Between Fear and Fascination

Orientalism in Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes Stories and the BBC Series Sherlock

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I hereby declare that this diploma thesis is my own and autonomous work. All sources and aids used have been indicated as such. All texts either quoted directly or paraphrased have been indicated by in-text citations. Full bibliographic details are given in the bibliography, which also contains internet sources including URL and access date. This work has not been submitted to any other examination authority before.

February 2019

Date _____________________________

Signature
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# Table of Contents

1. Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 1

2. State of the Art .......................................................................................................................................... 5

3. Of Colonialism, Imperialism, and Orientalism ....................................................................................... 8
   3.1 “The world’s sole superpower”: Colonialism, Imperialism, and the British Empire .... 8
   3.2 “The White Man’s Burden”: Imperialist Mindset .............................................................................. 14
       3.2.1 Shaping the Imperialist Mindset: Orientalism and Post-Colonial Theory ................. 18
       3.2.2 From Defoe, Conrad, and Kipling to Conan Doyle: Orientalism in Literature .... 27

4. Orientalism in Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* stories ................................................................................ 31
   4.1 Fascinatingly Dangerous: Oriental Characters and Other Living Beings ................................. 31
       4.1.1 Hindu Servants, Sikh Allies, and Cannibals: Exotic ‘Savages’ ........................................... 31
       4.1.2 From “the woman” to the “Napoleon of Crime”: Superior Westerners ..................... 43
       4.1.3 The Empire Bites Back: Exotic Animals and Diseases ...................................................... 52
   4.2 “Land of despair”, “oasis of art”, and Opium Dens: Oriental Settings ................................ ...... 58
       4.2.1 A Hero Abroad, a Criminal in Britain: Foreign Conflicts on British Soil ................. 59
       4.2.2 Dangerous Decoration: Oriental Settings in Britain .............................................................. 75
       4.2.3 “Lost in Tobacco and Thought”: Drug Use Between Addiction and Control ...... 82
   4.3 Conclusion of the Literary Analysis ................................................................................................. 88

5. Orientalism in the BBC series *Sherlock* .............................................................................................. 93
   5.1 Inferior Foreigners and Superior Westerners: Diversity, the BBC, and *Sherlock* .......... 93
   5.2 From “Distant Moonlit Shores” to the Iron Lady: Foreign Settings ......................................... 114
   5.3 Conclusion of the Series Analysis, Comparison, and Final Résumé ........................................ 124

6. Fear, Fascination, and Sherlock Holmes in the EFL Classroom .................................................... 130
   6.1 The Significance of Teaching Orientalism in Literature and Film ............................................. 130
   6.2 Target Group ..................................................................................................................................... 133
   6.3 Teaching Objectives, Content, and Structure of Lessons ........................................................... 134
   6.4 Teaching Material ............................................................................................................................. 140
1. Introduction

“All the same, whatever Europe is, it owes in part to its imperial adventures.”

(Kiernan, Imperialism 169)

“If one were choosing the best twenty short detective stories ever written, at least half a
dozen of them would be about Sherlock Holmes.”

(Symons 78)

In April 2012, the Daily Mail published an article bearing the title: “Yes, mistakes were made, but we must never stop being proud of the Empire” (Lawrence). The article was written by British historian James Lawrence, and it was only one of many contributions to the discussion of whether the Empire was actually “good or bad” (Jackson 3). Indeed, in Britain, the Empire is still a much-debated issue which “raises temperatures as well as headlines” (ibid. 2), as Jackson puts it. The pride connected to Empire originates in the nineteenth century, the heyday of British imperialism. The nineteenth century was, even more than the centuries before, characterised by imperialism and the struggle for colonies. The imperial ambition of the European powers led to most of the non-Western world being in European hands. By exploiting their colonies, the European powers accumulated riches and became wealthier and wealthier, their economies flourishing, whereas the colonies became poorer and poorer, being hindered from establishing their own functioning economies. The leading imperial power was the British Empire (Jansen and Osterhammel, Dekolonisation 11): it possessed more colonies than any other European nation and was, consequently, the most powerful empire of the world during the reign of Queen Victoria.

As a result, the British self-esteem was relatively high. Due to people from the colonies migrating to Britain and goods being imported into the Empire, the British came into contact with the foreign.¹ Together with exhibitions and stories about the colonies (Koller 400), this contact with colonial people and commodities resulted in an increasing sense of superiority on behalf of the British, and they were convinced of being more civilised and progressive than the peoples of the colonies. The British sense of superiority made itself noticeable in Britain’s

¹ Obviously, it was not the first time the British came into contact with the foreign. However, Victorian Britain’s beliefs and values were decisively influenced by the impression of the foreign they received in the colonial context.
attitude towards non-British ‘others’. Especially the colonised, but also foreigners or non-Europeans in general were often confronted with a rather arrogant and patronising attitude. This feeling of superiority was also expressed in contemporary literature.

One example thereof is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* series. His stories were and are famous all over the world and are considered some of the best detective stories ever written (Symons 78). Being referred to as “the Great Detective”, in Ousby’s (39) or Barnes’ (24) works, it is not even necessary to mention Holmes’s name in order to know who is being talked about. Doyle’s stories have been turned into several films and TV series, there is a Sherlock Holmes Museum in London², and famous companies like Red Bull and Nikon use the detective for their advertising campaigns³. There are even Sherlock Holmes societies which produce fan writing and search for hidden meanings in the *Holmes* stories (Wiltse 108-9). The fan culture surrounding the famous detective has not only overcome the death of the main character but also that of the author. From the moment the *Holmes* stories were first published in *The Strand*, people from all over Britain started writing letters to the then fictional address of 221B Baker Street in order to ask for Holmes’s help (Wiltse 109). When Doyle let Holmes die in “The Final Problem”, the detective’s death resulted in an outcry among his fans all over Britain and also America, as they wanted to continue reading stories featuring the great detective (Klinger 713; Wiltse 108).

Taking all this into consideration, it is clear that Sherlock Holmes has survived his creator and has become a household name, known by everyone, even if they have never read a Sherlock Holmes story or watched a movie or an episode of a TV adaptation. However, recent adaptations of the *Sherlock Holmes* matter are very popular and have revived the Great Detective once again. Thus, given the enormous popularity of Sherlock Holmes, almost 150 years after his creation, it makes sense to examine the attitude towards the colonised and foreigners in general in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, and also in the BBC series *Sherlock*. In a subject matter still so highly popular, many fail to recognise Orientalist stereotypes concerning the portrayal of non-Western characters or settings. Hence, this thesis serves as a means to make people aware of Orientalist representations of non-Western ‘others’ in the *Sherlock*

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² For the museum’s webpage see [http://www.sherlock-holmes.co.uk](http://www.sherlock-holmes.co.uk).
Holmes stories. In addition, it also wants to call attention to Orientalism in contemporary adaptations like the BBC series Sherlock.

In this diploma thesis I argue that in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories, which were written in the Victorian Age, the heyday of the British Empire, certain characters and settings imply Orientalism. The antinomy of fear and fascination, which is essential to the theory of Orientalism, is evident in several areas of Doyle’s stories. I argue that Oriental persons, animals, objects, settings, and customs constantly either evoke fascination or fear, or, in most cases, both. In order to find evidence for this thesis, selected stories will be analysed and compared to selected episodes of the TV serial adaptation Sherlock. Thereby, I will show that Orientalist stereotypes are not only present in Doyle’s stories but to some extent also in contemporary adaptations. Finally, the thesis will include an outline of ways in which Orientalism can be implemented in the EFL classroom by reading Sherlock Holmes and watching Sherlock.

The evidence necessary to prove my point will be given by providing a brief overview on the historical, cultural and social context of British imperialism, with a special focus on the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition, close readings of a few stories and ‘close-viewings’ of a few episodes will be provided. The stories consulted for the detailed analysis are the three novellas A Study in Scarlet, The Sign of the Four, and The Hound of the Baskervilles and the stories “The Speckled Band”, “A Scandal in Bohemia”, “The Adventure of the Dying Detective”, and “The Man with the Twisted Lip”, the reason for choosing these particular novellas and stories being that they contain several examples of Orientalism. Additionally, most of the chosen novellas and stories belong to the earlier Holmes stories Doyle wrote. According to O’Brien, these first stories are generally considered to be Doyle’s best ones, whereas the stories written after Holmes’s resurrection are considered inferior (O’Brien 153-54). Even though O’Brien argues that this results from Holmes’s methods being more scientific in the first stories (ibid. 155), I argue that the reason is also the fascination connected to the Oriental and foreign, the first stories being the ones most blatantly featuring Orientalist stereotypes.

Obviously, there are other stories which could be taken as evidence for Orientalist portrayals of non-Western ‘others’ than the ones chosen, also stories equally belonging to Doyle’s ‘first generation’ of Holmes stories. However, due to Doyle having written a great number of Sherlock Holmes stories, it is simply not possible to analyse all of them.

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4 English as a Foreign Language.
Nevertheless, in the course of the analysis, it will also be necessary to refer to some other Sherlock Holmes stories than the ones just named. The same applies to the BBC series Sherlock: not all episodes will be examined in detail. As opposed to Doyle’s stories, all twelve episodes have been considered for the analysis\(^5\), yet only some have been drawn on for a more detailed analysis, namely “The Blind Banker”, “His Last Vow”, “The Great Game”, and “The Six Thatchers”.

In Chapter 4.1, the stories will be analysed with regard to the differences in portrayal of Western and non-Western characters and the functions of Oriental people and also animals in the stories. Chapter 4.2 will deal with Oriental settings and thus with places in- and outside Britain with an Oriental or generally foreign atmosphere. This chapter will also be concerned with drug and tobacco consumption, as they were also associated with the so-called Orient at Doyle’s time. With regard to the BBC series, Chapter 5.1 will focus on Orientalist portrayals of non-Western characters in Sherlock, and their portrayals will again be compared to those of Western characters. In Chapter 5.2, Oriental or foreign settings in the TV series will be examined, using again both settings actually located abroad as well as Oriental settings within Britain. Finally, Chapter 5.3 will provide a summarising comparison of Orientalism in Doyle’s stories and in the BBC series. Despite trying to structure the analysis into clear-cut chapters, overlaps of the different sections will be inevitable, as they are so closely intertwined. The very last chapter will provide ideas of how to implement Orientalism in the EFL classroom.

\(^5\) Except for the special episode “The Abominable Bride”, for this episode is, unlike the others, set in Victorian Britain.
2. State of the Art

Orientalism, Edward Said’s concept of the West’s perception of the constructed East, has been used and adapted for all kinds of analyses. Especially in Victorian Literature, Orientalism is very common, for this was the age of imperialism. Many scholars have studied Orientalism in literature and have thus analysed numerous literary works. An author frequently mentioned in these analyses of Orientalist or imperialist literature is Rudyard Kipling (Said 226-28; Darby 44; Ashcroft et al. 5; Schulze-Engler 344-45). Even though not as frequently listed as Kipling, there are also scholars who have analysed Doyle’s approach to foreignness in his Sherlock Holmes stories. This chapter will give an overview of the state of the art by presenting the most significant secondary sources concerned with Orientalism in Sherlock Holmes.

As to Orientalism in detective fiction, Joseph McLaughlin states that imperialist features already show in the forerunner of the detective story, Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murder in the Rue Morgue” (1841), where the criminal turns out to be an orangutan, brought to Europe from Borneo, a former British colony, by a sailor (McLaughlin 29). Mevlüde Zengin dedicated a whole scholarly article to Orientalism in Agatha Christie’s Death on the Nile (1937). The article’s title is “Western Image of the Orient and Oriental in Agatha Christie’s Death on the Nile: A Postcolonial Reading”. In her analysis, she comes to the conclusion that even though Christie’s detective novel does not focus on empire or colonies, the attitude towards Easterners as well as the East in general is characterised by Orientalism, and since Christie was a best-selling author, her portrayal of non-Westerner contributed to a negative and non-realistic image of the Orient in western discourse. Poe’s story was published before and Christie’s detective novel after Doyle’s stories, meaning that these two examples provide evidence for the endurance of imperialist and Orientalist ways of thinking in literature.

Apart from these two contributions, there is not really much to find on Orientalism in Victorian detective fiction in general, but quite a few authors have written about imperialist mindset in Sherlock Holmes. Otis, for instance, wrote the article “The Empire Bites Back: Sherlock Holmes as an Imperial Immune System”. In this article, she compares Holmes to an imperial immune system, which continually rescues the British citizens from their “worst enemy” (Otis 32), namely the people of the colonies. She writes about how Doyle’s own experiences in foreign countries made him think of an “Imperial Threat” (ibid. 34) and how Holmes is Britain’s saviour who can cure this disease of colonial danger.

In “Whispers of Norbury: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Modernist Crisis of Racial (Un)Detection”, Jimmy Huh compares Holmes’s deduction methods to the practice of racially
categorising people by their looks. He sees parallels between nineteenth-century racial politics using so-called scientific methods in order to define otherness and Holmes’s combination of observing people and using scientific methods in order to deduce personal information about them (Huh 555). He uses the example of the *Holmes* story “The Yellow Face” to show how Holmes’s apparent knowledge on how to detect races results in a failure. Huh argues that this story might seem revolutionary at first glance, but that Doyle still fails to completely overcome the racial difference as well as the unease felt by the characters when being confronted with blackness (ibid. 566).

In “Racial and Criminal Types: Indian Ethnography and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Sign of Four*”, McBratney provides the reader with arguments that Doyle’s story shows his urge to control the foreign instead of subverting imperial norms. He elucidates how Doyle upholds existing racial hierarchies and confirms the legitimacy of prevalent stereotypical knowledge about India. He argues that Doyle could have created a “racial or criminal type as a worthy agent of political change” (McBratney 163) but ultimately fails to do so, since he could not imagine a foreign criminal as an active figure with ‘honourable’ political motives.

McLaughlin’s monograph *Writing the Urban Jungle: Reading Empire in London from Doyle to Eliot* analyses *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of the Four* regarding frontiers, race, and imperialism. According to McLaughlin, Holmes represents the “more civilized law” in comparison to the “primitive” and “barbaric” Native Americans and also those having been influenced by them in *A Study in Scarlet* (McLaughlin 44). In McLaughlin’s opinion, readers of all centuries have mostly failed to understand the underlying imperialist beliefs and values. To him, the first *Holmes* novella is of particular interest, as it is divided into two parts, the first being the typical *Sherlock Holmes* story told by Watson and set in London, but the second being set in the American West, in a frontier space between civilisation and the so-called Wild West. Even though the subsequent stories are all set in London only, McLaughlin argues that Doyle “did not abandon the frontier in opting for the urban” but rather makes London “the Range” (McLaughlin 46).

Regarding *The Sign of Four*, McLaughlin writes about the “Romance of Invasion”: He points out the paradox of being afraid of the Oriental but finding it fascinating on the other hand. He uses the example of Holmes’s drug use and also the house of the wealthy Thaddeus Sholto with its fascinating but at the same time scary objects, where the observer is both frightened and fascinated by their otherness. Furthermore, McLaughlin also shows that, according to Doyle’s narrative, there are “good savages […] who can be controlled and domesticated”, and “bad ones […] who refuse to submit” (ibid. 70). The thesis draws on
McLaughlin’s point of view in many respects and will provide further examples in order to show that many of Doyle’s stories feature a romantic ‘foreign invasion’. The thesis will also develop the idea of ‘good and bad savages’ further and show that control and domestication do not only play a role in *The Sign of the Four*.

Conclusively, quite a few authors have written about racial stereotypes, imperialism, and Orientalism in Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes*, yet most publications tend to focus on one or two particular stories. This is where this thesis comes in: it aims at analysing many stories and at showing that all of them are characterised by fear and fascination and that most hypotheses can be expanded onto the whole *Sherlock Holmes* series. With regard to newer adaptations, among all existing secondary works on Orientalism in *Sherlock Holmes*, there is nothing to be found on Orientalism in TV adaptations featuring the detective, also not with respect to the BBC series *Sherlock*. Even though there are a number of reviews or blog articles on the internet dealing with racism and stereotyping in recent adaptations, there are no scholarly publications on these topics yet. The only existing publications are concerned with topics like gender or the science of deduction, such as the anthology *Sherlock Holmes for the 21st Century: Essays on New Adapations* edited by Lynette Porter, whereas issues like race or imperialism in these very adaptations have yet not been explored. Thus, the latter two topics represent a niche which this thesis aims at filling: I will examine which of the Orientalist and imperialist features in Doyle’s stories remain in the modern TV adaptation *Sherlock*. 
3. Of Colonialism, Imperialism, and Orientalism

The late nineteenth century, the time of publication of the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, was also the heyday of the British Empire, a time in which colonies were a decisive factor in terms of defining a nation’s power. An empire possessing a considerable number of colonies was very powerful, which in turn led to a sense of superiority and a thereof resulting overbearing and patronising attitude of the colonisers towards the colonised. This sense of superiority and patronising attitude applied to all colonial powers, yet especially to the British Empire, as it was probably the most powerful of all imperial powers in the Victorian Era (Jansen and Osterhammel, *Dekolonisation* 11). It was this very patronising attitude which laid the foundation for Orientalism in Doyle’s time, and thus for the Orientalist stereotypes which characterise many of his stories.

To fully understand how this attitude came into existence, it is necessary to briefly define colonialism and imperialism and to provide a short outline of British colonial history. In addition, this chapter will try to offer definitions of colonialism and imperialism in relation to the British Empire and its colonies. Furthermore, the concept of Orientalism, which is based on the mindset that goes along with colonialism and imperialism, will be introduced, especially with regard to the situation in Doyle’s Britain. It will also be examined in how far Orientalism influenced nineteenth-century literature.

3.1 “The world’s sole superpower”6: Colonialism, Imperialism, and the British Empire

Ruling over nearly a quarter of the earth’s land surface and over a fifth of the world’s population, the British Empire was at the height of its power at the end of the First World War (Jackson 1). Unprecedented in the history of empires, it was “the world’s sole superpower” (ibid.), the only imperial power ever to become a true global empire (Jansen and Osterhammel, *Dekolonisation* 11). Among all colonial powers, Britain’s empire was the only one to be represented on all five continents. It even had colonies in Europe, such as Malta and Cyprus, and it had Ireland, which had a special, but, in the eyes of Irish nationalists, also colony-like status inside the United Kingdom (ibid.). In addition, Britain ruled the ‘dominions’, so-called from 1907 onwards, which were countries and territories that were self-governing, yet under British supervision. What also gave the British Empire a singular role among the colonial powers was its being the only empire that possessed the military resources and the economic

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6 Jackson 1.
power to have a strong influence overseas, an influence that extended beyond the colonies or so-called protectorates. This extended influence especially resulted from the empire’s being the hegemonic naval power as well as the global centre of finance (ibid.).

In short, Britain’s whole culture and identity are decisively based on its imperial past. As Kiernan phrases it, “whatever Europe is, it owes in part to its imperial adventures” (Kiernan, *Imperialism* 169). This, on the one hand, relates to Europe’s economic and political development, which profited immensely from its “imperial adventures” (ibid.), but, on the other, also to the development of national identities and a sense of superiority. In order to fully understand how imperialism and colonialism shaped Europe and made it what it is today, it is necessary to comprehend the structures of these two concepts. ‘Colonialism’ and ‘imperialism’ are two terms frequently used interchangeably, especially in contemporary discussions, and the distinction is all too often lost (Dubow 10). Indeed, the terms are closely related to each other: Young states that both concepts involved “forms of subjugation of one people by another” (Young 15). However, there is a terminological difference between colonialism and imperialism and, even though the terms are connected to each other, many scholars prefer to distinguish between the two.

As for colonialism, Childs and Williams define it as the “settling of communities from one country in another” (Childs and Williams 227). Scholars generally agree that settlement is a very important aspect when it comes to colonialism, but present-day scholars distinguish between two major forms of colonies: “settlement and exploitation colonies” (Harmand, qtd. in Young 17), in colonial times called “dominions and dependencies” by the British (Young 17). Some colonies were primarily “established for the purpose of forms of settlement, such as British North America, Australia and New Zealand, French Algeria, or Portuguese Brazil” (ibid.), and some, mostly “situated in the tropics” (ibid.), were “established for economic exploitation without any significant settlement” (ibid.). Young agrees with Harmand concerning the two main functions of colonies being settlement and economic exploitation. He argues that the colonisers were “motivated by the desire for living space or the extraction of riches” (ibid. 19). Jürgen Osterhammel, one of the leading German (post-)colonial scholars, has also argued for adding a third category, the “Stützpunktkolonie” (Jansen and Osterhammel, *Kolonisation* 17). Young translates these as “maritime enclaves”, which mean “islands, harbours, and other strategic points” kept for “global military and naval operations” (Osterhammel, qtd. in Young 17). Reckwitz, on the other hand, argues that British India added a new type of colony, the “Verwaltungskolonie” (Reckwitz 408), an administration colony. However, most scholars agree on settlement and exploitation colonies as the main types of
McLeod confirms Harmand’s and Young’s assertions that conquered territories were used to give land to settlers from the so-called mother country in Europe. He adds that this land was often gained by disowning its former owners and redistributing it to the settlers. On the other hand, natural resources were supported, in most cases with the natives’ labour power, and exported to the motherland, thereby contributing to Western wealth and Eastern poverty, as the West gained control over the international markets. This economic component also becomes apparent in the following statement by McLeod: “Colonialism was first and foremost a lucrative commercial operation, bringing wealth and riches to Western nations through the economic exploitation of others. It was pursued for economic profit, reward and riches” (ibid. 9). Thus, colonialism involves a gain of prosperity as well as a gain of economic, political, and military power for the colonisers, which is reached by the “economic exploitation” (ibid.) of the colonised.

Especially in the case of the British Empire, colonialism was an essential factor that contributed to the country’s economic success and also to its initial leading role in the Industrial Age (Kiernan, Imperialism 54). In Ernest Mandel’s opinion, all industrial growth of the West “has been possible only at the expense of the so-called under-developed world, which has been doomed to stagnation and repression” (Mandel, qtd. in Kiernan, Imperialism 54). Even though the colonies were not the only reason for the West’s economic success, industrialisation would not have happened to the extent it actually did, had it not been for the colonies. This standpoint is also expressed by McLeod when he writes that “the birth of European modernity was in many ways parented by this partnership of capitalism and colonialism, a fact which should remind us that colonialism is absolutely at the heart of Europe’s modern history” (McLeod 9).

The seemingly never-ending supply of natural resources from the colonised territories enabled Europeans to produce vast quantities of industrial goods, which they again exported to the colonies in large quantities and sold them there. Thereby, the Western economy profited, whereas the emergence of a functioning economy in the colonies was impeded. In India, for instance, the British Empire “crushed the old native crafts; it did too little to bring India’s natural resources into play, it planted very little industry in India, and it put obstacles in the
way of industry building by Indians” (Kiernan, *Imperialism* 57). By exporting a great part of their factory-made goods to the colonies, the system reached a paradoxical state: the colonised had to pay for the industrial processing of the goods that had previously been taken from them. Instead of the colonies being able to establish their own functioning economy and to process their natural goods themselves, this process took place in the European mother country. India, for instance, was “swamped with English cottons” (Kiernan, *Imperialism* 54), the West Indies also being a very important market for the British (ibid. 55).

Later, when Britain’s initial leading role in the Industrial Revolution was overtaken by other countries such as Germany or the US (ibid. 56), Britain used poverty-stricken India as a means to compensate its decreasing power and to refill the empty coffers (ibid. 55). Eventually, however, this system of getting rich at the expense of the colonies did not work out in the long run; in fact, it backfired. Since the colonies, thanks to the colonisers, did not have a functioning economy of their own, they were not able to provide for themselves, meaning that in the end, the colonisers had to invest a considerable amount of money in order to uphold the support and export from the colonies’ natural resources (Young 27).

This inversion of profit, from financial gain to financial loss, was of course a consequence of the hitherto prevalent colonial policy, but it was also a result of the emergence of imperialism. It is difficult to pin down the beginnings of imperialism, since it was the interplay of many factors that led to its emergence, and imperialism was not an event but rather a process that developed over decades and centuries. Young suggests that imperialism in Britain started to develop in the nineteenth century (ibid. 28), whereas Hobsbawm sees the end of the eighteenth century as its starting point (Hobsbawm 60). While colonialism is generally linked to capitalism and financial and economic success on behalf of the colonial powers (McLeod 9), this changed with the development of imperialism: Anne Phillips holds the view that imperialism was not successful at making the expansion of capitalism possible (Phillips 2-3). In fact, as indicated above, it was more likely to block it, even though this was obviously not intended.

Childs and Williams define imperialism as “the extension and expansion of trade and commerce under the protection of political, legal, and military controls” (Childs and Williams 227). This means that imperialism aims at guaranteeing and upholding the supremacy of one nation over others, i.e. in economic, political, and military matters, but also concerning “trade and commerce” (Childs and Williams 227). Colonialism is only “one form of practice, one modality of control which results from the ideology of imperialism, and it specifically concerns the settlement of people in a new location”, as McLeod puts it (McLeod 9). Imperialism, by
contrast, is not particularly concerned with settlement and can function without it. While colonialism is “one historically specific mechanism of imperialism which prioritises the act of settlement, and its manifestations can be varied” (McLeod 9), imperialism is an ideology, “multifarious” and “difficult to pin down”, according to Young (25). It becomes clear that the ideological orientation of imperialism is one of the main demarcation criteria towards colonialism, which is confirmed by Young, who also calls the former a “system of economic domination” (ibid. 26). Contrarily, colonialism emphasised “the material condition of the political rule of subjugated peoples by the old European colonial powers” (ibid. 27).

Colonialism is only a part, an expression of imperialism, the latter being an ideology, a “scheme of ideas […] forming the basis of action or policy; a set of beliefs governing conduct” (OED, “ideology” 4). Imperialism is the desire to expand one’s territories, motivated by the quest for economic and political power, and this quest is always an ideological one. Consequently, imperial powers aim at extending their sphere of influence and eventually becoming a hegemonic power. Colonialism, on the other hand, is mainly concerned with settlement and economic exploitation, thereby contributing to the European motherland’s wealth. There is no particular ideology behind it. Obviously, the two can be intertwined, a state Childs and Williams call “[i]mpperial colonization” (Childs and Williams 227), the “large-scale domination of substantial areas of the earth and multiple external territories” (ibid.). In the nineteenth and twentieth century, in fact, colonialism and imperialism were very much intertwined, the one was not imaginable without the other. In fact, imperialism is especially characteristic for the nineteenth century, in which the European powers were competing for hegemony and thus sought to own the largest empire.

Thus, conclusively, it can be said that there is a difference between colonialism and imperialism. However, colonialism was an essential part of imperialism at Doyle’s time, since the possession of colonies served as a means to define power and as something that could be compared in the competitive struggle for hegemony. Since Victorian Britain was strongly influenced by the imperialist attitude of feeling superior due to its being a global power, it will often be referred to imperialism in this thesis. The terms ‘colonialism’ and ‘imperialism’ are not to be understood entirely synonymously. However, bearing in mind that for the time concerned, these two concepts were strongly linked to each other and they were dependent on the respective other with regard to their existence, at times, the difference becomes indistinct.
However, it is also important to note that the term ‘imperialism’ has been subject to semantic change. Young distinguishes between earlier and later meanings of imperialism: originally, according to him, the term meant a “political system of actual conquest and occupation” (Young 26), but from the beginning of the twentieth century it acquired a meaning in the Marxist sense, being understood as a “general system of economic domination with direct political domination being possible but not necessarily adjunct” (Williams, qtd. in Young 26). This distinction makes sense, as in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, imperialism without colonialism would have been hard to imagine. It was primarily the number of colonies which expressed the power of a European nation. At Doyle’s time, it was also this first meaning of imperialism that had to be applied, namely the one of “conquest and occupation” (ibid.) in the literal sense.

Nowadays, at the time of the series Sherlock, imperialism is still existent, but in a different form. The colonial era came to an end in the mid-twentieth century, mainly from 1945 to 1975, when decolonisation took place (Jansen and Osterhammel, Dekolonisation 7), whereas imperialism remained. An example would be the global domination of the United States (Young 29; cf. also Kiernan, “Tennyson” 139). Especially in the Cold War, the United States’ imperialism was seen critically by communists, who, according to Young, opposed imperialism almost more than capitalism (Young 29). This contemporary example of imperialism in the twentieth-century sense shows that, while actual colonial empires such as the nineteenth-century British Empire are not existent anymore, imperial powers and correlative dependencies still are. Whenever I will refer to ‘imperialism’ in the following analysis, the term will bear the meaning it had in the respective period. For the analysis of Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories, it is essential to bear in mind the connection between colonialism and imperialism in Victorian

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7 Young also emphasises the necessity of distinguishing between the terms ‘empire’, ‘imperial’, and ‘imperialism’, as they have “different histories and different political resonances” (Young 25). In the case of the British Empire, the Empire itself has existed several centuries before British imperialism (Hulme 90), as it was already called ‘British Empire’ in Elizabethan times (Young 26). Yet, according to Young, the term then lacked the ideological connotation it gained later on, in the age of imperialism, when the meaning of the term ‘British Empire’ was expanded (ibid.). From the eighteenth century onwards, it was explicitly used to describe the relations between what was called the ‘Mother-country’ and the ‘colonies’ (ibid.). ‘Imperial’, too, is a word possessing a more general meaning, namely standing for something “sovereign or transcendent, the ultimate seat of authority, or just as a synonym for ‘magnificent’” (ibid.). While this description already approximates the connotation and meaning of imperialism, it is still less specific and also lacks the connotation of a word like ‘imperialism’. The latter only came into use at the end of the eighteenth century (Hobsbawm 60).

8 Apparently, Lenin even wrote an essay called “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”.

9 This too becomes apparent in the choice of the term ‘post-colonial’ rather than ‘post-imperial’, as the colonial era of direct rule over and exploiting of conquered territories is basically over, whereas the imperial one remains, although in other, more subtle forms, as Young’s and Williams’ twentieth-century definition implies.
Britain, whereas it is, if anything, the modern form of imperialism and imperialist thought that has to be applied for the analysis of the BBC series.

3.2 “The White Man’s Burden”\textsuperscript{10}: Imperialist Mindset

As has been illustrated, imperialism was permanently characterised by the competitive scramble for colonies. In 1814/15, the Congress of Vienna took place, aiming at restoring peaceful conditions and the balance of power in Europe after the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars (F. Knight 1). After the congress, the European powers officially stopped fighting over the colonies among themselves, but they still continued to use military force against the colonised (Kiernan, \textit{Imperialism} 150-151).

Childs and Williams speak of “colonisation”\textsuperscript{11}, which they describe as the “appropriation and exploitation of another geopolitical territory, together with an organized interference in its rule and culture” (Childs and Williams 227). This very essential aspect of “appropriation” and “organized interference in [the colonies’] rule and culture” (ibid.) shows that the colonies were not only economically exploited and that settlers did not start living in the colonies without interfering with the local inhabitants, on the contrary: the colonisers imposed their own laws and cultural habits on the colonised. The conquered peoples had to adopt the new rules and abandon their native culture and customs. This adoption did not happen on a voluntary basis: in most cases, it was enforced, often brutally.

In India, for instance, the “work of suppression was done with savage thoroughness” (Kiernan, \textit{Imperialism} 151), according to Kiernan. This suppression, among other factors, led to the Indian Mutiny in 1857, a rebellion against the British East India Company, showing the British colonisers how unwelcome they actually were (ibid. 151). Yet, they were still convinced of acting righteously with respect to their “civilizing mission”, as Kiernan phrases it (ibid. 154). Instead of fighting the other imperial powers, the rivalry now consisted of a contest of “‘civilization against barbarism’” (ibid. 153). In fact, the European powers tended to believe the “worst European colonial regime [to be] less bad than the best native government” (Kiernan, \textit{Imperialism} 166).

The colonisers did not perceive their patronising behaviour as wrong, as they regarded their own laws and culture as superior and felt like they were doing the colonised a favour by

\textsuperscript{10} Kipling 111.

\textsuperscript{11} Not to be confused with colonialism, which has been defined previously.
introducing their own, apparently superior values to them. Kiernan confirms this self-perception of superiority and benevolence in the following statement:

Each nation which has in turn felt itself the strongest – Revolutionary France, Victorian Britain, and in our day America – has wanted to impose its will on others, but to think of itself as their warden or rescuer. To Englishmen their long series of colonial wars might quite naturally seem to resemble the labours of Hercules, ridding the earth of its scourges. (Kiernan, “Tennyson” 139-140)

This expresses very well how the colonisers perceived themselves. They felt like heroes who brought civilisation to barbaric lands and liberated the colonised from the evil of their savageness. In Kiernan’s words, they felt like they had done “the labours of Hercules” (ibid. 140), they saw themselves as rescuers, even though they actually forced their way of living and thinking upon the colonised. Kiernan further states that

Western thinking has usually favoured the view that colonialism, despite much that is shameful in its record, rescued backward or stagnating societies by giving them better government, and transformed them by drawing them out of isolation into the currents of the world market and a world civilization. (Kiernan, Imperialism 121)

Kiernan emphasises that even though colonialism and thus also imperialism involved many very “shameful” (ibid.) actions on behalf of the West, Europeans were inclined to think that they had brought civilisation to territories which were, in their view, lacking structure and functioning administration and government. They felt like they were enabling the colonised to participate in global trade and cultural exchange. Yet, this exchange the colonisers meant to facilitate was rather one-sided. The colonised had to adapt to the colonisers’ rules and values, and the latter did also adopt some customs such as smoking tobacco or opium, for instance, but they were able to pick and choose, they adopted what appeared in any sort promising and left what did not.

The fact that Britain was a global empire and hegemonic power shaped the contemporary view on what it meant to be British. In fact, it led to a rather inflated self-image on behalf of the British. Their self-perception of being superior and thus having the responsibility of bringing civilisation to uncivilised lands becomes very apparent in Western sources published at the time, such as in Basil Williams’ 1928 monograph The British Empire. Williams, a professor of history at Edinburgh University, writes about how the British did not even plan to seize India at first, but then had to take responsibility and accomplish their mission of bringing civilisation to apparently barbaric lands:

Thus was founded almost by chance our Indian empire. Neither Newberrie and Fitch, the adventurous traders who made the hazardous journey overland to Delhi in the sixteenth century,
nor the trading company founded at the end of Elizabeth’s reign had any aim beyond commerce or dreamed of owning territory in India. For more than a century and a half the Company resisted any such idea and even doubted the policy of accepting proprietorship in the land at Madras and Bombay which barely exceeded the needs of their trading warehouses. (Williams 84)

Williams goes on to describe how it was only the British Empire’s sense of duty that made them protect India from the French, and since they “had become responsible” (ibid.) for India, they had to defend it and therefore had to annex further territories. He closes the chapter on India with the following words: “But fortunately, the British nation woke up, before it was too late, to its own responsibility for this romantic heritage, and thereafter became as truly master of India’s destiny as of its own” (ibid.). This contemporary justification of the British Empire’s imperial policy and the firm belief that Britain had a responsibility towards the apparently uncivilised savages makes clear how Britain perceived itself around the turn of the century: as superior, as a “master of […] destiny” (ibid.), its own as well as of the colonies. Williams even talks of the civilising mission as a “romantic heritage” (ibid.). Thereby, he suggests that this mission was not only Britain’s duty, but a noble quest. The British obviously saw a romantic component in ‘civilising’ peoples who were, in their eyes, primitive savages.

Williams’ contemporary D. C. Somervell, who too was a British historian, also published a monograph bearing the title *The British Empire*. First published in 1930, there are now seven editions, this being evidence of Somervell’s work having quite a large readership. As one important reason for the development of the “modern British Empire” Somervell lists the “growing sense of responsibility for the welfare of the non-European peoples within the Empire” (Somervell 61). Somervell explains that “backward peoples are entitled to the best that we can give them, and that where the interests of our wealth conflict with the interests of their welfare, it is the former that should give way” (ibid. 62). This again emphasises how the British even thought of themselves as making sacrifices in favour of the colonised. At this point, Somervell refers to Rudyard Kipling’s 1899 poem “The White Man’s Burden”, one of the most well-known examples displaying Britain’s imperialist mindset. As the title already suggests, in the poem, Kipling talks about the sacrifices the white man has to make for the sake of the native peoples in the colonies, without receiving any acknowledgement from the latter (Kipling 111-113). It is portrayed as if the colonisers were doing the colonised a favour by bringing what the former called civilisation, and the latter are painted as ungrateful and unappreciative. While the thought of the rich helping the poor is, technically, a noble one, what the imperial powers really aimed at was gaining more power. In fact, they did not at all care
about the colonised’s welfare if it was to their own economic and political disadvantage, and they did not ask the colonised whether they actually wanted the colonisers’ help.

In Somervell’s opinion, the phrase “The White Man’s Burden”, “if it means anything, means that the Empire itself is a kind of missionary enterprise, the greatest organization there has ever been for levelling up the civilizations of the world” (Somervell 62). All these examples display how the British saw themselves as superior, as saviours, as the bringers of civilisation to barbarous and savage places. The British sense of superiority was mainly based on the creation of counter-images, of the East as the antithesis of the West. Several factors contributed to the existence of this antithesis, but it was primarily the experience of ‘otherness’ which led to a delineation of the ‘own’ from the ‘other’. This very delineation resulted from the experiences Britain made when coming into contact with the colonial ‘other’.

The acquisition of colonies resulted in the import of exotic commodities, starting with tea, coffee, sugar, and other kinds of food, through to cotton and valuable gems (Schulze-Engler 344), and to intoxicants like tobacco or cocaine and opium (Reckwitz 407). In addition, the British also came into contact with exotic animals and sometimes even people from the colonies, and Britons who had visited the colonies brought mysterious tales with them, of fantastic adventures and experiences. The contact with foreign people, animals, and commodities led to an increasing fascination on behalf of the British, but it also gave rise to fear, to fear of the foreign, the unknown, the ‘other’. Europeans became aware of the differences concerning administration, economy, or cultural practices. Consequently, the European and British sense of superiority was enforced, and the West increasingly perceived itself as more progressive and civilised in comparison to the apparently uncivilised East.

The existence of anthropological counter-images and the construction of inferior ‘otherness’ is one of Jansen’s and Osterhammel’s three basic elements of a colonial mindset (Jansen and Osterhammel, Kolonialismus 112). As soon as a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’, between ‘own’ and ‘other’ is applied, the ‘us’ or ‘own’ becomes the norm, the superior, whereas the ‘other’ is what diverges from the norm. As a result, the British saw it as their duty to facilitate progress in the colonies and to bring this very progress as well as their culture to the colonies. This line of thinking is Jansen’ and Osterhammel’s second element of a colonial mindset, termed “Sendungsglaube und Vormundschaftspflicht” (ibid. 114). They are what Kiernan calls a “civilizing mission” (Kiernan, Imperialism 154), the superior party’s feeling of bearing responsibility towards the inferior party, the latter being the colonised. This responsibility manifests itself in bringing the colonised Western culture and ‘civilisation’ and the colonisers being convinced of their actions’ righteousness. The third element Jansen and
Osterhammel name is the “Utopie der Nicht-Politik” (Jansen and Osterhammel, Kolonialismus 115): not only did the colonisers fear chaos and wanted to eliminate it, but they were under the illusion of governing the colonies without being political. They forced their administrative system on the colonised, yet believed it to be for the best, as it served the elimination of chaos.

Conclusively, not only did Britain’s “imperial adventures” (Kiernan, Imperialism 169) have a great impact on its economic development, as described in Chapter 3.1, but its national identity was decisively influenced by these very adventures as well (Reckwitz 406). This aspect will be examined in more detail in the following chapter, which will confirm Kiernan’s statement once more: “[W]hatever Europe is, it owes in part to its imperial adventures” (Kiernan, Imperialism 169).

3.2.1 Shaping the Imperialist Mindset: Orientalism and Post-Colonial Theory
In 1978, a Palestinian American professor of English and Comparative Literature published a book and thereby created a term for the West’s patronising attitude towards the East: His name was Edward Said, and the name he gave to the concept as well as to his famous monograph was Orientalism.12 Said’s book immediately became a bestseller, but it also faced a lot of criticism and is seen controversially nowadays (McLeod 47). However, Said’s main achievement was his giving new impetus to the discussion about the West’s patronising attitude towards the East. Said was one of the first to so openly address the issue of Orientalism in literature and decisively influenced postcolonial discourse and further studies in the field. Scholars agree that his book “stimulated a necessary and valuable debate among scholars who study the Middle East, Islam, and colonial history” (Varisco xii). His “definition of Orientalism was important in theorising [colonial discourses] and shaping postcolonial studies” (McLeod 47), as McLeod puts it. Wiedemann agrees with Varisco and McLeod that Said was neither the first to deal with the history of European representations of the Orient, nor was he the first to massively criticise these representations (Wiedemann 2). He also sees Said’s achievement in his creating a term not limited to language and history of the Orient or European art history, but describing Western portrayals of the Orient in general, in which the latter is presented as the ‘Other’, as Europe’s counterpart (ibid.).

On the very first page of Orientalism, Said states that the Orient is “the place of Europe’s greatest and richest and oldest colonies” (Said 1). Already in the beginning, Said

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12 It has to be mentioned that the term Orientalism was not invented by Said but already existed before. However, Said gave Orientalism a new and wider meaning. Previously, Orientalism was simply understood as what is today called Near or Middle Eastern studies, Asian studies, or, less often, Oriental studies (Said 2).
refers to what he sees as the very roots of Orientalism: colonialism and thus also imperialism. As described in the previous subchapter, imperial practices went along with an imperialist mindset, i.e. a patronising attitude of the colonisers towards the colonised. This attitude is the basis of Orientalism. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Said dates the starting point of Orientalism at about the time at which imperialism emerged (Hobsbawn 60; Young 28) and defines it as follows:

Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (Said 3)

Basically, Orientalism is everything that demonstrates the Western view of the East. However, as already mentioned, it is most of all a patronising view, a view that expresses Western dominance and superiority as well as Eastern subordination and inferiority. However, speaking of East and West raises the question of what geographical areas these two concepts actually mean.

When trying to define the ‘Orient’ geographically, it soon becomes clear that there are no fixed borders of this region. Krause is one of the scholars to address the problem of delineation when it comes to the geographical space ‘Orient’ (Krause 4), but many scholars disagree about the regions belonging to the Orient. Said, for example, says that the Orient is “adjacent to Europe” (Said 1) and talks of West and East as “two geographical entities” (ibid. 5), but never exactly defines which geographical space he actually means when speaking of the Orient or the East. Said might be doing this on purpose, aiming at emphasising the nonexistence of any fixed borders. Still, it is never entirely clear which countries or peoples he means exactly when speaking of the East or the Orient.

