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„The Familiar and the Strange: Transmedial changes in serial
narration from Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* detective stories to
the BBC adaptation *Sherlock*.“

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Declaration of Authenticity

I hereby declare that the present paper was conceived and composed all by myself. Verbatim quotations as well as any ideas or passages borrowed and paraphrased from the works of other authors are truthfully acknowledged and identified in the paper. References to primary and secondary sources are all fully and clearly stated in the bibliographical section.

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Amra Hodžić

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Table of Contents

Table of figures	7
1. INTRODUCTION	8
2. ADAPTATION STUDIES	12
2.1. Different perspectives	12
2.2. Adapting written work into film	15
2.3. Television studies, streaming platforms & detective stories	17
3. NARRATION AND SERIALISATION	21
3.1. An Introduction	21
3.2. Narrative structure – series, serials, and narrative complexity	27
3.2.1. Narrative toolkit for a transmedia analysis	34
3.2.2. Analysis	37
3.2.2.1. <i>A Study in Scarlet</i> vs. “A Study in Pink”	37
3.2.2.2. “A Scandal in Bohemia” vs. “A Scandal in Belgravia”	48
3.2.2.3. “The Final Problem” vs. “The Reichenbach Fall”	55
3.2.2.4. “The Adventure of the Empty House” vs. “The Empty Hearse”	61
3.2.2.5. Interpretation	68
4. FAMILIARITY, INNOVATION AND ITS PLEASURES	70
4.1. Idyllic world – the familiar pattern and its infinite character	72
4.2. Never change a winning team – recurring (main) characters	78
4.3. Memento – How forgetting is crucial for remembering	86
5. FANDOM	94
5.1. Stereotypical Fan culture	95
5.2. Participatory Culture in Convergence Media - how the fans shape the story	100
6. CONCLUSION	105
7. REFERENCES	110
7.1. Primary sources	110
Original stories by Conan Doyle	110
BBC adaptation	110
7.2. Secondary sources	110
Appendix	114
Abstract English	114
Abstract German	115

Table of figures

Figure 1: Sherlock Holmes Silhouette (http://booksoulmates.blogspot.com/2012/05/discussion-characters-to-remember.html)	27
Figure 2: Reciprocity of production, reception, distribution and serial text (Fröhlich 20)	28
Figure 3: Freytag's pyramid (https://problogservice.com/2017/08/17/understanding-freytags-pyramid-content-marketing/)	31
Figure 4: Structural visualisation of episodic series and serials (Fröhlich 76)	32
Figure 5: Type and narrative techniques combine to cliffhangers (Fröhlich 258)	35
Figure 6: Sherlock Holmes & Dr Watson	47
Figure 7: Sherlock's jump	59
Figure 8: Sherlock's silhouette in the finale cliff	60
Figure 9: Sherlock's first reappearance	63
Figure 10: new criminal mastermind	66
Figure 11: First appearance of Sherlock Holmes	80
Figure 12: Sherlock mirroring Moriarty's mimic	83
Figure 13: Moriarty & Sherlock "shaking hands in hell"	83
Figure 14: Irene Adler Close-up	84
Figure 15: Sherlock & Irene Adler	84
Figure 16: Anderson	96
Figure 17: Fan club member	97
Figure 18: Anderson's nervous breakdown	98

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of postmodernism and easily accessible broadcasting applications, adaptations are omnipresent. Drawing on narratologist Gérard Genette, one could describe an adaptation as a work in the “second degree, created and then received in relation to a prior text” (5). The majority of research in the area of adaptation studies focuses on comparisons between ‘original’ and adaptation (Cardwell 9). My thesis is also a comparative study between a source text and an adaptation; however, it will not treat the latter as a “wilfully inferior form of cognition” (Newman 129), but as a work with its own “aura”, as Walter Benjamin would put it, with its own “presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (214). This view is crucial for my research since time and context of both production and perception of the original *Sherlock Holmes*-stories (1886) and the BBC adaptation *Sherlock* (2010) need to be acknowledged. The research question which will guide this thesis is: What are the methods for serial narration that are used in the BBC adaptation *Sherlock* in comparison to the in the TV series adapted ‘original’ Sherlock Holmes detective stories written by Conan Doyle? How does the change in medium influence the seriality of the texts? How do the texts maintain audience engagement and what role do the recipients play in the continuation of serial narratives?

