noun but not the plural. The laconic style may be to conceal the absence of knowledge of English. (1278)

[11] The story opens with Holmes saying: "Well, Mrs. Warren, I cannot see that you have any particular cause for uneasiness, nor do I understand why I, whose time is of some value, should interfere in the matter. I really have other things to engage me" (1272). It does not seem likely, therefore, based on Holmes' response here, that Mrs. Warren would have had much time or reason to describe her lodger as middle-sized, dark, and bearded.

Holmes' interpretation is later confirmed when they stake out the room from across the hall and catch a glimpse of the actual lodger, Emilia Lucca. There is still plenty of suspicion hanging over her, however, the bulk of which centers on her obvious foreignness: Watson catches "a glimpse of a dark, beautiful, horrified face glaring at the narrow opening of the box-room," and Holmes notes, "'My surmise, as you saw, proved to be correct,' said he, speaking from the depths of his easy-chair. 'There has been a substitution of lodgers. What I did not foresee is that we should find a woman, and no ordinary woman, Watson'" (1283). The implication is that Emilia is not "ordinary" in the sense that she is not English, an idea reinforced when she tells her story, with Watson noting how "[s]he spoke in rapid and fluent but very unconventional English" (1293) and how, on learning of Gorgiano's death, it was "terrible and amazing to see such a woman so convulsed with joy at such a sight" (1292). While Holmes' comment about Emilia's "un-ordinariness" might be interpreted in a similar way as Holmes' reactions to strong, willful female characters like Irene Adler, at this point in the story Holmes has no real context on which to base such an interpretation, being only aware that Emilia is a foreign woman in hiding. Thus while Emilia and Gennaro become avenged victims by the end of the story, they remain strange foreign presences who threaten the stability of English society in their attempt to hide in London.

The true foreign threat in "The Red Circle," however, is the mafia thug Gorgiano, whose desire for Emilia and jealousy of Gennaro bring him to London. A member of the organized crime syndicate that gives the story its name, Gorgiano's reputation precedes him as Holmes' reaction to the Pinkerton detective indicates:

> "I am on the trail of my life now, Mr. Holmes," said he. "If I can get Gorgiano—"
>
> "What! Gorgiano of the Red Circle?"

> "Oh he has a European fame, has he? Well we've learned all about him in America. We *know* he is at the bottom of fifty murders, and yet we have nothing positive we can take him on." (1286)

Gorgiano's notoriety almost certainly rests on his physical stature and the sort of violent actions Emilia Lucca describes in her narrative: he is "a huge man" with the body "of a giant" and a voice "like thunder," about which everything is "grotesque, gigantic, and terrifying" (1294). He attempts to rape Emilia when her husband is away, and intimidates Gennaro with threats of violence if the latter fails to follow the directives of the Red Circle. While Holmes and Watson have no way to confirm Gorgiano's actions, having no interaction with him, they do have his body, which confirms Emilia's story by broadcasting his criminal tendencies: finding "Black Gorgiano" (in Leverton's words) on the floor of the crime scene, Watson describes him as "an enormous man" with a "clean-shaven , swarthy face grotesquely horrible in its contortion," with "[h]is knees . . . drawn up, his hands thrown out in agony, and from the centre of his broad, brown, upturned throat there projected the white haft of a knife driven blade-deep into his body" (1289). The dark complexion, distorted features, and ape-like pose recall Watson's description of Enoch Drebber in *A Study in Scarlet*, while the "crimson halo of blood, lying in a broad wet circle upon the *white* woodwork [emphasis mine]" (1289) and the "white haft" of the knife in his "brown throat" of the "dark figure" (1292) use color-coding to further emphasize both his racial otherness and his criminal nature.

Although the threat he poses is quickly neutralized, the very fact that Gorgiano made it into London apparently undetected by British police (and, significantly, Holmes himself) and was killed in a mafia-related scuffle is plenty of cause for concern, especially when Leverton has already noted that "there are several of his gang in London" (1288). The second half of the story

shifts the anxiety from Mrs. Warren's mysterious lodger onto the dead criminal body of Gorgiano, but also onto the foreign criminal organization he represents. While there is no indication in the story that this "secret society" has any Catholic connection, Pionke points out that the question of Italian unification, a hotly debated topic in British political circles throughout the 1860s, also involved questions of Papal authority and the threat posed by Italian secret societies (101-03). Utilizing an Italian secret society in "The Red Circle" allows Doyle to capitalize on familiar cultural fears of the threatening "Other," highlighting the racial, religious, and political difference inherent in the story's Italian characters. Emilia's own narrative of The Red Circle's campaign of intimidation and violence highlights the danger such an organization poses to British society, and their Italian origins provide proponents of anti-immigration views with evidence to support their claims. Like similar claims leveled at Africans and "Orientals" throughout the canon, elements of "The Red Circle" suggest that Italians are not only racially different than the English, but racially inferior as well, easily detectable by their physical features and more likely to engage in criminal behavior. It is ironic, then, that one of the most zealous proponents of criminal anthropology's theory of racial/inherited criminality, Cesare Lombroso, was himself Italian, demonstrating how such ideas are capable of backfiring on those who espouse them. Riding on the coattails of cultural anxieties surrounding the immigration of European "Others," "The Red Circle" positions Holmes in his typical role as defender of British borders, flushing out and containing (or eliminating) foreign threats before they can infect and/or destabilize English society.