The only delineation he makes is a focus on “the Arabs and Islam, which for almost a thousand years together stood for the Orient” (Said 17). Even though he admits that Eastern regions like India or Persia cannot entirely be ignored for obvious reasons such as India’s importance for the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British Empire, he still argues that talking about Europe’s relation to India, China, or Japan is not necessary in order to understand the Western experience of the Orient.13 Wiedemann disagrees and criticises Said for only

13 However, it has to be noted that Said at least touches upon India when talking about Kipling, his ‘White Man’ and his Kim (Said 226–228). Even though Kipling’s messages can often be expanded upon imperialism in general, Kipling spent his early childhood and also part of his adult life in India and also set Kim in India at the time of the British Raj. This shows that Said still considered India as a part of the Orient in his analysis.
focussing on representations of the Arabic and Islamic worlds. In his opinion, Eastern regions like India, Iran, or China are also very important for Oriental studies of the nineteenth century (Wiedemann 3).

Krause also disagrees with Said’s selection: according to him, the use of ‘Arabic’ and ‘Islamic’ as delineation markers ends up being untenable, as the criterion of Arabic population would exclude Turkey, Iran, and the CIS countries\(^{14}\), regions commonly designated as Eastern and many of them as Oriental (Krause 4). Taking the religious component as the decisive factor would again ignore the fact that Indonesia and Bangladesh, nations commonly agreed to not belong to today’s so-called Near or Middle East, are the nations with the largest share of the worldwide Muslim population (ibid.). Although Krause’s argumentation focuses more on a late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century definition of East and Orient, his argumentation still shows how difficult it is to pin down an actual geographic or also cultural space for the Orient, especially since the perception of which regions are part of the Orient has been subject to constant change throughout history.\(^{15}\)

The same problem occurs when trying to define the geographic space referred to as the West. For Said, the West or Occident is mainly Britain and France, and since WWII also America (Said 4, 17), most probably North America. For this, he has also been criticised by miscellaneous scholars, such as by Wiedemann, who, understandably, thinks that results of a study based solely on Britain and France can barely be generalised and expanded on all Europe (Wiedemann 4).

At any rate, it becomes clear that both Orient and Occident are not really graspable and concrete regions but constructs, established by the West. Said states that like history (Said 54), Orient and Occident as “locales, regions, geographical sectors” are “man-made” (ibid. 5), making the Orient “an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West” (ibid.). Thus, Said suggests that the Orient is completely constructed and imagined by the West, but also taken as reality by the latter. The West, according to Said, has created two opposing positions: Orient and Occident (ibid. 2). They are dependent on each other, as “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (ibid. 1-2). In order to establish their own identity, Westerners created the concept of an alienated ‘other’,

\(^{14}\) Commonwealth of Independent States, also called Russian Commonwealth. It officially exists since 1991 and includes many former Soviet Union states. Since 1994, those states are “Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan” (\textit{OED}, “Commonwealth”, DRAFT ADDITIONS MARCH 2003).

\(^{15}\) For more details on the development of the term ‘Orient’ see Krause (4-9).
thereby providing the West with a means of delineation from the East. Only by creating this image of an ‘other’, they were able to create an image of themselves, because no ‘us’ or ‘self’ can exist without a counterpart that possesses whatever characteristics the ‘us’ or ‘self’ does not. By calling this counterpart ‘the Other’, the ‘us’ is made the so-called norm and the ‘other’ becomes what is different, diverging from the norm.\(^\text{16}\)

Said continues by stating that the “two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other” (Said 5). This confirms what has been said before, that the one literally cannot exist without the ‘other’. As they are meant to be opposites, they naturally “reflect each other” (ibid.). Yet, it is by no means a well-balanced relationship the two constructs of Occident and Orient share, it is rather one “of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (ibid.), with the West obviously being the more powerful, dominant, hegemonic party.

These power relations between East and West also find expression in the characteristics ascribed to the East. Said writes that “[t]he Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien” (Said 207). The Oriental was not only different, but it was all the ‘weak’ parts of Western society like “delinquents, the insane, women, the poor” (ibid.) which were thought of when trying to define the Orient from a Western perspective. Since Europeans lacked the words to describe things they had never seen before, they naturally drew on aspects they were familiar with from their own society in order to describe the Orient: the parts which were not as masculine and strong as the apparently ideal European were taken as examples of what the Orient was like.

Childs and Williams take a similar standpoint and state that the “cruelty, decadence, and sensuality of Oriental culture, the laziness, mendacity, and irrationality of its inhabitants, the violence and disorder of its societies […] were some of the staples of Orientalist knowledge” (Childs and Williams 100). This implies that Easterners were not only seen as physically weaker but their whole character seemed to be less strong and virtuous than that of the Westerners. Their working morale was ostensibly different from the Western one, they were dishonest, violent, and less intelligent in Western eyes, and they were believed to show

\(^{16}\) However, othering is not a concept that occurs only with regards to Orientalism. On the contrary, the phenomenon of needing an ‘other’ in order to define oneself is something that applies to every process of collective identity formation. As Wiedemann points out, identity is always created by delineation and an ‘Other’ has always been constitutive for an ‘own’ (Wiedemann 6). He further accuses Said of eurocentrism, as he portrays othering as a European phenomenon even though it is in fact a natural one (ibid. 5-6). According to Wiedemann, Said never clarifies how European Orientalism differs from alterity constructs in other contexts (ibid. 6-7).
irrational behaviour and not to be able to organise their society themselves. At this point, the “civilizing mission” (Kiernan, *Imperialism* 154) comes in: the West had to “[t]ake up the White Man’s burden” (Kipling 111), to free the inferior, uncivilised Oriental peoples from their chaos and anarchy.

McLeod names six major stereotypes of the Orient and Orientals. Firstly, “[t]he Orient is timeless” (McLeod 52), meaning that progress and development, both historical and scientific, take place in the West, whereas the Orient is stagnating and “unchanging” (Said 96). As a result, the West perceived itself as superior, for it was more progressive and advanced than the East, which led to the West’s aforementioned civilising mission (Kiernan, *Imperialism* 154; 166).

Secondly, “[t]he Orient is strange” (McLeod 53), not only different, but in an “unusual, fantastic, bizarre” (ibid.) way. However, this strangeness also caused fascination for Westerners, especially for writers and artists. In the Orient, one could expect to see and experience things never seen or experienced before. But not only did its otherness fascinate the Europeans, it also served as evidence for the Orient’s inferiority, for its being different and strange also made it “irrational” (ibid.) in comparison to the “rational, sensible and familiar” (ibid.) Occident.

Thirdly, “Orientalism makes assumptions about people” (ibid.): certain peoples were believed to show certain innate characteristics and behaviour. Character was assumed to be defined by ‘race’, religion, nationality, or ethnicity. This means that Orientals were denied individuality, which can also be seen in literature, where Oriental characters are often portrayed as very plain, often with stereotypical attributes, whereas only Western characters are provided with an in-depth portrayal and individuality (Hermes 262). Orientalist literature is also characterised by the colonisers laying claim to spreading knowledge about the colonised (Gymnich 235), whereas the latter are “rarely looked at” but “seen through” (Said 207), they are not given a voice themselves (Spivak 104). As a result, they are denied individuality and a complexity of experience (Mercer, “Introduction” 3), and their portrayals are usually rather stereotypical. Examples of such stereotypical images of the Oriental would be “the murderous and violent Arab, the lazy Indian, the sexually obsessed African, the inscrutable Chinese” (McLeod 53). By drawing on such stereotypes, Orientals are homogenised as a group, they are denied individuality (Hermes 262).

The fourth stereotype McLeod lists is “Orientalism makes assumptions about gender” (McLeod 53). Oriental men were believed to be effeminate, lacking real masculinity, and the women to be “sexually lascivious [and] exotic” (ibid.). The latter image was enforced by
pictures of nude or barely clothed women, portraying them as “immodest, immoral, active creature[s] of sexual pleasure who held the key to mysterious erotic sexual delights” (ibid. 54). What they perceived as a threat to so-called traditional British values at home, they liked in the colonies: in the imagination of many European men, the Orient promised adventures, adventures which they could not get at home and which they were secretly longing for. Paradoxically, this fascination results from the Oriental women being the exact opposite of the ‘ideal’ European woman. However, it might be this very paradox which gave rise to fascination. In Western eyes, Oriental men and women stood in stark contrast to their own, apparently ideal gender roles, yet this difference was not only frightening but also fascinating.

Out of these assumptions about Orientals and gender results the fifth stereotype: “[t]he Orient is feminine” (ibid.). Not only were Oriental men thought to lack masculinity and women believed to be fascinatingly alluring, but the Orient as a whole is ‘feminised’ in Orientalism. Like Oriental women, the Orient itself in its exoticism is alluring, subject to the European colonisers’ fantasy as well as fascination. The Orient offered a chance to escape the restrictions at home, and men did not have to act like gentlemen but got the chance of acting out their fantasies. The West, by contrast, was thought of as masculine, and its superiority over the colonies consolidated this image. By symbolising strength and power, the colonial empires expressed Europe’s masculinity, and thus, the “loss of empire” (Kiernan, *Imperialism* 160) was also a staggering blow to this very masculinity: Europe’s castration anxiety had come true. The stereotype of the feminine or feminised Orient contributed decisively to the antithesis of fear and fascination, which also expressed itself in art and literature featuring the Orient. As McLeod puts it, “in representing the Orient and Orientals, Western artists were actually depicting themselves, putting on the page or in their pictures their own desires, fantasies, and fears” (ibid. 55). The portrayal of both the Orient and Orientals often reveals more about the ones portraying than about the ones portrayed (Varisco xii).

All these stereotypes result in the sixth stereotype: “[t]he Oriental is degenerate” (McLeod 55). According to McLeod, Orientals are believed to show “cowardliness, laziness, untrustworthiness, fickleness, laxity, violence and lust” (ibid.). As has been discussed before, Oriental people were seen as morally inferior and uncivilised, apparently giving the West the mission of civilising the East, being utterly convinced of their mission’s honourableness.

As has become evident in McLeod’s list of stereotypes, the Orient has been romanticised as well as eroticised. Said describes the Orient as having a “special place in European Western experience” (Said 1). According to him, the Orient “had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences”
(ibid.) in the European imagination. Thus, on the one hand, the Orient has become an object of fascination. On the other hand, it is also associated with danger, mainly connected to its being different, alien, foreign, unknown. Naturally, people fear what they do not know or understand.\footnote{While the West perceived Islam as one of the major threats connected to the East (Said 59), the same could of course be said about any religion, also about Catholicism, as Dan Brown’s Robert Langdon points out in *The Lost Symbol*: “[O]n the pagan day of the sun god Ra, I kneel at the foot of an ancient instrument of torture and consume ritualistic symbols of blood and flesh” (Brown 32). When Langdon’s students look horrified after this statement, he continues: “And if any of you care to join me, come to the Harvard chapel on Sunday, kneel beneath the crucifix, and take Holy Communion. […] Open your minds, my friends. We all fear what we do not understand” (ibid.). See also Bhaba (“Signs” 38-9).}

The major reason for Europeans’ lack of understanding towards non-Europeans is that most of the sources they consult for information are European. In the Age of Imperialism, this might partly be excused by the fact that it was not so easy to get information from non-Europeans, as geographical as well as language boundaries had to be overcome. However, this is not a valid argument, for geographical boundaries apparently did not play a role with regard to the import of colonial commodities. In fact, there was simply no demand for getting to know a non-European view in most cases. At any rate, the argument is completely invalid today, since globalisation breaks geographical as well as language boundaries: global transport systems, the World Wide Web, and education make a wider range of information possible. Nevertheless, a lacking demand for a non-European perspective is still discernible.

This aspect of not taking any non-Western views into account reveals a paradox within Said’s *Orientalism*: many scholars criticise him for saying that “Orientalism denied Orientals the possibility of representing themselves” (Irwin 292), but then doing the very same himself by ignoring contributions of Arab or other Eastern scholars. To use Gayatri C. Spivak’s words, Said criticises that “[t]he subaltern cannot speak” (Spivak 104) because they are not given a voice, but he also does not give them the opportunity to speak. Spivak describes the Orientalist thought pattern as follows: the West presumes to know what is best for the East and is apparently convinced of doing something good and beneficial. Yet, this arrogant attitude ignores the view of the subaltern. The party in charge does not ask whether the apparently unjust or in any way wrong situation is perceived as such by the subordinate party, but lays claim to knowing what is best for the subaltern (Spivak 66-111). Thus, the West presumes the right to speak for the subaltern instead of letting them speak for themselves (Kerner 136; Gymnich 235). This again mirrors the imperialist mindset previously described.

Irwin and Wiedemann, along with other scholars, criticise Said for saying that the Orient does not exist but is only a construct, but then again suggesting that the Orient is
portrayed in patronising ways (Irwin 291; Wiedemann 5). As Irwin ironically remarks, this reveals the following paradox: “If indeed the Orient did not exist, it should not be possible to misrepresent it” (Irwin 291). This argument is problematic (the reasons will be discussed later in this chapter), but it does lead to another interesting phenomenon, which by no means only concerns Said’s writing. It can indeed be argued that Said has contributed to the Orient having become a “reified ‘Other’” (ibid.) by writing about it.

Maria do Mar Castro Varela calls this problem of confirming the existence of a difference by talking about the latter “Differenzdilemma”: By making people aware of the difference between certain groups, be it immigrants and non-immigrants or West and East, this difference is reified (Castro Varela 660). Of course, this dilemma occurs in any case of addressing racism, stereotyping, or any other form of discrimination or unequal treatment, making it a general phenomenon rather than a specifically Saidian problem. The ‘Differenzdilemma’ highlights that it is also not a solution to romanticise difference, as this equally enforces the difference aspect. Paul Mecheril suggests that this complex topic can be treated by accepting pluralistic identities (“Mehrfachzugehörigkeit”) and thereby deconstructing difference, rather than celebrating it (Mecheril 388). However, the answer to the problem is also not to ignore different preconditions. Castro Varela states that understanding that people think and act differently because of different cultural backgrounds or different prerequisites does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that they are different (Castro Varela 661).

However, while Castro Varela and Mecheril certainly have a point, Simon During believes the “Differenzdilemma” to be a rather utopian concept that lacks practicality. He states that “this critique is rather removed from everyday life where so much is ordered by identities. It seems to be making a theoretical and utopian rather than a practical point” (During 151). By addressing Orientalism in the Sherlock Holmes stories and the series Sherlock, this thesis also blunders into the dilemma of reifying the difference between West and East by talking about it. However, in order to make people aware of Orientalism, it has to be addressed. Only then, an attempt to accept and subsequently deconstruct difference can take place. In addition, as During argues, cultural difference is actually not something which can be ignored entirely, for identity is formed by the affiliation to certain groups. It cannot be denied that the identification with one or more groups plays an important role in society, but also for the individual, who often does not even want identity to be fluid, but stable (During 152). Hence, identity is “assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable”, and falls into crisis when “displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty” (Mercer, “Welcome” 43), as Mercer argues. However,
even though many immigrants, for instance, might suffer from the tension between two cultures and might be searching for their identity, there is neither a common identity to all people of one cultural background nor a migrant identity. Denying the fact of the fluid identity is exactly what happens when stereotyping, for identity is taken for what it is not: “fixed, coherent and stable” (ibid.).

When it comes to identity formation, an important aspect to include is national identity. As McLeod states, “it is the aim of nationalist discourses to create community out of difference, to convert ‘many’ into ‘one’” (McLeod 139). Nationalist discourses want to make use of the fact that the feeling of belonging to a community provides the basis for identity formation. As described above, this is done by delineating the ‘self’ from an alienated ‘other’. This delineation is achieved by emphasising difference, the difference between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. Nationalist discourse aims at defining ‘Britishness’ or ‘Englishness’, to name just one example, in order to bring a common reference group into existence. According to Stuart Hall, national identity is “formed and transformed within and in relation to representation” (Hall 612). It is a discourse, a narrative: national identity is formed by the way it is presented in media and popular culture, in literature or national histories (ibid. 613).

As a consequence, nations are constructs, “imagined communities” (Anderson 15), as Benedict Anderson calls them, created in order to have something people can identify with (Hall 613). Hall ironically points out that the British nation is in fact nothing more than the “product of a series of [violent] conquests” (ibid. 616) and thus the British people a mix of “Celtic, Roman, Viking, Saxon, and Norman” (ibid.) peoples. Thereby, he lets the whole discussion and argumentation of nationality and superior and inferior nations appear irrational. Homi Bhaba also argues that nations are very fragile and built on false assumptions, such as the – in reality non-existent – homogeneity of certain ostensibly inferior or less civilised regions. Bhaba especially focuses on Third World countries. He also speaks of “nation as narration” (Bhaba, “Dissemination” 132-33): nation is anthropogenic and fails to mirror a diverse and heterogeneous society. However, the concept of nation as an identity-forming concept still works very well, as is also mirrored by current political trends and developments.

As pointed out by Stuart Hall, literature and also TV series inevitably present and represent nationality, both the own and that of others, in a certain way and thus form the national discourse (Hall 612-13). This shows the relevance of this thesis, as especially literature and TV series as popular as Sherlock Holmes and Sherlock decisively influence the image people have of their nation and of others. Literature as well as film have the power to decide whether to delineate the ‘own’ nation and national culture from others and to emphasise
difference, and whether to present itself as superior and others as strange. Thus, it has the power to either enforce or counteract stereotypes, to affirm or resist Orientalism.

### 3.2.2 From Defoe, Conrad, and Kipling to Conan Doyle: Orientalism in Literature

Literature’s power to represent nation and to form national discourse (Hall 612-13) is most significant, as it has a say in how a society’s views develop. Usually, the views literature disseminates are already prevalent in certain sections of the population, yet literature possesses the power to enforce these prevalent views and to ensure they do not cease to exist. At Doyle’s time, and the prevalent mindset considerably mirrored imperialism and Orientalism, the Western society tended to see itself as differing from the East, as superior, more progressive, and more civilised. Holding the view which was prevalent in his society, Doyle was obviously not seen as racist in any sense by most of his contemporaries. Naturally, the circumstances in his surroundings influenced his thinking, which explains how Doyle came to his opinion on foreigners and his view of colonial ‘others’.

In British literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, there is in fact a lot of Orientalism to be found, regardless of the genre. The beginnings of the English novel in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century are closely interwoven with the history of the British Empire and global colonialism (Schulze-Engler 344). Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* already mirrors the imperial situation (D’haen 10; Schulze-Engler 344), but especially later, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, so-called ‘‘Fictions of Empire’’ (Schulze-Engler 344) gained enormous popularity in Britain. As examples, Schulze-Engler names Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1901), a work also essential for Said in *Orientalism*, or Joseph Conrad’s *Lord Jim* (1900) or his famous novella *Heart of Darkness* (1899) (ibid. 344-45). In these pieces of fiction, Empire and colonies are central to the plot, the action is often set in the colonies, at least partially.

However, literary productions with plots not primarily concerned with Empire also feature a variety of hints to the formative social and cultural significance of colonialism and imperialism (ibid. 345). Even though before the publication of Said’s *Orientalism*, it was widely believed that these very productions of Victorian authors did not display any interest in imperialism or the colonies (Brantlinger 5), this was evidently not true. Said accused many famous and celebrated writers of being Orientalists and thereby started a still ongoing discussion about Orientalism in literature. Apparently, the majority of nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary productions reflect the patronising mindset of the time. Brantlinger
names Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park* (1814), where the wealth of family patriarch Sir Thomas Bertram is based on his plantation in Antigua, or Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations* (1861), where Abel Magwitch acquired wealth in Australia, or Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847), where John Rivers goes to India as a missionary and Mr Rochester suffers from his marriage to a Caribbean wife, the “madwoman in the attic”, as Gilbert and Gubar’s 1979 monograph describes her role (Brantlinger 4-5; Schulze-Engler 345). Detective fiction is equally concerned, as Agatha Christie’s 1937 detective novel *Death on the Nile* shows, which, according to Zengin, “includes traces of Orientalism” (Zengin 838).

There are numerous other works which could be named here, but Brantlinger also lists the author most significant for this thesis: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Brantlinger 51). As already suggested, Doyle’s works are no exception, indeed they blend in perfectly with the literary productions from the Age of Imperialism. As Thomas Mann wrote in *Der Zauberberg*, “Der Mensch lebt nicht nur sein persönliches Leben als Einzelwesen, sondern, bewußt oder unbewußt, auch das seiner Epoche und Zeitgenossenschaft“ (Mann 47). Man does not only live his personal life as an individual, but, consciously or unconsciously, also the life of his age and his contemporaries. Like most authors in the nineteenth and twentieth century, Doyle was a supporter of Empire (Brantlinger 51), an attitude mirrored in his *Sherlock Holmes* novellas and stories.

Mann’s statement of man’s life being influenced by his epoch or his contemporaries equally applies to present-day literature and film: even though the political situation has changed and Britain’s factual colonial empire does not exist anymore\(^\text{18}\), literature and film still present an image of nation and cultural difference which is usually prevalent in society, but also reinforced by its portrayal in the media. This very portrayal of nation and difference is an essential factor contributing to identity formation, and it conveys superiority on behalf of the British or the West in general, and thus it conveys difference and non-equality. The focus has shifted, however, as it is not only the Arabic and Islamic world (Said 17) anymore which is seen as inferior or dangerous, but also Eastern European countries like Russia or other regions formerly part of the Soviet Union. Orientalism can now, for example, occur in the discourse around 9/11 and the Iraq War, regarding the representation of Islam and its apparent connection to terror, or also in the context of Western Europe feeling superior to Eastern Europe. Many popular films like *James Bond*, for instance, feature villains from Eastern Europe or Asia,\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{18}\) However, it has to be noted that the dissolution of Empire is not complete yet, as Britain still retains sovereignty over its fourteen British Overseas Territories and the Crown dependencies, and it is quite telling that Britain is so keen on keeping these territories, even though other nations lay claim to them as well.
whereas the hero is British and has to protect the Western world from foreign crimes (Chapman 141).

All examples listed give evidence for the fascination apparently linked to novels, stories, or films featuring Orientalist stereotypes, for all these productions were rather successful and popular at their time and, in most cases, still are today. The antithesis of fear and fascination, which was closely linked to the portrayal of Orientals, generally dominates literature and film featuring Orientalism. As Baumbach states, there is an “enduring fascination with evil, which feeds on the intense attraction we feel towards the violation of ethical and aesthetic borders, and towards the experience of excess” (Baumbach 5-6). Even though the evil first and foremost arouses fear, it is also awe-inspiring, not only in a negative way. In order to leave an impression, something does not necessarily have to be beautiful or positive. Often, the contrary is the case, something excessive, violating “ethical and aesthetic borders” (ibid. 6) leaves an even deeper impression. Since the Oriental is often perceived as threatening due to its otherness, it fits exactly into this scheme: its otherness is exotic, at times also hideous. However, as the “violation of […] aesthetic borders” (ibid.) leads to fascination, the Oriental is usually a both fascinating and dreadful sight. However, fascination also involves danger: the danger of getting too involved with the Oriental and thus risking a loss of one’s own identity.

Otherness poses a threat to the self, which risks being absorbed by the Other in the experience of fascination and its tendencies to eliminate categories of subject and object, ‘I’ and ‘you’, self and other. Combined with efforts to consolidate the Empire, nineteenth-century discourses of fascination not only served as a tool for identifying between ‘self’ and ‘other’: they also bore the risk of annihilating difference in the instance of fascination, when the self is absorbed by the other. (ibid. 209-10)

Once fascination gains the upper hand and the Westerner’s control is lost, his self is inevitably absorbed by the ‘other’, thus eliminating the difference. As the notion of empire, of ruling over inferior others, grounds on this difference, fascination in excess is a threat to the empire. There is the risk of going native (Hamann and Kißling 149): Kurtz in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, for instance, crosses the border and gets involved with the foreign, which in the end destroys him (ibid.). However, in moderation, fascination definitely offers pleasure to literary and cinematic characters as well as to the readers and viewers.

In conclusion, the core statement of Orientalism is the West’s patronising view of the East, the former having constructed a contrasting image of the latter, an ‘other’ in order to define its own identity. On the one hand, this image of a different, foreign ‘other’ makes the West fear the East, but, on the other hand, the East’s otherness is also somehow exotic and thus fascinating. In nineteenth-century literature, the Orient is mostly portrayed as lazy, alluring,
barbaric, and also as weak and passive, and stands in contrast to an active, civilised, dominant West. Thus, colonial literature is often a mirror of Europe’s imperialist, patronising attitude towards its colonies. Apart from the use of colonial jargon, colonial literature is characterised by differentiating between a ‘self’ and an ‘other’. The latter are usually flatter and plainer characters, whereas European characters are portrayed in more depth and detail (Hermes 262). These very characters are the one the plot revolves around, they are the only ones to get a voice in the sense of Spivak (Spivak 104), whereas the others remain silent (Hermes 262). Hence, the portrayal is one-sided, leaving aside the view of the colonised themselves. The colonial powers lay claim to spreading knowledge about the colonised (Gymnich 235), yet this very knowledge is often stereotypical. Hence, the colonised are not portrayed as individuals but as representatives of a collective (Hermes 262).

It is important to be aware of the fact that the Orient is not a clearly defined geographical region, which seems problematic on the one hand, but, on the other hand, makes it easier to expand the theory onto any imperialist system, and also onto contemporary ones. In this thesis, I aim to detect Orientalism in Doyle’s stories, where the connection is more obvious, since they are set in the glory days of British imperialism, as well as in the twenty-first-century BBC series, which is set in the age of political correctness, ostensibly remote from any notions of empire.
4. Orientalism in Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* stories

As has been shown above, Orientalism is prevalent in many pieces of Victorian literature, and Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* stories and novellas are no exception. As said previously, the colonies were a crucial part of the British Empire’s identity and they defined its power to a great extent. Its colonies and dependencies were what gave Britain an empire, and the political and economic power gained through the acquisition of each and every one of them was politically propagated in Britain. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Orientalist attitudes were very common in Doyle’s Britain and that the author’s thoughts were also shaped by Orientalism. In the following subchapters, the appearance of Oriental characters and animals will be analysed. It will be examined how living beings from the Orient are portrayed and which roles they play in the *Holmes* stories. Subsequently, the relevance and role of Oriental settings in- and outside Britain will be explored.

4.1 Fascinatingly Dangerous: Oriental Characters and Other Living Beings

When it comes to Orientalism in the *Sherlock Holmes* series, the reader soon notices that the stories feature a number of people and also other creatures, such as animals, from the Orient. Their portrayals stand in stark contrast to those of non-Orientals. Not only their physical appearance but also their behaviour differs in some respects from how Britons look and behave. I argue that, due to the former’s foreignness, they are interesting and fascinating, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, they also appear dangerous to the Westerner. First, this will be shown by using the example of human characters from the novellas *The Sign of the Four* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and from the stories “The Speckled Band” and “A Scandal in Bohemia”, as well as stories featuring Holmes’s arch nemesis Professor Moriarty, such as “The Final Problem”. The aim is to show how Orientals and non-Orientals are portrayed as contrasting figures, and to argue that origin or ethnicity seem to reveal more about a person than their actual actions. Subsequently, the appearance and function of Oriental animals and even an organism will be examined. For this purpose, “The Speckled Band” will again serve as an example, as well as the story “The Adventure of the Dying Detective”.

4.1.1 Hindu Servants, Sikh Allies, and Cannibals: Exotic ‘Savages’

As pointed out in Chapter 3.2 and 3.3, Orientals were mostly portrayed as exotic, uncivilised savages, as opposed to Europeans or, in this case, Britons, who were shown as civilised and progressive. This also becomes apparent in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories. When solving a case,
the detective often draws on previous cases. However, the knowledge he has gained in these cases is often based on racial stereotypes. In *The Sign of the Four*, he says about Small’s confederate:

There are features of interest about this ally. He lifts the case from the regions of the commonplace. I fancy that 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. (Doyle, *Sign* 34).

By remembering parallel cases, Holmes is able to draw conclusions about the nationality of the criminal. Afterwards, he discovers that the latter comes from the Andaman Islands, which were part of British India at the time, proving his prediction to be partly true. Holmes already presumed that India had something to do with the ally’s origin, but apparently, the Andaman Islands are, despite being part of British India, different. Holmes learns about the foreigner’s actual origin after having drawn on stereotypical knowledge, as is apparent in the following explanation, when he replies to Watson’s question whether the ally was Indian:

When I first 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. (Doyle, *Sign* 57)

As McLaughlin puts it, “Holmes’s interpretation depends upon his deployment of a set of generalizable racial and cultural characteristics such as ‘the Hindoo proper’ and the ‘Sandal-wearing Mohammedan.’” (McLaughlin 66). Indeed, Holmes elucidates the physical differences between two different ethnic groups, assuming that each of them is a homogenous group with a typical appearance. According to McBratney, Britain conducted quite a lot of research on Indian “racial types” (McBratney 152). The British were particularly fascinated by the Indian caste system, which they believed to be the evidence that people in India had remained largely “unmixed” (ibid. 149). Due to the Indian caste system not allowing people to marry outside their caste and strict laws of endogamy within the different religious communities, especially within the Hindu and Muslim ones (ibid. 150-52), the population was indeed largely “pure” (ibid. 149). Since the majority of these studies were conducted about one or two decades before the publication of *The Sign of the Four*, it is very likely that Holmes’s description of the “sandal-wearing Mohammedan” and the “Hindoo proper” (Doyle, *Sign* 57) is based on findings of these very studies. As McBratney states, the previously mentioned scientific research on Indians and “racial types” resulted in the publication of a great number of “gazetteers, handbooks, manuals” and other types of media providing information about
these very “racial types” (McBratney 153). This, again, shaped the British view on Indians significantly and thus also influenced nineteenth-century fiction writers such as Doyle (ibid.). By drawing on such ‘scientific’ research findings and thus stereotypical knowledge, Doyle’s detective is able to deduce the wanted person’s actual country of origin.

What is remarkable concerning the portrayals of foreigners in the Holmes stories, however, is that they are, in most cases, characterised as the antinomy of Britishness. By delineating foreigners from the British, two ostensibly contradicting identities are created. Examples of othering are to be found in The Sign of the Four: Mr Thaddeus Sholto, for instance, employs a “Hindoo servant” (Doyle, Sign 18), whose exoticism is shown already by his looks. He is described as wearing a “yellow turban, white loose-fitting clothes, and a yellow sash” (ibid.). Watson remarks that there was “something strangely incongruous in this Oriental figure framed in the commonplace doorway of a third-rate suburban dwelling-house” (ibid.). This shows that such an Oriental-looking character does not fit into the orderly British world in the eyes of a British citizen. The servant is clearly foreign, his non-Britishness identifiable by his outward appearance. Even though a slightly sordid house in the suburbs of London was certainly not an uncommon place for immigrants, also at Doyle’s time, the servant seems an odd and unexpected figure to Watson. The house apparently looks like an ordinary, standard lower class British home, at least from the outside – the servant, however, does not: He looks exotic, foreign, different. Moreover, he is a typical example of an Oriental character who only plays a minor role and is in a subordinate position, as seemed appropriate for a non-white individual in the Victorian age (Hermes 262). In addition, he does not get a voice in the sense of Spivak (Spivak 104).

The servant’s subordinate position stands in contrast to his white master’s superiority. Their relationship is, amongst other things, visible by the way the servant addresses Sholto: he calls him “Sahib” (ibid.), which means master and was the proper way to address a white person for an Indian (Jackson 42), as the skin colour alone was enough to define the social status of a person. However, despite his whiteness, Thaddeus Sholto is not exactly the epitome of an Englishman. As the servant appears “incongruous” (Doyle, Sign 18) to Watson, so does his master. He is not an Oriental but surrounds himself with Oriental objects and servants. Apparently, from an Orientalist point of view, this has a negative impact on his character: contact with seemingly odd things and people makes him odd himself, and he is described as a strange fellow. Sholto as a white person clearly outranks his servant in the social hierarchy, yet he is outranked by others who are closer to the prototype of the Englishman. However, this aspect will be discussed in more detail later on, namely in Chapter 4.2.2, where the impact of
exotic objects on Sholto’s character development will be analysed, and also in Chapter 4.1.3, here by using the example of Dr Grimesby Roylott from “The Speckled Band”.

While Thaddeus Sholto and his servant are rather odd but harmless, there are some other, more sinister characters of foreign descent in *The Sign of the Four*. The most obvious example is Tonga, an Indian native who turns out to be the murderer of Thaddeus Sholto’s brother Bartholomew. Before Holmes and Watson have actually seen Tonga, they discover his footsteps and are startled on account of their oddness. Firstly, the footprints are very small, like those of “a child or a small woman” (ibid. 44). Secondly, when Holmes asks Watson to compare Tonga’s footprint to his own, Watson deduces, “Your toes are all cramped together. The other print has each toe distinctively divided” (ibid.). This description of the divided toes sounds almost animal-like, more like a monkey’s foot than a man’s. Further descriptions of Tonga contribute to his rather animalistic appearance even more. When Holmes and Watson are puzzling over the islander’s nationality, Holmes consults a geographical gazetteer¹⁹, which describes Tonga’s native land and its inhabitants further:

The aborigines of the Andaman Islands may perhaps claim the distinction of being the smallest race upon this earth […] The average height is rather below four feet, although many full-grown adults may be found who are very much smaller than this. They are a fierce, morose, and intractable people, though capable of forming most devoted friendships when their confidence has once been gained. […] They 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 effort 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. (Doyle, *Sign* 57-58)

When hearing this description, one pictures horrible creatures, almost monsters. Indeed, it reminds one of other literary monsters like Frankenstein’s creature, who is also described as unnatural: he is of “gigantic stature” and appears like a “savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island” (Shelley 25-26). Moreover, he is able to move incredibly fast and seems to possess superhuman strengths (ibid. 79, 101), he is called “animal” (ibid. 79), “devil”, and “monster” (ibid. 102) and described as not human (ibid. 78). His ugliness is “unearthly” (ibid. 102), he is apparently very hideous, “almost too horrible for human eye” (ibid. 102), which also applies to the aborigines described above.

Even though the Andaman islanders are the opposite of gigantic, they, too, have unnatural features and also apparently supernatural skills: Tonga manages to enter a locked

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¹⁹ Holmes’s consulting a gazetteer confirms the above-mentioned rise in publication of information material on “racial types” (McBratney 153) and also the assumption that Doyle based his gazetteer entry as well as the ‘knowledge’ on Indians and Andaman Islanders on information gained from this very material.
room and to escape from that very room after having committed a crime. As the description shows, the islanders, like Frankenstein’s creation, appear non-human: the reader cannot help but think of animals, for the islanders are smaller than the average human and have distorted limbs and also abnormal facial features. Their big heads and small eyes are reminiscent of monkeys, even though they are, as opposed to Frankenstein’s creation, human.\(^\text{20}\) The aborigines are described as wild, abhorrent, savage creatures, as “hideous”, “fierce”, “morose”, “intractable” (Doyle, *Sign* 58). They are seen as a collective, their identity that of their ethnic group, homogenised and ascribed certain characteristics (Hermes 262). Apparently, the British have tried to “win them over” (ibid.), probably a euphemism for ‘colonise them’, but they have not succeeded, so wild were the creatures.\(^\text{21}\)

The islanders also resemble the natives in *Robinson Crusoe*, who were described as primitive, “inhuman”, “savage wretches”, as “dreadful creatures” (Defoe 142). Even though Wintle states that the Andamanese were wrongly associated with cannibalism (Wintle 201), Doyle confirms the rumours by making the islanders cannibals. Like in Defoe’s case, this move makes it easier to see them as non-humans and almost abnormal beings, for the wrongness of cannibalism is beyond all question in most cultures, not only Western ones. McLaughlin also sees a parallel to Defoe’s novel when Holmes discovers Tonga’s footprint, suggesting that Holmes’s discovery lets the Britons realise that they, like Crusoe (Defoe 131), are “not alone on their island” (McLaughlin 67). However, unlike in Crusoe’s case, the cannibal has ‘invaded’ Britain this time, and it is Holmes’s duty to stop this invasion. He is, according to McLaughlin, an “imperialist regulator”, who has to ensure the “smooth exchange” (McLaughlin 68) between the Empire and its colonies.

When Holmes and Watson first see the native man lying on the deck of a boat, they take him for a “Newfoundland dog” (ibid. 72). When he rises, they can see him properly, and he transforms from animal into human, but judging by Watson’s description, it is not entirely clear whether he really becomes human in their perception. The doctor describes Tonga as a most hideous creature:

\(^{20}\) The humanness of Frankenstein’s creation could be discussed, though. However, the creation was not born by a human mother, whereas the Andamanese were.

\(^{21}\) Interestingly, the Andaman Islands have a special status even today, and there has, very recently, been another attempt to missionize the Andaman Islands, namely in November 2018. According to several media reports, for instance by the CNN or the BBC, an American missionary was killed by the inhabitants of the island (Boyette/Darran; BBC). However, as an article in the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* points out, the evangelisation the American pursued is only a sequel of an ongoing repression, as the article’s title expresses: “Eine Unterwerfung, die nie aufhörte”, a never-ending supression (Perras).
There was movement in the huddled bundle upon the deck. It straightened itself into a little black man—the smallest I have ever seen—with a great, misshapen head and a shock of tangled, dishevelled hair. Holmes had already drawn his revolver, and I whipped out mine at the sight of this savage, distorted creature. He was wrapped in some sort of dark ulster or blanket, which left only his face exposed, but that face was enough to give a man a sleepless night. 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. (Doyle, *Sign* 73)

When reading Watson’s description, the islander’s appearance seems to be even more dreadful than described in the gazetteer. The reader cannot help but imagine an abominable creature which is indeed more animal than human. The native makes a wild, feral impression with his “great, misshapen head” and his “tangled, dishevelled hair” (ibid.). He is only sparsely clothed, solely with an “ulster or blanket” (ibid.), perhaps implying that he would prefer being naked but has to wear something in the ‘civilised’ world. This evokes images of barbarous, naked indigenes in the jungle. Tonga’s apparent bestiality is already mirrored by his facial features, which are “enough to give a man a sleepless night” (ibid.). Being described in such drastic ways, the reader gets the impression that the native is indeed a horrible, nightmarish creature, not a human being. The dehumanisation becomes more substantive by mentioning his “half animal fury” (ibid.), which now explicitly labels him a non-human, animalistic creature. Only a few sentences further, Watson calls Tonga an “unhallowed dwarf with [a] hideous face, and […] strong yellow teeth” and “venomous, menacing eyes” (ibid.). Whatever the Indian is, be it animal or dwarf, in Watson’s eyes, he is definitely something unhuman and monstrous, even “unhallowed”, devilish. Watson’s point of view is of course not an exceptional one but represents the opinion of the majority of British society at Doyle’s time.

However, McLaughlin does not only see fear in Watson’s description, but differentiates between “Watson-the-physician” (McLaughlin 69), who knows about the threat which radiates from the islander, and “Watson-the-chronicler” (ibid.), who sees the cannibal as an “attractively exotic spectacle” (ibid.). This, according to McLaughlin, can especially be seen in his description of the dying Tonga when he sinks into the depths of the Thames. As McLaughlin puts it, it is the “intractable cannibal’s last act of resistance […] to sink out of sight before the Englishmen can satisfy their hungry eyes” (ibid.). Hence, he suggests that besides being afraid, Holmes and Watson also somehow enjoy looking at the exotic being, for they find it fascinating. Indeed, when Watson says that Tonga’s “small eyes glowed and burned with a sombre light” (Doyle, *Sign* 73) or a “strange visitor to our shore” (ibid. 74), the reader can interpret this as fascination on behalf of Watson. However, even if one chooses not to interpret it that way, Holmes is definitely fascinated by the foreigner.
As stated above, Holmes says that the ally “lifts the case from the regions of the commonplace”, and he believes “that this ally breaks fresh ground in the annals of crime in this country” (ibid. 34). As he points out on several occasions, he associates the commonplace with what he detests the most: boredom and routine. “Give me problems, give me work, […] and I am in my own proper atmosphere […]. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation” (ibid. 4), he says in The Sign of the Four. In “The Red-Headed League”, Holmes replies to Watson’s praise for him solving the case, “‘It saved me from ennui […] Alas, I already feel it closing in upon me! My life is spent in one long effort to escape from the commonplaces of existence. These little problems help me to do so’” (Doyle, “Red-Headed” 161). Therefore, as Ousby puts it, Holmes is always pursuing excitement, for he is afraid of boredom and the ordinary life (Ousby 49). Since Tonga represents a welcome change to the boredom of the ordinary, Holmes is fascinated by him, despite his disgust on account of his sight and his cruelty.

Not only are Holmes and Watson fascinated by the native and somehow enjoy watching him, but others even paid in order to satisfy their fascination. Small earned a living by “exhibiting poor Tonga at fairs and other such places as the black cannibal. He would eat raw meat and dance his war-dance: so we always had a hatful of pennies after a day’s work” (Doyle, Sign 98). Small could actually earn money by exhibiting the native man like an animal at a zoo. In fact, watching the exhibition of exotic people was highly popular in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century. Ethnological exhibitions or so-called ‘human zoos’, where living humans from other countries, usually the East, were publicly exhibited in order to emphasise the differences between the West and the East (Koller 400), were a great success in Britain and all over Europe, and visitors came in flocks (Greenhalgh 273).

Hence, it comes as no surprise that exhibiting Tonga brought in capital for Small. Letting the native eat raw meat contributes to the animalistic image, whereas the war-dance simply makes him appear wild, savage, and uncivilised. The fact that people gave their money for such an exhibition again shows a key element of Orientalism: they surely found the wild, little man very scary and frightening, but, nevertheless, they were also fascinated by his otherness and exoticism. Another aspect that might have contributed to the fact that people enjoyed watching this show is that the display mirrored the relation of the coloniser and the colonised: the white man had apparently caught a wild, black native and had subjugated him. The latter was scary but not truly dangerous because he was controlled by his white master. The aspect of distributing exotic creatures and the concomitant fascination will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.1.2.
However, while Tonga seems to be domesticated and under Small’s control during these exhibitions, he is not when it comes to Small’s revenge mission. Tonga kills Bartholomew Sholto, even though his master Small did not instruct him to. By doing so, he gets out of Small’s control and he becomes dangerous again. As McLaughlin puts it,

there are good savages, like Sholto’s Hindu servant, who can be controlled and domesticated, and bad ones, like the aborigine, who refuse to submit, and who in his particular case can be relegated to the excretory sediment at the bottom of the stream flowing out of and into the heart of civilization. (McLaughlin 70)

The colonised were forced to adapt and accept their inferior role. If they did not, they were somehow punished. In Tonga’s case, the punishment is death. The native is a “peculiar appearance” (Doyle, Sign 69) with “savage instincts” (ibid. 48), as Holmes puts it. According to the detective, it is these instincts which make Tonga kill Bartholomew Sholto, even though it would not have been necessary, a circumstance that disgusts even his master Jonathan Small, prompting him to call Tonga a “little bloodthirsty imp” (ibid. 99). Small is also a convict and a criminal, but the difference is that he is white. Even though his plans are quite sinister, too, the difference in skin colour automatically makes him less savage and brutal than Tonga. As a consequence, Holmes tells Watson not to hesitate to kill the aborigine (ibid. 73) and makes clear that neither will he (ibid. 49). Yet, he does not say the same about Small, as the latter is obviously more human and can thus, even though a criminal, not simply be killed. Tonga, on the contrary, having been dehumanised due to the British perception of his physiognomy, can apparently be killed without violating any law. In addition, the chapter featuring Tonga’s killing is called “The end of the islander” (ibid. 67), almost as if his death was something passive, not an event caused by another human, even though it is Holmes and Watson who kill Tonga.