In order to address the above questions, I will analyse and compare a small number of relevant texts by Conan Doyle and the corresponding episodes of the *Sherlock* BBC series. The objects of analysis will be the first of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes novels *A Study in Scarlet* (1886), three of his short stories and finally five relevant episodes from the BBC series *Sherlock*, first aired in 2010. The decision to analyse a TV series instead of one of the many film adaptations was rather easy, for the simple reason that the basic

structure of a film with a closed-end and without intentions of continuity would not fit my focus on seriality. Therefore, a TV series, which is produced with the intention to be continued and thereby makes use of narrative techniques to create seriality, was the more appropriate choice. The *Sherlock* series created by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss is one of the most recent Holmes TV adaptations and was the ideal choice for this comparative analysis as it strongly adheres to the original. Other adaptations concern major changes such as featuring a future Sherlock Holmes (as in *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd century*, 1999) or, the transformation into a children's series (as in *Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars*, 2007) or casting a woman for the role of Watson (as in *Elementary*, 2012). These obvious changes make great adaptations; however, they might affect the narration and may consequently also influence the analysis. Moreover, *Sherlock* was the most popular adaptation of Conan Doyle's detective stories with 7.5 million views for the opening episode and 8.8 million for the start of the second season¹ (Plunkett n.p.).

The choice of the individual narratives started at the BBC show since only texts by Doyle which were featured in the BBC adaptation would be considered for the analysis. In total, Conan Doyle wrote four novels and 56 short stories about the detective. I narrowed it down to twelve stories after first considerations, since *Sherlock* offers four seasons á three episodes. The novel *A Study in Scarlet* marks the very first appearance of Sherlock Holmes and Dr John Watson and depicts their very first big case together after being introduced. The first episode of *Sherlock* is based on this novel and shares a similar title *A Study in Pink*. Interesting about this episode is that the name of the arch-enemy Moriarty already appears at the very end, while Moriarty does not play any role in the respective novel. This small but relevant detail influences my choice for further objects of analysis. Due to the

¹ The American term *season*, instead of the British equivalence *series*, is and will be used deliberately throughout this thesis in order to avoid confusion with the word *series*. e.g. The series *Sherlock* consists of four seasons á three episodes.

role the arch-enemy plays in my choice of narratives at this point, Doyle's novel *The Hounds of the Baskervilles* (1902) and its adapted equivalent "The Hounds of Baskerville" (Season 2, Episode 2) are not of interest, since Jim Moriarty does not play a role in either of the narratives. Only the very last minute of "The Hounds of Baskerville" will be relevant for the analysis, for Moriarty is used as a cliffhanger element unrelated to the rest of the episode. However, what is of interest to me is the very first adventure in the form of a short story, "A Scandal in Bohemia", first published in 1891 in *The Strand Magazine*, and the respective episode "A Scandal in Belgravia" (Season 2, Episode 1). Here again, Moriarty plays a role in the TV adaptation despite his non-appearance in the short story. The most obvious choice was the short story "The Adventure of the Final Problem" (1893), which is the only story by Conan Doyle in which Moriarty plays an active role, and the BBC series' equivalent "The Reichenbach Fall" (Season 2, Episode 3). They both feature the key scene of Moriarty's death and Sherlock's staged death. To round off the analysis, I chose Holmes' return to Baker Street, which is covered by "The Adventure of the Empty House" as well as episode 1 of season 2 – "The Empty Hearse". One final object to be analysed is the mini-episode "Many Happy Returns" (Christmas special 2013), which serves as a prequel for the third season and has no direct connection to the original stories by Conan Doyle. It nevertheless plays a special role in the serial narration of the TV series and shows how fan culture influences the continuity of series, for it depicts Sherlock's admirer's obsession with his death and hope of his return, similar to the reader's reaction to Conan Doyle's killing of the detective back in 1893.