Professor Moriarty

No account of European criminals would be complete without a look at Doyle's most famous master villain, Professor Moriarty. Although he only appears in "The Final Problem," the

last Holmes tale published before "The Great Hiatus" (1893-1902), Moriarty's shadow hangs over several other tales, and his reputation as Holmes' greatest opponent is securely entrenched. Unlike many of the villains considered in the preceding chapters, Moriarty appears to be a typical Englishman: the "Mathematical Chair at one of our smaller universities" (718), during their meeting Holmes tells Watson that Moriarty is "extremely tall and thin, his forehead domes out in a white curve, and his two eyes are deeply sunken in his head. He is clean-shaven, pale, and ascetic-looking, retaining something of the professor in his features" (720). But the professor's surname suggests Irish origins, Moriarty being an Anglicization of O'Muircheartaigh, a fact that betrays his non-English pedigree and plays on nineteenth century cultural anxieties surrounding Irish immigrants. These anxieties include the idea that physical signs of Irishness denote criminal tendencies, as well as the large number of Irish who were Catholics, a fact that would have raised suspicions of secret societies and "popish" plots among English Protestants (Pionke 57-59). Additionally, while Moriarty's physical appearance betrays no obvious signs of his criminality (nor of his Irish heritage), his depiction does subtly suggest Victorian stereotypes of the compulsive masturbator: much like Professor Coram's wife in "The Golden Pince-Nez," Moriarty's "shoulders are rounded from much study, and his face protrudes forward," while his body "is forever slowly oscillating from side to side in a curiously reptilian fashion" (720). As Alan Hunt points out in his study of nineteenth-century anti-masturbation campaigns, the typical compulsive "self-abuser" eventually acquired physical traits that mirror Moriarty's description in surprising ways (if they didn't end up dying prematurely): the professor's "rounded shoulders" are probably the biggest clue, with that exact phrase or a close equivalent appearing in descriptions of masturbators written by Joseph Howe, Henry Varley, and John Harvey Kellogg, among others (Hunt 596-98). Poor posture and pale skin are also common

"symptoms" of the practice, both of which Moriarty exhibits in his visit to Holmes. However, there are problems with characterizing the professor's appearance as the consequence of this "immoral" practice. Although the implicitly secretive nature of masturbation seems to correlate with the covert nature of Moriarty's criminal empire (Holmes knows he is at the center, but cannot legally prove it), Hunt points out that the moral issue with masturbation in the nineteenth century was largely an issue of self-control. Describing "purity movements" in broad terms, Hunt argues "the antimasturbation campaign was a part of everyday moral regulation that can fruitfully be understood as a project of the governance of the self that, in particular, promoted the goal of self-control" (582). One might argue that Moriarty's criminal activity is the manifestation of this lack of self-control; however, I would counter-argue that it takes a great deal of self-control to become a criminal mastermind while maintaining a public persona that is beyond reproach, to "[do] little himself" and "only plan," something that Moriarty apparently accomplishes with ease (719). Furthermore, Holmes highlights the hereditary nature of the professor's criminality (noting his "hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind" and the "criminal strain [that] ran in his blood" [718]), and while some anti-masturbation campaigners suggested that the compulsion could be inherited, more often it is seen as a vice "acquired from others," usually a dangerous individual of an inferior social class (Hunt 587-88). Thus, while Moriarty's appearance does suggest an immoral character, signaling to readers his untrustworthiness, the accompanying physical features do not correspond with those of the stereotypical criminal type Holmes detects throughout the canon, making it that much more difficult for the detective to build a case against him (as Holmes notes, "[Moriarty's] agent may be caught . . . But the central power which uses the agent is never caught—never so much as suspected" [719]).