In comparison to Holmes involvement in the death of Dr Grimesby Roylott, where he does not really regret, but at least acknowledge his partial, indirect responsibility (Doyle, “Speckled” 226), the great detective does not seem to feel guilty at all for causing Tonga’s death, and neither does Watson. The native’s cause of death is simply not mentioned anymore, not even by Scotland Yard. It might be argued that Holmes, Watson, and the police saw killing Tonga as self-defence. However, Holmes does condemn Small for being complicit in the death of the merchant Achmet (Doyle, Sign 90), even though Small also argues that there had not been any other option for him than death, had he not joined forces with the Sikh (ibid.). What is more, Small was convicted and sentenced for his crime, whereas Holmes’s murder is not
even mentioned by anyone. Consequently, there seem to be different measures when it comes
to law and justice, depending on whether the victim is white or not.

However, the question of guilt and justice in general is interesting in The Sign of the
Four, especially with regard to Orientalism. The root of all evil, the Agra treasure, originally
belonged to a rajah, an Indian prince (OED, “raja”). Whether it rightfully belonged to him or
not is not said, and the reader knows nothing except the prince having received most of it from
his father and having somehow managed to increase it. However, it is clear that all the other
characters who tried to get hold of the treasure definitely did not have a right to it. Small as
well as the three Sikh Mahomet Singh, Abdullah Khan, and Dost Akbar basically steal the
treasure out of greed, killing the envoy of the apparent rightful owner. It is clear to Holmes,
Watson, and inspector Athelney Jones that they have done something wrong. However, Major
Sholto acts equally unjust, as he takes advantage of the situation and betrays the others, wanting
the treasure all for himself. On his deathbed, he tells his two sons part of the story, saying that
he regrets his greed and not having shared the treasure.

However, he only regrets not having shared with Morstan’s daughter, who, in his
opinion, would have had a right to the treasure as Morstan’s only heiress. He does not waste
any words on feeling guilty for bereaving the four people who trusted him enough to divulge
their secret to him, in the confidence that he would help them escape for a part of the share.
Morstan’s perspective is not clear, since the only source is Major Sholto’s narration of events.
Sholto says that he and Morstan had different opinions on how to divide the treasure, not
mentioning who took which view. However, it is doubtful that Morstan wanted to share the
treasure with the four convicts. But even if this had been the case, in the end, no one questions
that half of the treasure should have been given to Miss Morstan (Doyle, Sign 60, 79) and no
one feels like part of it should have belonged to Small. This presupposes that Sholto and
Morstan were the rightful owners of the Agra treasure, even though they had no more claim to
the treasure than Small and his companions.

This way of thinking, however, is not really surprising when taking the context into
account. At Doyle’s time, many men had been to the colonies and most of England’s wealth
was based on imperial adventures. According to Otis, “Doyle’s readers wanted to be pardoned
for their theft and murder in the colonies” (Otis 54). Obviously, if Doyle had portrayed Morstan
and Sholto as villains, thousands of Britons would have had to admit that they, too, were guilty
of having committed crimes in the colonies and that their wealth had not been acquired
lawfully. Thus, the general view of the public was that there were two different legal systems.
As Otis puts it, on the one hand, there was “British justice, in which a crime is a crime” and,
on the other hand, there was “imperial justice, in which a crime in the colonies is not a crime at home and one can safeguard the dirty secrets of one’s imperial wealth” (ibid.). Thus, crimes committed in the colonies and wealth acquired in the course of these very crimes were neither condemned nor prosecuted in Britain. In the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, Holmes repeatedly helps to maintain the facades of apparently old and respectable families, whose respectability is in fact based on their wealth, which itself is based on colonial funds (Otis 41). Even though the detective is a “new man” (ibid.), who interacts with people from all social classes, which is one of the reasons for his success, he nonetheless “upholds traditional class boundaries” (ibid.). Holmes saves people from the imperial threat and ensures that their imperial wealth is safe, or, if he does not manage to do so, like in *The Sign of the Four*, he at least ensures that it does not return to the colonies.

Hence, Doyle’s stories supported Westerners in exploiting the colonies and enriching themselves at the latter’s cost without feeling guilty at all for their wealth being based on the colonies’ exploitation (McLeod 9; Kiernan, *Imperialism* 54). Doyle’s characters’ way of thinking so accurately and obviously mirrors these colonialist practices that it even seems intended. Appearing to be so obvious, it almost feels like Doyle aimed at criticising imperialist practices. However, since he does not even make the question of rightful ownership a subject of discussion and given the fact that he portrays Tonga and the Indians as so unscrupulous and inferior to Britons, it remains doubtful that he actually wants to criticise imperialism here.

His criticising imperialism becomes even more questionable when considering that Small’s Sikh allies seem to have even less of a claim to the treasure than Small because of their not being white. Morstan and Sholto, for instance, shake their heads in disbelief when Small refuses to betray his three Sikh companions. “Nonsense! […] What have three black fellows to do with our agreement?” (Doyle, *Sign* 95), Sholto asks him, as if their skin colour itself already makes an oath sworn to them invalid. However, Small answers, “Black or blue, […] they are in with me, and we all go together” (ibid. 96). Even though Small is doubtlessly not an innocent man himself, he shows more virtuousness and loyalty and less racism and Orientalist stereotyping than his fellow Englishmen. Nevertheless, Morstan and Sholto are portrayed as much more honourable and less evil than Small and his allies or Tonga, even though they have also acted unlawfully. They have deliberately held back the information about the treasure from the government due to their greed and betrayed the ones who shared their secrets with them.

The question arises what role Holmes plays in all this. McLaughlin states that the detective “must ensure that the wealth stays in England and does not return to its point of
Even though Holmes fails in the end, he tries to return the Agra treasure to Mary Morstan. Hence, Holmes works for the Empire, and he supports the exploitation of the colonies for its enrichment. Any possible claims of non-Westerners are of no relevance to him. The roots of this, however, lie much deeper. In the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, non-Westerners are practically never given a voice, a typical characteristic of Orientalism (Spivak 104). *The Sign of the Four* is the best example of this: of all people involved, the only ones who get to tell their stories are whites, namely Small and the Sholtos, whereas none of the non-Western characters are asked for their point of view. This also relates to the fact that Orientals are usually flat, two-dimensional characters who do not show any complexity, whereas only British characters such as Holmes and Watson are portrayed as round, more complex characters (Hermes 262). In *The Sign of the Four*, Small’s and Sholto’s background stories are provided, making them more complex than the non-white characters, which are rather seen as typed representatives of a collective.

Not taking these characters’ complexity into account is exactly what happens when stereotyping: the “complex character of experience” (Mercer, “Introduction” 3) is denied and characters are simplified, the ethnic group is reduced to a few fixed characters with certain character traits (Hermes 262). In this light, it is interesting to have a look at a scene where one of the two Sikh talks to Small about Hindus:

> I tell it to you because I know that an oath is binding upon a Feringhee, and that we may trust you. Had you been a lying Hindoo, though you had sworn by all gods in their false temples, your blood would have been upon the knife and your body in the water. But the Sikh knows the Englishman, and the Englishman knows the Sikh. (Doyle, *Sign* 86)

The Sikh also categorises the Hindus and generalises regarding their apparently bad character. The former also places himself on a higher level than the latter, like the English place themselves above all non-English or at least non-Europeans. Yet, the Sikh seems to feel as if he is on the same level as the English, even though this is not the case vice versa, as has been shown above. However, the Sikh’s view on Hindus derives from conflicts between the two religious groups, since Sikhism partially grew out of Hinduism and they thus have contrary views with regard to certain issues (Nesbitt 4; Singh 88). However, this scene shows that hierarchies exist also within the group the Europeans see as homogenous. Even though Holmes differentiates between the “sandal-wearing Mohammedan” and the “Hindoo proper” (Doyle, *Sign* 57), to him, they are all primarily defined by their foreignness and thus belong to the same

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22 Indian term for Europeans in colonial times (*OED*, “Feringhee”).
group, a group that delineates itself from Holmes’s own group by differing from it. The foreigners’ being the ‘other’ constitutes their whole identity, not leaving any space for complexity of character and identity. Even though they do know that there are different groups of Indians, Westerners choose to generalise and simplify and thus deny the complexity of experience (Mercer, “Introduction 3).

Linked to this denial of individuality was the belief that Orientals as a homogeneous group were inferior to Westerners. The West also attempted to justify this view by connecting it to scientific findings (McBratney 153). The growing interest in science also led to an increase in research regarding genes and heredity. Theories were established about different races and some of them being superior over others, implying that genes are the decisive element in determining a person’s character. These theories claim that character traits are inherited, since one possesses certain characteristics due to belonging to an ethnicity (Huh 556). This means that blood, descent, and ancestry play an important role for the social status of a person. This also corresponds with the social class system in Britain, which was largely based on heredity and blood lines.

The significance of blood and inheritance of character traits is also shown in the *Sherlock Holmes* series. In “The Speckled Band”, for instance, Helen Stoner says about her stepfather Dr Grimesby Roylott, “Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family” (Doyle, “Speckled”, 206). This view implies that character traits are partly genetically transmitted, in negative as well as positive ways. Doctor Grimesby Roylott is a scary and cold-hearted person, who does not show any kindness or love for his stepdaughters or any other person. During his stay in Calcutta, he killed his native butler by beating him to death, and his stepdaughter Helen reports that “in [her] stepfather’s case [the hereditary violence] had […] been intensified by his long residence in the tropics” (ibid.). Interestingly, Roylott has, on the one hand, inherited his violent temper, but, on the other hand, it has also become more intense due to his contact with the Orient, according to Ms Stoner (ibid.). Roylott’s stay in a foreign country has changed him, but not in a good way. He has taken on foreign customs such as smoking “strong Indian cigars” (ibid. 208), but most of all, his character has changed. Holmes says that only a “ruthless man who had had an Eastern training” (ibid. 225) like Roylott could have had the idea of using a snake’s poison in order to kill somebody. The “Eastern training” is clearly something negative that facilitated the death of an innocent girl.

It is worth noting that Roylott is also portrayed as an untypical Englishman, similar to Sholto. Both men have come into contact with the Orient and have let themselves be fascinated
by it and lost control, which has influenced their characters in a negative way. At this point, the attention must be drawn to another man who has also spent some time in Oriental climes: Doctor John Watson.

4.1.2 From “the woman”\textsuperscript{23} to the “Napoleon of Crime”\textsuperscript{24}: Superior Westerners

Sherlock Holmes’s assistant and biographer worked as an army doctor in Afghanistan before he was wounded by a “Jezail bullet” (Doyle, Study 7) and met Sherlock Holmes in London (Doyle, Study 7). Given the fact that he spent about two years abroad, the question arises what impact his stay had on his character. Since the Oriental influence has not turned out well for Dr Roylott and Thaddeus Sholto, the same should probably apply to Watson. However, his character has apparently not suffered, he is still a very upright and honourable man, even more correct and virtuous than Holmes himself, as is shown on various occasions.

Watson, for example, admonishes Holmes for his drug use, for he himself would never consume such harmful substances (Doyle, Hound 22; Doyle, Sign 4). In addition, while Holmes often demonstrates his intellectual superiority, which might even be read as arrogance sometimes (Doyle, “Scandal” 104; Doyle, Sign 8, 14), Watson is always modest and speaks in the highest terms of Sherlock Holmes (Doyle, Sign 9; Doyle, “Veiled” 693-94). Moreover, he is a very discrete man: in “The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger”, for example, he has “made a slight change of name and place, but otherwise the facts are as stated” (Doyle, “Veiled” 694). In “The Adventure of the Second Stain”, he also excuses himself for being “somewhat vague in certain details” (Doyle, “Second Stain” 1033), as he does not want to be indiscrete. Furthermore, Watson is a very loyal friend and never hesitates to put himself in danger for Holmes (O’Brien 30-32). In several stories, he goes on missions for Holmes, sometimes alone, even, and despite the imminent danger. In “The Hound of the Baskervilles”, for instance, Holmes asks Watson to go on ahead to Devonshire and to investigate for him, as he himself is still busy in London and will follow later. Watson’s reply to this request is, “I will come with pleasure, […] I do not know how I could employ my time better” (Doyle, Hound 41), even though Holmes says,

‘[…] I can only wish you better luck in Devonshire. But I’m not easy in my mind about it.’ ‘About what?’ ‘About sending you. It’s an ugly business, Watson, an ugly, dangerous business, and the more I see of it the less I like it. Yes, my dear fellow, you may laugh, but I give you my

\textsuperscript{23} Doyle, “Scandal” 102, 123.

\textsuperscript{24} Doyle, “Final” 718.
word that I shall be very glad to have you back safe and sound in Baker Street once more.’

(ibid. 44).

Nevertheless, Watson does not hesitate, and his loyalty does not begin to totter, despite Holmes’s warning. Accordi


g, Watson’s stay in Afghanistan has in no way had a bad influence on his character development. He is the perfect Victorian gentleman, the embodiment of Britishness. Otis calls him the best representative of “the body of the Empire” (Otis 55), he is “[s]olidly bourgeois, compassionate, and eager to act” (ibid.). In addition, as opposed to Holmes, he marries and will “most likely create new Englishmen” (ibid. 56), and thus, according to Otis, “Doyle hopes not to create a society of Holmeses, but a society of enlightened Watsons” (ibid.). Even though it is the extraordinary Holmes who protects Britain from the foreign invasion, it is Watson who perfectly embodies the middle-class British, he is the solid man the Western reader can relate to. As opposed to Holmes, he represents “the prevailing late-Victorian morality” (Toadvine 48), he is respectable, industrious, and modest, just as a Victorian gentleman should be (ibid. 53).

The reason for his resilience despite being exposed to the Oriental might lie in the fact that his virtuousness was already very strong before the war, so that the foreign was not able to influence him in a negative way. Even though he was wounded by a “Jezail bullet” (Doyle, Study 7), by an Afghan weapon (OED, “jezail”), he has recovered. This might also be read symbolically. Not only has his body been able to overcome the attack on his health, but also his character has been able to withstand the Oriental influence: he has not gone native (Hamann and Kißling 149), he has not let his self be absorbed by the ‘other’ through fascination (Baumbach 209). In addition, he does not have a hereditary handicap. In the case of Dr Roylott, for instance, his stepdaughter Ms Stoner argues that the “violence of temper” was already in the doctor’s blood (Doyle, “Speckled” 206), so he has partly inherited it, meaning that the foreign influence strengthened an already existing flaw, which is not the case with Watson.

Speaking of inheritance of character traits, the influence of an inherited nature is also possible in the reverse direction. In The Hound of the Baskervilles, Watson gives an example of the importance of blood relation in a positive context when he describes Sir Henry Baskerville as follows:

Baskerville sat for a long time, his eyes fixed upon [the grey, melancholy hill], and I read upon his eager face how much it meant to him, the first sight of that strange spot where the men of his blood had held sway so long and left their mark so deep. There he sat, with his tweed suit and his American accent, in the corner of a prosaic railway-carriage, and yet as I looked at his

25 For more examples of both stories where Watson works alone on behalf of Holmes and also of stories where there is evident danger, see O’Brien (31-32).
dark and expressive face I felt more than ever how true a descendant he was of that long line of high-blooded, fiery, and masterful men. There were pride, valour and strength in his thick brows, his sensitive nostrils, and his large hazel eyes. If on that forbidding moor a difficult and dangerous quest should lie before us, this was at least a comrade for whom one might venture to take a risk with the certainty that he would bravely share it. (Doyle, *Hound* 47)

Watson emphasises how much Henry Baskerville feels connected to his ancestors, the “men of his blood” (ibid.), even though he has never met them. Moreover, according to Watson, Sir Henry’s physical appearance already tells us about his noble descent: his facial features show “pride, valour and strength” (ibid.), proof of his ancestry of “high-blooded, fiery, and masterful men” (ibid.). As opposed to Tonga or also Thaddeus Sholto, whose looks are interpreted in a negative way, Sir Henry’s outward appearance marks him an honest and virtuous man, for he is well-dressed and looks almost majestic with his “dark and expressive face” and his “thick brows, his sensitive nostrils, and his large hazel eyes” (ibid.). It is obvious that Watson considers Sir Henry to be a very honourable man who is worth putting himself in danger for, and this is primarily due to his ancestry and his ‘blue blood’.

Yet, most of the descriptive adjectives Watson uses could also be understood in a negative way. A strong, proud, fiery, and masterful man can be most virtuous, as apparently applies to Sir Henry, but he can also use these attributes for malicious purposes. At this point, one must consider Sir Hugo Baskerville, Sir Henry’s ancestor, who is said to have started the curse of the mysterious hound with his dubious lifestyle. He is described as a “most wild, profane, and godless man” with “a certain wanton and cruel humour which made his name a byword through the West” (Doyle, *Hound*, 8). Another Baskerville that rather takes after Hugo is Sir Henry’s nephew Roger Baskerville. He has the same ‘high blood’ running through his veins, and he is not at all virtuous, but rather malignant and felonious. Therefore, it is interesting that Watson thinks so highly of Sir Henry’s ancestors’ blood, even though the only other Baskerville he has heard of is Hugo, who was certainly not honourable. Apparently, Henry Baskerville should rather be considered an exception among his evil relatives, for the reader as well as Holmes and Watson do not know any other family member with Sir Henry’s qualities. Consequently, heredity and blood relations are determining factors when it comes to a character’s moral evaluation.

The significance of blood and inheritance is even relevant for Holmes himself, which becomes apparent at one of the rare occasions where he speaks about his past. His conversation with Watson comes “to the question of atavism and hereditary aptitudes” (Doyle, “Greek” 245), the question being whether a remarkable gift is inherited or self-taught. Watson is
convinced that in Holmes’s case it must be training, yet Holmes counters that this is only the case to some extent:

‘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.’ ‘But how do you know that it is hereditary?’ ‘Because my brother Mycroft possesses it in a larger degree than I do.’ (Doyle, “Greek” 245)

Hence, according to Holmes, he has also inherited his remarkable skills, being born with them. Since one of his relatives is an artist, he believes that he has inherited this talent in a different form. In fact, being a painter or a detective appear to be rather different gifts, yet Holmes thinks that art can express itself in various ways. Indeed, it is not difficult to regard his deduction as a kind of art. In comparison to the example of Sir Henry Baskerville, in Holmes’s case, the inheritance of his remarkable intellectual ability is actually likely. Still, like in the former’s case, it is clear that genes and heredity play an important role.

However, it is not always the genes that determine whether someone becomes a ‘good’ or a ‘bad’ person. As has been shown so far, many of the criminals are either foreign or have been into contact with the foreign, such as Grimesby Roylott in “The Speckled Band” or Jonathan Small in The Sign of the Four. However, this does not apply to all of them. An interesting case is that of Irene Adler. Adler is a very clever woman, the only female person ever to manage to outwit Holmes in “A Scandal in Bohemia”. It is one of the very few cases Holmes is not able to solve, or at least not to the extent he had wanted to. Irene Adler is of particular interest, for she was born in New Jersey but has spent most of her life in different parts of Europe, such as Italy or Bohemia, due to her profession as an opera singer (Doyle, “Scanclal” 108). Technically, she is a foreigner and comes from a former British colony. Hence, having read the examples above, the reader would expect her to be presented in a negative way. However, she is not, on the contrary. In fact, Holmes is even impressed by her wit and almost respectfully refers to her as “the woman” (Doyle, “Scandal” 102; 123). When Holmes’s client, the king of Bohemia, wants to reward Holmes for preventing the scandal he feared, Holmes even asks for nothing but her photograph. According to Watson, “[i]n his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex” (Doyle, “Scandal” 102).

Holmes’s admiration for Irene Adler’s smartness has also been interpreted as romantic interest or even love in later adaptations, for example in the Guy Ritchie films or in the BBC series Sherlock. In the book, however, Watson makes quite clear that Holmes’s admiration for “the woman” is not of romantic nature: “It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for
Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise, but admirably balanced mind” (Doyle, “Scandal” 102). But still, “there was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler” (ibid.). In any case, the detective admires her cleverness, even though she is technically a criminal. Regardless of that fact, her portrayal is rather positive. Her beauty is stunning, “she has turned all the men’s heads down in that part. She is the daintiest thing under a bonnet on this planet” (Doyle, “Scandal” 112), as Holmes puts it. He continues, “I only caught a glimpse of her at the moment, but she was a lovely woman, with a face that a man might die for” (ibid. 113). Thus, compared to Oriental or foreign criminals, her physical appearance is described in a very positive way, and Holmes is very much fascinated by her.

Furthermore, her letter to Holmes and everything else the reader gets to know about her makes her seem like she was a perfectly polite and virtuous woman (Doyle, “Scandal” 117-18; 121-22). Admittedly, blackmail is not as heavy a crime as murder, yet, Irene Adler is evidently not a virtuous woman in the eyes of a Victorian. She does not at all fit the image of the ideal Victorian woman, on the contrary: she disguises herself as a man in order to “take advantage of the freedom it gives” (ibid. 122), and she most certainly had an extramarital affair with the then crown-prince and now King of Bohemia and blackmailed him afterwards due to her possession of a compromising photograph. Hence, she is clearly not a person the Victorian society would have considered righteous but earns nothing but admiration nevertheless. In the end, however, she becomes a “respectable professional wife” (S. Knight 59), and, as Knight puts it, “the apparent villain becomes the heroine of the story” (ibid.). Thus, she eventually conforms to social norms, which could be a reason for her rather positive portrayal. Nonetheless, her depiction is positive from the beginning, not only after her change of mind.

Apparently, in Irene Adler’s case, the foreign origin does not result in her being portrayed in a negative way, on the contrary. The consequential conclusion could be that Doyle’s stories are in fact less Orientalist than previously assumed. However, one argument against that conclusion is that in Adler’s case, the European influence must have proven stronger than her foreign descent. While in Dr Roylott’s case, his stay in the tropics led to a corruption of his character, it might have been the other way round in Adler’s case: her stay in the Europe had a positive influence on her character. What seems even more reasonable, though, is the fact that the United States are different from colonies like India. At the Holmes stories’ time of creation, the US had already declared their independence from their former mother country more than a century ago. In addition, the US became a British colony in the sixteenth-century colonial era, whereas India or other ‘Oriental’ regions became colonies in
the Age of Imperialism. While nowadays there is no doubt that the US belong to the West, whenever a division between East and West is made, the US were a foreign country at Doyle’s time, but even then, they had a different standpoint and were, status-wise, clearly above the regions which were still colonies under British rule.

One reason for this might be that most of the US’ inhabitants in the nineteenth century, actually all of them except for the Native Americans, were descendants of European settlers, mostly British expatriates. As a consequence, the American lifestyle, ‘culture’, and traditions resemble the British ones more closely than the ones in India and other colonies in the East. Thus, the difference in culture was perceived as much smaller, making the US less foreign in the eyes of the British. In addition, these North Americans were white. Not only was the cultural difference of very slight extent, physical differences were also virtually absent. The special situation of the US will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.2.1.

Taking the above into account, Irene Adler can be counted as a white, Western character. As in the case of Sir Henry, who has also spent most of his life in North America and thus “has the bracing strength of white North America to add to his sterling English blood” (S. Knight 61), Adler’s American origin is not at all unfavourable for her development. Consequently, her portrayal confirms the Orientalist assumption of white people’s superiority. By presenting criminals of Oriental descent or under foreign influence as less smart and intelligent than British or European ones, this very superiority is confirmed. Irene Adler as a Western character has proven capable of outwitting Sherlock Holmes. While she seems, in comparison to other criminals, relatively harmless and only appears in this one story26, there is someone far more dangerous who is as clever as Sherlock Holmes and turns out to be a criminal mastermind with a network of criminals:

He is the Napoleon of Crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He has a brain of the first order. He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them. He does little himself. He only plans. (Doyle, “Final” 718)

The “Napoleon of Crime” (ibid.), as Holmes calls him, is the most dangerous criminal he has ever encountered. Professor James Moriarty27 controls all the evil in the city, he is a genius of

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26 She indeed only appears in “A Scandal in Bohemia”, even though Holmes refers to her in a couple of others, in „The Five Orange Pips“, for example, where he says that he has been “beaten four times – three times by men, and once by a woman” (Doyle, “Orange Pips” 99).
27 Apparently, his first name is only mentioned in one story, „The Adventure of the Empty House“ (Doyle, “Empty” 811), in “The Final Problem” and The Valley of Fear, he is referred to only as Professor Moriarty. Oddly
the first water regarding crime, as Holmes is regarding deduction. His extraordinary wit and cunning lead to the assumption that Moriarty is British or at least Western. Doyle does not provide any explicit information about Moriarty’s nationality, however, there are hints which suggest British descent rather than foreignness (Doyle, Valley 320). One of these hints is Moriarty’s name itself: ‘Moriarty’ is an anglicised version of the Irish name Ó Muircheartaigh (Library Ireland, ‘Ó Muircheartaigh’). At the time, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Furthermore, what the reader learns about Moriarty is that he is “a man of good birth and excellent education, endowed by nature with a phenomenal mathematical faculty” and won “the Mathematical Chair at one of our smaller universities” (Doyle, “Final” 718). One of “our” universities obviously refers to a British university, which again might hint at his UK\(^{28}\) origin.

Professor James Moriarty is Holmes’s arch nemesis and is the only person whose intellectual powers prove to be equal to the ones of Holmes himself. As O’Brien points out, given the fact that Moriarty’s academic career prospects were very promising, it is puzzling why he turned his hand to crime (O’Brien 36). Holmes, however, has an explanation for that. According to him, Moriarty

> had hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind. A criminal strain ran in his blood, which, instead of being modified, was increased and rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental powers. (Doyle, “Final” 718)

As in Dr Roylott’s case, crime is ostensibly hereditary. It is in Moriarty’s blood, and he was apparently born with these diabolical tendencies, just as Sir Henry Baskerville’s blood destined him to be virtuous, according to Watson (Doyle, Hound 47). Interestingly, Holmes and Watson seem to know all about blood and can easily explain why someone is a criminal or not. In Moriarty’s case, holding blood responsible for his being a criminal is an ideal way of justifying how it is possible that a citizen of the civilised UK can be so dangerous and evil.

However, Holmes is not only shocked by Moriarty’s criminal mastery but also fascinated, as he points out: “My horror at his crimes was lost in my admiration at his skill” (Doyle, “Final” 719). His other descriptions of Moriarty sound rather admiring, too, as in the quote above, where he calls him a “genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker” who “has a brain of the first order” (Doyle, “Final” 718). This brain is what Holmes has veneration for. He is

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\(^{28}\) Obviously, in this context, the term UK means the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, as it was called at Doyle’s time. It is not to be confused with today’s United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which excludes the present-day Republic of Ireland.
fascinated by Moriarty’s skill and wit, which moves him far beyond the common criminal. In
*The Valley of Fear*, Holmes admonishes Watson for calling Moriarty a criminal:

> But in calling Moriarty a criminal you are uttering libel in the eyes of the law – and there lie
> the glory and the wonder of it! The greatest schemer of all time, the organizer of every deviltry,
> the controlling brain of the underworld, a brain which might have made or marred the destiny
> of nations – that’s the man! But aloof is he from general suspicion, so immune from criticism,
> so admirable in his management and self-effacement, that for those very words that you have
> uttered he could hale you to a court and emerge with your year’s pension as a solatium for his
> wounded character. (Doyle, *Valley* 164)

The “greatest schemer of all time”, “admirable in his management and self-effacement” (ibid.),
is indeed a fascinating person, not only to Holmes, but also to the reader. He is what von Matt
calls a “Weltintrigant” (von Matt 246), a global intriguer, he controls the fate of nations. Even
though the stories do not show any such global conspiracy, the image Holmes paints of
Moriarty makes him the master of crime, and he becomes even more mysterious. O’Brien sees
it as evidence for Doyle’s genius that he was able to make Moriarty such a vivid, malignant
character, despite his few actual appearances (O’Brien 38). What is particularly fascinating for
Holmes is Moriarty’s ability to escape any prosecution or solid evidence, “there lie the glory
and the wonder of it” (Doyle, *Valley* 164). The most evil of all criminals commands admiration
of Holmes. He has found his intellectual equal, and thus is fascinated, which also becomes
apparent in the following statement:

> ‘No, no, my good sir,’ said Holmes. ‘There is a master hand here. It is no case of sawed-off
> shotguns and clumsy six-shooters. You can tell an old master by the sweep of his brush. I can
tell a Moriarty when I see one. This crime is from London, not from America.’ (Doyle, *Valley*
320)

Moriarty is a mastermind indeed, and by comparing him to a very valuable painting, he is
clearly given credit for his cleverness and his masterful criminal work. As opposed to the
criminals in most of the other stories, Moriarty is highly intelligent. While Small, Tonga, or
Roylott are portrayed as very sinister but also inferior characters, Moriarty is not. Among
criminals, he holds a higher position, he is the criminal mastermind. He keeps his hands clean,
the dirty work is done by others. Even though that actually makes him even more dangerous,
Holmes acknowledges his superiority over common criminals and admires him for it. Moriarty
rather fits the image of the superior coloniser. By being in control, he confirms the desired self-
image of the British more than the image of the inferior savage from the colonies. As opposed
to characters like Tonga, he cannot be portrayed as despicable and barbaric, for even though
he is a criminal, he is “of good birth and excellent education” (Doyle, “Final” 718) and
possesses a lot of confidence (ibid. 721-23). He is aware of his superiority and makes no secret
of it. Still, his arrogance is justifiable, he really is a mastermind. Obviously, Holmes’s equal had to be a Western character, most likely even a British one: the masterful crime “is from London, not from America” (Doyle, *Valley 320*).

While Doyle had first planned to use Moriarty in order to kill off Holmes, which resulted in a massive public outcry (Wiltse 108; Klinger 713; Symons 77), Holmes is later resurrected, mainly due to financial reasons on the part of Doyle (Wiltse 108). However, this changed Moriarty’s role in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, for his smartness is not entirely equal to Holmes’s anymore. Given the fact that Holmes succeeds in the end and triumphs over Moriarty, the combination of Britishness and righteousness proves to be stronger than Britishness and criminal mastery. However, it is significant that the only people whose intellect can measure up to that of Sherlock Holmes are Western characters. Holmes, however, is a very special case himself. The great detective is not a foreigner, yet he does not fit the image of the Victorian gentleman either. The thesis will touch upon his persona in the subsequent chapters, especially in Chapter 4.2.1.

To sum up, people in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories are often characterised and categorised by their looks. Character is believed to be shown by a person’s looks and determined by genes and heredity. Orientals are mostly portrayed as backward, uncivilised, and sometimes even animalistic, and, as a consequence, the example of Tonga shows that their lives seem to have less value than those of Westerners. This inferior portrayal to some extent eventuates in them not being given the possibility to speak. The perspective is an exclusively Western one, not taking any Eastern views into account (Spivak 104; Hermes 262). Orientals are homogenised as a group, their characters reduced and simplified to stock characters or very simple-minded, two-dimensional figures, which again stands in relation to the fact that they are not given a voice and are only characterised through Western people’s comments (Hermes 262). To the Westerner, the otherness and exoticism of Orientals often seem quite frightening, yet, at the same time, fascinating. If untamed, Orientals are highly dangerous, but if tamed, they are even more fascinating, as they represent a successful example of colonisation and emphasise the relation of the superior coloniser and the inferior colonised. Given the fact that *The Sign of the Four* was the novella which helped Doyle acquire wider recognition (Wiltse 107), it is hard to believe this to be mere coincidence: the blatant evidence of Orientalism in the story was surely a reason for the novella’s success.

The hierarchic relationship between Westerners and non-western ‘others’ is also directly expressed in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories. As opposed to the portrayal of Orientals, Western people are clearly depicted as superior. While criminals of foreign descent are never
equal or even close to Sherlock Holmes in intelligence, Western criminals are the cleverer ones, and sometimes even manage to outwit the detective. Examples are Irene Adler and Professor Moriarty. For Westerners exposed to Oriental influence, there can be negative consequences, leading to a corruption of their character and misleading them into turning to crime. Giving in to fascination can result in the self being absorbed by the other (Baumbach 209), and there is a chance of the Westerner going native (Hamann and Kißling 149). However, this is not always the case, but it depends on the general stability of a character. Watson, for example, is not negatively affected by his participation in the Afghan war, whereas during Dr Roylott’s stay in the tropics, the latter’s character has apparently changed for the worse. Whether a character is stable enough to resist temptation and not let his or her senses delude by the Oriental is partly a matter of inheritance, according to Doyle’s stories. With some people, criminal tendencies are inherent: apparently, they are in their blood already. However, as these very tendencies can be hereditary, so can virtuous ones, as the example of Sir Henry Baskerville shows. To sum up, there is a clear contrast between whites and non-whites, the imperialist superiority being clearly evident. The latter is mainly expressed by a superior intellect of whites, but often also by superiority in moral issues.

### 4.1.3 The Empire Bites Back: Exotic Animals and Diseases

After having analysed the role and function of people from the colonies in the *Sherlock Holmes* series, the question arises to what extent this function and role resembles that of exotic animals. As has been shown, exhibiting an exotic-looking man was highly fascinating for Victorian society. While the exhibition of living people was indeed carried out in the Victorian era, it was still limited to exhibitions and fairs. However, in the nineteenth century, when the British Empire was steadily increasing, the first zoos began to emerge (Hochadel 183). In these zoos, a menagerie, a “collection of wild animals in cages or enclosures” (*OED*, “menagerie” 1a) was kept for exhibition. In Britain, the first zoological garden opened in 1828: the *Regent’s Park Zoo* in London (Hochadel 185). As opposed to annual exhibitions, zoological gardens presented the possibility of permanent exhibitions. From the 1830s until the 1930s, there were also ‘travelling menageries’ which presented living animals in cages, touring from town to town (*OED* “menagerie” 1a). In either case, exotic animals were brought to Europe from Eastern countries, mostly colonies, and displayed for scientific research, but also for human

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29 Even though there are, sadly, cases like that of Ota Benga, an African ‘pygmy’, who was exhibited in the Bronx, New York, and had to share a cage with apes. However, this was, even at times where people were exhibited at fairs or expositions, an exception (Newkirk 11-13).
entertainment (Hochadel 185). In the majority of cases, this process was rather cruel, as Hancocks describes by providing the example of the famous elephant Jumbo. Jumbo, like many other animals in zoo history, had been

[c]aptured as a baby, his mother probably shot, sold to various institutions, never given proper care, put on display as a monstrous curiosity, reduced to a plaything to ride upon, moved from place to place, and haggled over in life and after death, [...] both belittled and adored by the crowds that paid to see him. (Hancocks 5)

Apparently, people did not care about the wellbeing of the animals, and the latter simply served as a means of the humans’ pleasure and entertainment. Like people paid to see the native Tonga, as described in the previous chapter, people paid money in order to see the exotic creatures: on the one hand, they were fascinated by them, since they came from unknown far away territories. On the other hand, having been able to capture and hold captive wild animals also gave the Europeans a feeling of pride and superiority. As Hancocks states,

[p]eople wanted to see the massiveness of [Jumbo’s] form, yet saw too the superiority of their own kind. Awed and astonished by his size, they were also emboldened by the audacity of holding captive such a beast; humbled by his great bulk, they were yet prideful in the knowledge of human control over this giant. (ibid.)

In zoos, people could satisfy their curiosity and, what is more, confirm their own view of humankind being superior to animals. In addition, the display of exotic animals confirmed the West’s view of itself being superior to the East, as they had managed to capture Eastern animals and to attain control over them. Hancocks further claims that these circumstances have not really changed (ibid.). He points out the inconsistency in peoples’ attitudes, as he finds it paradoxical that the human race admires wild animals and wants to protect them, but, at the same time, shoots and kills them for trophies or fur. Moreover, Hancock criticises the fact that some species, such as birds, seem to be worthier of preservation than others, such as fish (ibid.). However, the evolution of zoos in the West shows that, apparently, the fascination exotic animals evoke is still as much of an issue today as it was back in the Victorian era, mixed with a certain degree of unease.

In any case, the attitude towards animals described above shows what has already become apparent in the previous chapter: exotic animals lead to fascination on behalf of the people who watch them. In zoos, the otherwise dangerous animals are tamed and under control, caged and can thus safely be watched. Their being dangerous contributes to their being fascinating, however, in practice, people prefer holding the controlling function. As the example of Tonga has shown, the lack of this very control can prove fatal and result in death.
The fascination for, and also danger emanating from, exotic animals is also evident in the story “The Speckled Band”, where Doctor Grimesby Roylott of Stoke Moran owns wild animals from the Orient. According to his stepdaughter Helen Stoner, he

has a passion for Indian animals, 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. (Doyle, “Speckled” 207)

As has been explained in Chapter 4.1.1, the doctor is a very unpleasant person, and people are afraid of him and his temper, but also of his Oriental animals that move around freely. In Helen’s opinion, Roylott’s “hereditary” (ibid. 206) violence has “been intensified by his long residence in the tropics” (ibid.), meaning that India must be a place which makes people become more ferocious and dangerous. In this apparently dark and uncanny land, strange and dangerous animals are to be found.

On the one hand, these very animals are considered dangerous and are therefore feared, but, on the other hand, there are people who send them to their friends or business partners as gifts and there are apparently people who hold them as pets. Thus, there are evidently people who are fascinated by these exotic creatures and keep them at home as a demonstration of their wealth and sophistication. The correspondent who gave the wild creatures to Roylott sent the animals over to Britain because he thought them to be entertaining and pleasurable for the doctor. He sent a piece of India in order to amuse his British correspondent and to decorate the latter’s place. The reader does not find out much about Roylott’s actual behaviour towards the animals, but their function is rather clear. The animals symbolise luxury and decadence: already in Ancient Rome or Egypt, the possession of exotic creatures was seen as a symbol of power and wealth (Toynbee 17-18).

In Ancient Rome, having a great variety of exotic creatures in games or wild animal shows served as a means of demonstrating how far the Roman annexations and trading connections had already expanded (ibid.). George Jennison also states that the animals were not only a sign of wealth, but rather a mirror of the degree of the Roman expansion (Jennison 1-2). The beasts symbolised imperialism, as they were the visible evidence that the Romans had conquered foreign lands and brought animals from these territories to Rome for the citizens’ pleasure. They were used for animal spectacles as part of the popular Roman games, where the majority of animals were brutally killed sooner or later (Epplett 210). This symbolised the superiority of the Roman Empire over the annexed territories and also the despotism the animals as well as the conquered peoples were exposed to. In addition to the beasts’ participation in shows and fights, some citizens also held them as pets simply for their
exotic beauty (Jennison 1). The display of wild creatures being the visible evidence of imperialism can as well be applied to the possession of exotic animals in the era of British Imperialism. Like the Roman Empire in ancient times, the British Empire wanted to show its power and the degree of its expansion by displaying exotic animals. For both zoos and private individuals, to possess such an animal was a sign of power and superiority over the countries where the animals came from.

Keeping exotic animals as pets is, like the capture of animals for a zoo, once again a demonstration of imperialism. However, keeping them at home goes one step further, as the animals had to be tamed to a certain degree to keep them in or around the house. To tame an animal is to deprive it of its being its own master. It has a new master now whom it must obey, one who is not from the same species, but from an apparently superior one. The exact same thing happens when territories are colonised. The colonisers demonstrate to the colonised their superiority and claim the right to be their masters. Race and nationality serve as legitimation for supremacy and dominance. The colonisers depict themselves as the bringers of civilisation to the barbaric and savage lands (Jansen and Osterhammel, Kolonisation 115). The taming of animals clearly shows parallels to the colonising of the conquered peoples, who end up having to adapt their lifestyles to that of the conquerors with regard to cultural habits, customs and religion.

As stated in the previous chapter, McLaughlin differentiated between “good savages” and “bad ones” (McLaughlin 70), namely the ones who submit and the ones who do not. The same applies to the animals, the ‘good ones’ submit and the ‘bad ones’ do not. In the example of Doctor Roylott, the cheetah and the baboon are able to move around freely, therefore, they must have been tamed to at least some extent. Since neither the doctor and his stepdaughters nor any of the servants have been killed or hurt by the beasts, they cannot be entirely wild and untamed, for both are highly dangerous if encountered in the wilderness.

Besides the cheetah and the baboon, Roylott keeps another animal which nobody except himself has knowledge of. He keeps a “swamp adder […] – the deadliest snake in India” (Doyle, “Speckled” 224), as Holmes claims. Apparently, he does not only have animals for decoration and entertainment, but also for more sinister purposes. Roylott’s “loathsome serpent” (ibid.) kills two people, Julia Stoner and the doctor himself, with its venom. Already in ancient times, snakes, especially venomous ones, were connected with death (Toynbee 233-34). From a mythological point of view, snakes are said to be related to “cunning, deceit, evil, life renewal, treachery […], destruction, malice, power, […] self-creation” (Jobes 1418-1419). Apparently, there are positive aspects, too, such as “self-creation” or healing powers (ibid.).
However, the swamp adder from India rather fits into the negative imagery. Correspondingly, in mythology, many people are said to have died through the venom of a snake, even historical characters such as Cleopatra (Toynbee 233). In literature and detective stories, exotic animals as murderers or killers are nothing new either. Already in the forerunner of the modern detective story, Edgar Allan Poe’s 1841 story “The Murder in the Rue Morgue”, the criminal turns out to be an orangutan, brought to Europe from Borneo, a former British colony in Southeast Asia, by a sailor (McLaughlin 29).