In this thesis' second chapter, I will discuss different perspectives on adaptations and specifically on the issue of fidelity. Moreover, the process of adapting one text into another, across media, will be of importance. Due to the difference in media between the subjects of analysis, the medium television and its development will be explored in more detail and

how technological advances influence media consumption. The third chapter already concerns the main subject of the thesis, namely narrative techniques and serialisation. This chapter will offer an introduction in order to get a better understanding of the concepts of narration and serialisation. Following the theoretical introduction, the Sherlock Holmes stories will be analysed in terms of narrative structure and techniques constituting serialisation. While seriality is an important factor in the pleasure gained from narratives, other aspects contribute to this entertainment. Therefore, chapter four will give insights into how familiarity plays a crucial role in serialised narratives' success. However, adaptations do not only make use of the desire for familiarity but also the concept of "repetition without replication" (Hutcheon 3) in order to be successful. The concept of repetition including variation is important in order to theorise seriality, as Sabine Sielke (389) suggests, and notes that after all, seriality is an essential tool in mass media which also constitutes its success (393), which is why both familiarity, as well as variation, will be discussed in chapter four. Chapter five presents the last instance which I believe to be pivotal for serialisation: the fanbase. In this chapter, fans' influence on narratives will be discussed.

Finally, what I expect to find in these chapters is that the serial narration by Conan Doyle focuses on the main characters while creating a series of adventures and crimes which work independently, so that casual readers, as well as regulars, find interest in the narratives. Meanwhile, in a time of Netflix and Co. and a vast number of series to choose from, reoccurrence of characters with a variety of adventures is no longer sufficient to keep the audience interested. The narration of *Sherlock* is thus altered from independent and immediately solved cases to an additional bigger challenge, namely the hero defeating its arch-enemy, which keeps unfolding over the course of the series. I nevertheless believe that the written and audio-visual texts share similarities in the use of non-diegetic narrative

techniques to maintain audiences' interest. The conclusion will, at last, discuss whether these assumptions hold true for the Sherlock Holmes detective stories.

2. ADAPTATION STUDIES

The omnipresence of adaptations nowadays leads to a shared understanding that an adaptation is a work that originates from or is based on a previous text. But what marks a work as an adaptation? How does it go beyond intertextuality? And what is its precise relationship to the original work? Scholars have attempted to establish a solid definition for the term 'adaptation' in order to identify what it entails. However, opinions differ considerably, not only as far as meaning is concerned but also, possibly even more so, in terms of value. Considering the rather strong opinions in this respect, Deborah Cartmell's argument is worth mentioning, as she suggests that "[t]he time might be ripe to stop kidding ourselves that there can be a single theory of adaptation, or that the field has a distinctive shape, or a Holy Grail yet to be uncovered." (*Now Major Motion Pictures* 464) What this chapter aims at, despite the eventually unavoidable disappointment of not being able to find a clear explanation, is presenting different perspectives on adaptations and how scholars perceive this kind of representational art. Moreover, television and online streaming platforms as media will be discussed in order to shed light on the role they play in broadcasting and popularising serial narratives and adaptations with the focus on detective and crime stories.

2.1. Different perspectives

Adaptations can take on various different forms, which is why a straightforward definition is understandably difficult to find. To this day, a common association is that an adaptation is a transfer from a literary work into a visual medium, such as film and/or television. The transformation of literature to a visual medium engenders criticism and thus leads to

questioning the value of the adaptation. In 1985, Charles Newman argued that the filmic outcome is a “wilfully inferior form of cognition” (129). Back then, the film industry faced a challenging time establishing itself in the field of art and it was notions such as Newman’s that were responsible for that. According to Cartmell (*Adaptations* 28), this negative connotation originates from the logocentric view that “words come first and that literature is better than film”. The first question that comes to mind here is, better in what sense? This view of considering one art as being better than another creates a hierarchy between literature and the visual media. Louis Begley supports this hierarchy as he argues that “writing a screenplay based on a great novel is foremost a labour of simplification” (2). He specifies his claim by saying that a film not only simplifies the plot but also the intellectual content (Begley 2). What this means for adaptations, as Mireia Aragay (12) claims, is that “the literary work [is] conceived of as the valued original, while the film adaptation [is] merely a copy, and where fidelity emerge[s] as the central category of adaptation studies”. This binary hierarchy does not only place the literary work on a pedestal, seemingly unreachable for the visual arts, but also limits the analysis to a direct comparison, unappreciative of the media’s individuality.