Moriarty may not be obviously criminal in appearance, but his evil nature, like the racial and physical features that mark other criminals in the canon, is an inherited trait: the "instead of being modified, [the criminal strain in Moriarty's blood] was increased and rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental power" (718). Moriarty's unsurpassed criminal status, then, is not just the result of his actions—as Holmes notes, "He sits motionless, like a spider in the center 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" (719). Rather, Moriarty is the world's most dangerous criminal precisely because he does *not* display the "usual" criminal features: he appears outwardly as a distinguished Englishman (albeit one who may have indulged in certain vices in his youth), but has inherited a pure "criminal strain" from his predecessors, along with a mind matched only by Holmes himself.[12] Like the busts of Napoleon in "The Six Napoleons," one of which hides the criminal's true motivation beneath its "typical" features, Moriarty, the "Napoleon of Crime" (719), hides his criminality behind a benign exterior, obscuring his own "monomania" beneath the trappings of conventional British respectability.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in the preceding chapters, the late-nineteenth century criminal-anthropological theories of Galton, Ellis, Lombroso, Bertillon, and others have used the principles of Darwinian evolution and natural selection to systematically build a case for inherited, biologically-based criminality rooted in fundamental racial difference. Even though such theories had critics in their own time period, they were used to justify everything from criminal profiling to imperial policy, ultimately playing a significant role in constructing the

[12] This is why Holmes similarly characterizes Charles Augustus Milverton (in the story that shares his name)—also a typical Englishman—as "The worst man in London," who makes him feel more repulsion than the worst fifty murders he has investigated (1007).

West's view of itself and its relation to the "Other." The Sherlock Holmes stories may not be the origin of such ideas, but their immense and continued popularity—and particularly their widely acknowledged influence on forensic science and police work—has doubtless played a role in the popular conception of criminality and its causes. Many of the criminals in the canon are motivated by greed, passion, or revenge; however, just as many are ultimately compelled to commit immoral acts because they have inherited a "criminal strain" from their forebears, an inheritance written upon their body and inescapably apparent to the careful observer. While it is easy to dismiss such portrayals as a product of their time period, the continued popularity of the Sherlock Holmes franchise necessitates a thorough critique of the ways in which Doyle, through Holmes and Watson, perpetuates an unscientific, inconsistent, and racist worldview. The Holmes stories constitute a fascinating, highly entertaining, and—importantly—still-relevant literary achievement, and the purpose of this study has not been to condemn these tales for their shortcomings. But racial profiling, pseudoscientific investigative techniques, and prejudiced ideologies are still regrettably common in the twenty-first century, and it is only by questioning some of our most beloved cultural touchstones and examining their darkest corners that we can hope to learn from the mistakes of the past. One hopes that even Holmes himself, ever the champion of scientific accuracy, would see the value in such an endeavor.

Epilogue: The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

The final Sherlock Holmes story written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place" (1927), did not end the career of the world's most famous detective. Indeed, the fictional escapades of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, and their numerous opponents and allies have never stalled and show no signs of doing so anytime soon. From parodies and tributes that appeared during Conan Doyle's lifetime to modern day adaptations, particularly in film and television, such as BBC's *Sherlock* (2010-present), the Guy Ritchie-directed feature films starring Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law (2009, 2011), and CBS's *Elementary* (2012-present), there exists a wealth of extra-canonical material for fans of the character to explore. Some of these adaptations, such as the Ritchie films, set their plots against a romanticized and stylized Victorian backdrop, while others (such as *Sherlock* and *Elementary*) "update" the characters and place them in modern day settings (*Elementary*, for instance, features a female Watson played by Lucy Liu and is set in modern New York City).

The constant and consistent popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as well as the unending production of related cultural artifacts, means that many readers and fans of the franchise were likely first exposed to the character and his world via some sort of adaptation; some may never have read Conan Doyle's original stories at all. As Suzanne R. Black has recently pointed out, the myriad works of what she calls "the SH [Sherlock Holmes] fandom (from 'fanatic domain')" are an excellent example of Jacques Derrida's concept of "the archive" in that such works, "as a microcosmic example of multiple intertexts, [provide] evidence of how sources and adaptations interact, and a model for the intertextual nature of all literary production" (1). As such, the extra-canonical world of Sherlock Holmes provides a rich opportunity for analyzing the ways in which the issues

examined in the preceding chapters (i.e. the intersections between biomedical science, criminology, and imperial ideology) have been preserved, ignored, modified, obscured, or dealt with in the adaptation process.