In “The Speckled Band”, the focus is also on the evil and destructive character of the animal. The death-bringing serpent is from India, the British Empire’s most important colony (Washbrook 54). Thus, death comes from the Orient in the shape of a venomous animal. As the foreign creature is relatively unknown in Britain, it is not possible for anyone to discover the venom through chemical tests. Moreover, according to Holmes, no one but a “sharp-eyed coroner” would be able to discover the “two little dark punctures” (Doyle, “Speckled” 225) from the snakebite on the victim’s body. Hence, no one can tell the cause of Julia Stoner’s death, making the venomous snake the ideal murder weapon for Roylott. He manages to seem innocent or at least to escape prosecution, as no occurrence of a crime can be proven. This reminds one of Moriarty, who is admired by Holmes for the skill of not leaving any traceable marks. Not only does it make the criminals mysterious, but they are also highly dangerous and frightening. However, Holmes manages to expose Roylott in the end, despite his operating in secrecy, and thus saves the Empire from the beastly Oriental invader as well as from its owner. It speaks volumes that “The Speckled Band” takes first place in a ranking of the best Sherlock Holmes short stories (O’Brien 153), definitely owing to the fascination the exoticism of other cultures evoked.

Saving the Empire from an Oriental invader is also necessary in “The Adventure of the Dying Detective”. Just like “The Speckled Band”, this story features an animal-like creature from a foreign place which causes death: a Sumatran microbe is used to kill a boy (Doyle, “Dying” 440). A microbe is not really an animal but a prestage of one, namely a protist, but it is nevertheless a “living organism” (OED, “microbe”), which, in this case, comes from a former colony in Southeast Asia. Klinger notes that Sumatra is “the second-largest island in Indonesia” and was “coveted, and battled over, by the British and the Dutch throughout the nineteenth century” (Klinger 1343). In the story, the microbe functions as a carrier of disease and infects

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30 Actually, there is another story about a foreign disease, where Holmes’s investigations lead to a happy ending: “The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier”. For more information on this story’s connection to imperialism, see Otis (38ff.).
the victim with a “cooler disease from Sumatra” (Doyle, “Dying” 430). Since microbes are tiny and invisible to the naked eye, using them as a murder weapon is similarly clever as using a snake, if not cleverer.

Like the swamp adder in “The Speckled Band”, the microbe and the disease it carries originate in the East. Holmes explains to Watson that “there are many problems of disease, many strange pathological possibilities, in the East” (ibid. 431). Obviously, Holmes thinks that an illness like the one mentioned before can only derive from an Eastern country, for the natural condition of the imperial body is health. Mr Culverton Smith confirms this belief in the following statement, addressed to Holmes: “It was certainly, as you said, very surprising that [the victim] should have contracted an out-of-the-way Asiatic disease in the heart of London” (ibid. 440). Holmes has already reasoned that the disease is Asian and must have been brought to the centre of the Empire on purpose. The detective claims to know about the Eastern origin of the disease due to his recent working with Chinese sailors (ibid. 438). In order to set a trap for Smith, who used the microbe to murder his nephew, Holmes pretends to have caught the disease himself. However, he has not really been contracted the disease, neither through the sailors nor through the microbe.

In Otis’ opinion, the argument of the detective having been contaminated during his contact with Easterners “works so well because it plays on the characters’ and readers’ view of the East as a source of unknown threats that might one day infiltrate the capital” (Otis 39-40). She argues that Watson and the other characters as well as the readers at Doyle’s time – and maybe even today – found it very reasonable that danger and even death should come from the Orient, for they perceived the East as a threatening force that might stealthily invade London. As Doyle himself experienced while being an army doctor in the Boer war, bacteria were indeed a serious threat, for they come on the quiet, without being noticed (ibid. 32). Discovered only when the disease has already broken out, it is often too late to effectively take action against them. For Doyle, his experience with bacteria depicted “with disturbing clarity the potential destruction that undetected foreign and domestic malefactors might bring about in British society” (ibid.)

Holmes’s role, according to Otis, is that of a “national immune system” (ibid.). His job is to protect Britain from being infected by the Oriental disease, also in a metaphorical sense. Otis states that “[a]ny immune system relies absolutely upon signals identifying elements as ‘self’ and ‘other’” (ibid. 33). As the ‘other’, non-endogenous elements threaten Britain, Holmes needs to make sure these very elements are identified and combatted. As argued in the previous two chapters, he has to save Britain from actual foreign invaders such as criminals of foreign
descent. Likewise, foreign diseases threaten Britain and leave it in need of protection. In any case, Holmes is “the Empire’s watchman” (ibid. 42), the safeguard of imperialism. Eventually, the Sumatran microbe is another example of a foreign invasion that threatens the Empire’s safety at its very heart and thus frightens people, but it also shows that Holmes as the protector of the Empire always gains the upper hand in the end.

Conclusively, exotic animals in the *Sherlock Holmes* series are seen as a source of pleasure and entertainment, on the one hand, but also as a way of killing people. Even though, admittedly, there are not many Holmes stories featuring exotic animals, their function in the stories resembles that of Oriental humans. Thus, they can be taken as examples of Orientalism in Doyle’s detective series, for they confirm and emphasise what has been said in the previous two chapters. Some wild creatures are dangerous and death-bringing, whereas others have been tamed in order to display them as decoration and thus as a sign of prosperity. The taming of the animals can be connected to the repression of the colonised, who also had to adapt to the lifestyle of the colonisers and were forced to suppress their own culture and traditions.

The death-bringing serpent, on the other hand, has not been tamed, and has not been colonised. It has invaded the Empire and endangers it by functioning as a murder weapon. What makes it even more dangerous is its operating in the dark, it remains invisible for everyone. The same applies to the microbe, which, too, is invisible, this time in the literal sense. The microbe is even more dangerous than the snake, for it carries disease and is powerful enough to extinguish the whole of Britain. Holmes as the imperial immune system manages to solve both cases and saves the Empire once again, thus ensuring and confirming the latter’s power and sovereignty. Hence, the message clearly is that the British always end up proving their superiority. Nevertheless, the two examples of the swamp adder and the Sumatran microbe show powerful attempts to revolt against the colonisers’ suppression of the colonised: in the literal sense of the word, the Empire bites back.

4.2 “Land of despair”\textsuperscript{31}, “oasis of art”\textsuperscript{32}, and Opium Dens: Oriental Settings
The *Sherlock Holmes* stories do not only feature numerous Oriental characters, humans as well as animals, but there is also a vast number of Oriental settings. On the one hand, there are parts actually set in other countries, such as in *A Study in Scarlet*, for instance. On the other hand, there are objects and customs that contribute to Oriental settings in England. Antinomies of

\textsuperscript{31} Doyle, *Study* 71.
\textsuperscript{32} Doyle, *Sign* 19.
space are created, and ‘East versus West’ transforms to ‘urban versus rural’ or ‘urban versus colonial’. In the following, the antinomy of urban and colonial space will be discussed, also with regard to the role of the hero in the different settings. Subsequently, the focus lies on Oriental objects imported into Britain which create Oriental settings in the Empire’s capital. Finally, in this context, the originally Oriental customs of smoking tobacco and taking drugs in Britain will be discussed, for they too led to the formation of Oriental settings. In the course of this analysis, the consequences of tobacco and drug consumption for the Empire will be examined, as well as Holmes’s relationship to drugs and the Oriental, as it is of singular nature.

4.2.1 A Hero Abroad, a Criminal in Britain: Foreign Conflicts on British Soil

The Sherlock Holmes stories are usually set in London, the capital of the British Empire, even though there is, as has been shown previously, a lot of non-British influence. People from remote places of the Empire come to London, and animals are imported for pleasure. However, the criminal cases Holmes has to solve do not only involve foreign people or animals in the capital, but the crimes often have their origin in foreign countries. In many cases, there is already a background story that has taken place abroad. In order to solve these cases, it is necessary that Holmes reach further and take knowledge on these countries into account. As it turns out, Holmes is apparently an expert on racial theory and he also seems to be very knowledgeable concerning foreign places.

Occasionally, he shares his knowledge with Watson. In The Sign of the Four, for instance, Holmes reads to Watson from a gazetteer which can, according to him, “be looked upon as the very latest authority” (Doyle, Sign 57): “Andaman Islands, situated 340 miles to the north of Sumatra, in the Bay of Bengal. […] Moist climate, coral reefs, sharks, Port Blair, convict barracks, Rutland Island, cotton-woods” (ibid.). This description of the island where crime comes from, in the shape of the islander Tonga, does not sound very friendly with its “sharks” and “convict barracks” (ibid.). In fact, the islands were a British colonial territory and served the British as a penal colony from 1858 onwards (Wintle 194). The Andaman Islands especially entered British consciousness in 1886, for they were part of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in South Kensington (ibid. 195), only four years before the publication of The Sign of the Four. According to Wintle, the exhibition of life-sized figures of Andamanese people contributed to the more and more common belief that the islanders were one of the most primitive peoples: on evolutionary scales, they were considered to occupy the lowest ranks (Wintle 197).
Doyle confirms this image by portraying them as a “fierce, morose, and intractable people” (Doyle, *Sign* 58) and as very cruel and animal-like (ibid. 73). The highly negative representation of the Andamanese has already been discussed in detail in Chapter 4.1.1. Since the exposition decisively formed society’s image of the Andaman Islands, Doyle most certainly either visited the exhibition himself, or read about it in the newspapers. With his representation of the islands, he enforces the stereotypical public image and creates a stark contrast between the British and the inhabitants of the colonies. In other words, he provides a foundation of identification for the British by creating an ‘other’ they can delineate themselves from (Wiedemann 6; Said 1-2). Thus, he not only creates identity but also juxtaposes Britain and the colonies in opposition, the one representing the other’s contrary.

The same happens in parts of Small’s confession, where he emphasises how the law in India and the general atmosphere is apparently different from the one in Britain. He tries to explain why he and his companions murdered an innocent merchant: “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” (Doyle, *Sign* 87). Evidently, a place where there is “fire and blood” everywhere and death lurks around every corner and can strike people anytime is an extremely inhospitable place. In such a place, it seems natural that crimes happen, for the hostile scenery already predestines violence. This very scenery serves as a justification for the crime, which fits the above-mentioned difference between “British” and “imperial justice” (Otis 54), implying that a crime committed in the colonies is not a crime in Britain.

Concerning the landscape, it should, first of all, be noted that Small’s statement is meant to be a justification for a murder he has committed, so he might have exaggerated a bit. However, to a certain extent, he probably had a point, for it was the time of the Indian Rebellion, also called Indian Mutiny (Keep and Randall 208). The reasons for the rebellion, though, were the bad conditions under colonial rule. Hence, the British themselves, too, were responsible for the dangerous atmosphere in India. However, the question of guilt as well as the influence of the foreign in *The Sign of the Four* has already been discussed in detail in Chapter 4.1.1. At any rate, in this case, Doyle also creates an antagonistic Other, which stands in contrast to Britain, the latter representing the familiar, the home. The crime has its origin in India and on the Andaman Islands and has been brought to Britain, and it is only thanks to Holmes that the criminals are stopped.

A crime originating in a foreign country is also central to the plot in the story of “The Five Orange Pips”, where three murders are committed by a mysterious secret society with
origins in America: the Ku Klux Klan. When Watson does not know what the KKK is, Holmes reads out the following definition from the “American Encyclopaedia” (Doyle, “Orange Pips” 110) to him:

Ku Klux Klan. A name derived from the fanciful resemblance to the sound produced by cocking a rifle. This terrible secret society was formed by some ex-Confederate soldiers in the Southern states after the Civil War, and it rapidly formed local branches in different parts of the country, notably in Tennessee, Louisiana, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida. Its power was used for political purposes, principally for the terrorizing of the negro voters and the murdering and driving from the country of those who were opposed to its views. (Doyle, “Orange Pips” 112)

In the historiography of the KKK, a distinction is generally made between three different Klans: the Reconstruction Klan, founded directly after the American Civil War, the 1920s Klan, and the third Klan, which emerged around the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement and still exists today (Lewis and Serbu 142). Holmes is obviously referring to the first Klan, since at the story’s time of publication, the other two were not yet existent. According to Lewis and Serbu, the first Klan was “limited regionally to the South and was organized for the sole purpose of restoring the racial order the region had lost during the Civil War” (142). The Reconstruction Klan saw it as its “primary political purpose […] to prevent newly enfranchised black Southerners from electing Republicans to office in the Southern states”, but they also “opposed the exercise of all African American rights – also including land ownership, work opportunities, educational advancement, and social equality – through violence and terror” (Misiroglu 419).

As expressed here, the main focus of the organisation lay on the oppression of black people. They were the victims of the KKK’s often violent and cruel actions. However, in the Holmes story, the focus lies more on “those who were opposed to its views” (Doyle, “Orange Pips” 112), to quote the encyclopaedia again. The reference book further focuses on how the Klan warned his victims with orange pips and such. This part of the story is probably made up, for in scientific literature, there is nothing to be found on such a practice. However, this also mainly concerns (probably white) opponents and not victims. Holmes obviously condemns the murders the society has committed. These murders, though, concern three white Englishmen who possess incriminating evidence that would, in the hands of the wrong person, harm the Klan.

Again, crime comes from abroad: a conflict originating in America is decided on British soil. Hence, it is important that Holmes solves the case, even though he fails to save his client, who consequently is, like his uncle and father, murdered by the Klan. Holmes’s client John Openshaw and his father are actually innocent, they are just unlucky to fall victim to a
“hereditary matter” (Doyle, “Orange Pips” 100). Apparently, not only character, but also crime and its consequences can be inherited. Openshaw’s uncle, though, was evidently a member of the KKK. Apparently, he disagreed with the Klan at some point and stole their documents, which, according to the story, leads to the Klan’s collapse (ibid. 112-13). Nevertheless, he was a member once and also committed crimes for them, probably even murdered people, as his diary suggests (ibid. 107). This is not approved of by anyone in the story, but it is also not questioned, the only thing that matters is that foreign crimes must not be committed on British soil. Whatever happened in other countries before, it is not important to Holmes or the British police force (Otis 54). Thus, even though the Ku Klux Klan’s main purpose was the discrimination and oppression of black people, later also of certain religious or ethnic groups, and there is absolutely no doubt that the KKK was a highly racist organisation, this is not at all important for the plot. Only one sentence in the encyclopaedia entry mentions the “terrorizing of the negro voters” (Doyle, “Orange Pips” 112). As long as the Empire does not have to fear a foreign invasion, there is nothing to worry about.

What is remarkable about the story is that the portrayal of America differs from the ones described before. In contrast to India and the Andaman Islands, which are, from a British perspective, probably rather typical representatives of an Oriental colony, America does not really match this image of the Oriental. While portrayals of India, for instance, often paint a rather dark picture, as has been shown above, this does not exactly apply to America. Being a former British colony and now independent, the United States of America are described in a much more positive way than the regions that still hold the colony status. This has, to some extent, already become apparent in Chapter 4.1.1 when analysing Irene Adler’s character. However, there is another story where America plays an important role and which is even more suitable for demonstrating the difference between the United States and Eastern colonies such as India: A Study in Scarlet.

The first Holmes novella distinguishes itself from all the other stories in one decisive aspect: in A Study in Scarlet, only the first part of the story is set in London, where the Holmes stories are usually set, whereas the second is set in North America.33 While many of Doyle’s contemporaries and also later readers considered this a weakness of the novella, McLaughlin insists that it is an essential part of the story and that it cannot be read without taking the second part into consideration, for it says a lot about Victorian society’s view on what it means to be British or non-British. Firstly, no story shows better the antinomy of space, the contrast

33 Even though there is another novella, namely The Valley of Fear, in which Doyle chose to use a similar structure.
between the very heart of the Empire and its more remote regions, than *A Study in Scarlet*. The story shows the dichotomy of urban London, on the one hand, as the centre of culture, civilisation, and everything assumed to be British, and, on the other hand, of other continents as the places where the barbaric and savage parts of the Empire are located. Secondly, *A Study in Scarlet* is also unique in having two heroes, one in London and one in Salt Lake City, namely Sherlock Holmes in the former city and Jefferson Hope in the latter. Ultimately, the heroes of the two stories collide in London, but only one of them can be the true hero in the end. The final outcome again gives an insight into society’s imperial thought patterns.

As to the antinomy of space, the second part of the novella tells the murderer Jefferson Hope’s background story and is set in the “Country of the Saints” (Doyle, *Study* 69), as the subheading reads. Even though ‘Part Two’ of the novella, chronologically, this part of the story is set before the one featuring Holmes and Watson. The “Country of the Saints” is today’s Utah in the middle of North America, the story being set in Salt Lake City and the surrounding area. The heading “The Country of the Saints” hints at the fact that the plot twists around the Latter-day Saints founding Salt Lake City as the new centre of their faith in the middle of the desert. However, this very heading is also somehow ironic, as an observant reader might already have guessed. Given the unlikeliness of there indeed being a whole country of saints, the story falsifies the assumption of such a country, yet it does not draw an entirely negative picture either.

The first chapter of the novella’s second part is called “On the Great Alkali Plain” (Doyle, *Study* 71) and starts with a description of a kind of salt desert in which the beginning of the story is set:

In the central portion of the great North American Continent there lies an arid and repulsive desert, which for many a long year served as a barrier against the advance of civilization. From the Sierra Nevada to Nebraska, and from the Yellowstone River in the north to the Colorado upon the south, is a region of desolation and silence. Nor is Nature always in one mood throughout this grim district. It comprises snowcapped and lofty mountains, and dark and gloomy valleys. There are swift-flowing rivers which dash through jagged canyons; and there are enormous plains, which in winter are white with snow, and in summer are grey with the saline alkali dust. They all preserve, however, the common characteristics of barrenness, inhospitality, and misery. (Doyle, *Study* 71)

As becomes clear, the area is rather unwelcoming and uncanny. Not only is it “repulsive”, “grim”, “dark and gloomy”, but it is even a “barrier against the advance of civilization” (ibid.). As has been shown in the previous chapters, bringing civilisation to the colonies was an important part of the imperial mission (Castro Varela and Dhawan 15; Jansen and Osterhammel, *Kolonisation* 115). By saying that the desert prevented or slowed down the
civilisation process as well as with the following negative description of the area, it is once again suggested that civilisation is the preferable state. Without it, there is “desolation and silence”, gloominess, darkness, “barrenness, inhospitality, and misery” (Doyle, Study 71). The description of this apparently so sinister landscape goes on, Doyle talks of a “land of despair”, of “wilderness” (ibid.), where there is “no sign of life”, only “complete and heart-subduing silence” (ibid. 72). In the desert, there are bones to be found, not only of animals, but also of men who lost their lives due to dehydration and starvation. There are “savage mountains” (ibid.), and, as a result, in “all that broad landscape there [is] no gleam of hope” (ibid. 73).

Thus, the place described here is evidently one of darkness and despair, an inhospitable region where no one would voluntarily choose to dwell. However, the description is not entirely negative, as there lies also fascination in the account. The “snowcapped and lofty mountains”, the “swift-flowing rivers which dash through jagged canyons” (ibid. 71), the “long chain of mountain peaks, with their rugged summits flecked with snow” and the fact that there is “no shadow of a sound in all that mighty wilderness: nothing but silence” (Doyle, Study 71-72) also sounds powerful and impressive, not only frightful. However, as expressed by Baumbach, this is not necessarily a contradiction, on the contrary. Something “deeply disturbing and intensely threatening” (Baumbach 11) can also appear somehow attractive and fascinate the observer. A “state of exception and extraordinariness” (ibid.) can evoke positive reactions and emotions. Otherness can obviously be alluring and not only deterrent and daunting. This applies to Doyle’s novella as well. He calls the apparently extraordinary wasteland “mighty” (Doyle, Study 72), and he also sees the sublime of it. The wilderness is powerful and extraordinary, which makes it “disturbing” and “threatening” (Baumbach 11), yet fascinating and attractive at the same time.

The same applies to the scene in which John Ferrier and his adoptive daughter Lucy flee Salt Lake City with Jefferson Hope. The refugees take a route that leads them through the mountains, and despite their fear they cannot help but admire the landscape surrounding them: “When morning broke a scene of marvellous though savage beauty lay before them. In every direction the great snow-capped peaks hemmed them in, peeping over each other’s shoulders to the far horizon” (Doyle, Study 102). This quote again mirrors the ambiguity connected to Orientalism: the area is described to be of “marvellous though savage beauty” (ibid.). The fact that something like “savage beauty” exists makes clear that precisely this ambiguity and apparent contradiction are what evokes fascination on behalf of the observer or reader. Nevertheless, this fascinating and awe-inspiring nature is deadly. The traveller, who is soon
revealed to be Jefferson Hope’s prospective father-in-law\(^{34}\) John Ferrier, is on the verge of collapse, “dying from hunger and thirst” (ibid. 72). The bleakness of the landscape combined with the heat results in him lacking what he needs in order to survive. Thus, despite the landscape’s being fascinating, it is also dangerous and death-bringing. Just like the people and animals from foreign regions, who are fascinating and dangerous at the same time, this also applies to the foreign regions the former come from.

As opposed to the uncivilised desert, the second chapter of Part Two is set in Salt Lake City, the capital of Mormonism. As the caravan in the desert made clear from the beginning, they are Mormons, more specifically Latter-day Saints, and their pilgrimage has the purpose of building an isolated society. When the settlers arrive in the valley, however, there is no city, as it has yet to be built. The place where the city is to be erected is the “promised land”, and by the sight of it, “[t]here was not one who did not sink upon his knees in heartfelt prayer when they saw the broad valley of Utah bathed in the sunlight beneath them” (ibid. 81). In comparison to the barren and unhospitable desert, this description sounds a lot friendlier and welcoming. Here, the settlers start to build their city and bring with them their knowledge and thus their ‘culture’ and ‘civilisation’. Thus, the newly built city stands in contrast to the uncivilised desert they had to track through.

On their journey, the immigrant Mormons had to endure a lot, yet they made it safely to “the broad valley of Utah” (ibid.). It is interesting to read what quality enabled them to meet the challenges they had to face, according to Doyle: “The savage man, and the savage beast, hunger, thirst, fatigue, and disease – every impediment which Nature could place in the way – had all been overcome with Anglo-Saxon tenacity” (ibid.). Whatever the “Anglo-Saxon tenacity” may be, it is apparently an English character trait that people in other parts of the world do not possess, and it was the decisive element that helped the travellers to overcome all the difficulties. Using the word “Anglo-Saxon” is certainly an intentional hint at the colonial past. Even though the United States had declared their independence almost a century ago, namely in 1776, Doyle chooses to let the omnipotent narrator call the Mormons, who have probably been American citizens for a few generations, Anglo-Saxons. Using McLaughlin’s words, Doyle “displays a boastful hint of pride in acknowledging his racial kinship to these brave pioneers” (McLaughlin 33).

Speaking of “brave pioneers” (ibid.), the portrayal of the Mormons is also an aspect worth looking at in light of Orientalism and imperialism. In fact, they are also objects of

\(^{34}\) That was at least the plan.
fascination as well as of disgust. On the one hand, the narrator pays respect for their tenacity and perseverance. They do not let any hardship stop them but overcome all difficulties bravely. They are “skilful administrator[s]” (Doyle, *Study* 81), determined to begin anew after having been persecuted in Illinois. They manage to build a civilisation in what was only wilderness and deserted land. McLaughlin sees them as “empire builders, as the vanguard of Western advancement into supposedly savage lands” (McLaughlin 32).

Thus, the Latter-day Saints arouse admiration, but, on the other hand, there is disgust for their polygamy, for the lacking freedom of opinion and speech, and their theocracy (ibid.). John Ferrier secretly questions the Mormons’ religion and the practices connected to it already in the beginning (Doyle, *Study* 88-89), but in the course of events, especially the practice of polygamy is highly criticised. Polygamy, which was in force until 1890, had always been a barrier that prevented the Mormons from gaining national respectability (Bushman 103). Understandably, John Ferrier does not want his adoptive daughter Lucy to marry one of the Elders’ sons who already have a few wives: “‘I would sooner see you in your grave, my girl, than the wife of either of them.’” (Doyle, *Study* 95). Evidently, the sons only want her as a status symbol, for she is very beautiful, and because of her father’s riches. Eventually, she cannot escape her fate and does become “one of the harem of an Elder’s son” (ibid. 105). The forced marriage breaks her and she “pine[s] away” (ibid. 107) and dies shortly after the wedding. While polygamy is indeed to be criticised, for it is a manifestation of a patriarchal society and of female oppression, the Mormons themselves justified the practice by its preventing women from prostitution or social poverty and providing children with a larger family. The latter was believed to be beneficial for children’s social and communal development (McLaughlin 33).

Doyle, however, shared the predominant contemporary view on Mormonism which depicted the Latter-day Saints’ sexuality as “licentious, lustful, greedy” (ibid.). *A Study in Scarlet* mirrors this view on their morals and thus heavily criticises Mormonism. According to Larson, men who lived in polygamy seldom had more than two wives (Larson 41), making the polygamy as depicted in the novella appear less realistic. However, having two wives is still polygamy, and Smith states that the practice reached its peak in 1860 (Smith 9-10), the year in which Doyle’s Lucy Ferrier had to marry Drebber (Doyle, *Study* 105), and that at that time, 43% of all Mormon households lived in polygamy (Smith 9-10). Despite of this being not so

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35 Ironically, the persecutors were most certainly as Anglo-Saxon as the persecuted, if one wants to follow this strand of argument.
small a number, McLaughlin is certainly right when he states that Doyle “emphasizes the extreme, the unusual, the excessive in Mormon culture” (McLaughlin 33-34). Indeed, what Doyle writes about the Mormon plural marriages sounds very sinister:

The supply of adult women was running short, and polygamy without a female population on which to draw was a barren doctrine indeed. Strange rumours began to be bandied about – rumours of murdered immigrants and rifled camps in regions where Indians had never been seen. Fresh women appeared in the harems of the Elders – women who pined and wept, and bore upon their faces the traces of an unextinguishable horror. (Doyle, Study 89)

Apart from accusing the Native Americans of being bandits and murderers without questioning the white people’s actions, Doyle links the former’s apparent savagery to the Mormons. In doing so, he paints a very dark picture of Mormon polygamy and its consequences. By implying that their sexual greed went as far as killing men in order to abduct their women, the practice appears not only very disturbing but undoubtedly wrong. According to McLaughlin, descriptions like this one aim at emphasising the savagery of polygamy and at letting the Latter-day Saints appear in a very unfavourable light (McLaughlin 35). Also, the term “harem” serves as a connection to the Orient, for a harem is an originally Arabic or Turkish word (OED, “harem”, ORIGIN) and is usually linked to the Islamic world (ibid. 2a). Oriental harems were, for similar reasons, seen very negatively in Britain: they were perceived as unknown, strange, ‘other’, and, as a result, wrong (McLaughlin 35).

However, again, the more unusual, strange, unfamiliar something is, the more fascinating it is. Indeed, the reader might shudder at the thought of polygamy, but as mentioned before, this does not necessarily mean that he or she does not enjoy reading about it. The unknown and disturbing are exactly what attracts the reader and wherein the fascination lies (Baumbach 11). The convert John Ferrier also finds himself between fear and fascination with respect to the Mormons. McLaughlin speaks of Ferrier as embodying Doyle’s “amalgam of praise for, and critique of, Mormon culture” (McLaughlin 34), an “amalgam of admiration and disgust” (ibid. 35). John Ferrier adapts to what he admires, namely the industriousness of the Mormons, but refuses what frightens and disgusts him, namely polygamy. This “amalgam”, the close relation between praise and critique, embodied in one person, confirms Baumbach’s argument that the apparent ambiguity of fear and fascination is not exactly contradictory (Baumbach 11).

Even though the complexity of the Mormon’s portrayal has been demonstrated, when examining the two conflicting parties, their positive attributes soon fade into the background. It is clear that in the Salt Lake City setting, the Mormons incorporate the evil, whereas John
Ferrier, his adoptive daughter Lucy and her fiancé Jefferson Hope are the good ones, the latter being the hero of the story. The two parts of the story are finally joined together in London, where all the main figures’ paths cross and the connection between the two stories is revealed. The Americans have come to the heart of the Empire, they have invaded it, and, as a direct consequence, a disaster hits the city. On English soil, two murders have been committed, and it is Holmes’s turn to deliver London from danger.

As opposed to Utah, the capital is the epitome of urbanity and modernity. Due to its leading role in industrialisation (Kiernan, *Imperialism* 54), it might even have been the most progressive city in the world during Victorian times. However, as opposed to this view of London as a highly progressive city, Watson speaks of the capital as “that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained” (Doyle, *Study* 8). A few sentences further, he talks about how glad he was to see a “friendly face in the great wilderness of London” (ibid.). In Watson’s description, London is not the centre of civilisation and the place where all things are good. By calling the city a “cesspool”, he suggests that it has become a place where all the wastrels and worthless fellows of the Empire gather. This stands in contrast to the Empire’s “civilization mission” (Kiernan, *Imperialism* 154; Jansen and Osterhammel, *Kolonisation* 115). While the Empire brings ostensibly good things such as civilisation and culture to the colonies, the colonies in return seem to bring the Empire only bad things, such as savage people, animals, and other dangerous things. What is left aside here is the raw materials and the economic gain many of the colonies bring their mother land.

In any case, the foreign influence is obviously a threat, and thus, the Londoners need to be protected from this very influence. It is the invasion of the foreign they fear, and Holmes is their saviour. As he had to ensure that the wealth the Empire acquired – however improper the methods and motifs – stayed in England in *The Sign of the Four* (McLaughlin 68), he now has to save England from an invasion of the foreign. In *A Study in Scarlet*, the media thematise the ‘problem of foreigners’ when reporting about the case:

The *Daily Telegraph* remarked that in the history of crime there had seldom been a tragedy which presented stranger features. The German name of the victim, the absence of all other motive, and the sinister inscription on the wall, all pointed to its perpetration by political refugees and revolutionists. The Socialists had many branches in America, and the deceased had, no doubt, infringed their unwritten laws, and had been tracked down by them. After alluding airily to the Vehmgericht, aqua tofana, Carbonari, the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, the Darwinian theory, the principles of Malthus, and the Ratcliff Highway murders, the article concluded by admonishing the Government and advocating a closer watch over foreigners in England. (Doyle, *Study* 50)
Obviously, the newspapers make the foreign influence responsible for the crime. No matter what national influence it was, the focus lies on the foreign. Obviously, the article’s contents are nothing more than speculation about secret societies and criminal organisations in other countries being responsible for the murder, for it is highly unlikely that a mix of so many different branches, many of them not at all connected to each other, were in fact to blame. The Daily Telegraph is referring to different kinds of past foreign cases, lacking any logical connection to the current case. Interestingly, among all these criminal cases like that of the Marchioness de Brinvilliers or the Ratcliff Highway murders, the newspaper names the Darwinian theory. Most certainly, what is meant here is social Darwinism: the misinterpretation and transferral of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution, originally based on studies with animals, to humans. Social Darwinism promotes the survival of the fittest with reference to humans. The concept is also connected to ideas we now know to be extremely racist today, as the theory was used to legitimate the superiority of certain ‘races’ and the inferiority of others. Similarly, the principles of Malthus supported the prevalent class system by arguing that people who were born poor or could not work and thereby make their contribution to society were not to make any demands as to receive food (Blanqui 105).

The newspaper’s referral to these theories matches the conclusion that “foreigners in England” (Doyle, Study 50) should be watched more closely. While the phenomenon of blaming foreigners has always been a very popular strategy by the media, the nineteenth-century audience was most probably confirmed in its beliefs. More and more, the public spirit started to perceive foreign influence as threatening, and many began to believe that a foreign invasion was taking place. Relatively high crime rates at the time contributed to the view that an increase in migration resulted in more danger and crime (McLaughlin 29). Hence, the Sherlock Holmes stories perfectly hit the zeitgeist, for they were a gleam of hope in the urban jungle. Finally, there was a man who did not let himself be tricked by the cunning and deceitful foreigners but cleverly outwitted them. By solving nearly all the crimes he has to deal with, he proves to be cleverer than the ‘other’, in whatever shape it comes, be it man, animal, or object. Thus, the superiority of the British or Europeans is demonstrated. At the end of A Study in Scarlet, it is again the media, this time the Echo, which says,

If the case has had no other effect, it, at least, brings out in the most striking manner the efficiency of our detective police force, and will serve as a lesson to all foreigners that they will do wisely to settle their feuds at home, and not to carry them on to British soil. (Doyle, Study 126)
The final message of the media is that foreigners should beware of the police force, for “on British soil” (ibid.), they will lose against the forces of civilisation. However, the interesting thing is that the police as the embodiment of discipline and order – aspects that apparently define a civilised society – are not able to succeed against the foreign invasion. What the article does not say is that without Sherlock Holmes, this case would not have had a chance of being solved. This is interesting insofar as Holmes possesses some qualities that mark him a Victorian gentleman, yet he also contradicts this gentlemanliness in some respects.

According to Julia Round, “Victorian masculinity was strongly associated with rationality, logical thought, and a lack of emotion” (Round 135). Holmes uses scientific methods and is the epitome of rationality, as he puts logic and reason before emotion. In The Sign of the Four, he states that “whatever is emotional is opposed to that true cold reason which I place above all things” (Doyle, Sign 100). Holmes’s and Watson’s mutual acquaintance Stamford confirms this by saying that the detective is even “a little too scientific for [his] tastes – it approaches to cold-bloodedness” (Doyle, Study 10). As a result, according to Round’s definition of Victorian masculinity, Holmes is a typical male representative of Victorianism. His intellect and his enthusiasm for music, his experience of boxing, fencing, and martial arts (Doyle, Study 8; “Empty” 791) add to the picture of Holmes as a gentleman (Round 137). Even though definitions of both gender and class are problematic and can hardly be regarded as valid then as now, they were accepted and also asserted at Doyle’s time (ibid. 136-37).

In A Study in Scarlet, the detective represents the “more civilized law” (McLaughlin 44) in comparison to Jefferson Hope, but, on the other hand, he does not fully conform to the rules of civilisation. He possesses gentlemanly features, but he also has another side. As McLaughlin puts it, “[a]s a master rationalist, he is both scientist and shaman” (ibid. 41). McLaughlin argues that even though many of Holmes’s methods appear modern and new, they are rooted way earlier. Reading footsteps, for example, is a technique which was already used by hunters in very early times, or also by Native Americans. The latter are portrayed as savages (Doyle, Study 89), but Holmes uses the same methods. While civilisation is also characterised by a declining awareness for the surrounding and a decreasing relationship with nature, Holmes draws on knowledge the civilised, urban man has long forgotten (McLaughlin 41).

In addition, as opposed to the police, Holmes is willing to experiment with the Oriental and the foreign and to get involved with it. He consumes drugs such as cocaine and morphine for his own pleasure, as will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4.2.3. For the sake of a case, he even visits an opium den in “The Man with the Twisted Lip” and smokes opium (Doyle, “Twisted” 165-66). As opposed to the others, Holmes is not afraid of the Oriental, but
his fascination outweighs the fear and he is, as said before, willing to get involved with the foreign. He is able to think like a criminal, which helps him to reconstruct the criminals’ motives and strategies and recognise the most elaborate and cleverly designed criminal master plans. In “A Scandal in Bohemia”, he makes clear that he does not shy away from breaking the law if need be (Doyle, “Scandal” 115), and Watson remarks that he “could not but think what a terrible criminal he would have made had he turned his energy and sagacity against the law, instead of exerting them in its defence” (Doyle, Sign 36). In addition, he is the master of disguise. Not only does he disguise himself so well that not even Watson is able to recognise him (Doyle, “Empty” 789; Sign 64-66), but he also fake his own death and pretends to be mortally ill (Doyle, “Dying” 429).

All these aspects contradict the image of Holmes as a Victorian gentleman. However, his adventurous lifestyle fascinated the readers, and his not conforming to all social conventions appeared attractive to them. A detective who dares to do things many might have secretly dreamed of but would never have the courage to actually try was certainly one reason for the Holmes stories’ enormous success. Most importantly, though, the fact that only the great detective is able to solve the most mysterious cases suggests that it needs more than civilisation to encounter the foreign or Oriental villainy.

By creating a hero who is not entirely the paragon of the Victorian gentleman, Doyle might have wanted to criticise the imperial civilising mission. That the police force needs help from someone with rather unconventional methods runs rings around the legal system in Britain. It reveals the faults of the government, of an idealised system, which are believed to be superior. The media statements discussed above (Doyle, Study 50, 126), which – especially the one from the Daily Telegraph – include very borderline remarks and thus sound rather ridiculous to a certain degree, adding to the thesis of Doyle wanting to criticise imperial and colonial methods.

In this regard, Doyle’s unconventional hero is surely also contradicting Orientalism to some extent. Then again, many statements today considered very racist are uttered by Holmes himself, as shown in Chapter 4.1.1 (Doyle, Sign 48). What is more, as will also be discussed in Chapter 4.2.3, Holmes usually controls the Oriental. He does not have to be afraid of it, for he is able to tame and manipulate it, to use it for his purposes, to his advantage. In addition, when the heroes of the two story parts encounter each other in London, it is clear that only one of them can prevail. Naturally, it is Holmes, who in the end convicts Hope. The latter has transformed from hero into criminal: he is suddenly a murderer instead of an avenger and thus must be sentenced. Even though his deed gains partial justification through the telling of his
background, now that he has entered civilisation, he is a criminal instead of a hero. A hierarchy emerges: the Mormons, also portrayed as very brave and industrious in the beginning, are killed by Hope, the frontier hero, and he is finally convicted by Holmes, who represents the civilised hero who remains pure and keeps his hands clean. His work is characterised by the “intellectual purity of detection” instead of the “bloodthirsty task of punishment” (McLaughlin 44). As McLaughlin puts it, “hero-type succeeds hero-type as we move through history and from the periphery of civilization to its center” (ibid. 41).

However, while the Mormons’ portrayal becomes increasingly negative as the story evolves and probably every reader considers them to be villains, Hope’s actions seem understandable to some extent. While Holmes makes sure London remains pure and free from foreign savagery, Hope wanted to preserve Lucy’s purity. Having failed to do so, he has taken revenge for the injustice done to him, his fiancée and her adoptive father. He argues:

After the lapse of time that has passed since their crime, it was impossible for me to secure a conviction against them in any court. I knew of their guilt though, and I determined that I should be judge, jury and executioner all rolled into one. You’d have done the same, if you have any manhood in you, if you had been in my place. (Doyle, Study 113)

Hope justifies the murder of the two Mormons by saying that he knew that the men were obviously guilty, also according to English law, and that they would not have been punished if he had not taken action. He is certainly right with this, even though vigilante justice – also called frontier justice – is still to be questioned, for Hope places himself on the same level as the Mormons. In addition, this form of justice is prohibited by law. However, Hope’s arguing that any man would have acted like him is not directly contradicted by Holmes or Watson. Holmes, though, represents a “new’, urban, civilized masculinity” (McLaughlin 45), in the urban context, and a hero would not make use of such savage methods as frontier justice anymore.

A similar situation arises shortly after the previous statement, when Hope says, “That’s the whole of my story, gentlemen. You may consider me to be a murderer; but I hold that I am just as much an officer of justice as you are” (Doyle, Study 120). What speaks for him is that Doyle gives him the opportunity to tell his story, not only by telling Holmes, Watson, and the police, but by dedicating half of the novella to his story. In comparison to later stories, the foreigner is actually given a voice, he and Holmes both get one part of the story, and, as said before, each of them holds the role of the hero in his part of the story.

However, when the question of guilt comes up and it is time to decide who is in the right, neither the detective nor any of the others take sides for Hope. When the inspector insists
that “the forms of the law must be complied with” and that “the prisoner will be brought before the magistrates” (ibid.), Holmes does not object. However, Holmes himself has also made use of vigilante justice in several cases and does not always obey the law. In “The Blue Carbuncle”, for instance, Holmes decides to let the culprit go, even though he is sure of his guilt and could have had him arrested. His justification reads as follows:

‘After all, Watson,’ said Holmes, reaching up his hand for his clay pipe, ‘I am not retained by the police to supply their deficiencies. If Horner were in danger it would be another thing, but this fellow will not appear against him, and the case must collapse. I suppose that I am commuting a felony, but it is just possible that I am saving a soul. […]’ (Doyle, “Carbuncle” 202)

Even though another man is suspected of having committed the crime, Holmes decides that he will not deliver the culprit to the police. He argues that the other man will be acquitted of the charge, even though his reputation will most probably suffer, having a bearing on his further life and career. However, Holmes puts himself above the police and lays claim to being the law enforcer himself. The same applies to the case of “The Speckled Band”, where Holmes – even though accidentally – is indirectly responsible for the death of Dr Roylott and does not report anything about the case to the police. In The Sign of the Four, Holmes kills the native Tonga without being prosecuted, as already expounded in Chapter 4.1.1. In “A Case of Identity”, Holmes solves the case of Ms Sutherland and her mysterious fiancé who turns out to be her disguised stepfather. In this case, Mr Windibank technically did not break any law, but since he is a very despicable person, a “cold-blooded scoundrel” (Doyle, “Identity” 139), as Holmes calls him, the latter attempts to punish the man himself:

‘The law cannot, as you say, touch you,’ said Holmes, unlocking and throwing open the door, ‘yet there never was a man who deserved punishment more. If the young lady has a brother or a friend he ought to lay a whip across your shoulders. By Jove!’ he continued, flushing up at the sight of the bitter sneer upon the man’s face, ‘it is not part of my duties to my client, but here’s a hunting-crop handy, and I think I shall just treat myself to –’ (Doyle, “Identity” 139)

Before he manages to grab the whip, the man escapes, but nevertheless, Holmes again wanted to take matters into his own hand and punish the man. In all these cases, neither Holmes nor Watson or any other person questions Holmes’s decisions. Thus, it does not seem right of Holmes to judge Jefferson Hope for vigilante justice, thinking back to A Study in Scarlet. However, conveniently for Holmes, Hope dies before his trial, meaning that the decision whether he is guilty or not does not have to be made. Holmes, who was to appear as a witness in the trial, does not have to judge over Hope, and thus the detective’s hero status remains pure. Despite the apparent lack of any final judgement, Hope’s death might also convey a message
and can, figuratively, be read as a punishment as well. Accordingly, his death is to be understood as a sign of his guilt and the subsequent just punishment. At any rate, it is not Holmes who has to decide. He is the urban, civilised hero, the one who remains in the end.

A similar pattern is to be found in The Sign of the Four. A conflict originating in India is brought over to England. The culprit’s motif is revenge and a demand for justice, as in the case of Jefferson Hope. Like the latter, Jonathan Small takes the law into his own hands and wants to take back what he thinks is his. Even though vigilante justice cannot be supported, the readers might show some understanding towards Small, although not to the extent they do in Jefferson Hope’s case. As opposed to Hope, Small is also responsible for the death of innocent people, and, in addition, his story is not told in such detail from the perspective of an omniscient narrator. In this novella, the conflict in India is not of any serious interest to the Britons in the story. Even though it laid the foundation of the crimes happening in London, the only thing that matters is that the Empire is under threat and needs to be saved from the foreign invasion. The fact that Jonathan Small has been wronged by Englishmen in India is of no importance to Holmes, Watson, and the police. Instead, as argued in Chapter 4.1.1, the guilt seems to be entirely Jonathan Small’s, whereas Morstan and Sholto are regarded as the rightful owners of the Agra treasure (Doyle, Sign 60, 79).