The issue of fidelity provokes a much-debated discussion in the field of adaptation studies. Maurice Beja poses the most basic but most fundamental question in this respect by asking: “What relationship should a film have to the original source? Should it be “faithful”? Can it be? To what?” (80). Even though these questions seem simple and straightforward, they are quite frankly very difficult to answer. With respect to the fidelity discussion, Millicent Marcus (16) argues that despite the two media’s individuality, a film adaptation should at least be faithful to the spirit of the preceding literary work. She specifies that at least the story, the linguistic and the cultural context at the time of production should be considered (16). However, *considering* the linguistic and cultural

context does not mean that the adaptation has to be faithful to it; especially when considered with respect to the time of perception. A text invites the audience to develop different interpretations of culture and values and since an adaptation follows the original, there is always the possibility of a completely new interpretation at the point of perception and again at the point of the adaptation's production.

Moreover, the process of translating into another medium must not be neglected. As George Bluestone claims "changes are inevitable the moment one abandons the linguistic for the visual medium" (5), thereby supporting the view that fidelity is not a valid criterion. This becomes evident when considering that the textual and visual medium work so differently and that a direct comparison with the goal of fidelity is highly unappreciative of the possibilities the respective medium presents. This also applies to the historical and cultural contexts of both production and perception of the 'source' and the adaptation, for they, too, cannot stand in direct comparison to each other. Robert Giddings and his co-editors are of a similar opinion, namely that "the past [...] can never be transcribed, it always has to be reinvented. And it is never innocently reinvented but will always bear the fingerprints and distortion of the time which reinvented it" (50). What the arguments presented by Bluestone and Giddings and his colleagues amount to is that both changes in medium and a different time of perception imply significant changes. Reading a text in a different setting than its creation presupposes a new interpretation of the cultural content.

Adaptations [...] make clear the nature of that interpretive act more than any other type of text, with the process of adaptation itself a form of cultural reading, rooted in the interface between the individuality [...] of the adaptor, and the historical context [...] the adaptor works within (McCaw 6).

Thomas Leitch (302) also insists on moving away from a one-sided view of adaptation, which compels it to be faithful to one single source. Instead, he argues that adaptations rest on a more solid foundation when the researchers in question redirect their attention towards

the process of adaptation itself, instead of insisting on its connection to the literary work (Leitch 302). We should, therefore, move away from the perception that an adaptation is more or less an already existing text simply transferred into a new medium. When we view adaptation as a cultural reading, the original work's reinterpretation becomes a priority. In that case, fidelity should not be an issue since interpretations are subjective, especially considering the fact that cultural and historical differences are also part of this reinterpretation. However, adaptations nevertheless openly announce their direct relationship to a prior text and as a result, many scholars insist on a degree of faithfulness in the process. But an adaptation's openly announced relation to prior work only makes it explicit that "art is derived from other art; stories are born of other stories" (Hutcheon 2). Even if *Sherlock*, in the case of this thesis, was not specifically based on the stories and characters by Arthur Conan Doyle, it would nevertheless follow the already existing scheme of detective stories and a 'hero' solving problems, besides the fact that there are several other intertextualities hidden in the popular BBC show. This follows Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism in which he proposes that

"[...] adaptations [...] are caught up in the ongoing whirl of intertextual reference and transformation, of texts generating other texts in an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation [...]" (66).

This concept again supports the fact that adaptations should be viewed as a process instead of a product and this process has infinite possibilities.