My plans to expand this study include examining the ways in which motifs such as "criminal types," biologically determined criminality, physiognomic profiling, and other problematic investigative techniques and narrative strategies are carried over into other media, including early examples such as the stage-play adaptation of "The Speckled Band" (written by Doyle himself) and the extremely popular series of fourteen Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce films produced in the late 1930s and 1940s. Also of interest are Holmesian pastiches, such as Nicholas Meyer's popular 1974 novel *The Seven Per-Cent Solution*, especially in terms of how the authors of such works deal with (or fail to deal with) some of Watson's Victorian prejudices and beliefs. Finally, of particular interest is the recent resurgence of Holmes adaptations in film and television, specifically *Sherlock*, *Elementary*, the Guy Ritchie films, and 2015's *Mr. Holmes* (starring Ian McKellan as an elderly retired Holmes). Because many of these works recast the stories into a modern setting (or into periods not covered by the original tales), they offer an opportunity for examining both the ways in which the Holmes stories are still relevant for contemporary audiences and how various adaptors have re-worked elements of the stories that might prove problematic for such audiences.

For example, the debut episode of BBC's *Sherlock*, "A Study in Pink" (2010), introduces its audience to a modern day Holmes (Benedict Cumberbatch) whose investigative techniques, much like the "original" Holmes, are enhanced by (and are in many instances based in) scientific techniques. Additionally, the episode (and the series in general) incorporates elements of original Holmes tales into its plot, which in this case echoes *A Study in Scarlet* without being a straight

adaptation. Eliminating the central plot points almost entirely except for Jefferson Hope's murder technique, the episode avoids many of the problematic aspects of Doyle's original tale. There is no Mormon presence in the story, and thus Doyle's prejudiced and exaggerated view of the religion is largely avoided. Similarly, the episode's antagonist (an unnamed cabbie) is fairly unremarkable in appearance, unlike the villains of *A Study in Scarlet*, whose criminality is explicitly tied to their physical features. However, by ignoring such issues, the episode avoids an opportunity to examine or critique those issues within a contemporary political framework, choosing instead to play it safe by eliminating controversial material (as in the case of the Mormon sub-plot) or changing the emphasis of others. Thus, rather than creating opportunities in which Holmes can point out the flaws in physiognomic or anthropometric profiling, the writers subtly nod to the problems of judging by appearances (for example, the villain points out that "No one ever thinks about the cabbie… it's like we're invisible. Just the back of an 'ead. Proper advantage for a serial killer") without developing the idea further.

On the other hand, "A Study in Pink" does tackle other contemporary social and political issues in a positive and constructive way. Rather than emphasizing the dangerous foreign aspects of Watson's (Martin Freeman) military service, the episode paints a more sympathetic portrait of the doctor's return to England, presenting his struggles with PTSD and reintegration into civilian life. Watson's experience has changed him, but the change is the result of traumatic experiences rather than foreign contaminants as in *A Study in Scarlet*. Additionally, the portrayal of the relationship between Holmes and Watson acknowledges its homosocial, and potentially homoerotic, aspects, dismissing the possibility of a homosexual relationship in a humorous but respectful way. During a scene in which Holmes and Watson are staking out a side street in an attempt to spot the murderer, they awkwardly breach the subject by repeatedly clarifying their

lack of sexual attraction to each other while assuring the other that there is "nothing wrong" with same sex attraction, that "it's all fine" ("it" seemingly referring to any sort of sexual preference). By acknowledging a more modern perspective on homosexuality, something that in Doyle's time would have been unthinkable, *Sherlock* is able to preserve the original characters' homosocial (but heterosexual) bond while positioning itself as a program with a progressive worldview. The show is also able to reframe Holmes' Otherness in modern terms, acknowledging the increasing awareness of psychological, personality, and behavioral disorders without casting them in a negative light. Sherlock's own admittance that he is a "high-functioning sociopath," for example, offers a potential explanation for Holmes' peculiarities while simultaneously diminishing the stigma such a label might carry by associating it with the show's hero. Thus, while *Sherlock* could do more to address and critique issues with its source material, particularly in terms of tackling misconceptions about the efficacy certain investigative techniques, the program is frequently successful in its attempt to portray a more progressive, modern version of Holmes and Watson for contemporary audiences (though not always, as the program's oddly misogynist revision of Irene Adler demonstrates).

Many other adaptations and pastiches also incorporate commentary on social issues that would have been taboo in the Victorian era; Nicholas Meyer's *Seven Per-Cent Solution*, for example, re-frames Holmes' drug use through a 1970s (when the novel was published) understanding of addiction, while *Elementary*'s reimagining of Watson as an Asian-American woman allows the show to frequently work in and address issues of race and gender. By placing Holmes and Watson in situations that reflect the complexity of life and society in the twenty-first century, viewers and readers are able to reevaluate and re-imagine these characters and the world(s) they inhabit. In future chapters, I hope to analyze how these factors interact with the

legacy of Holmes and Watson's complicity in the ideological nexus of biomedical science, criminology, and imperialism, and hope to shed light on how these characters, so tied to a romanticized Victorian London, have continued to reflect the cultural zeitgeist of the modern (and post-modern) world.

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