To sum up, foreign places often serve as the originator of crime, they represent places where the law is different, where conditions are more brutal, more barbaric, which inevitably paves the way for crime. This serves, on the one hand, as a plausible explanation for why horrible crimes happen at the cultured and civilised centre of the Empire. On the other hand, it gives Holmes’s profession a higher purpose, as he is not only a detective but the saviour of the Empire. He helps to keep the latter clean and pure and saves it from a foreign invasion. Even though Holmes himself is not a Victorian gentleman in all respects, he always remains an advocate of empire. He can only solve the cases and fully understand the criminals by slipping into their roles and by getting involved with the foreign, yet he always retains control. When these foreign crimes are being imported to Britain and apparently threaten the British peace, Holmes is in demand: he needs to make sure the criminals are caught and London stays safe from the foreign criminal invasion. The foreign places are never visited by Holmes himself. He stays on his hunting grounds and defends them, for what happens there is the only thing that counts. Holmes is the one to save the heart of the Empire from the foreign attack and from foreign crimes decided on British soil.

Mostly, a change in settings also causes a role change: a person might have been the hero in the foreign setting, but, arriving at the urban setting, in civilisation, the former hero
suddenly becomes a criminal. In civilisation, heroism is, all of a sudden, defined through brain work: the methods change. While revenge and vigilante justice might be heroic in remote parts of the Empire or even independent foreign countries, it is not so at the heart of the Empire. However, paradoxically, when Holmes makes use of vigilante justice himself, this is not questioned by anyone. Evidently, double standards are being applied, as Holmes is apparently above all suspicion, whereas foreigners or people “somehow tainted with foreignness” (S. Knight 61) are not. Foreigners are, once again, portrayed as inferior and ‘less civilised’, especially when it comes to moral principles, even if their actions are performed equally by whites.

4.2.2 Dangerous Decoration: Oriental Settings in Britain

As has become evident, the *Sherlock Holmes* canon features a number of Oriental and generally foreign settings. However, these very settings were not only to be found outside Britain, but they invaded the Empire, just like the Empire invaded the territories it made its colonies. These invasions came in the shape of animals and people, as discussed above, but also, more subtly, in the shape of decorative objects. In this way, Oriental settings were created in Britain, at the very centre of the Empire. In fact, the creation of these settings and the import of Oriental objects were not only private individuals’ doing, but there was more to it: they were actually a matter of public concern.

As already briefly addressed in Chapter 4.2.1, in the mid-nineteenth century, imperial expositions started to become fashionable in Europe and attracted large crowds. England, of course, was no exception, and in 1851, the Great Exhibition took place in Hyde Park, in the Crystal Palace (Cantor, “Reporting” 182), specially built for the exhibition (Richards 17). Its full title was “The Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations” (ibid.) and its aim was to show what humanity had reached so far and what it was capable of. McLaughlin calls it a “spectacle of nation” (McLaughlin 64), and, in Richards’ words, it had “at its root a single conception: that all human life and cultural endeavor could be fully represented by exhibiting manufactured articles” (ibid.). The exhibits came from all over the world to be displayed in the capital of the British Empire. Among them were hand-crafted material objects, “ranging from delicate embroidery samples to fine examples of Sheffield cutlery and from wooden bowls carved by African craftsmen to the power looms that dominated the northern industrial mill towns” (Cantor, “Science” 442). According to Richards, the exhibition
brought together the representatives of thirty-two nations from Europe, America, Africa, and the Far East. [Crystal Palace] contained […] an assembly of manufactured articles, the largest display of commodities that had ever been brought together under one roof. (Richards 17)

Richards further states that “the Victorian taste for luxury, ostentation, and outward show” (ibid. 21) had existed long before. However, he sees the main achievement of the Great Exhibition in synthesising and systematising “these elements of spectacle by putting them all together under one roof in the service of manufactured objects. The Great Exhibition of Things made it possible to talk expressively and excessively about commodities” (ibid.). The exposition made talking about the latter not only socially acceptable but even fashionable. Exhibiting these very commodities enabled nations to use them as representatives and scientific organisations to demonstrate their expertise and their progress (ibid. 22). Thus, objects played an increasingly important role in the nineteenth century, especially objects from other countries, including the Empire’s colonies. These objects fascinated people, as the extremely high number of exhibition visitors shows (Greenhalgh 273). Their display had, like that of exotic animals in zoos and other exhibitions, the function of presenting foreign commodities for the visitors’ entertainment, and possessing them signified wealth and luxury.

However, as the focus of the Great Exhibition was rather on the display of industrial success, the proportion of imperial goods was comparatively small: only 520 out of 14,000 exhibits were from the colonies (MacKenzie 98). In 1862, eleven years after the Great Exhibition, the International Exhibition was held in South Kensington, being the last “‘official’ universal exhibition” (Geppert 102) until the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition by the Hungarian Imre Kiralfy. In the International Exhibition, the focus was similar to the 1851 exposition, but the share of colonial exhibits had increased considerably. There were already 7,000 Indian exhibits, for instance, as well as pieces from thirty other colonies such as Bermuda or Borneo (MacKenzie 98). From the 1880s on, the imperial theme started to gain centre stage (ibid. 97). In 1886, Kiralfy hosted the ‘Colonial and Indian Exhibition’ in Earls Court (McLaughlin 75), which was only the first in a series of expositions where the imperialist theme dominated. Thus, the exhibitions ended up offering “most striking examples of both conscious and unconscious approaches to imperial propaganda” (MacKenzie 97).

While the 1886 exposition emphasised India’s importance as a source of “raw materials such as cotton, foodstuffs, indigo, dyes, and timbers” (McLaughlin 78), Kiralfy’s ‘Empire of India Exhibition’ in 1895 aimed at displaying aspects of India, such as the apparently typical city. There, according to McLaughlin, India was presented as a “happy, traditional, and self-contained village, that today would rate as Disneyesque” (ibid. 75). It did not show the
suppression, exploitation, and the resulting poverty of the real India (ibid.). What is actually very ironic is the title of the exposition: ‘Empire of India’ suggests that India is an empire, when in fact the only empire was Britain, and India clearly held the status of a colony in the aforementioned Empire.

Kiralfy had imported animals such as elephants from India, as well as people: 85 craftsmen and more than a hundred entertainers. Thereby, he was painting a picture of a carefree India, whose primary concern was entertainment (ibid. 77). The fact that agriculture most certainly took India’s top priority was completely ignored. It was rather portrayed as if Indians only focused on crafts and not on manufacture, as opposed to England. Obviously, this did not correctly represent the Indian population (ibid.), but the aim was to glorify British imperialism by showing how happy people in India were apparently under British rule. Thereby, the image of the British coloniser as the saviour, as the bringer of civilisation was confirmed. As a consequence, the British were encouraged in their “civilizing mission” (Kiernan, Imperialism 154; Castro Varela and Dhawan 15; Jansen and Osterhammel, Kolonisation 115).

However, McLaughlin states that what was special about the Empire of India Exhibition was the fact that its central aim was not the dissemination of knowledge but solely entertainment (McLaughlin 75). This again corresponds to the fascination society had for the display of foreign animals and also people, as demonstrated in Chapter 4.1. The former enjoyed looking at foreign, exotic beings and things, especially if they came in the form of a show. Nevertheless, there were of course underlying messages, as described. Some of them were unconscious, but MacKenzie argues that these very messages were often deliberately conveyed, for the expositions aimed at “combining pleasure and instruction” (MacKenzie 97). This combination often resulted from the fact that to the hosts, the function of the exhibitions was an entirely commercial one (ibid. 118) and that most people visited them for entertainment and fun. However, given the fact that the number of visitors was extremely high, the underlying message certainly stayed in people’s minds and subtly formed their opinion on the Empire and their view on themselves as a superior nation and of others as inferior and uncivilised.

In the case of Kiralfy’s 1895 exhibition, that very message also manifested itself in a play called India, which was part of the exhibition and the content of which mirrored the imperialist attitude: Britain’s colonial and imperial past was glorified (McLaughlin 75). Needless to say, this was not only the case in the Empire of India Exhibition. As has been shown, there were numerous exhibitions in Victorian England. Helland speaks of a “proliferation of exhibitions” (Helland 190), which enveloped “the world in the pervasive
imagery of spectacle” (Richards 165). The expositions often showed a romantic image of the colonies and strengthened Britain’s ideological position as an imperial power, as has been explained by the example of the happy Indian city.

According to Helland, also the press “acknowledged and encouraged the imperial relationship that was explicitly guaranteed by London’s ‘looking at’ different peoples and cultures as well as the flaunting of its own financial successes in manufacture” (Helland 190). The media facilitated the Orientalist idea, it endorsed what the exhibitions already did: they supported Orientalism, for they reinforced othering and emphasised the difference between the respective nations by displaying both peoples and cultures that differed from their own, and objects which in their eyes represented these countries. Actually, this was often done on purpose, for Kiralfy’s Indian City, for instance, was, as explained before, not a realistic portrayal of an Indian city but rather presented a stark contrast to London. In McLaughlin’s words, “Kiralfy’s city was more un-London than it was authentically Indian” (McLaughlin 75). MacKenzie agrees with him and states, “As with Orientalism generally, the exhibitions created a vision of what the East ought to look like rather than the actuality” (MacKenzie 105).

After having seen exotic commodities at these exhibitions, people in the Victorian era wanted to show their wealth and also their imperial consciousness by having Oriental objects in their private spaces. Starting with the early expositions, talking about and owning commodities became very fashionable, and the more prominent the imperial theme got, the more compelling became the desire to possess foreign curiosities. There were examples of high society women who wore extremely expensive dresses made of Oriental fabrics, embroidered with valuable gems and jewels such as emeralds, diamonds, rubies, amethysts, and sapphires, gold, silver, pearls, and even ostrich feathers (Helland 192). In addition, people decorated their houses with Oriental artefacts in order to demonstrate their ability to afford a luxurious lifestyle.

In the Sherlock Holmes stories, this becomes especially apparent in The Sign of the Four. Oriental objects are used to decorate both Thaddeus Sholto’s house and Pondicherry Lodge, the late Major John Sholto’s residence. The objects give the houses an extravagant and luxurious touch, as Watson describes, deeply impressed, when entering Thaddeus Sholto’s home:

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-
soups 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. (Doyle, _Sign 19_)

This description of Thaddeus Sholto’s apartment points to the fact that Sholto has used a mixture of Oriental objects to “furnish his room to [his] own liking” and to create “an oasis of art in the howling desert of South London” (ibid.), as he himself phrases it. The decorative objects demonstrate his wealth, on the one hand, and his sophistication with regard to art on the other. Even though Sholto has never been to India or any other Oriental country himself, he owns and displays Oriental objects in order to appear like a man of the world. He is a collector of valuable curiosities and all kinds of precious things from different parts of the globe. His collection includes objects such as “Oriental vase[s]”, or tiger skins, which, as Watson puts it, increase “the suggestion of Eastern luxury” (ibid.).

Not only the visitors’ visual sense is addressed, though, but also the olfactory one. The lamp in the shape of a dove produces a “subtle and aromatic odour” (ibid.), also something typically associated with exoticism. Interestingly, Watson uses the adjective “subtle” to describe the scent. It comes stealthily, almost unnoticed, like the so much dreaded foreign invasion. Nevertheless, it is alluring and pleasant to smell. The same applies to the “Eastern tobacco” smoked in the above-mentioned hookah: it leaves what Sholto calls a “balsamic odour” (ibid. 20). Sholto clearly associates the smell of the tobacco with something positive, something fascinating and stimulating. The fascination “artificial stimulants” (Doyle, _Sign 4_) evoke will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter, Chapter 4.2.3.

Overall, it has been shown that Sholto’s Oriental home is undoubtedly fascinating for Holmes and Watson. It offers an adventure, an escape from the commonplace, the latter being what Holmes abhors the most (Doyle, “Red-Headed” 161). One of Sholto’s desired effects is definitely reached: he appears to be very wealthy, and also incorporates imperialism in a way. He has Indian servants and decorates his house with ill-gotten curiosities from the colonies. Apparently, he likes the speciality and singularity connected to the decoration of his house, as he describes himself as follows:

> I am a man of somewhat retiring, and I might even say refined, tastes [...]. I have a natural shrinking from all forms of raw materialism. I seldom come in contact with the rough crowd. I live, as you see, with some little atmosphere of elegance around me. I may call myself a patron of the art. It is my weakness. (Doyle, _Sign 21_)

Sholto apparently feels like a man who has exquisite taste because he owns original paintings and other valuable items from the Orient. Yet, he does not seem to appear like that to others,
as Watson describes him as a “strange, jerky little fellow, with his high, shining head” (ibid. 20). Just as the interior of his house is incongruous and does not fit into the suburban area, Sholto himself is an incongruous figure. He is neither Oriental nor ‘proper’ Briton, but rather a “grotesque Englishman in an aesthetic room of eclectic Eastern decor” (McLaughlin 59). He let himself be “absorbed by the Other in the experience of fascination” (Baumbach 209), goes native (Hamann and Kißling 149), and thus is living proof of the dangers lurking in the Orient if one cannot control it. There will be a further analysis of Sholto and control over the Oriental in the next subchapter, Chapter 4.2.3.

To come back to the house as an Oriental setting, Sholtos’ residence stands in contrast to English homes. While its interior is fascinating, the exterior is rather repellent. Watson’s description shows how the British visitors perceive the area where Thaddeus Sholto lives as a “questionable and forbidding neighbourhood” and as not “very fashionable” (Doyle, Sign 18). The same applies to Pondicherry Lodge, the house of the late Major Sholto in Upper Norwood. It is fenced-in by a “very high stone wall topped with broken glass” and a “single narrow iron-clamped door” which forms “the only means of entrance” (ibid. 27). Thus, from the outside, the residence looks almost threatening, and the owner must obviously have been afraid of something, which is also confirmed by the fact that a prize-fighter guards Pondicherry Lodge. The house itself is “square and prosaic”, a “huge clump”, of “vast size” (ibid. 28). As McLaughlin puts it, “from the outside [the house] looks like a fortress; on the inside it is a grander version of Thaddeus’s Orientalized apartment” (McLaughlin 65). However, the inside of the house is in fact not really described in much detail. Watson names Oriental items of furniture such as a “coconut matting” and a “great picture of Indian tapestry”, but apart from that, his focus lies more on the chaotic state the house is in due to the treasure seekers having dug the ground in search of the hoard. In any case, from the examples Watson lists and the huge size of the estate, it can be assumed that Major Sholto’s house was filled with Oriental curiosities, just like his son’s.

A further point of interest with regard to imperialism is the name Pondicherry Lodge: the building has been named after an Indian city. In McLaughlin’s eyes, what happens here is colonialism in reverse, for it was a common imperial practice to name places in the colonies after places in the motherland (Agnarsdóttir 77). However, in this case, an English place is named after an Indian city (McLaughlin 62-63). Since naming a place is basically a demonstration of power, a claim of ownership, naming a house in Britain after an Indian city is alarming for those fearing a foreign invasion.
However, what is most alarming is the main function of the house: it is most of all a crime scene. Mary Morstan’s father has met his death in this Oriental setting years ago, and now, another murder has taken place. Once again, there is a connection between the Oriental and death. As foreign people or exotic animals can cause death, Oriental settings in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories function as murder scenes, as in the described sequence. As a consequence, Watson wants to bring Mary Morstan to a safe place after having learned about the events having taken place at Pondicherry Lodge. When they get back to where Mary is staying, Watson remarks, “It was soothing to catch even that passing glimpse of a tranquil English home in the midst of the wild, dark business which had absorbed us” (Doyle, *Sign* 42).

The “tranquil English home” (ibid.) stands in stark contrast to the Oriental setting, where the “wild, dark business” (ibid.) took place: the latter is, despite the fascination it evokes, a place to be feared. As opposed to the Oriental one, the English home symbolises familiarity, safety, and protection. McLaughlin calls that very home a “beacon of light and a symbol of civilization – an outpost of progress in the midst of the urban jungle” (McLaughlin 65). While the Oriental house represents luxury, but also savagery and chaos, the English home stands for advance and progress, and thus for being superior to the former. Just like Thaddeus calls his home “an oasis of art in the howling desert of South London” (Doyle, *Sign* 19), the English home is an oasis in the “urban jungle” (McLaughlin 65), a stronghold in the Britain that is in danger of being invaded by foreigners.

In order for this contrast between British and Oriental homes to be perceivable, exotic decorative objects are essential, for they contribute to a place’s Oriental appearance. These very objects have the function of a means of representation, as they can make a place look luxurious and thereby demonstrate wealth and sophistication. However, these places can also be crime or even murder scenes, and, likewise, Oriental objects do not only have a decorative function, but they can also come in the form of deadly weapons. The object which kills Bartholomew Sholto, for instance, is a poisoned thorn. Like in “The Speckled Band”, the weapon is poison from the Orient.

Poison is often regarded as a weapon of cowards, for death happens in secrecy, the murderer does not have to confront his or her victim directly. It is also the weapon preferred by women, according to Hale and Bolin (38), or, in the case at hand, cunning and deceitful Orientals, because, at has been shown in Chapter 3.2.1, the Orient is often considered to be feminine (McLeod 54). Like in Roylott’s case, the secrecy connected to poison also makes the crime untraceable, at least if it was not for Sherlock Holmes. However, not only the poison is Oriental, also the thorn itself is “certainly […] not” an “English thorn” (Doyle, *Sign* 37).
Interestingly, Holmes speaks of such thorns as “hellish things” (ibid. 45), which is relatively untypical for him. As McLaughlin’s phrases it, “the coldly rational Holmes does not usually ascribe metaphysical explanations such as ‘hellish’ to the sensory data he encounters” (McLaughlin 64). Holmes’s choice of words indicates how repulsed he is by the apparent ferocity. Once again, the Orient shows its deadly face, like in “The Speckled Band” or “The Adventure of the Dying Detective”, and evokes fear, which is even enforced due to its almost supernatural portrayal.

In summary, it can be said that Oriental objects serve two purposes: like people and animals, they can be of decorative nature, symbolising wealth and power, but they can also be dangerous, or both at the same time. Either way, they appear fascinating to the observer, for their exoticism and otherness and the thereof resulting peril is also attractive and alluring. The danger, however, proves to be stronger in many cases, and people fall victim to the objects and the Oriental settings they create, for they fail to control the Oriental and let themselves be overpowered by it. Like untamed beasts and ‘savages’, if uncontrolled, foreign objects and Oriental settings represents a hazard, often with lethal consequence.

In this subchapter, The Sign of the Four was the only story analysed, which might cast doubt on the representativity of this analysis. However, the findings add to the picture that has been drawn in the previous chapters. Consequently, they can be considered representative after all. In addition, there is another example of Oriental settings in Britain, not primarily created by objects, but by an action: the consumption of tobacco and drugs.

4.2.3 “Lost in Tobacco and Thought”\textsuperscript{36}: Drug Use Between Addiction and Control

“[B]y the light of a flickering oil lamp above the door I found the latch and made my way into a long, low room, thick and heavy with brown opium smoke, and terraced with wooden berths, like the forecastle of an emigrant ship” (Doyle, “Twisted” 163).

This description given by Watson when entering an opium den is already a relatively accurate indicator of how drugs and their surroundings are perceived as something exotic and Oriental. The den is compared to an “emigrant ship”, meaning that the use of drugs derives from another country and came to Britain like a ship full of foreign people. The employees working in the opium den are also not British, but from Eastern countries. A “Malay attendant” (Doyle, “Twisted” 164) and a “Lascar” (ibid. 168-69), which is an “East Indian sailor” (OED “lascar”

\textsuperscript{36} Doyle, Hound 42.
1), work in the opium den, which too emphasises the Oriental touch of the whole scenery. The den is furthermore described as threatening:

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 upwards, 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. (Doyle, “Twisted” 163-164)

This description of the “burning poison” (ibid.) shows, on the one hand, that opium is truly considered evil, and, on the other hand, how daunting and appalling the scenery appears to the innocent bystander. The people in the den lie in “strange fantastic poses”, their limbs in abnormal posture and their expression “dark, lack-lustre”. Their posture is particularly interesting, since the description of the bodies is reminiscent of submissive, almost subhuman creatures. The figures show a total lack of control: the “bowed shoulders”, the “bent knees”, and the “thrown back” heads imply that the people concerned are helpless and completely at somebody else’s mercy, in this case at the drug’s. With regard to colonialism, this situation can be compared to the role and image of the colonised, who were at the colonisers mercy and had to bow to them and to acknowledge them as their masters (Childs and Williams 227; Jackson 42). This appalling scenery is intensified by the red light of the burning opium pipes in the dim room, which creates a gloomy and uncanny atmosphere. The scenery stands in stark contrast to the image of the civilised British society Britons are so proud of. Thus, it is clearly implied that something that gruesome and appalling must come from somewhere else, namely from the Orient.

As opposed to the use of opium, which, as shown in the example above, had an extremely negative connotation, cocaine was not seen negatively at Doyle’s time (Wiltse 112-13). In England, the drug was legal until 1917, and, according to Littmann, it was believed to be harmless, “or even medically beneficial” (Littmann 269). It was used as medication and “enthusiastically advertised” (ibid.). While Holmes only entered the opium den for the sake of a case, he takes morphine and cocaine (Doyle, Sign 3) in order to be able to bear the everyday dullness, as he himself states:

'My mind,' [Holmes] said, ‘rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, […] and I am in my own proper atmosphere, I can dispense then with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. […]’ (ibid. 4)

Holmes needs drugs in order to escape the boredom of the ordinary life, for this is what he is afraid of (Ousby 49; Malloy 261). Ousby states that Holmes is always pursuing excitement, he
cannot cope with an ordinary life, and therefore, he cannot live without drugs (Ousby 49). When he does not have any interesting work to do, he finds refuge in morphine and cocaine (Malloy 261; Littmann 270). They also give him “satisfaction” (Doyle, *Sign* 3) and help him wait for the next “mental exaltation” (ibid. 4) he craves. But not only is the cocaine between the cases conceived as beneficial and indispensable by Holmes: in “The Man with the Twisted Lip”, he even states that he came to the solution of his case “by sitting upon five pillows and consuming an ounce of shag” (Doyle, “Twisted” 183). Like most people, Holmes is also sceptical regarding the use of opium, but cocaine for him is apparently positive, as it saves his mind from dullness and boredom in between cases. Contrary, Watson is rather concerned about Holmes’s frequent drug use and sees it as a danger to Holmes as a person on the one hand, but, on the other hand, also to his career (Wiltse 114; McLaughlin 54). He calls Holmes a “self-poisoner by cocaine and tobacco” (Doyle, “Orange Pips” 110) and admonishes Holmes for his cocaine use:

‘Count the cost! Your brain may, as you say, be roused and excited, but it is a pathological and morbid process, which involves increased tissue-change and may at least leave a permanent weakness. You know, too, what a black reaction comes upon you. Surely the game is hardly worth the candle. Why should you, for a mere passing pleasure, risk the loss of those great powers with which you have been endowed? Remember that I speak not only as one comrade to another, but as a medical man to one for whose constitution he is to some extent answerable.’ (Doyle, *Sign* 4)

Dr Watson is apparently concerned about the physical effects of cocaine and calls upon Holmes to consider the consequences of his habit. He asks, with good reason, why Holmes puts pleasure before rationality. However, Kilroy argues that Watson’s admonishing Holmes reveals his “prudence and practicality” (Kilroy 252), which, in turn, are “[q]ualities which never go hand in hand with special powers” (ibid.). Holmes’s powers, though, are indeed special, and Watson fails to understand that Holmes’s relationship to drugs is also special. In addition, Littmann argues that “for Holmes, the relief of his boredom loomed so large as he prepared his seven-percent cocaine solution, that it seemed more important to his happiness than any costs he might later incur” (Littmann 273).

Still, these costs are very real, actually right under the detective’s nose: the best example of the harmful effects drugs have on the body is Thaddeus Sholto in *The Sign of the Four*. Sholto smokes “Eastern tobacco” and possesses a hookah which he describes as an “invaluable sedative” (Doyle, *Sign* 20). As a consequence, as already addressed in Chapter 4.1.1, his features are “in a perpetual jerk – now smiling, now scowling, but never for an instance in repose” (Doyle, *Sign* 19). Even though he is only thirty, he is almost completely bald and is
constantly smiling, jerking, and shivering. The drugs’ impact on the human body is clearly destructive, and the short-term positive effects of pleasure are outweighed by the long-term negative ones. Similarly, in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Holmes smokes “strong, coarse tobacco”, which is described rather negatively by Watson:

> My first impression as I opened the door was that a fire had broken out, for the room was so filled with smoke that the light of the lamp upon the table was blurred by it. As I entered, however, my fears were set at rest, for it was the acrid fumes of strong, coarse tobacco which took me by the throat and set me coughing. Through the haze I had a vague vision of Holmes in his dressing-gown coiled up in an armchair with his black clay pipe between his lips. (Doyle, *Hound* 22)

Watson already feels the tobacco’s negative effects on health himself, since it “[takes] him by the throat” (ibid.) and makes him cough. Yet, he is not the one actually consuming the substance, meaning that for Holmes’s health, it must be even worse. The fumes of the tobacco are so strong and heavy that it seems to Watson as if “a fire had broken out” (ibid.). He cannot even see Holmes clearly, the detective is only a vague, blurred figure amidst the clouds of smoke. As pointed out above, Watson describes the opium as “burning poison” (Doyle, “Twisted” 164), but he also considers the fumes of the strong tobacco poisonous:

> ‘Caught cold, Watson?’ said [Holmes].
> ‘No, it’s this poisonous atmosphere.’
> ‘I suppose it is pretty thick, now that you mention it.’
> ‘Thick! It is intolerable.’ (Doyle, *Hound* 22)

Not only does Watson perceive the atmosphere as “poisonous”, but even as “intolerable” (ibid.) for both himself and Holmes. As a doctor, Watson is aware of the harmful effects of cocaine and other intoxicants, but as a British citizen, the drugs seem to him like an Oriental invasion of Britain and he wants to protect Holmes from these invading substances and therefore from the Oriental influence. Yet, on the other hand, Watson is somehow fascinated by the scene in which he observes Holmes’s drug consumption, as McLaughlin points out (McLaughlin 54). Indeed, the doctor describes how accurately Holmes places the needle, how carefully he injects the drug:

> Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantelpiece and his hypodermic syringe from its neat morocco case. With his long, white, nervous fingers he adjusted the delicate needle, and rolled back his left shirt-cuff. For some little time his eyes rested thoughtfully upon his sinewy forearm and wrist, all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks. Finally he thrust the sharp point home, pressed down the tiny piston, and sunk back into the velvet lined armchair with a long sigh of satisfaction. (Doyle, *The Sign of the Four* 3)
This detailed description of Holmes’s cocaine consumption almost sounds as if Watson were enjoying the scene. Even though he also describes how the drug has already left its mark on Holmes’s body, he seems to picture the action in a quite objective and distanced way. McLaughlin argues that for Watson, there is “fear for Holmes; but also pleasure in the spectacle” (McLaughlin 54). However, Watson is not the only one to be torn between fear and fascination with regard to drugs. Every drug user is probably aware of their danger, yet this very awareness does not hinder him or her from consuming drugs. It is the deluding of the senses, on the one hand, but also the risk, on the other hand, that makes drugs so fascinating that they are consumed despite their deleterious effect.

Drug consumers’ as well as Watson’s repulsion on the one hand and fascination on the other show the contradiction of Orientalism, where people from the West are fascinated and appalled by the East at the same time. Moreover, besides the fascination, there is always the need for the Westerner to distance him- or herself from the Eastern influence, and that is exactly what Watson as a spectator does. He himself would never take cocaine, but he watches Holmes and describes the scene without explicitly judging. His fear and fascination are palpable, yet from the perspective of the observer and not from the involved. The observer’s point of view is also a typical characteristic of Orientalism, since Orientalism is the West’s perception of the East, without taking the East’s point of view into account (Spivak 104; Hermes 262).

However, as previously mentioned, not only the drugs are an indicator of Orientalism, but also their surroundings. This becomes apparent when Watson describes Holmes’s cocaine use: “Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantelpiece and his hypodermic syringe from its neat morocco case” (Doyle, Sign 3). The case in which Holmes keeps the instruments necessary for his drug use is made from morocco leather, a type of leather that was imported from the Arabic world at Doyle’s time. Therefore, this description also implies that drugs and their accompanying features are something foreign, more precisely something Oriental. Another example of this is to be found in “The Greek Interpreter”, where Mycroft Holmes also keeps his snuff in a “tortoise-shell box” (Doyle, “Greek” 248). A tortoise is an animal whose natural habitat is not in Britain but in Eastern climes.

In another situation, Holmes smokes “an ounce of shag tobacco” after having “constructed a sort of Eastern divan” (Doyle, “Twisted” 177) with pillows and cushions. This situation also indicates how not only the addictive substance itself has got an Eastern touch but also its surroundings, since Holmes builds himself an “Eastern divan”, which is clearly an Oriental object, emphasised by the adjective “Eastern”. This Oriental setting helps Holmes relax and focus, he sits on his divan smoking the whole night, until in the morning, he has come
to a conclusion. The construction of pillows and cushions in combination with the consumption of tobacco calms Holmes down and increases his concentration, enabling him to solve cases while sitting “lost in tobacco and thought” (Doyle, *Hound* 42).

Even though snuff and tobacco are not hard drugs like cocaine or opium, they are nevertheless intoxicants and the fact that Watson calls Holmes a “self-poisoner by cocaine and tobacco” (Doyle, “Orange Pips” 110) also points to the fact that they are both harmful substances. Moreover, as indicated above, tobacco also primarily comes from India. When Holmes names a few types of tobacco, for instance, he lists Indian lunkah and Trichinopoly (Doyle, *Sign* 6), which both originate in India (McCrea 321). In addition, both Grimesby Roylott in “The Speckled Band” and Mr John Turner in “The Boscombe Valley Mystery” also smoke Indian cigars (Doyle, “Speckled” 208; “Boscombe” 89).

Taking all these arguments into account, it seems as if drug consumption in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories is portrayed rather negatively. Despite Watson’s partial fascination, it is repeatedly pointed out that drugs such as opium or also cocaine and their use have a negative connotation and come from the Orient. People fear drugs because they can only imagine their power and effect. Drugs delude the senses, they make people see, hear, feel, and smell things that are not real. Experiences like that are unknown to people who have never consumed drugs, which is why they fear it. Moreover, drugs and intoxicants can lead to addiction, which is something uncontrollable and dangerous, and thus also something to be feared.

However, Sherlock Holmes is not a drug addict in the common sense. As a study conducted by Corrigan et al. shows, drug addicts are usually socially stigmatised people (Corrigan et al. 143). They are commonly believed to be to blame themselves for their fate, for they are too weak to resist the drug (ibid.). They are looked down upon and even seen as dangerous, and, as a consequence, they are avoided by society (ibid.). Holmes, however, is not at all despised by society, let alone looked down upon. He is almost a national hero, Britain’s saviour from the foreign invasion, a character doubtlessly good and not evil. It seems paradoxical that he should take drugs and still does not suffer from any negative side effects but even seems to profit from the intoxicants, as the above-mentioned example from “The Man with the Twisted Lip” indicates (Doyle, “Twisted” 183). Not only is he free of any social stigma, but even after having spent hours in the midst of opium smoke, he does not seem intoxicated at all. He is apparently still capable of thinking clearly (ibid. 165-77), prompting Littmann to remark that Holmes must have “a unique immunity” (Littmann 275).

What distinguishes him from other drug consumers is the fact that he seems to be able to control his drug use. Holmes does not need drugs when he has got a case to work on. As
discussed previously, Holmes only needs cocaine or morphine in the phases without cases in order to escape from the ordinary (Doyle, *Sign* 4). If he is addicted to anything, it is his cases, not the drugs. He is always pursuing excitement (Ousby 49) and needs mental challenge, which he gets either from a challenging case or from “artificial stimulants” (Doyle, *Sign* 4). This means that he deliberately consumes drugs and also tobacco, putting himself into power over the stimulants and not vice versa. As he is master of his consumption of intoxicants, it is possible for him to profit from them instead of suffering from any negative side effects. Indeed, there is no case where his drug or tobacco consumption hinders him from solving a case, on the contrary, it helps him focus (Doyle, “Twisted” 183; *Hound* 42).

To summarise, the scenes described imply that drugs from the East invade Britain by invading people’s bodies and destroy its civilisation by creating addicts and leaving marks of destruction on their bodies. Yet, with the character of Sherlock Holmes, Doyle has created a more powerful force, a person that wilfully lets his body be invaded, but not controlled. Indeed, Holmes manages to take advantage of the ‘Oriental invasion’: he does not merely perceive the Orient as dangerous and frightening, but rather as interesting and exciting. In his body, the two forces of West and East are fused. Therefore, he shows that West and East are in fact not as incompatible as they were in the public opinion. This can be interpreted as a subversion of Orientalism, as Holmes’s character proves that the fusion of the two forces is actually beneficial and that combined, East and West can profit a lot from each other. Hence, the stories might also serve as a critique of Orientalism. However, even though Holmes profits from the Oriental, this is not the case vice versa, as the Easterners do not get anything in return. In the end, it is the white European male who again and again triumphs over the Orient and takes the more powerful role: just like the coloniser exploits the colonised and capitalises on their goods and resources (McLeod 9; Young 17), the detective takes advantage of the benefits of the Oriental while relinquishing the disadvantages.

### 4.3 Conclusion of the Literary Analysis

To conclude, the analysis of the *Sherlock Holmes* stories has made the prevalence of the imperial theme in the canon evident. By examining the role of foreign and non-foreign characters and other living beings and of Oriental settings in- and outside the Empire, it has become clear that the stories display various features which suggest Orientalism. To begin with, in Doyle’s stories, physical appearance is frequently believed to reflect the character of a person. Repeatedly, good as well as bad character is based on outer appearance, such as in the
case of the Andaman islander Tonga or Sir Henry Baskerville. The example of the latter suggests, however, that character is partly hereditary, too. In Sir Henry’s case, this finds positive expression, in Dr Roylott’s, though, his hereditary tendencies have turned out to be utterly negative. As to the outward appearance, Orientals’ descriptions often make the reader think of savages, sometimes even appearing animal-like, as in the case of the Andaman islander Tonga. Due to their largely savage and barbaric portrayal, it was beyond doubt for Europeans that non-whites were inferior to white Europeans.

The superiority of the colonisers and the inferiority of the colonised are repeatedly demonstrated in the *Holmes* canon. As is characteristic for Orientalism, there is always a contrast between East and West, between savagery and civilisation: the East is the West’s “contrasting image” (Said 2). Eastern characters like Tonga or the Sikh are portrayed as uncivilised savages, as opposed to Westerners, who appear progressive, advanced, and civilised. Easterners hold lower positions, they are servants, in Sholto’s house, for instance, or in the opium den, or they are criminals, like Tonga or Small’s Sikh allies in *The Sign of the Four*. Their lives apparently matter less than those of Europeans. Tonga, for instance, is killed by Holmes and Watson, the rightfulness of this deed not being questioned by anyone. As opposed to Tonga, his white master Small has the possibility to tell his story and is granted a trial. Apparently, Holmes, Watson, and Scotland Yard proceed according to the principle that the civilised law shall remain reserved for the civilised, whereas less civilised methods are appropriate for the uncivilised.

The fact that Small receives the chance to tell his story and Tonga does not reveals another feature of Orientalism. The subaltern do not have a voice themselves, and if their stories are told at all, it is through the accounts of Westerners. As the imperial powers lay claim to spreading knowledge about the colonised (Gymnich 235), the former are the only ones to have a voice (Spivak 104). They, too, are the only characters to be described in more detail and depth (Hermes 262). Indeed, all major characters in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories are white Westerners. Even when it comes to criminals, there is a hierarchy between white Westerners and non-white Easterners. Not only the relationship between Tonga and his master Small suggests that white people are intellectually as well as morally superior, but also Irene Adler and Holmes’s arch nemesis Professor Moriarty expose that the only criminals whose intellect ever proves equal to Holmes’s are white Westerners.

Similar to the portrayal of foreign characters, their native countries are depicted as barbarous, savage lands, such as the Andaman Islands, India, and the salt desert of North America. These foreign settings also play an important role for the *Holmes* canon. The cases
Holmes has to solve frequently have their origin abroad. In the shape of foreign people, animals, or objects, crime invades Britain, and Holmes is assigned the role of the Empire’s saviour. He is the one that makes sure crime stays out of Britain and that the foreigners who dare to continue their crimes on British soil are taught better: Holmes will always remain the one to triumph. As his aim is to safeguard Britain against an invasion of the foreign, background stories which happened in other countries or in remote corners of the Empire are not of interest to him, even if they were to clear an accused person of a charge. As long as the danger is averted for the British, what happened before is not relevant for Holmes and the police. Even though quite a large number of the detective’s cases have their origin in foreign countries, the enforcers of British law are only concerned about what happened on British soil.

This becomes evident in *The Sign of the Four*, when it comes to the question of who should rightfully own the Agra treasure. Even though Small tells his story, he is still considered guilty and not the rightful owner of the treasure. However, it is also not the original owner in India, but rather Sholto’s heir and Morstan’s heiress who the treasure is believed to appertain to. Apparently, colonial wealth needs to stay in Britain, and Holmes is there to ensure it does (McLaughlin 68). It is not questioned whether wealth acquired in the colonies has been acquired lawfully or is in fact ill-gotten property, as it probably was in most cases. In *The Sign of the Four*, all Western characters are eager to accept Sholto’s and Morstan’s rightful ownership of the Agra treasure, even though they evidently came into its property unlawfully.

Similarly, *A Study in Scarlet* reveals how the only story that really matters in the end is the one taking place in London. The novella shows how a change in setting actually leads to a change of the hero’s role: while the Mormons initially appeared to deserve credit for their industriousness, their role soon changes to that of villains. The new hero is Jefferson Hope, a frontier hero who wants to preserve the purity of his fiancée, and, after having failed to do so, take revenge. However, in the urban setting, his revenge mission is, all of a sudden, nothing more than murder, and thus crime, and the true leader in the hierarchy of heroes is revealed: Sherlock Holmes, the civilised hero, preserves Britain’s purity and thus triumphs over the frontier hero. Even though half of the novella is dedicated to Hope’s story, which helps him earn partial recognition and understanding on behalf of the readers, in the end, he has to die, saving Holmes from having to decide on the frontier hero’s guilt. His story is being listened to, but it is not being heard, for it does not have any impact on his trial in Britain.

In Small’s case, his time spent in the Orient turns out to have grave consequences. Likewise, the Oriental influence proves fatal for other people who have been in contact with the Orient for a longer amount of time. After a stay abroad, their character becomes, in a way,
tainted, like in Roylott’s case, but also spending time in Oriental settings can also have negative effects on the character. Being surrounded by Oriental objects or consuming drugs and tobacco can cause an Oriental invasion of both body and mind. The example of Thaddeus Sholto shows, frighteningly, what living amidst Oriental curiosities as well as taking drugs can do to a body, whereas Sherlock Holmes is the living proof of someone who can control the Oriental and thus profit from it.

As opposed to all other apparently virtuous Western characters, Holmes is willing to experiment with the foreign. He takes drugs and makes use of seemingly primitive methods such as reading footprints. Additionally, he is able to think like a criminal, even if these criminals are foreigners. Hence, in many regards, he is not exactly the embodiment of a Victorian gentleman. Nevertheless, in all of the analysed cases, the police are powerless against the foreign forces. They need Holmes in order to solve the most mysterious cases, a detective who is willing to get involved with the foreign. However, during all his interactions with the foreign, Holmes is always in control.

Retaining control is actually a key issue when it comes to Orientalism. Holmes’s control over drugs enables him to use them to his advantage, yet, if not controlled, they can destroy a man’s body and mind. The same applies to Oriental animals: once they are tamed and domesticated, they give people pleasure, offering them a possibility to satisfy their curiosity and let themselves be fascinated. Tamed exotic animals can even be used as pets, like Dr Roylott’s cheetah and baboon. In these cases, they are a symbol of imperialism: they once more confirm the supremacy of the West over the East. However, if untamed, exotic animals can cause death, like the Indian snake in “The Speckled Band”. Similarly, in Tonga’s case, Small can earn a living by exhibiting the native at fairs. His display of imperialism, of being the master of an Oriental creature, fascinates people and prompts them to pay money for the spectacle. Eventually, the native gets beyond Small’s control and kills Bartholomew Sholto. Out of control, his apparently savage instincts gain the upper hand and he causes death and destruction. Thus, control seems essential so as to maintain order, or at least what is perceived as such. Even though examples such as Holmes’s control over drugs and thus his profiting from the latter might be seen as the paradigm of a successful fusion of West and East in one body, it always remains the West that controls the East and profits from it, and not vice versa.

With control being the pivotal element in dealing with the Oriental or foreign in general, it becomes clear that the fear of the uncontrolled Oriental is enormous. Chances are that the latter causes chaos, violence, and death, so the theory goes. The analysis has shown that fearing the uncontrolled Oriental is actually justified in a few cases: untamed exotic animals such as
cheetahs or baboons are indeed dangerous, Oriental diseases are not to be underestimated, and tobacco and drug consumption is undeniably harmful. However, all these aspects are also objects of fascination. Animals look exotic, drugs are alluring due to their deluding and indulging the senses, and even the Sumatran disease is apparently a fascinating way of killing without leaving a trace. The same applies to the swamp adder in “The Speckled Band”. Evidently, Westerners enjoy looking at curiosities, at things they perceive as ‘other’. The popularity of imperial exhibitions proves the European interest in all kinds of exotic exhibits, be it animate or inanimate ones. Even in an untamed and uncontrolled form, the Oriental is fascinating, for it offers risk and adventure, and thus escape from the commonplace. The latter is not only Holmes’s biggest nightmare, but actually, most people are continually seeking escape from boredom.

As a matter of fact, most of all, the exoticism and otherness the Holmes canon offers is obviously fascinating to the readers. As stated in the introduction, the first Holmes stories are considered to be Doyle’s best, and they are the ones featuring the most obvious accounts of Orientalism. Hence, it can be said that the Oriental fascinated Doyle’s characters and readers alike, and that the antithesis of fear and fascination is a decisive factor with reference to the Sherlock Holmes stories’ enormous success. Ultimately, it is most probably also a reason for the ever-enduring appeal of Sherlock Holmes, even more than a century after his creation.
5. Orientalism in the BBC series *Sherlock*

The *Sherlock Holmes* stories were not only a huge success at Doyle’s time and beyond, they also led to the emergence of a vast number of adaptations. Ever since the moment the *Holmes* stories were first published, people from all over Britain have been writing letters to the detective in order to ask for his help (Wiltse 109). These letters can be seen as the earliest examples of *Sherlock Holmes* fan fiction. However, the emergence of film and television opened up new possibilities and added a new dimension to the already enormous popularity of Sherlock Holmes. After a considerable number of adaptations during the twentieth century, the most recent ones are the Guy Ritchie films *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011), the US-American TV series *Elementary* (since 2012), and the BBC series *Sherlock* (since 2010).

According to Lynnette Porter, especially the Guy Ritchie films and the BBC series led to a renewed increase in Sherlock Holmes’s already existing notoriety and popularity (Porter, “Introduction” 10). While the Guy Ritchie films are set in Victorian London, both TV series make use of a modern setting. In the US-American series, Holmes’s hunting ground is New York City, whereas it is still London in the British series. This analysis will focus on the BBC series *Sherlock*, as representations of Britishness and non-British ‘others’ can be compared to their representations in Doyle’s stories. Since Britain had to give up the majority of its colonies during the twentieth century37, the dimension of a factual colonial empire disappears in *Sherlock*. This raises the following question: In how far are representations of empire and Orientalist attitudes are transmitted into the twenty-first century?

5.1 Inferior Foreigners and Superior Westerners: Diversity, the BBC, and *Sherlock*

Since the publication of Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* stories, approaches to the depiction of non-British ‘others’ have changed. While the formative social and cultural significance of colonialism and imperialism at Doyle’s time caused many authors to address non-Westerners’ inferiority very directly (Schulze-Engler 345), it is, fortunately, not acceptable anymore for broadcasting companies to be openly racist. This especially applies to public service broadcasters such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC): their TV productions are

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37 Apart from the fourteen British Overseas Territories and the Crown dependencies. Thus, compared to the Empire’s size before at Doyle’s time, the remaining territory is rather small, and Britain’s political ‘soft power’ has also diminished.
expected to be politically correct. They should not discriminate anyone due to their ethnicity, colour, religion, or in any other respect. Indeed, the BBC considers itself to be a “public service organisation” and has signed a “Royal Charter and Agreement” (BBC, “Public Purposes”). This agreement with the UK parliament serves as the constitutional basis for the broadcasting organisation. One of the five public purposes the BBC commits itself to is “[t]o reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the United Kingdom’s nations and regions and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the United Kingdom” (ibid.). Thus, the BBC is obligated to represent diversity and to reflect the different ethnicities living in the UK in its programme. Elsewhere on the BBC website, under the section “Diversity”, it is stated that

At the BBC we are committed to reflecting and representing the diversity of the UK. The BBC is for everyone and should include everyone whatever their background. We are a diverse organisation and have much to be proud of, but we are also challenging ourselves to ensure that Diversity and Inclusion is hardwired into everything the BBC does. (BBC, “Diversity”)

Thus, the BBC makes clear that it is proud of being a diverse organisation and hence wants to include people of all ethnicities and backgrounds across the board. It also published a “Diversity Commissioning Code of Practice”, last updated in 2018, which underscores the above principles even more. In this Code of Practice, it is emphasised how the BBC is “proud of its unique public service role” (BBC, “Code” 1) in the UK and how its output “must mirror and promote different backgrounds, places, life experiences, languages and abilities” (ibid.). Its aim is to be “relevant to all audiences and [to] truly reflect a modern United Kingdom” (ibid.). Thus, the BBC wants to show that it is aware of the diversity in the UK and that it actually wants to impart this diverse picture. As the BBC itself puts it, it wants to “accurately and authentically represent and portray the lives of the people of the United Kingdom today, and raise awareness of the different cultures and alternative viewpoints that make up its society” (ibid.).

Accordingly, with regard to ethnicity, the BBC should cast actors of all nationalities that live in the UK, for their cultures and viewpoints indeed constitute British society. Even though these nationalities’ contribution to defining the UK’s identity is still neglected by advocates of ‘British culture’, there is no such thing as British culture, for ‘culture’ in Britain is composed of viewpoints, experiences, and lifestyles of various ethnicities. Hence, in order to not discriminate anyone, a predominantly white cast should be avoided. The subaltern should get a voice (Spivak 104), meaning that not only white characters have the possibility to speak
and are thus characterised in depth, as is typical for colonial literary productions (Hermes 262; Gymnich 235).

However, while the producers of the US-American series *Elementary* have actually made an effort to represent a diverse society by casting a female Asian actress as Watson, the producers of *Sherlock* chose to let all major roles be played by whites. Sherlock Holmes, John Watson, Greg Lestrade and his colleague Philip Anderson, John’s wife Mary, Mrs Hudson, Molly Hooper, Irene Adler, Jim Moriarty, as well as Mycroft and Eurus Holmes are the characters important to the greater plot, they all appear in more than one episode, and they are all white. As will be shown in this chapter, most of these characters’ descriptions reach a level of complexity that of non-whites never reach. With regard to Orientalism, this confirms Hermes’ argument that non-Westerners are often portrayed as flatter and plainer characters in literature, whereas Westerners are portrayed in more detail (Hermes 262).

The same applies to the series *Sherlock*: the portrayals of the only non-white recurring characters in the series, Sergeant Sally Donovan and John’s therapist, show less complexity than those of white characters. Both Donovan and John’s therapist have African American roots. As to John’s therapist, she holds a minor role in the series and her function is rather to provide an in-depth portrayal of John. Her ethnicity is not addressed in the series, but she is not a very elaborate character, on the contrary. She is not even given a name, which is not exactly an indicator of a very significant role. In fact, she only appears in three episodes, and always only in one scene.38

Sergeant Donovan’s ethnicity is not addressed in the series either and does not seem to be of significance, yet her character is portrayed rather negatively. She is a secondary character (Lavigne 17; Porter, “Process” 113) working for New Scotland Yard under Detective Inspector Greg Lestrade. Her position cannot be considered low, as working for Scotland Yard is a respectable occupation, yet it is also not a leading position. The latter is held by a white male, namely Lestrade, who is much more congenial and likeable. Just like with Small’s and Tonga’s relationship in Doyle’s *The Sign of the Four*, the white person’s position is higher-ranking than that of the person of colour (PoC). Of course, it would be highly exaggerated and would not fit into the non-colonial context to call Lestrade Donovan’s master. However, Lestrade is Donovan’s superior, hence she fits into the scheme of the PoC holding the inferior position.

Donovan’s portrayal is rather one-sided and negative, and she is not a very likeable character but often appears petulant and at times resentful. Her negative portrayal primarily

38 These episodes are “A Study in Pink”, “The Reichenbach Fall”, and “The Six Thatchers”.

95
results from her rather tense relationship with Sherlock. While being highly loyal to Lestrade, she is very antagonistic towards the detective. When John meets her for the first time in “A Study in Pink”, for instance, she tells him to avoid Sherlock:

SALLY: Bit of advice then. Stay away from that guy.
JOHN: Why?
SALLY: You know why he’s here? He’s not paid or anything. He likes it. He gets off on it. Weird the crime, the more he gets off. And you know what? One day just showing up won’t be enough. One day we’ll be standing round a body and Sherlock Holmes will be the one who put it there.
JOHN: Why would he do that?
SALLY: Because he’s a psychopath. And psychopaths get bored.

(S1:E1 00:31:53-32:26)

Donovan does not hide her aversion towards Sherlock. She accuses him of enjoying crime and “get[ting] off on it” (ibid.), thus adding a sexual component and implying that Sherlock gets satisfaction from solving weird crimes. She leaves John bewildered: he is reluctant to believe her, yet unsure what to think and whom to believe. As the series continues, the viewer discovers that Donovan’s prediction of Sherlock as a criminal was not so far-fetched and that her aversion for Sherlock is actually understandable. He does not exactly behave like a gentleman and repeatedly offends her, as their dialogue in “A Study in Pink” demonstrates:

SALLY: Hello Freak.
SHERLOCK: I’m here to see Detective Inspector Lestrade.
SALLY: Why?
SHERLOCK: I was invited.
SALLY: Why?
SHERLOCK: I think he wants me to take a look.
SALLY: Well you know what I think, don’t you.
SHERLOCK: Always, Sally. I even know you didn’t make it home last night.

(ibid. 00:21:40-22:02)

Sherlock’s last statement is highly indiscreet and embarrassing, as he implies in front of everyone that she is having an affair. Her greeting him “Hello Freak” and her not being very happy about his presence give rise to the assumption that this was not the first time Sherlock insulted her. As a matter of fact, he acts like this towards everyone. However, it makes her dislike for him understandable. Nevertheless, the viewer starts to like Sherlock. One the one hand, his cleverness is admirable, and on the other hand, his sense of empathy towards John increases. At the end of “The Great Game”, for instance, when Moriarty threatens to kill John, Sherlock’s relief about John’s eventual rescue shows that he is indeed capable of caring for other people. As his empathy makes him congenial, the sergeant’s slander about the detective
makes her appear unlikeable. Sherlock, on the other hand, may be an anti-hero to some extent, but is nevertheless likeable (Marinaro and Thomas 78-79).

Donovan’s defamation of Sherlock reaches its climax in “The Reichenbach Fall”, where she and her colleague Anderson begin to believe in Sherlock’s involvement in a kidnapping, thereby making Jim Moriarty’s plan work. The latter aims at bringing discredit and defamation on Sherlock, and Donovan, among others, contributes to his plan’s success. According to Marinaro and Thomas, this episode also presents the climax of Sherlock’s empathy: he “sacrifices all that makes him great – his intellect, his superiority, his carefully constructed persona – to do what is good” (ibid. 78). Even though Sherlock hurts John, Mrs Hudson, and Lestrade by making them believe that he is dead, he sacrifices his reputation for their lives, as his apparent suicide legitimates Moriarty’s story about Sherlock being a liar.

Sherlock’s portrayal is not entirely positive, yet his character shows a greater degree of complexity than Donovan’s, which makes him more likeable. The sergeant is only shown from a negative side. Obviously, an entirely positive portrayal of Donovan would not improve her depiction either, for that would not present her in a realistic way and again lead to the simplification of her experience into fixed categories (Mercer, “Introduction” 3). However, her portrayal is not only negative, but, as already mentioned, rather one-sided: in her case, the complexity of experience (ibid.) is denied. The viewers do not learn anything about Donovan’s views or her personal life, except from the previously mentioned affair with Anderson. Hence, her character lacks an in-depth portrayal.

Even Anderson, the only other not very pleasant, non-criminal recurring character, seems a more complex figure. Even though not really changing his character’s portrayal for the better, the viewer gets to know more about his personal life and character than about Donovan’s. The series shows his regrets after Sherlock’s apparent death, for instance, which lead to his resignation, as well as his newly awakened admiration for Sherlock, prompting him to form a fan club called “The Empty Hearse” in episode with the same title. After feeling guilty for his partial responsibility regarding Sherlock’s apparent suicide, he is the first to believe in the detective’s return in the mini episode “Many Happy Returns”. In the subsequent episode, “The Empty Hearse”, the viewer sees how Anderson’s feelings of guilt prompt him to develop various kinds of theories how Sherlock faked his death, and how guilt eventually drives him to insanity. Even though Anderson appears quite despicable in the end, his character

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39 For a more detailed analysis of whether Sherlock should be considered an anti-hero or not, see Marinaro and Thomas (65-80).
shows complexity: the viewer learns about his thoughts and feelings, and about his motives. In addition, his character undergoes development in the course of the series: from annoying forensic scientist to regretful founder of a Sherlock Holmes fan club to a lunatic.

As opposed to this, Donovan’s character remains less elaborate. While Anderson regrets having caused Sherlock’s apparent suicide, the viewer does not learn how Donovan feels about the situation. She does not get a voice in this regard (Spivak 104), and thus, her portrayal remains one-sided. In addition, as opposed to Anderson, Donovan does not develop but remains an unlikeable, captious critic of Sherlock. The same applies to John’s therapist, who does not develop either. Her depiction is equally one-sided: her function is simply to fulfil the role of therapist, and therefore, the viewer learns nothing about her character or her personal life. In summary, the only two non-white characters who appear in more than one episode are flat, secondary characters. Not only do they play rather insignificant roles, but they also lack an in-depth portrayal as well as complexity.

All other people of colour featured in the series are minor characters who only appear in one episode, and even then, they hold minor roles, or even those of the criminals, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. As to the non-criminal characters, there are few examples of such people with a migrant background. One of them is Bainbridge, a black soldier and crime victim in “The Sign of Three”. However, just like in Donovan’s or the therapist’s case, the viewer does not learn a lot about his persona, and the little he or she learns is from other people’s narrations, either from Sherlock or from the white officer in command. Just like the colonial powers laid claim to spreading knowledge about the colonised (Gymnich 235), all the knowledge gained about Bainbridge comes from white people. Bainbridge does not get a voice in the sense of Spivak (104): in fact, except from a short letter to Sherlock asking for the detective’s help, the soldier does not say a single word, even though he appears on screen a couple of times. He is not really important but only a means to an end both for the murderer to test his method of killing and for Sherlock in order to solve Major Sholto’s case and save the latter’s life. Even though both Sholto’ and Bainbridge’s lives can be saved in the end, Sholto gets the chance to tell his story and thus becomes more complex, whereas Bainbridge does not.

The denial of complexity non-white characters face also becomes evident in the example of Mrs Whitney and her son Isaac in “His Last Vow”, two more Black British people. They play an even less important role than Bainbridge, and the only thing the viewers get to know about them is that Isaac causes his mother a lot of trouble by taking drugs. Of course, the boy’s skin colour might not be connected to his drug habit, and in the drug den, the majority
of people are white. It is, however, a common stereotype that black people are more likely to use drugs, as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) concludes from racial disparity concerning the number of drug arrests in the US (ACLU 4). In reality, there is no difference between blacks and whites concerning the frequency of drug usage (ibid.). Therefore, it is again interesting that, besides his complexity-lacking depiction, one of the few non-white characters in the series is a drug-addict. Not only is he shown from a negative side only, but his portrayal is also stereotypical. He is denied individuality and depicted as one of many black drug users. As Orientalism “makes assumptions about people” (McLeod 53), assumptions about the ethnic group of Black British people are being made and applied to Isaac’s character.

Such stereotypical assumptions are also made about Soo Lin Yao in “The Blind Banker”. Soo Lin is a non-criminal person – or at least not criminal anymore – of foreign origin, too, just like Bainbridge and the Whitneys. She is a young, pretty Chinese woman, and works as a Chinese pottery expert at a museum. She performs tea ceremonies for tourists, while wearing traditional Chinese garments. Her job is rather stereotypical, but the stereotyping goes even further: according to her colleague at the museum, “the [tea] pots were here obsession” (S1:E2 00:43:19-23). Indeed, even when she has to hide from her brother, as he wants to kill her, she hides at the museum in order to be able to keep performing the tea ceremony secretly at night. She speaks with a Chinese accent, even though other TV productions starring the actress Gemma Chan prove that she usually does not have such an accent. The accent serves as a means of portraying her in a more exotic way, as exoticism evokes fascination on behalf of the viewers. It emphasises the difference between her and the British, and this being ‘other’ leads to her being perceived as fascinating. What adds to this fascination is that most of her utterances sound like proverbs, for she says things like, “Sometimes you have to look hard at something – to see its value” (ibid. 00:01:23-26) or, “Some things aren’t supposed to sit behind glass. They’re made to be touched, to be handled” (ibid. 00:01:12-14).

Whether depicting a young Chinese woman in such a traditional way, being obsessed with tea pots and uttering ancient wisdoms is a realistic depiction of a Chinese woman in twenty-first-century London is to be doubted. While it is possible for a person to attach importance to customs and traditions, even for a young woman, it remains doubtful that she does not have any other fields of interest. Soo Lin, however, seems to be content with tea pots being her only purpose in life. Her depiction implies that she is interested in Chinese tradition due to her Chinese descent, regardless of the fact that she left China many years ago. Apparently, however, her memories of China are rather negative, for she is an orphan who was
forced to join the criminal organisation “Black Lotus”. Hence, it is even less likely that she would want to spend her whole time surrounded by Chinese culture.

As Salman Rushdie elucidates, migrants usually do not forget their roots, but they also do not ignore and deny their new culture (Rushdie 15). Naturally, the two cultures mingle, meaning that migrants keep some of their old traditions and customs, yet also adopt certain aspects of their new culture. Soo Lin, however, does not seem to have adopted anything: she remains true to her culture of origin. Additionally, Soo Lin’s being shown from an utterly traditional side paints a picture of ancient China rather than of today’s modern and advanced China: most certainly, young people in today’s China have quite similar hobbies as young people in Britain. Thus, her portrayal does neither “accurately and authentically represent and portray the lives of the people of the United Kingdom today” (BBC, “Code” 1), as is the BBC’s aim, according to its “Diversity Commissioning Code of Practice”, nor does it “accurately and authentically” represent the life of a Chinese girl in the twenty-first century. She is simply seen as a member of a homogenous group of Chinese people about whom the West makes assumptions. Instead of increasing the complexity of her character, her Eastern, exotic depiction aims at fascinatining the viewers. Just like Western characters in (as well as Western readers of) Doyle’s stories were fascinated by exotic characters such as Tonga, as discussed in Chapter 4.1.1, both Soo Lin’s audience in the museum as well as the viewers are indeed fascinated by her appearance and enjoy watching Eastern exoticism.

Taking all of the above arguments into consideration, there are extremely few non-white characters who are not criminals, only two of them appearing in more than one episode, and they are secondary characters, portrayed rather one-sided and occupying passive roles. In Isaac Whitney’s and Soo Lin Yao’s case, their depiction does not only lack complexity, but is also rather stereotypical. Similarly, non-white criminals are often depicted in very stereotypical ways, as one-sided and uncomplex figures. The best example is “The Blind Banker”: at the beginning of the episode, Sherlock fights against an Oriental-looking man whom the script identifies as a “six-foot SIKH warrior” (Thompson 5). The man is wearing traditional garments such as a “turban and full traditional battle dress” (ibid.) and carrying a sword or sabre with a curved, “lethal-looking” (ibid.) blade (S1:E2 00:04:16-50), thus clearly coming from an Eastern country. The warrior has nothing to do with the rest of the story, he is simply there to demonstrate Sherlock’s remarkable fighting abilities. The screenwriters could just as well have chosen to let Sherlock fight against a Westerner, however, they did not. Doubtlessly, an exotic-looking Oriental is more fascinating for the viewers. In addition, in the twenty-first century, the fear of a foreign invasion has not ceased to exist, as becomes evident in current migration
debates. By displaying Sherlock fighting against and succeeding over a foreigner who complies with the cliché of the dangerous Oriental, he is Britain’s saviour once again, just like in Doyle’s stories, as discussed in Chapter 4.1.1. Thus, he provides Britain with a feeling of superiority, for viewers are confirmed in their belief that foreigners are dangerous, but they are given a hero who can save them from this very danger.

Later in the episode, Sherlock saves Britain from even more dangerous foreign invaders, namely from the “Black Lotus”, a Chinese smuggler organisation. Every Chinese character in the episode belongs to the criminal organisation, except Soo Lin Yao, but she, too, was once a member. The characters engage in their smuggling activities under the guise of a Chinese circus, in which they perform ancient “Chinese escapology act[s]” (ibid. 01:04:19-21) and astonishing, spider-like rope climbing feats. The latter is performed by Soo Lin Yao’s brother Zhi Zhu, who is an assassin so heartless that he does not hesitate to kill his own sister on account of her leaving the organisation. The group’s leader, General Shan, is also very sadistic and cruel, as she would probably have killed John and his date Sarah, had it not been for Sherlock, who comes to their rescue just in time and saves them from the Eastern threat.

Again, the characters’ portrayal is one-sided instead of showing their complexity. They are not portrayed as individuals but homogenised as a group of dangerous Chinese criminals. The danger emanating from them is not only shocking but also highly fascinating for the viewers.

However, not only are all Chinese perceived as homogenous, but the homogenisation goes even further. The Black Lotus leaves a mark after killing its victims: a black origami lotus flower. While this practice adds to the picture of Eastern exoticism, origami is actually Japanese and not Chinese. This mingling of cultures unveils the ignorance of the creators: to them, all Asians are apparently the same. Not only do they see all Chinese as a homogenised group, as a collective with no individual identity, but the creators do not even differentiate between Chinese and Japanese. Rushdie already pointed out that the English tend not to differentiate between Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, East or West Indians, or even South Africans but simply call them all Indians, assuming them to be a homogenised group, as is characteristic of an “us vs. them”-mindset, even though these people are in fact individuals with a complex and differing experience (Rushdie 16-17). The same applies to Asians in Sherlock: all Asians are apparently defined by differing from Britain, they are the homogenised ‘other’. Thus, the

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40 A very obvious example is President Donald Trump’s plan to build a wall in order to stop Mexican immigrants from ‘invading’ the US. However, a rise of nationalism is also noticeable in many other Western countries: far-right parties who promote themselves as saviours in a migration crisis are gaining more and more popularity. Examples of such parties are the German AfD, the French Front National, the Austrian FPÖ, or the Italian Lega.
series clearly displays Orientalist elements, and the portrayal of Eastern ‘others’ shows parallels to Doyle’s stories as well as to colonial literature in general (Hermes 262). Just like Doyle’s Holmes differentiates between “the Hindoo proper”, “the sandal-wearing Mohammedan” (Doyle, Sign 57), and the Sikh, the series homogenises and simplifies characters to certain ‘typical’ figures.

In addition, one-sided portrayals of Eastern ‘others’, such as the Chinese in the series, also occur in Doyle’s stories: Tonga, for instance, is an excellent example of a character who lacks complexity, but serves as a means to fascinate the reader, as he gives rise to fear as well as fascination. The same applies to the Chinese: on the one hand, the appearance of Eastern criminals immediately evokes fear, for they are the ‘other’ and thus appear dangerous. On the other hand, the creators’ choice results in fascination on behalf of the viewers, for the danger connected to their foreignness makes them fascinating as well. Moreover, the Chinese, like the mummed Sikh warrior in the beginning of the episode, look exotic, which again gives rise to fascination. However, as described when discussing exotic humans and animals in Doyle’s stories, Sherlock always proves to hold the upper hand. In “The Blind Banker”, Sherlock shows once again that he fights the foreign invasion and, eventually, he will defeat the foreigners and save Britain. Hence, he proves his superiority over non-British ‘others’. Just like every other episode, “The Blind Banker” takes elements from Doyle stories, yet the Chinese smuggler ring is not part of any of them. Thus, the featuring of Chinese criminals was the series creators’ idea, and their intention was probably to cause this very fascination on behalf of the viewers, as well as providing them with a feeling of superiority.

The image of the Chinese enemy is not a coincidence, however. Britain and China were on opposing sides in the two Opium Wars in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as in the Cold War. Even though these wars are over, stereotypes formed in that very period of time often outlast generations. The adherence to these stereotypes also resulted from China challenging the British sense of superiority due to the former’s advance in technology. According to Zhao, [I]ed by the general reorientation of official policies towards opening up to the outside world, Chinese intellectuals turned to the scientifically and technologically ‘advanced’ West in finding solutions to what they saw as the backwardness of their own society. (Zhao 43)

As the West was advanced in many respects after the wars, China perceived itself as backward and tried to catch up with the West. Nowadays, China has mostly out-competed the West in the scientific and technological sector, which leaves the latter in an unpleasant situation and impairs the Western feeling of superiority. Thus, the West is even more keen on emphasising its superiority by portraying the Chinese as inferior criminals. The historical context of British-
Chinese relations also make a Chinese defeat even more significant, for it means a British triumph over foreigners still somehow regarded as enemies. The rivalry between Britain and China still exists, and hence, it is important for Britain to emphasise its superiority.

Enmities resulting from the Cold War also play a role in “The Great Game”, an episode which features a gang of foreign criminals, too. While this episode features a number of cases, for Moriarty plays a game with Sherlock, one of these cases it that of Alex Woodbridge. The latter’s corpse is found on the riverbank of the Thames and Sherlock deduces that he has been killed by the Golem, a Czech assassin who “squeezes the breath out of his victims with his bare hands” (S1:E3 00:53:58-54:03).41 Woodbridge was killed because he found out about a Vermeer painting being a fake. This very painting was to be exhibited at the Hickman Gallery, and its owner Miss Wenceslas is also involved in the crime: it was her who commissioned the fake painting. Just like the Golem, Miss Wenceslas is Czech, as her name and her Eastern European accent indicate. Just like the actress playing Soo Lin Yao, the Miss Wenceslas actress does not have an accent in real life either. Thus, the accent is again a means of creating what is believed to be an ‘authentic’ representation of a Czech, even though it does exactly the opposite: it creates stereotypes. Just like in Soo Lin’s case, the accent emphasises difference and creates otherness and thus evokes fascination on behalf of the viewers.

The Czech subject probably stems from Doyle’s “A Scandal in Bohemia”, in which the King of Bohemia, which is a region in the present-day Czech Republic, seeks Holmes’s help. However, the international role and perception of the Czech Republic have changed. Once part of the Habsburg Empire, Bohemia and the present-day Czech Republic in general were part of the Eastern Bloc for 41 years. Until the end of communist rule in 1989, Czechoslovakia was under the hegemony of the Soviet Union. This period led to Czechoslovakia lagging behind the West in both social and economic areas, regarding the health care system, for instance (Andel 894-95), but also in almost every other respect. Thus, Western Europe once again developed a feeling of superiority, and this very sense of superiority towards Eastern Europe is very common still.

In the twenty-first century, a new dimension has been added to the antithesis of West and East: it is no longer limited to the contrast between Europe or the US and former colonies in Asia and other places, but there is also Western and Eastern Europe.42 The factor of

41 The Golem will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.
42 At this point, my intention is not to imply that Eastern European otherness did not exist before the twenty-first century. The aim is rather to emphasise that this Eastern European otherness has become increasingly significant since the Holmes stories’ time of publication, where the otherness discourse was very much defined by colonial
exoticism and thus fascination is less distinct than in terms of non-European countries, which might result from the fact that Eastern Europe is still closer to the West than non-European countries. Hence, the cultural difference and thus the perception of Eastern Europe as ‘other’ is less distinct than the difference between Europe and China, for instance. Otherness is often the decisive factor when it comes to fascination. However, Western Europe also creates difference by delineating itself from Eastern Europe. As mentioned, the relationship between Western and Eastern Europe is characterised by a feeling of superiority on behalf of the West, and, as a result of the Cold War, one can still observe a more or less subtle feeling of the ‘us versus them’ mentality. This othering as well as the depiction of Eastern Europe as inferior, less progressive, and less civilised than the West is evidence for the West’s application of Orientalist stereotypes to Eastern Europe.

The episode’s title already hints at a conflict between East and West: “Great Game” usually refers to the nineteenth-century “contest between Great Britain and Russia for influence in Central Asia and control over strategic access to British India” (Hamm 396). The episode begins with a scene set in Minsk, Belarus, formerly part of the Soviet Union, and continues with Czech criminals, also from a country which was under the influence of the Soviet Union until the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc. Even though the episode does not deal with a conflict in India, there is indeed a competition between Great Britain and ‘Eastern’ states that formerly belonged to the USSR during the Soviet era. Hence, the aftermath of the contest between the two empires apparently continues to affect the relationship between the two, or, much more likely, the stereotypes developed during the time of the Soviet Union have been preserved and enforced. Just like in the case of Britain’s relations with China, the official end of the Cold War did not end the rivalry between Britain and the regions formerly part of the Soviet Union. This still existing rivalry is expressed in the series, as it features criminal characters of Eastern European descent.

This very rivalry also manifests itself in the very beginning of “The Great Game”. Just like “The Blind Banker”, the episode starts with a scene irrelevant to the rest of the plot, this time set in an Eastern European country. This scene will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5.2. The fact that both this episode and the previous one begin with a scene that is not of any significance to the plot and that these scenes both feature foreigners or are set in a foreign country is an indicator of the function foreign elements bear. Apparently, using elements which

relations. An earlier example expressing Eastern European otherness would be Bram Stoker’s Dracula, as Transylvania, the vampire’s native country, is a part of present-day Romania.
fascinate the reader is an efficient strategy in order to capture the audience’s attention. In order to evoke the latter’s fascination, the series creators, knowingly or unknowingly, make use of this strategy. In addition, the use of two different narrative threads featuring Eastern European elements but lacking any connection confirms once again that even though the competition between West and East is not openly displayed anymore, it is still present, despite the Cold War being officially over.\textsuperscript{43} While it is quite natural that the official end of a conflict does not lead to an immediate change with regard to the perception of former enemies, stereotypes resulting from these very former enmities still frequently go unnoticed. The concept of the Eastern European enemy is still deeply embedded in many Westerners’ minds, meaning that they do not notice the occurrence of such stereotypes in literature or TV productions.

A very popular example of fiction featuring stereotypes resulting from the Cold War are the James Bond books and films. As Jaffe puts it, “the Bond thrillers shoehorn a macro-cosmos – the geo-politics of the Cold War – into a micro-cosmos” (Jaffe 91). “[I]mmanent concerns of the free world” (ibid.) are put into cases the British hero has to solve. In the majority of Fleming’s books, Britain is in danger, yet in the films, it is mostly the “Western world as a whole that is threatened” (Chapman 141), making Bond a “protector of Western interests” (ibid.). Like Sherlock Holmes, James Bond is the saviour of the Western world, showing the relevance of the Cold War in popular culture. In addition, the character M once says that “without [Bond’s] service he fears for the security of the civilized world” (as qtd. in Chapman 141), thus providing evidence for the Western sense of superiority with regards to civilisation. This statement reveals a lot about the West’s perception of the non-Western world: by expressing that Bond’s hunting ground is the “civilized world” (ibid.), M implies that the non-Western world is uncivilised. The West has to be protected from the uncivilised, savage ‘other’, and thus needs a hero like James Bond or Sherlock Holmes.

The assassin who calls himself the Golem is an excellent example of an uncivilised non-Westerner. In Jewish folklore, the Golem is a “mystical Jewish artificial man of legend” (Gelbin 1), a man made of clay, around whom many legends and stories revolve. Golem stories can be traced back to the sixteenth century, but the most well-known Golem today is the Golem of Prague (Neubauer 296; 300). Hence, the nationality fits, as the assassin is Czech. There are many different interpretations as to whether the Golem is a positive or negative figure. However, while being a positive figure in Jewish literature, Christian writing negatively

\textsuperscript{43} Actually, in the Cold War, the competition was also not openly addressed most of the time, but, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the rivalry should officially have come to an end.
associated the Golem with the Eastern, according to Gelbin (15). Kalmar states that in the nineteenth century, Judaism was regarded as an Oriental religion, as it had its origins in what is now Israel (Kalmar 59). The Jews were imagined as racial relatives of Muslim Arabs. Kalmar speaks of an “Orientalization of the Jews” (ibid. 58): they were non-Western ‘others’, and thus opposed to the West, in some cases even the West’s enemy (ibid. 59).

The Golem in the series is clearly an enemy of the West. He is “one of the deadliest assassins in the world” (S1:E3 00:53:50-51), apparently, according to Sherlock. Hence, he is obviously not very civilised. On the contrary: he is a very cruel and savage fellow, as he kills his victims with his bare hands. He is a very hideous creature; he looks monstrous, almost unhuman. He is the Orientalised ‘other’ and brings destruction over the West, in this case over London, Sherlock’s hunting ground. The detective’s attempt to capture the Golem fails. However, even though the assassin escapes, Sherlock manages to solve the puzzle and expose the people responsible for the crime and to infringe their plan of making money with the fake Vermeer. Thus, the detective is again superior, and the criminals’ intellectual abilities are doubtlessly inferior. Inferiority being indicated by intellectual abilities is also a recurrent theme in Doyle’s stories, as has been examined in Chapter 4.1.2, and it is especially noticeable with regard to criminals: the cleverest ones are white Westerners, as the examples of Moriarty and Adler have shown.

The same applies to Sherlock: in the series, white superiority is especially noticeable with regard to intelligence. Western superiority is not so much defined by moral high ground, as Eurus’ cruelty proves otherwise, but rather by a cultural and intellectual superiority. The latter is expressed by depicting foreigners as inferior and less intelligent and, consequently, by portraying white characters as superior and more intelligent. Just like in Doyle’s stories, it is precisely these clever, white criminals who are portrayed in more depth, as if it was necessary to explain how it is possible that a white Westerner like Adler or Moriarty became a criminal. As opposed to this, a foreign criminal does not come as a surprise to Doyle’s readers, and probably also not to the majority of the series’ audience, since stereotypical images of foreign criminals were and are so deeply embedded in people’s minds.

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44 This enmity has a long history: antisemitism dates back to Ancient Greece and Rome and can be merged into three categories, as Chanes suggests: “ancient antisemitism, which was primarily ethnic in nature; Christian antisemitism, which was religious; and the racial antisemitism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (Chanes 5-6). At Doyle’s time, Christian anti-Judaism was gradually being replaced by racial antisemitism. As the West is very much defined by its Christian heritage (Kalmar 53), the concept of the Jewish enemy became linked to the concept of the Jew as an Eastern threat. This again suggests parallels to Bram Stoker’s Dracula. Vampires were often associated with Judaism. Ewence, for instance, explores Dracula as an “articulation of the Jewish immigrant ‘other’” (Ewence 213). Just like the vampire invades the West and sucks Westerners’ blood, the Jew was an Eastern parasite in Western minds.
The in-depth portrayal of white, Western characters is probably one major reason for the series’ creators’ taking many of these very white characters from Doyle’s stories as models for their characters, whereas they did not draw on Doyle’s foreign characters. Characters portrayed in more depth are easier to take as models and appear more authentic than characters about whom the reader does not learn a lot. Moriarty or Adler, for instance, are elaborate characters who make a lasting impression on the reader, and it thus makes sense to use them for the series as well. Consequently, it is them whom the series’ creators based their clever criminals on. In addition to Moriarty and Adler, Charles Augustus Magnussen, who is an adaptation of Charles Augustus Milverton, proves to be a very clever criminal. The cleverest of them all, however, is a character who did not appear in Doyle’s stories: Eurus Holmes, whose role will be analysed later in this chapter.\footnote{Actually, Mary Watson a.k.a. Rosamund Mary could be mentioned here as well, for she is a former criminal of Western origin and of white skin colour, and she is also very clever. As opposed to her husband, she is often able to follow Sherlock’s deductions and explanations and makes deductions herself, proving that she also comes close to being an intellectual equal to Sherlock. However, when saying that she was a former criminal, the emphasis is on ‘former’: she certainly does not hold the role of a villain in the series, which is why she is not part of this listing. In addition, the viewer does not know what her actual nationality is, for her nationality as well as her accent are probably faked.} Again, all these characters are white Westerners: not all British, but definitely white Westerners.

The intellectual superiority of white Western criminals is expressed in the character of Irene Adler, who is a dominatrix and a kind of blackmailer in the series. She takes compromising photographs of her clients, yet does not use them to extort money or to gain power, but only for her own protection. As to her intelligence, there is one decisive difference to the stories. While she stands out in “A Scandal in Bohemia” for outwitting the detective, she fails to do so in the series. Sherlock eventually deduces that she has fallen in love with him, enabling him to guess her phone code. The “camera phone is [her] life” (S2:E1 00:32:24-26) and her “protection” (ibid. 00:32:30) and gives Sherlock complete power over her: she is at his mercy. Nevertheless, she is a very strong character, proves to be extremely clever and manages to trick Sherlock several times. He is impressed by her wit and admires her for it, and he is most certainly even romantically attached to her, for he sinks into depression when he believes her dead and later travels to Pakistan in order to save her from being beheaded. Thus, she is, even though outwitted by Sherlock Holmes, a very strong character.

As analysed in Chapter 4.1.2, Adler’s portrayal is thoroughly positive in “A Scandal in Bohemia”, even though she is not what Victorians would have considered a virtuous woman. Equally, Irene Adler in Sherlock is not considered virtuous or honourable by many, for she works as a dominatrix. The stigma still associated with sex work (Sprankle et al. 242) gives
rise to the assumption that Adler’s character would be depicted negatively, yet this is not the case. This speaks in favour of the series, for it is made rather clear that Irene Adler’s working in the sex industry is her own choice, and her job does not result in a negative depiction of her character. She is also a criminal to some extent, though, as she takes compromising photos of her clients for her own protection. Since she gets the chance to explain her situation, Sherlock as well as the viewer show understanding for her taking the pictures. I argue that it is again her being white and Western which leads to a more elaborate portrayal of her character and thus to a more authentic and more positive overall image. In addition, her being a white Westerner is most certainly linked to her being more intelligent than most other criminals, which is one of the reasons why Sherlock is fascinated by her.

Equally, Jim Moriarty, the analogy to Professor James Moriarty, is an intelligent, white Western criminal. Just like in Doyle’s stories, he also seems to be the detective’s arch nemesis in the series. He appears to possess even more power than in the books, as he is said to be highly powerful in Doyle’s stories, but he only appears in one story and is mentioned in two others. In the series, by contrast, Moriarty appears in almost every episode. He is a recurring character, his name is already mentioned in the very first episode, when the serial killer Jeff Hope reveals the name of his sponsor. In the second episode, the last scene again reveals that Moriarty helped the criminal organisation Black Lotus under General Shan to get into London. The same applies to the following episodes: Moriarty appears in almost every one of them, even though not always in person. He is the one behind most of the crimes, though, and even after his death, he continues to appear on screens. Apparently, he is always one step ahead of Sherlock. Even though the detective succeeds in the end, Moriarty is, like in Doyle’s stories, apparently the cleverest of all criminals. He is able to puzzle Sherlock beyond his imagination, repeatedly leaving him, who usually loves and needs the challenge, more baffled than the detective intended to be. Once again, the cleverest criminal is white and Western.

However, as is revealed in the very last episode, “The Final Problem”, Sherlock’s arch nemesis is not Moriarty but someone even more dangerous: it is his own sister, Eurus Holmes. While Sherlock and Mycroft already possess incredible cognitive abilities, Eurus is “incandescent” (S4:E3 00:10:20), “an era-defining genius, beyond Newton” (ibid. 00:10:26-29). In fact, it was her who gave Moriarty information and personal details about Sherlock and who planned her ‘game’ in “The Final Problem” during five minutes of unsupervised conversation with Moriarty. Thus, it is not clear in how far she helped Moriarty play his game with Sherlock, for the viewer only gets to know that her conversation with Moriarty took place five years before the events of “The Final Problem”. It is not clear though whether this was
before or after “A Study in Pink”. However, Eurus became interested in Moriarty having “noted [his] interest in the activities of [her] little brother” (ibid. 00:39:22-28), and she probably knew about his intellect in combination with his criminal abilities. Thus, he is not the cleverest criminal of the series, but still a clever one. This fact upholds the validity of the argumentation above, of him as a white male being a very clever criminal.

Eurus’ intellect, however, is even superior to that of Moriarty. Apparently, she cannot even be outwitted by Sherlock Holmes. He solves her riddle in the end, yet this is what she wanted him to do. However, in her case, her being white and Western is rather obvious, as she is Sherlock’s and Mycroft’s sister and both her parents were white Westerners. Also, her intellectual superiority is apparently a hereditary matter, as all three Holmes children stand out due to their remarkable cognitive abilities. As their blood relationship is obviously important for the plot, Eurus’ being white and clever cannot really be taken as an example of Orientalist stereotyping, yet she also does not contradict it. She, the cleverest of all criminals, is still a white Westerner, and she is intellectually superior to non-white criminals.

What is fascinating, though, is Eurus’ name. It means east wind, or the god of the east wind (OED, “eurus”). That the cleverest and most dangerous of all criminals bears a name that includes the word ‘East’ is quite revelatory. On several occasions, starting in “His Last Vow”, Mycroft or other characters say, “There’s an east wind coming”, and it is usually to express an upcoming danger. In Doyle’s story “His Last Bow”, Holmes also says, “There’s an east wind coming, Watson” (Doyle, “Bow” 507). In the story, Holmes utters this sentence on the eve of the First World War, and the east wind “will be cold and bitter, Watson, and a good many of us may wither before its blast” (ibid.). The east wind, coming from the evil East, will bring death and destruction upon Britain, apparently, so the name fits Eurus perfectly. The only reason for her not to be as destructive as the war is because she chooses not to, but her outstanding manipulation skills lead to her causing a considerable number of deathly or destructive incidents. But not only does she bring evil to people, she apparently enjoys their suffering. Her lack of empathy exceeds that of Sherlock and Mycroft many times over. Therefore, even though Eurus is white and not from the East, she is an allegory of evil and destruction.

The last criminal who shows remarkable intellect is Charles Augustus Magnussen. Magnussen is the “Napoleon of blackmail” (S3:E3 00:22:14-16), according to Sherlock, and “he knows the critical pressure point on every person of note or influence in the whole of the Western world and probably beyond” (ibid. 00:22:07-13). He does not want money, as he has got enough already, but what he wants is power. Knowing people’s critical pressure point
indeed vests him with power, and this very power makes him untouchable. Consequently, as he is aware of this fact, he exhibits an incredible arrogance and repeatedly reminds people of his power over them. Interestingly, he knows the pressure points of the Western world only, implying that the rest of the world is not worth his attention.

Sherlock eventually defeats him, yet only by killing him. Even though having solved the case, Sherlock knows that he is powerless if he adheres to the law. Had he not killed Magnussen, the latter would have had the upper hand: he would not have been charged. The detective would have had nothing on the media mogul, for there were no documents containing all the information he collected. It is all in his head; there are no documents to be destroyed, making killing him the only possibility to defeat him. Thus, Sherlock draws on the uncivilised method of killing him, making use of vigilante justice, like in Doyle’s “The Blue Carbuncle” or The Sign of the Four, as described in Chapter 4.2.1. In this specific case, he does so in order to save John, his wife Mary, and their unborn daughter. His motives might be considered honourable and Magnussen is doubtlessly a despicable person, but nevertheless, the detective kills a man, a man who otherwise would have outwitted him. This leaves Sherlock in quite an ambiguous position, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The clever criminal is, once again, a white Westerner, but, as opposed to his literary predecessor Charles Augustus Milverton, not an Englishman: he is Danish.

Magnussen is interesting when considering the fear of a foreign invasion, as he also plays with stereotypes. In the very beginning of the episode, John Garvie, one of the parliamentary commission members, asks him, “Do you think it right that a newspaper proprietor, a private individual and in fact a foreign national should have such regular access to our prime minister?” (ibid. 00:00:49-01:06). While Garvie’s first two arguments are absolutely valid, as a newspaper proprietor or a private individual should not have access to governmental secrets, he then voices the fear of a foreign invasion: he is worried that a foreigner might have power over the British prime minister and thus over the whole nation. To that, Magnussen replies, “I don’t think it’s wrong that a private individual should accept an invitation. However, you have my sincere apologies for being foreign” (ibid. 00:01:07-08), knowing exactly how this is going to embarrass his interrogator, as the last thing he wants is to appear politically incorrect or even racist.

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46 At least as long as these secrets are not illegal or unethical. However, Magnussen is certainly not a whistleblower – he wants to know the government’s secrets in order to have power over them.
Interestingly, Sherlock plays with stereotypes as well. In “The Six Thatchers”, a client wants to know whether his wife is having an affair. Sherlock makes up a story about her being a Swedish spy and wanting to kill the president of the United States, which would, according to him, result in an anti-Russian policy and finally in World War Three (S4:E1 00:26:47-27:35). Obviously, he is not being serious, as John immediately remarks with a laugh. Nevertheless, the viewer as well as the client are inclined to believe Sherlock. Not only does Sherlock deal with peculiar cases quite often, but the apparent international conspiracy fits the image of evil foreigners, especially regarding the somewhat tense relations between Russia and the US, which again leads back to the Cold War subject. Magnussen exposes the general suspicion under which all foreigners are in the eyes of the British, and Sherlock’s apparently credible story confirms this very general suspicion.

Connected to the latter is Britain’s fear of losing superiority. In fact, this loss of superiority and control is Britain’s largest pressure point, as Magnussen later reveals. He says to Sherlock and John, “Best thing about the English – you’re so domesticated. All standing around, apologising ... keeping your little heads down” (ibid. 00:25:47-26:03). Being domesticated sounds like the worst thing that can happen to the British, for they are used to being the ones who domesticate and control others. Sherlock and John are representatives of Britain, and the former’s assignment is to make sure the British remain in control. The media mogul is very much aware of Britain’s compulsion to retain control. He knows its biggest fear and uses his knowledge to humiliate the British. He even calls them a “nation of herbivores” (ibid. 00:26:12-14), comparing them to calm and rather powerless animals who have to be afraid of carnivores, who will eventually devour them at some point. The carnivores could symbolically stand for the foreign, which will devour the British in the course of the foreign invasion, if Britons lose control.

Without doubt, Magnussen is an ambivalent character. On the one hand, he is a foreigner, a fact he is absolutely aware of and which he readily takes advantage of by accusing the British of being racist, touching on a pressure point of theirs. He is rather dangerous, and Sherlock can only defeat him by killing him, making use of vigilante justice. Frankly speaking, it is quite an unfair move, when considering that Magnussen did not try to kill Sherlock or to physically harm him in any way. Magnussen did not expect to be shot, obviously, and he did not have a chance to defend himself. Thus, speaking of self-defence seems absurd. However, Magnussen is a threat to Britain by pointing out its weaknesses and by causing its power and control to dwindle. Possessing the superior intellect of a white Westerner, he is more dangerous than a non-Western foreigner with apparently inferior intellect: he threatens Britain’s structure.
He does not attack its exterior, but manages to assault the whole framework holding the nation together: Britain’s belief in its own strength and power. Thus, from the British perspective, the argumentation that Sherlock’s killing him was self-defence might even sound plausible. If seen from this angle, Sherlock again saves Britain from the foreign threat, even making a sacrifice himself, for he knows that the killing will have consequences for him. However, in the end, he does not even get punished, because after five minutes of sitting in the plane that would take him to Eastern Europe, Mycroft calls him and tells him he is needed. When Sherlock asks, “Who needs me this time?” (ibid. 01:28:11-12), Mycroft’s reply is short: “England” (ibid. 01:28:20).

His country needs him, and, of course, Sherlock comes back to help. His punishment would have been to do “some undercover work in Eastern Europe” (ibid. 01:25:34-35), which would most certainly have resulted in his death after six months (ibid. 01:25:36). This is also quite revealing with regard to the Western perception of Eastern Europe: as in the Czech example above, Eastern Europe is apparently a very dangerous place, for if it kills the great detective after only six months, one cannot imagine how dangerous it must actually be. Consequently, it makes sense that the East wind brings destruction, when considering the perils lurking in the place it originates from.

In Doyle’s stories, Holmes’s role is an ambiguous one, he is the Empire’s saviour, yet not its ideal representative. However, his sometimes ungentlemanly behaviour, such as taking drugs or his seemingly primitive deduction methods like reading footsteps (McLaughlin 41), is what distinguishes him from Scotland Yard and thus enables him to solve cases where they are at their wits’ end. As opposed to all the others, he is willing to get involved with the Oriental, yet he always remains in control and can thus profit from it. In Sherlock, the detective is an ambiguous figure as well, as his behaviour equally deviates from that of a so-called gentleman in today’s sense. However, this results mainly from his arrogance and his lack of empathy. His methods seem a little primitive sometimes, too. In “A Study in Pink”, for instance, he merely touches the corpse to see whether the hair is wet or takes the dead woman’s ring off her finger in order to check its shininess. From his observations, he makes his deductions. In addition, he does not hesitate to make use of unconventional methods such as drugging his parents, his brother, and even the pregnant Mary in order to steal his brother’s laptop in “His Last Vow”. However, even though his methods could be considered uncivilised in some cases, he does not really get involved with the Oriental in the series. He consumes a considerable amount of drugs, yet drugs are not really associated with the East anymore, as will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 5.2. Hence, Sherlock can be considered an
ambiguous figure when it comes to his character and personality in general, yet not with regard to Orientalism.

To sum up, the cast of the series *Sherlock* does not authentically mirror the UK’s population, which is much more diverse. A series featuring mostly white characters does not “truly reflect a modern United Kingdom” (*BBC*, “Code” 1). The few non-white characters are either criminals, or they remain very flat and plain characters who lack an in-depth portrayal. With the exception of the secondary characters Sergeant Donovan and John’s nameless therapist, there are no non-white recurring characters. The Chinese people’s depictions present them as very traditional people who are obsessed with Chinese customs and culture, even when having lived in the UK for a considerable amount of time, such as Soo Lin Yao. Since it is rather unrealistic that a young woman does not have any other interests than maintaining ancient tea pots, the series fails to “accurately and authentically represent and portray the lives of the people of the United Kingdom today” (ibid.). Instead, the creators of the series focus on very traditional images. These traditional representations are not even authentic representations of present-day China, but they simply serve as a means to evoke fascination on behalf of the viewers.

Westerners, by contrast, are portrayed in more detail, and also as superior. There is even a criminal hierarchy, just like in Doyle’s stories. Moriarty, Adler, and Eurus Holmes are the cleverest criminals, the only ones to outwit Sherlock or at least to come close to outwitting him, and they are white Westerners, Britons even. The Dane Charles Augustus Magnussen is probably an exceptional case, for he is a white Westerner, but a foreigner. He is of particular interest, as he knows Britain’s biggest fears. He knows how to humiliate the British and how to deprive them of control, thus taking away their most important weapon: their sense of superiority, and, as a result, their confidence. Thus, Sherlock as Britain’s saviour has to kill him in order to ensure the nation’s power. Even though a factual colonial empire does not exist anymore, there are still notions of empire in the portrayals of foreigners: non-Westerners are, like in Doyle’s stories, often homogenised and denied individuality and a complexity of experience (Hermes 262; Mercer, “Introduction” 3). Since Doyle already did the same, his more elaborate, western characters were mostly taken as models for the ones in the series, whereas the less elaborate ones were not. Non-Westerners are intellectually inferior, as especially the comparison of Western and non-Western criminals shows. In “The Blind Banker”, the series creators clearly made use of Oriental stereotypes, as especially the discrepancies with regard to the portrayal of Chinese culture reveal.
In addition to the mingling of Chinese and Japanese culture, the beginning of the series features a stereotypical mummed Sikh warrior, who is just a means of attracting the viewers’ attention and fascination. Similarly, in the subsequent episode, there is a scene set in Belarus which serves the same purpose. Both these scenes are not at all relevant to the plot. They simply demonstrate the West’s superiority over the East, be it Asia or Eastern Europe. Both China’s and Eastern Europe’s rather negative depictions mainly result from the Cold War and the Communist era. Britain and China were opposing parties in the Opium Wars as well as in the Cold War. The Czech Republic as well as Belarus were part of the Eastern Bloc during the time of the Soviet Union, having negative consequences with regard to their development in almost all areas. Hence, they lag behind the more progressive West, which again leads to a sense of superiority on behalf of the latter. This becomes apparent in the series: the Czech Republic is pictured as a rundown trouble spot full of criminal gangs. Above all, the stereotype of the dangerous East is confirmed by giving the most intelligent, dangerous, and cunning criminal the name Eurus, meaning ‘east wind’ and being an allegory of evil originating from the East.

5.2 From “Distant Moonlit Shores”47 to the Iron Lady: Foreign Settings

The danger emanating from the East is not only discernible with regard to non-Western characters, but also with regard to non-Western settings. Like Doyle’s stories, the series *Sherlock* features a couple of such foreign or even Oriental settings. Again, some of them are actually abroad, but some of them have ‘invaded’ Britain. Similar to the depiction of non-Western ‘others’, non-Western settings do not possess a high degree of complexity. They are always the West’s “contrasting image” (Said 2), being portrayed as different, uncivilised, and inferior to the West. However, in most cases, foreign settings also evoke fascination.

The aspect of the uncivilised East becomes apparent at the beginning of “The Great Game”. As has already been addressed, the episode starts with a scene set in Minsk, Belarus, in what appears to be a very sordid and shabby prison. It looks like a “spartan schoolroom” (Gatiss 1), as stated in the script, there are a number of tables and chairs. The shabbiness fits the perception of Belarus as a former Soviet state, underdeveloped and backward in comparison to Western countries like Britain. The only two people in the room are Sherlock and a prisoner. In the room, it is very cold, as Sherlock’s and the prisoner’s steaming breath signifies, and it is rather dark; the only light coming from the small windows. The darkness adds to the notion of

47 S1:E2 01:06:22-27.
unfriendliness, maybe even of hostility. It creates a rather sombre and gloomy atmosphere, fitting the topic of murder, and the sombreness and gloominess are enforced when it becomes clear that the prisoner will face death penalty.

The conditions for people facing death penalty in Belarus are indeed rather bad, as a report by Amnesty International exposes, even though the method used is not hanging but shooting the convicts (Amnesty International 5). Not only did the creators fail to do their research properly, just like in the case of the Chinese making origami, but they chose to set the scene in the only country in the region of Europe and Central Asia that still makes use of the death penalty (ibid.). Most viewers probably do not know about that, and while conditions in Belarus indeed appear archaic with regard to the death penalty, its being part of Eastern Europe contributes to a generally uncivilised image of the region. This image stands in contrast to the civilised West, where the death penalty is unthinkable. Sherlock goes to Belarus to listen to an English prisoner’s story, as the latter asks for the detective’s help. However, Sherlock does not help the prisoner. In fact, the only thing he does is continually correct the latter’s English. Even at the end of the conversation, he shows no compassion whatsoever:

BEWICK: Look, you’ve gotta help me, Mr Holmes. Everyone says you’re the best. Without you, I’ll get hung for this.
SHERLOCK: No, no, no Mr Bewick. Not at all.

BEWICK looks reassured. SHERLOCK turns in the doorway.

SHERLOCK: Hanged, yes.
He smiles and goes out.

(S1:E3 00:01:39-56)

Sherlock is known for his arrogance and his lack of empathy, but the scene emphasises how events happening in another country are not important to Sherlock. Just like in Doyle’s stories, in the case of Jefferson Hope’s or Jonathan Small’s background narratives, the detective does not care about what happens outside Britain, as long as Britain is not in danger. Hence, the prisoner’s fate is irrelevant to him. The prisoner travelled to a foreign country and lost control there, and, as a consequence, killed his girlfriend. Even though his guilt is beyond doubt, he should be granted the right to a fair trial in Britain. In his home country, he would be punished, too, but not sentenced to death. However, Sherlock does not seem to think so. He does not even try to help the prisoner. Apparently, going to a foreign country with uncivilised laws proves fatal to Bewick, and his death seems to be a just punishment. Likewise, his stay abroad proved fatal to Doctor Roylott in “The Speckled Band”, as analysed in Chapter 4.1.3.
For Soo Lin Yao in “The Blind Banker”, her time in China proves lethal as well. In her case, China is the place where she was born. She tells Sherlock and John her story about how she was forced to join the Black Lotus and how trying to leave the organisation brought her into mortal danger. Indeed, she is killed by her own brother, and even though Sherlock and John feel sorry for her death, their greatest concern is to expel the Chinese crime organisation from England. In addition, the white people are saved, and while Sherlock and John’s survival seems obvious, the viewer does not know more about John’s date Sarah than about Soo Lin. Nevertheless, it is the latter who has to die, and as she herself seems to accept her fate, for she was once a member of the Black Lotus – even though not by her own free will –, John, Sherlock, and the viewers do so as well. She knows her apparent place as a foreigner: her life is of no significance to the British, thus she accepts death instead of fighting for her life. Even though she only smuggled drugs because she was forced to, she has to accept death after a life full of misery: she managed to escape, but eventually, her escape attempt is doomed to failure.

Given Soo Lin’s sad destiny, the image the viewer gets of China is quite a sinister one – it is connected to crime, fear, and death. The same applies to the very first foreign setting of the series: Afghanistan. In the very first scene of the first episode, the viewer is introduced to Dr John Watson, formerly of the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers. The scene shows John having a nightmare of the war he has returned from due to an injury. The battle scene only serves as a means of showing John’s background, and it is very short. There is gunfire, an explosion, and men screaming, unequivocally a scene that gives men nightmares. Even though Afghanistan is a country of many facets, the war scene is the only one shown in the series. Evidently, it casts the country in a negative light, for the only aspect displayed is a negative one. Of course, the country is not really of importance to the series’ plot, but rather the war itself and its influence on John. It is also clear that the numerous wars cast destruction on the country and had a formative influence on the previously beautiful country. However, by only connecting battle and death to Afghanistan, it becomes but another example of an Eastern country not being presented as the multifaceted place it actually is.

The same applies to Pakistan, where Irene Adler would have found her death, being killed by a terrorist cell, if Sherlock had not come to her rescue. Like non-white characters are usually depicted one-sided and lack an in-depth portrayal (Hermes 262; Gymnich 235), Pakistan’s as well as Afghanistan’s complexity is denied (Mercer, “Introduction” 3). The countries are reduced to a place of death and destruction, to a battle zone.

However, even though the war gives John nightmares, he also misses it, as Mycroft points out during their first meeting (S1:E1 00:40:18). Thus, the dichotomy of fear and
fascination also applies to the Afghan war: despite its being dangerous and unspeakably dreadful, John is fascinated by the thrill of it. As opposed to the stories, in the series, Afghanistan is not entirely negative for him. For Sherlock, the cases serve as a substitute for drugs, as discussed in Chapter 4.2.3, but for John, they are a substitute for the war. Not only do the cases provide Sherlock with the necessary adrenaline rush, but John longs for this very rush just as much. Thus, the image of Afghanistan is ambivalent. As is typical for Orientalism, something dangerous is, at the same time, highly fascinating, often precisely because it is so dangerous (Baumbach 5-6).

A place where fascination outweighs the fear is Morocco, where John and Sherlock finally find Mary in “The Six Thatchers”, when she tries to escape her killer by travelling around the world. Before the three meet, however, Mary is seen walking around a Moroccan market. In the background, there is Oriental music, and the objects the vendors sell at the market look quite tawdry. Silver, gold, and glitter come into focus, flipflops, bags, and scarves in loud colours, as well as people in Oriental-looking clothes. When leaving the market behind, the area becomes shabbier. Mary is walking through a sordid alley and finally enters what is apparently a small, dimly lit hotel room. Inside, the ambience is even more Oriental than the market outside. The furnishing recalls Sholto’s apartment in Doyle’s The Sign of the Four, even though the hotel room does not appear incongruous. It is stylishly furnished, yet, in European eyes, very exotic. The walls are painted in a reddish orange and the furniture looks very Oriental: a hexagonal cupboard with golden ornaments, a chest, a wardrobe, a bed, and chairs in similar style. There are Oriental-looking patterns everywhere, a patterned carpet, and a low table, and the floor consists of thousands of colourful tiles. In the corner, there is a palm-like plant and a huge golden vase, and smaller ones are on the cupboards, as well as a golden bowl of fruit. The house looks very exotic and alluring – it is utterly fascinating. It also looks very stereotypical, however, and so does Karim, the boy who is in the room with Sherlock.

Karim fits into the exotic room perfectly. He is wearing traditional garments and playing a card game with the detective. With his Oriental clothes, he looks like a character from Disney’s Aladdin, and apparently works in the hotel. Just like in Western countries, child labour is prohibited in Morocco, which raises the question of why a boy like Karim is serving tea to hotel guests. Indeed, on Sherlock’s request, Karim goes to fetch some tea. When he comes back with the tray, however, a mistake is revealed, which most non-Moroccans will
probably not notice: in Morocco, tea is never served without a teapot (Benlafquih), yet there are only cups on Karim’s tray.\textsuperscript{48}

While it is perfectly realistic that Moroccan people drink tea and also have houses or apartments with colourful tile floors or some objects, it is to be doubted that a young boy like Karim would walk around wearing a hat and a scarf over such traditional-looking clothes. If actually employed in the hotel, his clothes could be part of the marketing strategy, yet in either case, the complexity of experience is denied once again (Mercer, “Introduction” 3). Even though it is not implausible that a Moroccan house might be traditionally decorated and furnished, especially when it is a hotel, a hotel room in a twenty-first-century hotel might also include a TV, for instance, or electric lighting. Instead, there is a set of matches on the table, and an oil lamp on the wall, probably for what is perceived as a more ‘authentic’ experience. According to its depiction in the series, Morocco appears to be a very traditional and underdeveloped country, still, and stands in contrast to the progressive West.

This contrast becomes even more explicit when Sherlock and John visit Mr and Mrs Welsborough’s house in the same episode. The British home is the counterpart of the Oriental one, similar to Sholto’s and Mary’s home in Doyle’s stories, as discussed in Chapter 4.2.2. The British home is modern, and everything is “perfectly ordered, managed” (S4:E1 00:18:04-08). Interestingly, it also includes a shrine for Margaret Thatcher, with photos and a small bust, a bigger one having been smashed recently. The owner of the house, Mr Welsborough, is just one of many British admirers of the Iron Lady. Since she is considered a rather controversial figure, she has about as many admirers as critics. For many, she is still the embodiment of Britishness, a heroine not only due to her working the way up to the top, as she is for Mr Welsborough. She also stands for Victorian values (Cannadine 126), and she is praised by her admirers for her role in ending the Cold War (ibid. 89-90). As Veldman puts it,

The cold war not only confirmed Thatcher’s tendency to see both domestic and international political affairs in terms of ‘us versus them,’ it also solidified her perception of Britain’s alliance with the United States as the central defining feature of ‘us’. (Veldman 2)

The “‘us versus them’” (ibid.) is exactly what Orientalism does: delineating the self from the ‘other’ and thus defining one’s identity by creating a counterpart, and unifying people by giving them an “us” and a “them” they can delineate from (Said 1-2; Wiedemann 6). Once again, the

\textsuperscript{48} Actually, in Egypt, tea is mostly served without a pot, which might explain the series creators’ mistake. Morocco was a French colony once, while Egypt was a British one. Thus, the creators probably assumed that there is no difference between Moroccan and Egyptian way of serving tea. Once again, Europeans perceive Arab speaking countries as homogenous, when in fact their cultures differ from each other and they often do not even understand each other’s language.
“us” is the West, namely Britain and America, and “them” is the East, in this case the Eastern Bloc. The admiration for Britain’s first female prime minister might not only result from her contribution to ending the Cold War. However, this very admiration suggests that there are still people who have veneration for her attitude and her values. Most certainly, many people also still see Eastern Europe as hostile or adversarial.

Thus, it can be concluded that the East, be it Eastern Europe or Asia, is repeatedly portrayed as backward, as less civilised, and as sticking to traditions. The same applies to Morocco, a country not exactly Eastern from a geographic point of view, but culturally, as it is a member of the Arab League and thus belongs to the so-called Arab world. Just like China, Morocco is an exotic country for Westerners, and its otherness fascinates them. With regard to Eastern Europe, the uncivilised, backward image seems to be more prevalent than the fascination, as its culture resembles the Western European one more than that of Asia or North Africa. However, Eastern Europe is still the ‘other’, sometimes even an antagonistic ‘other’, which is mostly a result of the Cold War, when the Soviet Union with the then Eastern Bloc and the West were opposing each other. This applies to China as well, which was also on opposing sides with Britain. Officially, there is no war anymore, and no colonial relationship, yet the rivalry has not disappeared entirely. Likewise, the British feeling of superiority has not ceased to exist, making it even more important for them to emphasise their superiority over their ‘former’ rivals every now and then. Accordingly, the Eastern European countries as well as China are portrayed as the West’s, in the series mostly Britain’s, “contrasting image” (Said 2).

However, Britain is not only the East’s “contrasting image” (ibid.) with regard to settings actually located abroad. Just like Doyle’s stories, Sherlock also features Oriental or at least foreign settings in Britain. In Britain, the contrast between East and West is even more obvious: amidst ‘British-looking’ houses and places, the ‘other’ stands out. An example of such an Oriental setting in London is Soo Lin Yao’s apartment in “The Blind Banker”. Not only does she have an obsession with tea pots, as discussed in Chapter 5.1, but also her flat is decorated in a very traditional way. There are dried flowers, an orchid, Eastern-looking paintings and statues, and a Chinese-style dressing screen. In short, it looks like a very stereotypical apartment that a stereotypical, traditional Chinese woman would inhabit. However, even though the majority of migrants, regardless of which generation, still feel like belonging to their so-called ‘original’, ‘traditional’ culture somehow, the culture of the country they immigrated to becomes part of them as well: in the case of emigrating to Britain, they become “partly of the West” (Rushdie 15), too. This fact, however, is denied in the series: Soo
Lin’s portrayal is entirely focused on her Chinese origin and not on the complex process of adopting features of her ‘new culture’, which she has certainly undergone. Instead, she is shown in a very traditional way, as she decorates her flat with Chinese objects only.

Thus, the emphasis lies on difference, not on a migrant’s complex search for identity without losing either the new or the old identity. By portraying her in a stereotypical way, in contrast to British people, she becomes an ‘other’, and this is what makes her appear exotic and fascinating for the viewers. The tea ceremony at the beginning of the episode contributes to this image of the fascinating Chinese as well. The combination of Oriental music and Soo Lin’s calm and monotone voice creates an infatuating and alluring atmosphere, and thus an Oriental setting. Her audience is clearly fascinated by her show, as their facial expressions indicate.

A show which is even more fascinating is the Chinese circus in the same episode. At the entrance of the building in which the circus takes place, there are red or orange paper lanterns which provide the setting with an Eastern touch. Inside, this Eastern touch intensifies: there is a ring of candles, and the dim lighting creates a rather mysterious atmosphere. The drumbeat enforces the mystery, as well as the Chinese woman’s garment. The woman, who is later revealed to be General Shan, is wearing a sparkling red and golden headdress and a matching robe. Her appearance probably meets the expectations of Westerners picturing a traditional Chinese person. General Shan’s face is coloured in white, which is the colour of craftiness and cunning, of death and treachery in traditional Chinese colour symbolism (Ward 20; 22). Indeed, General Shan looks dangerous, a circumstance which is enforced by the dangerous weapon she reveals. It is an ornate ballista, clearly made to kill. However, like all Oriental characters, she also looks fascinating in her traditional garments and her thereof resulting exoticism. Next, a Chinese warrior appears, wearing a dreadful and frightening mask, which looks very Eastern and Oriental. He is wearing what looks like an ancient battle dress, and he is performing a “classic Chinese escapology act” (S1:E2 01:04:19-21), according to Sherlock. The warrior is strapped to a wooden board with metal chains. Later, the same man attacks Sherlock in the dressing room with an Oriental-looking weapon, probably a scimitar. He is doubtlessly dangerous, as he tries to kill Sherlock. However, his mask, his sabre, and his way of fighting make him appear fascinating, too.

The costumes of the ‘circus artists’ as well as the objects, such as weapons, make the scenery appear very traditional, ancient, Eastern, and Oriental. The weapons are clearly dangerous, the show leaves no doubt about their deadliness. The masks as well as the drums contribute to a very dangerous atmosphere, however, the whole setting is also fascinating. The
antithesis of fear and fascination is also evident with regard to the “deadly Chinese bird spider” (ibid. 01:06:32-35), Soo Lin Yao’s brother. Apparently, he is dangerous, “deadly” (ibid.) even, he has already given proof of his lethality when killing his own sister. Nevertheless, due to his Oriental-looking clothes and especially his acrobatic skills, but also due to his dangerousness, he is highly fascinating as well. The whole scenery is accompanied with what sounds like traditional Chinese music, making the atmosphere even more exotic and alluring. The fascination resulting from this Oriental setting becomes especially evident when looking at Sarah’s face: she is truly entranced by the show.

Obviously, the circus does not reflect twenty-first-century China, but it plays with the viewers’ expectations. They do not want to see a China which is as modern as Britain, which does not differ from their own home, but they want to see the exotic ‘other’, for it arouses their fascination. The Chinese obviously make use of the fascination an Oriental show evokes in the spectators, which also holds a mirror up to Western viewers, showing them how they are actually responsible for Easterners to emphasise their traditional side. Once again, the circus shows how people are willing to pay money so as to let themselves be fascinated by a display of Orient, of exoticism, of otherness.

The Chinese actually emphasise and enforce stereotypes themselves. General Shan, for instance, affirms the Oriental image when saying, “Ladies and gentlemen, from the distant moonlit shores of the Yangtze river, we present for your pleasure ... the deadly Chinese bird spider” (ibid. 01:06:19-35). She is evidently aware of the pleasure and fascination their display of exoticism and otherness causes, and she uses Oriental imagery. She highlights the distance, thereby emphasising the difference between East and West, and she speaks of “moonlit shores of the Yangtze river”, evoking images of unspoiled nature and mystical landscapes. Instead of emphasising diversity and showing different sides of her country, she enforces stereotypes about a backward and uncivilised country where people still wear Oriental garments and practise Oriental rituals. She confirms the image of a “timeless” (McLeod 52) and “unchanging” (Said 96) Orient. However, it is hardly surprising that the Chinese make use of these stereotypes for their own benefits and fulfil the expectations set in them as members of their ethnicity (Mercer, “Introduction” 9), as doing so is what promises them success. Hence, even though the Chinese do not fight against the stereotypes, their taking advantage of them can also lead to the reader’s confrontation with those very stereotypes and raises the question of their origin as well as their reasonableness.

The majority of viewers most certainly do not reflect on their own involvement in the creation of these stereotypes, though. This leads to the assumption that the makers of the series
did not have fighting stereotypes in mind when writing the script of the episode. Since the image of an Eastern and Oriental ‘other’ is so deeply rooted in people’s minds, they do not question its occurrence in books or series. This explains why a show in the twenty-first century still reflects an image of Chinese identity that, if anything, may be applied to nineteenth-century China. It also explains how people make assumptions about China which are not at all realistic.

As the circus is in London for one night only, Sherlock deduces that the circus is just the pretext for the gang’s criminal activities. He claims that the criminals needed a reason to leave China, for “[e]xit visas are scarce in China” (S1:E2 01:01:51-54). This sounds as if China was a despotic country where people are not allowed to leave, even though in fact hundreds of thousands of Chinese leave China on a regular basis and travel to the West, including a great number of students (Chan-Wyles). Hence, China is portrayed as a backward, almost tyrannical country, where people do not have the liberties Western people have. It is the ‘other’, a country more dangerous and less progressive than the West, which guarantees freedom of mobility.

Thus, the West appears superior once again, also with regard to the final outcome. Despite the danger emanating from the Chinese criminals, once again, the Westerners prove to be stronger in the end: they eventually succeed over the Easterners. In the circus, the Chinese are defeated by John and Sarah, which is quite refreshing, as Sarah is not the damsel in distress but takes her fate into her own hands. This changes later, however, when John is supposed to give answers for the price of her life. Also, regarding race and ethnicity, the series is not so refreshing, as Western superiority is demonstrated once again. West and East collide again later, in the tunnel, where Sherlock comes to John’s and Sarah’s rescue. The setting is Oriental yet again: the only light comes from torches and fire bowls, General Shan utters Chinese proverbs, and the ballista appears again, apparently being Shan’s preferred way of killing. In this scene, the fear most certainly outweighs the fascination for the involved. However, for the audience, the scene is definitely compelling and captivating, as the evil continuously evokes fascination (Baumbach 5).

In Doyle’s Holmes stories, the fascination connected to the evil became particularly evident regarding the destructive nature of drugs. In the stories, artificial stimulants played an important role regarding Oriental settings. Since drugs and tobacco originally come from the East (Reckwitz 407), they were connected to the Orient, and they were often associated with people of Oriental origin. Despite the risks connected to drug consumption, they still had the effect of fascinating people, such as Watson when watching Holmes injecting cocaine, or Holmes as a drug user himself. While smoking tobacco does not play a significant role in the series, drugs are frequently the subject of conversation. Obviously, they have not lost their
fascination for the users today, even though the latter are aware of the risks. However, as opposed to Doyle’s time, drugs are no longer indicators of Orient.

Nowadays, both drugs and tobacco have become part of the West. Actually, this Oriental invasion of the West can be regarded as successful, as neither the drugs themselves nor the settings in which they are consumed are perceived as Oriental anymore. In *Sherlock*, this becomes evident in “His Last Vow”, where John picks up Isaac Whitney and Sherlock in a drug den. As opposed to the opium den in Doyle’s story “The Man with the Twisted Lip”, the den in the series does not look very Eastern. Nobody smokes opium, the den is just a very sordid and degenerate house, a filthy place where the addicts lie around apathetically. There are quite a few scenes which touch upon the topic of drugs, especially in “The Dying Detective”, where Sherlock almost dies of a drug overdose, but there is not really an Oriental or Eastern connection anymore. Mrs Hudson’s deceased husband ran a drug cartel in Florida (S3:E2 00:55:46-56:10), for instance, not in India or any other Eastern country. As Isaac Whitney’s example in Chapter 5.1 has shown, black people nowadays have to face stereotyping concerning drugs, as they are suspected of drug usage three times as often as whites (ACLU 4). However, as said before, drug consumption is not linked to Oriental settings anymore.

In conclusion, it has become evident that Oriental or foreign settings still evoke both fear and fascination. The series features a considerable number of such settings: Belarus, Morocco, Pakistan, and Afghanistan show how Eastern countries are portrayed as backward, as less civilised, and as inferior to the West. The Cold War left its marks regarding the attitude of the West, mainly Europe and the US, towards the East, basically the former Communist Bloc. The West perceives itself as superior, as more civilised, and the East still as hostile, apparently. Eastern Europe is not as fascinating as exotic countries like China or Morocco, since it offers fewer differences concerning culture and way of living. Nonetheless, it is attractive for viewers to see Sherlock triumph over Eastern European criminals or in Eastern European settings, for while the rivalries of the Cold War may be officially over, they might still exist in people’s minds. The detective, once again, provides evidence of the Western superiority and saves the ‘civilised world’ from the savage non-Westerners. The above-mentioned Eastern countries are only shown from a one-sided perspective. Just like in the case of Eastern people, the countries’ complexity is not taken into account (Mercer, “Introduction” 3). Most of the time, the viewer only sees one of all their facets, and it is usually a sinister one, which gives rise to fascination, but does not “accurately and authentically represent” (*BBC, “Code” 1) these countries.
The same applies to foreign settings in Britain. The Chinese circus, the tea ceremony, Soo Lin Yao’s flat, or the tunnel in “The Blind Banker” are examples of Oriental settings in Britain, and they reflect the same one-sidedness, simplification and denial of complexity as the actual foreign settings outside Britain. In all these depictions, the East is the West’s “contrasting image” (Said 2), and stands in opposition to the British home, where everything is modern and orderly. Here, Mr Welsborough’s house serves as an example: in fact, his house incorporates the ultimate of Britishness. He has installed a shrine for Margaret Thatcher, the embodiment of Victorian values and British control over the East, for her admirers see her as a key figure in the process of the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc and the ending of the Cold War. Hence, the display of Thatcher images and busts is a blatant symbol of British strength and superiority. Conclusively, taking all these considerations into account, the BBC series Sherlock fails to provide a differentiated and complex image of non-Western countries and depicts them as inferior in many respects, as backward, and as less civilised than the West itself.

5.3 Conclusion of the Series Analysis, Comparison, and Final Résumé

Considering the analysis of Sherlock, it is clear that representations of Empire and Orientalist attitudes are still to be found in the series. Even though the BBC commits itself to representing a diverse society and to providing authentic portrayals of members of all ethnicities, it fails to do so in Sherlock. The series does not “truly reflect a modern United Kingdom” (BBC, “Code” 1), as all major characters are white. There are only two non-white recurring characters, Sergeant Donovan and John’s therapist, yet they are not really significant to the plot and are portrayed rather one-sided, their characters being simplified. The same applies to other PoC characters. They, too, lack an in-depth portrayal, and the complexity of their character as well as their individuality are denied. This applies to the Chinese criminals, for instance, or to the ferocious Golem, who is another example of an uncivilised, non-Western ‘other’, but also to Soo Lin Yao, who is not a criminal. Foreign characters are homogenised as an ethnic group, such as the Czech or the Chinese, or Asians in general, as the mingling of Chinese and Japanese culture in “The Blind Banker” gives evidence of. Another example of such a mingling of cultures is the tea scene in Morocco, which gives rise to the assumption that all Arab countries are perceived as a homogenous group by the West.

Equally, in Doyle’s stories, non-Western characters’ depictions are usually one-sided. Their portrayals do not present them as individuals but rather as part of a homogenised group.
Their characters are simplified and reduced to that of their group: the complexity of experience is denied. This concerns Indians, for instance, or also the Mormons, who are not described in detail but are reduced to certain so-called typical character traits. In addition, non-Westerners usually do not get the chance to tell their stories. The only information the reader gets to know about Tonga, for instance, he gets from Small’s narration, who is white and Western. The same applies to the series: non-white characters are not given a voice in most cases, but knowledge about them is spread by whites, which is typical for colonial or Orientalist literature (Spivak 104; Gymnich 235). Examples for non-white characters not getting a voice would be Bainbridge in “The Sign of Three”, Isaac Whitney in “His Last Vow”, or also the Sikh warrior in “The Blind Banker”.

Soo Lin Yao actually gets to tell her story, even though she is a foreigner, but her story is not really important to Sherlock. It serves as an explanation for why her brother wants to kill her and for the smugglers’ plans, yet she has to die nonetheless. In the end, the case is more or less successfully solved, as Sherlock blocks the Chinese’s plans, and Soo Lin has vanished into oblivion. Similarly, in Doyle’s stories, background stories set in other countries only serve as explanations for why crimes happen, but they do not have any influence on the perception of these crimes in Britain and on the administration of legal procedure. Here, Jefferson Hope’s background story set in North America can be named, or Small’s experiences in India. In both stories and series, what matters most is to keep Britain safe when faced with the foreign invasion, and in both cases, Sherlock Holmes is the saviour who guarantees Britain’s safety and, most of all, its superiority and control. He always remains superior himself, prevailing over the foreign criminals.

In the twenty-first century, there is no factual colonial empire anymore, yet the British sense of superiority has not ceased to exist. The two opposing parties are not coloniser and colonised anymore, but nevertheless, in Doyle’s stories as well as in the series, non-Western others are repeatedly portrayed as inferior, as backward, as less civilised. This becomes especially evident when juxtaposing white, Western and non-white, non-Western criminals. The former are usually intellectually superior to the latter: the cleverest criminals are white and Western, and they are the only ones capable of outwitting Sherlock Holmes, or at least coming close to doing so. In Doyle’s stories, these very criminals are Irene Adler and Professor James Moriarty, and in the series, it is Irene Adler and Jim Moriarty, too, as well as Eurus Holmes and Charles Augustus Magnussen. They are also characterised in more depth than non-white criminals such as the Chinese smuggling organisation Black Lotus or the Czech criminals.
In Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes*, Western superiority is also expressed through physical appearance. The latter often discloses the nature of Oriental or foreign characters, such as in the case of the native Tonga. He looks savage, almost animal-like, and he is highly dangerous, but also utterly fascinating due to his otherness, for the “violation of […] aesthetic borders” (Baumbach 6) also arouses fascination. Tonga is so fascinating that his master Small could even earn a living by exhibiting him at fairs, like an exotic animal. He is also very dangerous, which does not negate the fact that his otherness is somehow admired. However, what is important is that Small is in control. He gives a demonstration of British superiority, himself representing the coloniser, whereas Tonga is clearly the colonised.

In the series, the characters’ physical appearance is equally of significance and can prompt fear as well as fascination on behalf of the viewers. The mummed Sikh-warrior, for instance, looks clearly foreign, and it is also his otherness which gives rise to fear as well as fascination. However, it is again Holmes who remains triumphant. He defeats the foreigner and thus ensures British superiority. This adds even more to the fascination his clothes and weapon evoked. With regard to clothes, the Chinese people in the circus evoke fascination as well. Traditional clothing is used in order to emphasise the difference between West and East. In the case of the Chinese, it is even on purpose, for they know how it will fascinate the audience und thus promises success. In other cases, such as in Karim’s, for instance, the circumstances are slightly different, since he is not performing a show. The effect is similar, though: Karim’s traditional clothes and his exotic outer appearance thereof resulting serve as a means of attracting the viewer’s attention. Karim looks like a character from Disney’s Aladdin, yet the likeliness of a young boy in twenty-first-century Morocco wearing such traditional garments is to be doubted. Thus, his representation is another example of a not at all authentic depiction of a non-Western character.

In Doyle’s stories, heredity is also a decisive factor when it comes to character development. In the series, however, the former does not play such a role at all: there is no character having “hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind” (Doyle, “Final” 718) like Professor Moriarty, or someone whose “[v]iolence of temper approaching to mania” (Doyle, “Speckled”, 206) is hereditary like Doctor Roylott’s in Doyle’s stories. In the latter’s case, his violence partly results from his hereditary tendencies. However, they were intensified by his stay in the tropics.

As to a stay abroad or foreign influence in general proving fatal for the people concerned, Doyle’s stories provide quite a few examples. Besides Dr Roylott, Jonathan Small or Thaddeus Sholto can be named. As opposed to Watson or Holmes, their characters were not
strong enough to resist the temptations of the Orient, and they let themselves be “absorbed by the Other” (Baumbach 209). Especially the example of Sholto shows how a loss of control over the Oriental leads to a loss of identity, as the other has absorbed his self (ibid. 210), leaving him neither an actual foreigner, nor a proper Englishman (McLaughlin 59). In the series, it could be argued that for the prisoner in Minsk, his stay abroad has proven fatal, which is true, for had he not been in Belarus but in Britain, he would not have had to face the death penalty. However, it is not really the foreign ‘spirit’ or foreign influence, it is simply the laws of Belarus which are detrimental to him. Another character who could be named here is Soo Lin Yao, for her connections to the Chinese organisation Black Lotus ultimately lead to her death. However, it was her being born poor in China which resulted in her having to join the Black Lotus. Thus, she is an Easterner by birth, meaning that she is not a Westerner having been “absorbed by the Other in the experience of fascination” (Baumbach 209). The Eastern influence cannot prove fatal to her, for she already is Eastern. Nevertheless, the image the viewer gets of China is one of death and danger.

Oriental settings are dangerous in both Doyle’s stories and the series. Just like the Andaman Islands, India, or the salt desert of Utah are inhospitable places, Belarus, Morocco, Pakistan, and Afghanistan appear very dangerous as well as backward and uncivilised. As the stories portray the East as underdeveloped, the series, too, implies that the West beats the East in almost all respects, be it economically, technologically, or socially. Like non-Western people, Eastern countries are only shown from one particular side, and their complexity and intricacy are not taken into account. They are reduced to exotic and alluring places, such as in the case of Morocco, to countries with barbaric and outdated law systems, like Belarus, or to war zones, such as Afghanistan or Pakistan. However, as always, the evil arouses fascination, too. Just like India and the North American salt desert are highly fascinating for the readers, the aforementioned countries are for the viewers. It is not only them, however, who cannot help but admire the exotic setting of Morocco, its shining colours, and its Oriental-looking patterns, or who are fascinated by the destructiveness of the war in Afghanistan. Even John, despite having left the war due to an injury and suffering from nightmares, secretly misses the war. He misses the thrill of it, hence he needs the adrenaline rush the cases provide him with as much as Sherlock does.

The latter always pursues excitement, too; he wants to escape from the ordinary. His way of coping with not having a case is taking refuge in morphine or cocaine (Malloy 261; Littmann 270), in the stories as well as in the series. It has already been shown in Chapter 4.2.3 and 5.2 that drugs play a significant role in both stories and series, yet their perception has
changed. While they were clearly associated with East and Orient at Doyle’s time, they are just as much part of the West today as they are of the East, which could actually be seen as a successful Oriental invasion of the West. Today, drugs are no longer perceived as exotic or fascinating, which is confirmed by their depiction in the series: the settings in which drugs are consumed are no longer Oriental. Thus also the element of Holmes profiting from the Orient by getting involved with it but retaining control becomes invalid. While this element was very much applicable to the stories, the series does not really show the detective getting involved with the Oriental anymore. His methods still seem a little primitive or unconventional from time to time, yet he cannot be considered an ambiguous character with respect to Orientalism. Like in the stories, the Sherlock in the series is clearly not interested in societal problems like inequality, be it of social, gender-related, or ethnic nature, but when England’s dominance is at stake, he is there to help, whatever the cost.

In summary, the analysis of Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* novellas and stories and the BBC series *Sherlock* has revealed that representations of Empire and Orientalist attitudes are more blatant and manifest in Doyle’s literary productions, when an imperialist mindset was still socially acceptable. In the twenty-first century, this mindset might have vanished on the surface. Below, however, the British sense of superiority has not ceased to exist. Still, Western characters are ignorant as well as arrogant in their interactions with non-Westerners. They feel superior, more progressive, and more civilised. This attitude is not only expressed during interactions with foreign people, but also in the way foreign settings are depicted. Nowadays, audiences still feel attracted to exoticism, but they are fascinated by the foreign in general, especially due to the imminent danger they connect to it. The geographical borders of the region perceived as East have shifted: while at Doyle’s time, the East was mainly Asia and the Arab world, the Cold War resulted in a rather negative portrayal of Eastern Europe, too. Hence, the latter has become part of the numerous regions of the world the West patronisingly looks down upon.

Both stories and series made use of their power to choose to present their ‘own’ nation and national culture in a superior way and to delineate it from others and thus to emphasise difference (Hall 612-13). Evidently, they both chose to enforce rather than counteract stereotypes, and to affirm rather than resist Orientalism. The series’ enormous success shows that even today, it is apparently socially acceptable for a series to feature an almost exclusively white cast, to present non-Western characters in a simplified way, as homogenised groups, and deprived of any complexity or individuality. Apparently, this exact way of portraying foreigners is most certainly one of the reasons for the series’ success: subconsciously, most
Western viewers still enjoy the fascination non-Western characters and settings evoke, as well as the West’s eventual triumph over the East. While this preference is partially understandable, as the majority of viewers simply does not know any better, it is rather disillusioning that a public service broadcasting organisation like the BBC does not abide by the agreement concluded with the government, in which it commits itself to principles which should actually go without saying: authentically representing the diversity of the UK, and “truly reflect[ing] a modern United Kingdom” (BBC, “Code” 1).
6. Fear, Fascination, and Sherlock Holmes in the EFL Classroom

Due to Sherlock Holmes’s enormous popularity, the detective is a popular subject in the English classroom. He is one of the most recognisable figures in literature, he has been reinterpreted in popular culture countless times: Sherlock Holmes has become a household name all over the world. His being the embodiment of Britishness, London being the stories’ setting, and the general fascination linked to the stories and his persona make him the perfect choice when aiming at giving the students an understanding of British culture. However, lessons on the great detective mostly focus on his science of deduction, which is doubtlessly interesting and also highly informative for the students. Lessons on Sherlock Holmes rarely focus on Britishness in opposition to ‘otherness’, or on racism or stereotypes in general. In order to fill this gap, this chapter will provide ways of implementing the topic of Orientalism, of ‘self’ and ‘other’ in Sherlock Holmes in the EFL classroom. First of all, the relevance of the topic will be discussed, secondly, the target group and the general teaching objectives will be defined, and, lastly, the thesis will present specific teaching strategies and a possible lesson structure.

6.1 The Significance of Teaching Orientalism in Literature and Film

The multiculturalism observable in most of today’s classrooms results in every student having his or her own bearing on how to deal with the foreign. Moreover, in current political debates, migration is very present, and it is one of the topics everybody has an opinion about, be it students, parents, or even uninvolved bystanders. As the analysis in this thesis has revealed, both the *Sherlock Holmes* stories and the series *Sherlock* feature elements that enforce Orientalist stereotypes. While students are most certainly not familiar with the term Orientalism, they are all very familiar with racism and stereotyping. However, in this field, it is rather direct forms of racism people are conscious of, whereas institutional racism or the frequent exclusion of non-whites in literature and popular culture are issues which often go unnoticed. In response to this, the Austrian curriculum for teaching foreign languages in upper secondary schools explicitly expresses a demand for the development of intercultural competence:

*Interkulturelle Kompetenz*

Durch interkulturelle Themenstellungen ist die Sensibilisierung der Schülerinnen und Schüler für die Sprachenvielfalt Europas und der Welt zu verstärken, Aufgeschlossenheit gegenüber Nachbarsprachen – bzw. gegenüber Sprachen von autochthonen Minderheiten und
According to this excerpt, teachers should aim at promoting open-mindedness as well as appreciation and understanding towards different cultures and ways of living. They should raise awareness for cultural similarities and differences, yet also facilitate the unprejudiced examination of cultural stereotypes and clichés, as well as a critical analysis of the students’ own environment. In the curriculum for English in lower secondary schools, it is stated that,

The curriculum wants students to become familiar with the foreign, to consciously deal with cultural difference and the portrayal and evaluation of the latter. Actually, the curriculum emphasises that there is difference and that students should become aware of this very difference, which is to be criticised, following the argument that emphasising difference leads to a delineation of the ‘self’ from an alienated ‘other’. However, leaving this fact aside, the curriculum’s aim is to make students aware of stereotyping, which is a crucial step towards the annihilation of stereotypes. By dealing with judgements based on ethnicity and critically reflecting the students’ own experiences, also with regard to what it means to be Austrian, it can be shown that identity is not “fixed, coherent and stable” (Mercer, “Welcome” 43), but that it is highly complex. It can be shown that societies are always diverse, Austria being no exception, and that it is natural for students with a migration background to feel like they are part of two cultures, even if they are not first-generation migrants and were born in Austria. By addressing these issues, the students should become aware of the perks a diverse society entails.

Thus, the significance of teaching the topic of Orientalism in the EFL classroom has become manifest: not only is stereotyping based on race and ethnicity a highly relevant issue in the classroom, but the political discourse on migration and foreigners is very present in people’s minds and the refugee debate remains a highly controversial and hotly debated issue. Hence, it is also vital to show the East-West divide, to show that stereotyping in many cases does not happen in all directions, but that certain parts of society have always been favoured by the system and have profited from their status as a kind of ‘superior race’.
The best way to teach students about Orientalism is certainly literature and film. Firstly, the curriculum requires the use of a diverse range of media:

Die verschiedenen Themenbereiche sind durch möglichst vielfältige Quellen zu erschließen, wobei bei der thematischen Auswahl fremdsprachiger Texte auch literarischen Werken ein angemessener Stellenwert einzuräumen ist. (Bundesministerium Bildung 129)

Besides literature, other types of media such as films, TV series, articles, videos, or podcasts published on the internet are possible ways of approaching the topics taught in the EFL classroom in a multifaceted manner. Secondly, since all these types of media play an important role in how a society develops and perceives itself and ‘others’ (Hall 612-13), it is all the more essential to teach students awareness with regard to the contents of the books they read and the films and series they watch.

Yimwilai distinguishes three different approaches to teaching literature, the “language model”, the “cultural model” and the “personal growth model” (Yimwilai 15). The cultural model aims at helping “EFL students deal with a literary work in relation to the target culture” (ibid.), thus providing “an opportunity for students to explore cultural background, which leads to a genuine understanding of literary works and encourages students to understand different cultures and ideologies in relation to their own” (ibid.). Hence, reading and discussing literary works in class which deal with different cultural backgrounds helps students to not only understand these stories in regard to their intention, but also to reflect on their own, probably privileged situation. The advancement of the cultural model is the personal growth model, and it should encourage students to “express their feelings and opinions and to make connections between their own personal and cultural experiences and those expressed in the text” (ibid.). As Yimwilai puts it, learning only takes place “when readers are able to interpret texts and construct meaning on the basis of their own experience” (ibid.). Hence, literature is ideal for teaching about Orientalist stereotypes, for interpreting literature is essential.

The same applies to films and series: in the age of Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, students spend much more time in front of the TV, laptop and smartphone than with books, making it even more important to impart a critical approach to media. While the implementation of film in the EFL classroom is becoming increasingly popular, series are underrepresented due to their seriality. Obviously, teachers lack the time to watch a whole season of a series in class. *Sherlock*, however, is a series with disconnected episodes. Just like Doyle’s stories, all episodes feature the same protagonists, namely Sherlock Holmes and Dr John Watson, but, apart from story arcs that are hinted at in individual episodes and are fully revealed in the final episode of each series, both stories and series are “complete in themselves”
(Doyle, *Memories* 90), “individual, self-contained ‘adventures’” (Wiltse 106). Thus, the reader can miss a story or episode and still read or watch a new one without lacking any important knowledge necessary to understand it. This circumstance makes the stories as well as the series an ideal choice for teaching about Orientalism. In addition, the character of Sherlock Holmes is an excellent figure to analyse in the EFL classroom, as the detective is commonly associated with Britishness and considered an essential part of British pop culture as well as British identity. His enormous popularity highlights the necessity of reading Doyle’s stories and critically watching the series, for, considering their wide reach, the images they convey influence a large number of people.

### 6.2 Target Group

The lessons presented in this chapter are designed for advanced learners of English as a foreign language, namely for an 8th grade of an Austrian ‘Gymnasium’. At this point, the students’ language level is supposed to be B2 in all five skills49, according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) (Horak et al. 20; Bundesministerium Bildung 130). At this level, students should be able to read and understand Doyle’s *Holmes* stories as well as the series *Sherlock*. Reading and interpreting the stories requires a high language level, a considerable knowledge of vocabulary as well as interpretation skills. In order to interpret a *Holmes* story and to read it in the context of its time, it is necessary for the students to possess some cultural, political, and historical background knowledge.

As for literature, in their final year of English as a foreign language, learners should be capable of the following:

> ein breites Spektrum an Texten (auch literarischen) auch zu weniger vertrauten Themen verstehen und die Hauptaussagen sowie spezifische Informationen und implizite Bedeutungen erfassen können (Bundesministerium Bildung 133)

The curriculum requires 8th grade students to possess reading skills elaborate enough to understand a broad spectrum of texts, also literary ones, and also concerning topics they are not familiar with. They should be able to understand the central message of these texts, as well as understanding specific information. Thus, they should be able to read and interpret a nineteenth-century literary production such as a *Sherlock Holmes* story.

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49 The five skills, according to the CEFR, are Listening, Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production, Reading, and Writing (Horak et al. 20; Bundesministerium Bildung 127, 130).
Students’ listening skills, the skills addressed when watching a film or series episode, should have acquired the following level:

im direkten Kontakt und in den Medien gesprochene Standardsprache verstehen können, wenn es um vertraute oder auch um weniger vertraute Themen geht, wie man ihnen normalerweise im privaten, gesellschaftlichen, beruflichen Leben oder in der Ausbildung begegnet; nur extreme Hintergrundgeräusche, unangemessene Diskursstrukturen oder starke Idiomatik können das Verständnis beeinträchtigen (ibid.)

Hence, students should be able to understand authentic spoken dialogue, regardless of the topic being familiar or not. They should be able to communicate in authentic communication situations set in a private, societal, or working context. Hence, they should be able to follow the action of a *Sherlock* episode and to understand its plot as well as its central message.

6.3 Teaching Objectives, Content, and Structure of Lessons

As already indicated, the following lessons present ways to implement the topic of Orientalism in the EFL classroom by analysing literature and film, namely Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* and the BBC series *Sherlock*. The aim of the subsequently presented lessons is to make students aware of Orientalist stereotypes in literature and film. Firstly, however, they should be provided with a general overview on Sherlock Holmes and become aware of his singular role in the British mind. In addition, it is essential to read Doyle’s stories as products of their time, i.e. to be aware of the historical context in which they were written. Thus, some information on British imperialism and colonialism needs to be provided in order to enable the students to genuinely understand the situation prevalent at Doyle’s time. Subsequently, students should become aware of the influence literature and film have with regard to identity formation (Hall 612-13). Moreover, since students spend a lot of time online, they should also be able to critically reflect on articles and blog entries they encounter on the internet.

By using the examples of one *Holmes* story and one episode of *Sherlock*, students should be able to identify differences in portrayal of white Westerners and non-white, non-Western ‘others’. They should realise that the latter are frequently portrayed as inferior, also with regard to intelligence, while the former usually appear superior in every regard. They should become aware of the fact that white characters are often the only ones to exhibit an in-depth portrayal, while non-whites often lack such a portrayal and are depicted as one-sided, flat characters. It should become clear that the latter often do not get a voice and are denied individuality and complexity of experience. They should critically reflect on why authors and screenwriters choose to show very traditional portrayals of foreigners, and they should become
aware of the fascination inspired by the ‘other’. Moreover, students should be able to recognise whether non-Westerners are portrayed as alienated ‘others’, and that these homogenised ‘others’ are usually defeated by the white male, in this case Holmes, who always remains triumphant in the end.

The set of lessons will be structured as follows: First, there will be a general introduction to the topic of Sherlock Holmes. The students will see different images of Sherlock Holmes: one classic detective image with hat and pipe, one illustration by Sidney Paget, and three photos of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson from the Guy Ritchie movies as well as from the BBC series Sherlock and from the US-American series Elementary.\textsuperscript{50} In a student-teacher-interaction, the students are asked the following questions:

- Who is this person?
- What does he do? What is his profession?
- Where does he live and work?
- What else do you know about him?
- Have you ever read a story or watched a movie or series featuring him?

The aim of this activity is to activate the students’ knowledge on Sherlock Holmes and to find out what they already know. Choosing images from different Holmes adaptations serves as a means of drawing students’ attention to the fact that there are different interpretations of the detective’s adventures, a fact that will be of significance later on.

After this activity, the students will be handed out a copy of the novella The Sign of the Four. The reason for choosing this novella is that it exhibits very blatant forms of Orientalist stereotyping, as shown in the analysis in Chapter 4. On the one hand, it would certainly be interesting to have the students analyse a story where this very stereotyping is not as obvious. On the other hand, the students’ level of awareness regarding Orientalist stereotypes is probably not as elaborate yet. The majority of readers not familiar with Orientalist theory will still fail to recognise imperialist attitudes and stereotypes in The Sign of the Four, which is why it makes sense to pick this story. Analysing a story featuring more blatant Orientalist stereotyping will then lay the foundation for expanding the students’ newly acquired skills: they will also be able to recognise such stereotypes in literature where the connection is not as explicit.

The students will start reading the novella. One possibility would be to let them take turns at reading it aloud. The advantage of starting the novella together is that the students are

\textsuperscript{50} See Chapter 6.4, Activity 1.
given the chance to ask questions if they are experiencing difficulties with some phrases or in
general. After this lesson, the students will be asked to read the novella at home. Since The
Sign of the Four is only about a hundred pages, it should be possible for the students to read it
within a week – at best, they are assigned the task before a long weekend. Most certainly, there
will be another English lesson before the students have finished reading. In this lesson, the
students will be shown a four-minute video on Sherlock Holmes, provided by the British
Council, after which they will solve a short true or false task on what they have just seen and
heard.\footnote{51} The video provides a short overview of the Holmes universe. Afterwards, the students
are provided with a short overview of British imperialism by the teacher.\footnote{52} This input will be
loosely based on the contents discussed in Chapter 3.1 of this thesis.

After having finished the book, the students are given the opportunity to talk about their
reading experience in plenary form and to ask questions. Subsequently, they will be asked to
get together in groups of three or four and discuss the following questions:

- Describe how foreigners are portrayed in The Sign of the Four. Name examples.
- By contrast, discuss how the British are described. What impact does a stay abroad have
  on people?
- How do these portrayals differ? Why do you think they differ?
- Remember Sholto’s apartment and Pondicherry Lodge. What came to your mind when
  reading about these places?
- The novella begins and ends with Holmes taking cocaine. Discuss the role of drugs for
  the detective. When does he take drugs and what effect do they have on him?

The aim of letting the students discuss these questions is to make them aware of the differences
in portrayal, depending on whether characters are white and Western or non-white and Eastern.
Moreover, they should discuss what kind of feelings Oriental settings give rise to, as well as
the role of drugs. After having discussed in their groups, the students are supposed to share the
results of their discussions in class. The teacher’s role is to moderate the discussion, to ask
questions and to steer the discussion into the desired direction.

\footnote{52}{Ideally, the students have already encountered colonialism and imperialism in their history lessons. Otherwise, an option would be to suggest an interdisciplinary project to the students’ history teacher.}
In the subsequent two lessons, the *Sherlock* episode “The Blind Banker” will be watched in class. In the lesson after finishing the episode, students are again put together in groups of three or four to discuss similar questions:

- Describe how foreigners are portrayed in “The Blind Banker”. Name examples.
- By contrast, discuss the portrayal of British people.
- How do these portrayals differ? Why do you think they differ?
- With regard to the portrayal of the Chinese, discuss in how far they enforce stereotypes themselves by wearing exotic clothes or performing an ancient Chinese circus show.
- Remember the museum, the Chinese circus, and Soo Lin Yao’s apartment. What came to your mind when seeing these places?

After having discussed these questions in their group, they are again discussed in class. Most probably, this discussion takes a lot of time. Afterwards, the teacher hands out blog entries or reviews – if possible, a different one for each group. There are five articles in total, four of them with direct reference to “The Blind Banker” and one more general one, referring to both *Sherlock* as well as Doyle’s stories. These blog entries or online newspaper articles all deal with stereotyping and racism in *Sherlock*. The students are supposed to read their article, and if there is not enough time in the lesson, a possibility would be to let them finish reading at home. However, the advantage of having them finish in class would be the time left for discussion: in their groups, they should critically reflect on their own observations and the results of their previous discussion and compare them with the statements made in their article or blog entry. Following this activity, the students’ task is to write a text in response to the article they have read. They can choose between three types of text:

a) Write an e-mail to the author of your article and respond to his or her text. In your e-mail, you should consider the following points:

- Choose a few aspects presented in the article and describe which of them you also thought of when watching the episode and which were new to you, and write whether you agree or disagree with the author’s arguments.
- Compare these arguments to *The Sign of the Four*: What differences or similarities do you recognise with regard to stereotyping and racism?

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53 See Chapter 6.4, Activity 3.
54 The chosen text types correspond to the text types relevant for the written Matura, according to the Austrian Ministry for Education (SRDP 1-2).
• Comment on whether or not you think it possible for a white, Western author or screen writer to authentically portray non-white, non-Western people and their way of living.

b) Write an article about the media’s role in enforcing or counteracting racism and stereotypes. Refer to Doyle’s *The Sign of the Four* and “The Blind Banker”. In your article, you should consider the following points:

• Discuss the relevance of media with regard to identity formation. In how far is our notion of identity and our perception of ‘others’ shaped by what we see in the media?

• By referring to *The Sign of the Four* and “The Blind Banker”, comment on how stereotyping has changed in the course of time. What is different today?

• Provide suggestions of how media could use its influence to counteract stereotypes.

c) Write a blog entry about the portrayal of white and non-white characters in “The Blind Banker” and *The Sign of the Four*. Refer to the article or blog entry you have read and comment on one or two statements the author makes. In your blog entry, you should consider the following points:

• Compare the roles of white and non-white characters in the novella and the episode.

• Reflect on why authors and screen writers choose to show foreign characters in often very traditional ways, without taking the complexity of experience into account.

• The US-American series *Elementary* chose to cast a female Asian for the role of Watson, which is appreciated by many, but also criticised by others. Give your opinion on this.

The students’ texts represent their final reflection on the topic and enable the teacher to see whether students can apply their newly gained knowledge.

As a follow-up activity, leaving the topic of Sherlock Holmes behind, students could be shown the fifteen-minute short film *Ali der Tiroler*55. Since the video is in German, it would also make sense to implement this activity in History or German in the course of an interdisciplinary project. The short film won the Tyrolean short film festival ‘TakeOne’ in

55 Unfortunately, the video is only available on Facebook so far: https://www.facebook.com/alidertiroler/videos/370507190425142/, accessed 8 February 2019.
February 2019. The contest’s topic was “Typisch Tirol?!”, and while most submissions featured a breathtaking mountain scenery or traditional Krampus runs, it is an important statement that a short film about a Turkish migrant worker in Tyrol wins a contest with the topic “Typisch Tirol?!”. Even though the festival’s reach might not be huge, it possesses local relevance and is thus interesting for the students. They can be asked to discuss, in oral or written form, what this means with regard to identity. The video shows very well how identity is not fixed and stable but can also mean a feeling of belonging to more than one culture, for both Ali and his wife feel like being half Turkish and half Tyrolean. In addition, the short film about Ali shows that migration is also part of Tyrolean identity and that the latter is not solely defined by food, Dirndl and Lederhosen, mountains and Krampus figures. Hence, parallels can be drawn to the Sherlock Holmes universe and British identity, the short film being a positive example of how to counteract stereotypes and portray a migrant’s life in its whole complexity.

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56 For more information on the contest, see http://takeone.at/wettbewerb/, accessed 8 February 2019.
6.4 Teaching Material

Activity 1
Questions:
1. Who is this person? (Who is the second person?)
2. What does he do? What is his profession?
3. Where does he live and work?
4. What else do you know about him?
5. Have you ever read a story or watched a movie or series featuring him?

Activity 2


Check your understanding: true or false.

Tick TRUE or FALSE for these sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sherlock Holmes was a real person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The books were written in the late 1800s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The author of the books lived at 221B Baker Street.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can visit a pub with a room set up like Sherlock Holmes’s study.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Johnson thinks the character of Sherlock Holmes is a perfect human.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>According to the lady in the video, the original stories are very well written.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conan Doyle took his inspiration from real-life crimes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific or forensic policing is now even more important than in Sherlock Holmes’s time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/sites/teens/files/sherlock_holmes_-_exercises_0.pdf

Activity 3

Text 1

SHERLOCK COULD NOT SEE THROUGH THE RACISM
20/12/2015 Adrian Chan-Wyles (PhD)
Sherlock Holmes (the private detective) has always been a fascinating figure for Western audiences, because of his pristine use of rationality, reason, and logic, and his astonishing ability to ‘see’ or
‘perceive’ more than others. The BBC’s re-imagining of the Arthur Conan-Doyle characters in its 2010 series entitled ‘Sherlock’ utilises entertaining and very clever scripts and has been incredibly successful not only in the UK, but also across the world. It is a BBC series that can be described as lavishly produced and superbly acted, with Sherlock’s breath-taking ‘deductions’ around crime-scenes often sending shivers down the spine and making the air seem to ‘crackle’ with creative electricity, whilst the other characters look on in a type of impotent amazement! Sherlock, again and again demonstrates a relentless ability to think clearly and discern even the slightest of relevant facts from an often confusing jumble of information, and ‘perceive’ how those facts ‘fit together’ to reveal the truth of who committed a crime, where, when, how and with whom, etc. Although Sherlock often presents ‘adult’ themes of murder and mayhem in its episodes, the use of logic and reason to assess the material world is a good example of ‘rationality’ over ‘superstition’.

Given that Sherlock Holmes – the master detective who possesses the power to bring duplicitous people to their knees just through the power of his insight – then why as a character could he not ‘see through’ the obvious anti-Chinese racism that appeared throughout the script of the 2010 episode of Sherlock entitled ‘The Blind Banker’ (S1E2)? The misrepresentation of Chinese history, Chinese culture, and Chinese people is so thorough in its ignorance that one cannot but conclude that Thompson used for his inspiration, the equally racist 1977 Dr Who episode entitled the ‘The Talons of Weng-Chiang’. Thirty-five years on, and the British born Chinese lead actor in ‘The Blind Banker’ – Gemma Chan – is asked by modern white British producers at the BBC to ‘put on’ a terrible Chinese accent that is supposed to represent how white British ‘hear’ Chinese people when they talk in England. In fact Gemma Chan speaks with a refined English accent which is easily discernible in her lead-role for the Channel 4 2015 Sci-fi series ‘Humans’. Thompson provides all the stupid Eurocentric and racist stereotypes that have been evident for hundreds of years in the UK, and which form the bedrock of anti-Chinese racism. What is even more worrying about this blatant racist misrepresentation of Chinese people in the UK is that other British ‘white’ executives at the BBC vetted Thompson’s script and then ‘okayed’ it for production!

Not only this, but Cumberbatch is seen making comments such as ‘no one can get a visa’ to travel outside of China – playing on the stereotype that modern China is a despotic country – when in fact hundreds of thousands of Chinese people (which includes a large number of students) travel to the West on a regular basis. Of course, in true racist style, Thompson depicts the Chinese people as weird, stupid, sinister, sub-human, insane in their ambitions, obsessive, secretive, naturally drawn to crime, irrational, possessing animal-like skills due to their retarded evolutionary development, violent, unreasonable, pleading, inscrutable, uncaring and unable to think clearly. This disgusting portrayal of the Chinese people in the UK can be compared with the modern US depiction of Sherlock Holmes where Dr Watson is positively played by Chinese-American Actor Lucy Liu. Perhaps the strangest manifestation of Thompson’s racial stereotyping lies in the fact that Gemma Chan’s character (Soo Lin Yao) is seen at one point deciding to live in a cupboard at the museum, so that she can be near to the ‘teapots’ she obsessively tends!

Even more bizarrely, the main protagonist is of course a Chinese acrobat whose speciality lies in the fact that he can enter and leave any building in a ‘weird’ manner – but which actually turns-out to just be the ability to fit through open windows. Whatever his skills, the Chinese actor playing this part, although central to the plot and seen on screen a number of times, remains ‘uncredited’ on the BBC website. Every Chinese person is depicted as being a member of, or victim of a Chinese crime syndicate (the ‘Tong’) when in fact China has one of the lowest crime rates in the world, and the members of the Chinese diaspora are generally well behaved. Chinese people do not possess the ability to ‘live’ appropriately in the modern world and so must exist in dark allies or Tube tunnels, when not existing in strange curiosity shops or attending the Chinese circus. This appalling racist misrepresentation of a part of UK society was lauded as a ‘success’ by the white press, with even the
liberal Guardian Newspaper claiming this episode ‘better’ than the first! The inability for intelligent white people to discern what is and is not racist proves that the UK is still a very racist country. Ethnic minorities who suffer this type of routine and casual racism are so oppressed that they are made to feel that they should not complain – but they should use their brains and complain away. Racism must be fought on every front to protect those in the future being victims of it. Thompson’s ill-gotten script ensures Victorian anti-Chinese racism lives anew in the 21st century. What about a Sherlock episode that sees the detective ‘seeing through’ Eurocentric racism, and revealing its links to a vicious Eurocentricism and imperialism?

Source: https://thesanghakommune.org/2015/12/20/sherlock-could-not-see-through-the-racism/, accessed 8 February 2019, slightly adapted.

Text 2

SHERLOCK AND WILY ORIENTALS: BLIND BANKER, EPISODE 2 REVIEW
08/01/2010 Madam Miaow a.k.a. Anna Chen

Having missed the curtain-raiser of the Sherlock series last week, boo-hooing over the rave reviews, and tonight's show — The Blind Banker — promising to be more Second Coming than second episode, Loved One and I settled in to watch.

Episode Two began intriguingly enough. The robotic woman from the Bing ad emotied in similar fashion as she mysteriously and inscrutably demonstrated the tea ceremony. I did wonder why a modern young Chinese Miss would be wearing a chipao frock in present-day London, but my boyfriend sniffed that she needed it for her job entrancing the tourists and demanded to know why didn't I do tranquillity and ancient wisdom like writer Stephen Thompson's creation? After yelling that I am frikkin' peaceful when not being wound up, I admiringly noted her noble struggle with the accent, as actress Gemma Chan evidently speaks Chinese as authentically as I speak it — that is: not at all.

In this reboot of the Sherlock Holmes franchise for BBC1, Arthur Conan Doyle's characters stay in the same Baker Street location but move forward in time to the present. Thus Martin Freeman's John Watson, like the original, is a former military doctor, wounded in Afghanistan. Ooh, topical as well as clever. And Sherlock (Benedict Cumberbatch) is a snotty skint smart-arse, perpetually dragging his friend into mischief.

Suddenly, my heart sinks and I realise it's all Black Lotus, Tongs, drugs and torture. For are we not a cruel race, as the clever programme-makers have noticed? A series of killings and a trail of yellow-themed clues lead our intrepid heroes into the dangers of Soho Chinatown where even the shop assistants are ... sinister. Very clever creators Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat, and Stephen Thompson, plus assorted producers, editors, BBC bods and friends, un cleverly fail to pull the mindset out of the 19th century along with the update and sadly jam their heads up their collective fundament.

Here's a heart-of-darkness Chinese circus with their uncanny abilities and deathly tricks. Sherlock has to fight assorted Yellow Peril villainy that is so dastardly evil and fiendish that a brother can kill his own sister without breaking into a sweat. They do kill off the Chinese female lead character as they must: she's sexotic so she has to go. And life in these parts is cheap.

I too am rapidly losing the will to live. Eventually, clever Sherlock identifies the McGuiffin as being a jade hairpin worth nine million dollars or pounds or yen and defeats the cruel circus-mistress by doing something-or-other that's very clever.

For much of the programme I was hoping clever Mark Gatiss et al would do something remarkable and witty with the wily Oriental clichés that would leave me gasping with delight and applauding their clever audacity. This is, after all, the 21st Century and we all do irony now. Evidently
this was beyond their capabilities. Unaccountably, they omitted the obligatory Limehouse opium den scene. WHY?

The idea of updating Sherlock Holmes is a spiffing wheeze. Nevertheless, there are some Victorian values which should be locked in a hansom cab back with the swirling pea-soup fogs.


Text 3

EXCELLENT CHARACTER WORK CAN’T MAKE UP FOR A LACKLUSTRE PLOT IN EPISODE TWO
02/08/19 Chris Tilly

The BBC’s big-budget, modern-day take on Sherlock Holmes kicked off in impressive fashion last week, packing an origin story and a murder-mystery into the show’s 90-minute run-time. Having set the scene in such economical fashion however, the series has fallen at the first hurdle, with episode two a lacklustre effort that fails to do justice to that smart and sophisticated start. Which is a shame as it certainly kicks off in the right manner; writer Stephen Thompson and director Euros Lyn dispensing with recap or back-story and instead plunging the viewer head-first into case number two, “The Blind Banker”.

Proceedings begin with an act of seemingly unspeakable horror perpetrated at an antiques museum, closely followed by a mysterious break-in at a bank. Asked to investigate the latter by an old university colleague, Holmes and Watson discover nothing missing, with the only clue a cipher daubed in graffiti on the office wall. Unfortunately, just as Holmes deduces to whom the message is aimed, that soul turns up dead, closely followed by another body being found in much the same circumstances. The police plump for double suicide, but anyone who watched last week's episode knows that murder is the more likely explanation in this particular universe, and when Holmes makes that connection, he soon finds himself engaged in a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse with a murderous organization.

Unfortunately the plot - which revolves around ancient codes, gangs of smugglers and a shady travelling circus - fails to fully engage, the story feeling like 60-minutes of material dragged out over 90. It all looks fantastic, there's also some excellent action peppered throughout, most notably a pair of thrilling punch-ups, while the duo look dapper racing over some of London's most famous landmarks, most notably the Millennium Bridge and Trafalgar Square. But the pretty pictures can't prevent the show from dragging, particularly in the final half-hour when a story like this should be shifting into top gear rather than coasting.

Benedict Cumberbatch continues to impress as Holmes, although the demons hinted at in episode one fail to rear their ugly head on this occasion. Watson fares better this time around however, with Martin Freeman flexing his comedic muscles in bits of business involving a disastrous date and an unexpected ASBO, and proving to be the perfect level-headed foil for Cumberbatch's manic supersleuth.

But what of Lestrade? Introduced last week but given little to do other than tut his way through the episode, he doesn't even appear on this occasion, instead replaced by an equally wet constabulary lettuce. The same goes for Moriarty, Holmes' nemesis cropping up in a brief coda when the episode is clearly screaming out for a genuinely terrifying villain to cast a shadow over proceedings. Indeed the only villain here seems to be some of Thompson's writing, especially with regard to the Chinese community, who are presented as scheming, smuggling stereotypes throughout.

All of which makes for a somewhat disappointing continuation to our heroes' adventures, and one which doesn't bode well for the series finale next week. That said there's not a lot wrong here, just
the need for a gripping plot to match the marvellous character work on display. So if creators Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss can nail that and rediscover some of the spark from episode one, then hopefully *Sherlock* will conclude with the bang it so richly deserves.


**Text 4**

**SHERLOCK: THE BLIND BANKER**

*11/01/2011 Jasmine E.*

Sherlock, a modern-day adaptation of the awesome books by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is a fast-paced, funny series (with three episodes), produced and written by Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat. It's a BBC program that debuted on PBS' Masterpiece Mystery in October and many wonderful blurbs have been written about it. I really really enjoy this show (understatement - I'm ever so slightly addicted to it) except for this episode, entitled “The Blind Banker”. Adapted from the original stories of *The Valley of Fear* and “The Adventure of the Dancing Men”, this story involves a Chinese smuggling gang, a China Doll/Lotus Blossom, a Dragon Lady, an ancient form of Chinese writing, Chinese acrobatics and a tea ceremony. Oh yeah, and two white people get murdered.

**Is it any wonder that I was more than slightly offended while watching this?**

**My Complaints:**

1. Soo Lin Yao – The China Doll. She's pretty and innocent-looking, all wide-eyed and silky black hair and a non-whore-y, British Suzie Wong. She works at some museum in London where she performs a tea ceremony for tourists, spewing silly aphorisms about tea and shiny teapots. She escaped from China after being orphaned and joining a gang (called The Black Lotus - cringe) and smuggling drugs. Off she goes to London to a new life where she can do cute little tea ceremonies and have dorky little English boys try to ask her out. But alas! She is not safe! The Black Lotus catches up to her and BANG! She's shot dead by her own brother. Soo Lin Yao is pathetic and lacking in a backbone.

2. The Black Lotus Gang - Also referred to as a tong. The gang, posing as a Chinese circus troupe, threatens their victims by spray painting yellow characters as part of a mysterious cipher onto a surface close to their victims. Then they track down their targets, kill them, and then plant a black origami (which is *Japanese*, people...) lotus somewhere on their body. The yellow paint is a clear indicator of the sickening racism embedded in the fetishized "Oriental" aspects of the story. Yellow? Can you get any more obvious? The origami lotuses are another indicator of ignorance and dismissiveness. Origami is Japanese. While there were forms of paper folding arts in other places in the world (even China), the art of origami remains a specifically Japanese art form. It is this sort of mixing of the two cultures without research that is increasingly annoying and offensive. The fetishization of the lotus flower doesn't help either.

3. "The One They Call 'Shan!'" (not even listed in the Casting Credits - the indignity!) - The Dragon Lady. She controls The Black Lotus. She tortures John Watson. She wields a gun. She speaks with an awful, exaggerated accent, with her l's and her r's getting mixed up all over the place. She is ruthless. She dons a traditional-looking Chinese opera outfit and facilitates "death-defying acts from the Yangtze River!" She doesn't seduce anybody (Thank goodness) but she does watch Sherlock and John Watson...
do their mystery-solving from behind shady (pun intended) black glasses with an evil warlord-esque smirk on her face. She's the female Fu Manchu, with Sherlock playing the role of the great good white knight out to save the day and prevent "The One They Call 'Shan!"

4. The Villain of Indeterminate Race But is Obviously Not White – This character makes a brief appearance in the very beginning of the show as a samurai-sword-brandishing, turbaned, long-robed assassin enters 221B and attacks Sherlock! But, with Sherlock being the great white knight, this Assassin of Indeterminate Race is no match for our white-as-white-can-be hero, who easily defeats him with no weapons at all. For starters, the samurai sword being wielded by the man dressed in Berberesque clothing? Mishmash of cultures, even a culture that deserves its very own independent study. Uncool, making that mishmash of cultures into the villain. And even worse, the bits of Sherlock versus Villain of Color and interspersed with John trying and failing to do the self-checkout line at the grocery store, so that the entire opening sequence really comes off as slapstick. All in all, it's a slapstick Unnamed Villain of Color versus White Knight Sherlock. Come on, we can do better than that, BBC!

5. The Dangerous Mystique of London's Chinatown - I don't think there was a single shot that was located in this setting that didn't scream, "This is a creepy, shadowy, mysterious place full of shady people who may or may not be assassins, and who knows? Maybe you'll find an opium den if you look hard enough!" Not only that, but Sherlock and John decide to go into the "Lucky Cat Emporium" to look for clues, where an old lady tells them, "You buy Rucky Cat? Onry ten pound! Your wife, she will rike!" In the "Lucky Cat Emporium," an old Chinese lady tries to sell a "Rucky Cat" to John, which he politely refuses. I am not joking. Do I even need to explain the incredibly blatant racism in that one little bit of a scene?

6. The Code! - There's a cipher code thing used to communicate with other members of the Black Lotus, and the code starts with a series of numbers that refer to page numbers in a certain book and then the first word on that page. The numbers are written in Suzhou (mistakenly called "Hangzhou" by Sherlock - tsk, tsk, writer of the script, do some research!), which then refer to the book "London A to Z." Again, more mysteriousness for shading dealings of drugs and other goods... Sneaky sneaky.

7. The Music - The Sherlock theme and the usual background suspenseful music is stellar. But whenever Soo Lin Yao or The One They Call Shan showed up on screen, there was a sudden bout of Zen-like flute and some atmospheric zithers to accompany it. I'm getting sick of zithers. And when Unnamed Indeterminate Race Villain of Color made his dastardly appearance there was - you guessed it - some funky funky sitar sounds. It was painful.

It's really frightening that this slipped under the noses, maybe even was applauded, by the producers of the show. But is it because it was made in Britain? Is being Asian different over there? Would all the things I found offensive be considered offensive in the UK, or all over the world? Should I just start lowering my expectations for media that features either a token Asian or some sort of Asian-themed thing? Who knows?

Predictable and degrading stereotypes aside, the most frustrating this is that the original plot of The Dancing Men does not involve a Chinese gang at all, nor does The Valley of Fear. The Dancing Men has an American criminal chasing down an old flame and the Valley of Fear has no foreign criminal involvement at all. So why incorporate a Chinese crime ring involved in smuggling drugs and other goods around the world? That decision seemed to come completely out of left field with no real reason for it other than the fact that it would provide cheap entertainment and mystique to a story that would have been just as exciting as if it didn't have that "Oriental" vibe going on.
I can only hope that next season doesn't feature stuff like this again.


Text 5

LAURIE PENNY ON THE BBC’S SHERLOCK: I’M TIRED OF STORIES ABOUT CLEVER WHITE MEN AND HOW SPECIAL THEY ARE
03/08/2010 Laurie Penny

We need to stop rehashing tired formulations of hierarchy and privilege and start telling some new stories.

School's out in Westminster and there's nothing good on telly, so everybody seems to be talking about Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat's modern adaptation of the Sherlock Holmes stories for the BBC. And since everybody's talking about it, and since it's a terribly clever update of a traditional British adventure with saucy gay innuendo and phones that do the internet, Sherlock has become rather more important as a cultural barometer than 90 minutes of Sunday-night crime drama would normally suggest. Most of the commentariat has decided that Sherlock is a good thing, but I beg to differ.

It's not that Sherlock is a bad show. It's beautifully shot, with a lovely suggestive rapport between Martin Freeman's cantankerous Watson and Benedict Cumberbatch's rakish, manic Holmes, who seems so taken with his own genius that he can barely keep his balance. Gatiss and Moffat clearly have a great deal of affection for the original books, and the scripts are stuffed with the sort of throwaway quips designed to please Sherlockian geeks, of whom I happen to be one - as a child, I read every Holmes story over and over again until my charity-shop paperbacks disintegrated. Nonetheless, the series has failed to make a case for why yet another dramatisation of the exhaustively adapted Holmes tales is really worthy of BBC licence money, only six months after the latest big-budget Hollywood retelling, much less a version implausibly set in modern London.

On a number of levels, the adaptation simply doesn't work. The real fascination of Holmes and Watson's puzzles was always that they could only be solved by rigorous forensics, by using reason over superstition, a method that set Conan Doyle's icy protagonist at odds with the law enforcement of the day. The notion that today's force would need the help of a wayward genius to solve forensic puzzles is more than a little clunky.

This is just one of the reasons why Sherlock Holmes doesn't belong in the 21st century. Ultimately, the decision to have him dashing around texting his sidekicks, slurping frappe lattes and looking broody under the London Eye was misplaced, because substantial thematic elements of the original stories simply refuse to be rehabilitated. Like a lot of excellent fiction from previous centuries, Conan Doyle's writing is scarred by ugly cultural assumptions about race, class and gender, and while there are many stories from the 19th century whose dodgy sexist, racist or imperialist undertones can be excused on the basis of being incidental to the plot, Sherlock Holmes is not one of them.

In the books, the maverick detective's deeply felt superiority to women, to people from other nations and to the "criminal classes" is an intrinsic part of the stories, as is the fetishisation of the British empire as a place full of bristling, hostile natives, rum deeds and murder most foul.

Sherlockians have a choice: we can acknowledge and try to understand the racism and sexism implicit in our beloved detective's adventures, or we can try to pretend it's not a problem. Gatiss and Moffatt seem to have gone for the latter option. Cumberbatch's Holmes retains his disdain for women, who are there merely to provide two-dimensional foils for the protagonists' character development,
presuming they are lucky enough to survive to the end of the episode. Sunday's show, moreover, was less of an update than a direct transposition of British Sinophobia in the late-Victorian period.

In précis, the plot of The Blind Banker was booga-booga yellow peril exotic chinky slaughter emporium: an exhilarating romp through nearly every hackneyed Orientalist cliche going. There were improbable and sinister circus contortionists, ersatz torture devices, yellow-themed cryptic writing, keepers of dusty Chinatown shops attempting to peddle curiously significant pieces of ethnic tat, a submissive and inevitably doomed eastern maiden pouring tea in traditional dress, and even, for Christ's sake, ninjas. As the British-Chinese blogger Anna Chen observed:

Sherlock morphs into Nayland Smith (hero of Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu books) . . . and it's all Black Lotus, Tongs, drugs and torture. For are we not a cruel race, as the clever programme-makers have noticed? Unaccountably, they omitted the Limehouse opium den scene, but there are some Victorian values which should be locked in a hansom cab back with the swirling pea-soup fogs.

The description of the mysterious Chinese assassin, Spider, all broad brow and smouldering evil eyes, had a worrying resemblance to the following uncomfortable passage from the opening scene of Conan Doyle's The Adventure of the Three Gables:

The door had flown open and a huge negro had burst into the room. He would have been a comic figure if he had not been terrific . . . his broad face and flattened nose were thrust forward, as his sullen dark eyes, with a smouldering gleam of malice in them, turned from one of us to the other . . . "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 bruise?"
"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, staring at our visitor's hideous mouth.

The racism, sexism and imperialism that are fundamental to Conan Doyle's stories do not mean we should dismiss Holmes out of hand, but they do raise the question of why, precisely, Sherlock Holmes still means so much to us, and why we're so anxious to rehabilitate him to the modern world, as it's highly unlikely that this will be the last BBC dramatisation of the books.

Holmes has enduring appeal because he's the original brilliant outsider, the lone maverick who wins every time, simply by being cleverer or braver than everyone else. The formulation appeals particularly to teenagers -- all of whom are brilliant outsiders -- and remains an enormously important part of pop culture, particularly in crime fiction and especially in Britain, where we just love an oddball. Harry Potter, Gene Hunt, Jonathan Creek, Inspector Morse, John Constantine, even Doctor Who -- all are brilliant outsiders with rich interior lives. They are all also always male, always white and always western.

I'm getting bored by stories about posh white men and how much cleverer and more special they are than everyone else. I've been hearing that story, in one form or another, since I was old enough to listen. I want to hear about other lives, new adventures. Adaptations are all very well, but it's long past time we updated our myths for good, rather than struggling to rehabilitate the past. If we want to avoid cultural implosion, it's high time for the British to stop rehashing tired formulations of hierarchy and privilege and start telling some new stories.

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