2.2. Adapting written work into film

A literary work is not an object that stands by itself and
that offers the same view to each reader in each period.
It is not a monument that monologically reveals its timeless essence [...]
A literary event can continue to have an effect only
if those who come after it still or once again respond to it—
if there are readers who again appropriate the past work
or authors who want to imitate, outdo, or refute it. (Jauss 1982: 21-2)

There are numerous ways to adapt a previous text and this is evident from the vast variety of adaptations on the market. The majority, however, seems to be adaptations from the written medium to the audio-visual. Geoffrey Wagner (222), for example, distinguishes further between three modes of adapting written work to the screen; “transposition,” “commentary,” and “analogy”. The first describes the process of a novel directly shown on screen, “with the minimum of apparent interference” (222). Commentary concerns the act of altering the source text “in some respect” (223) with “a different intention on the part of the film-maker, rather than an infidelity or outright violation” (224). Finally, the third mode – analogy – is the process that is the furthest away from the original source in that it takes “a fiction as a point of departure” (223) and dismisses the fidelity criterion due to the fact that “the director has not attempted (or has only minimally attempted) to reproduce the original” (227). BBC’s *Sherlock*, for instance, works on the level of a “commentary” in the sense that the original Sherlock Holmes stories are altered, not only on the level of the storyline but also characters and narrativity. This process, as well as the different intentions behind it, will be demonstrated in the analysis. Wagner’s categorization is one possible way of creating an overview of the adaptation process; however, these concepts categorize adaptations again on the basis of the fidelity criterion and how true they are to a single source text.

Instead of being faithful to the original, scholars such as John Ellis (3) argue that the real aim of an adaptation is to replace the images and memories of the original with its own. These memories of the source text can either originate from the actual reading of the material or, which is also quite likely, general cultural knowledge of a text (Ellis 3). On that note, it can be assumed that many have never read Arthur Conan Doyle’s detective stories, but due to the character’s iconic nature, a common understanding of the Holmesian ways is shared. Taking Ellis’ views into consideration, the adaptation replaces the original

and hence creates new images. In the case of Sherlock Holmes, many people are likely to picture specific actors, such as Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman from the latest BBC adaptation, when talking about the consultant detective with deductive abilities and his partner in crime.

If it is actually the case that Sherlock is basically known not because of Doyle's stories but because of the character's iconicity and the many adaptations, which do not necessarily depict the original writing over a hundred years ago, then authors such as James Naremore (15) and Catherine Belsey (134) may be right to believe that we are facing an era in which the author is dead. Belsey describes this phenomenon of "the death of the author" in that the text is "[r]eleased from the constraints of a single and univocal reading, [thus becoming] available for production, plural, contradictory, capable of change" (134). In the case of Sherlock Holmes, this means that the protagonist outgrew the author Conan Doyle and independently stands as a cultural figure, together with his companion Dr John Watson, open to new interpretations and appropriations and detached from the author and his original intentions. Even if this view on literature seems to carry negative connotations, the recognition of the 'death of the author' would, at last, end the fidelity based limitations which are encouraged by scholars with a logocentric view on this matter.

2.3. [Television studies, streaming platforms & detective stories](#)

Adaptations have always been used by television broadcasting channels to attract the audience, for repetition of familiar content often catches viewers' attention. However, single publications have proven to be rather inefficient for the producers in the long term, which is why connected and coherent shows grew in popularity. Television broadcasting has promoted the rise of the serial narrative and has brought it directly into people's homes. This serial narration that is enjoyed from the sofa manifests itself in two different forms;

series and serials. The former consists of independently functioning episodes in a broader story world. Sitcoms are usually structured like this; the same characters face an issue, which is resolved by the end of the episode. The following episode does not have anything to do with the previous one, except for the same characters, which is why the episodes can be watched individually and in random order and still make sense. Serials, on the contrary, are told in continuing episodes with a story arc that stretches over an entire season and sometimes even beyond. Even though some troubles are mostly solved in the course of one episode, a bigger overarching issue still remains to be resolved and as a result, the audience is animated to keep watching, especially in chronological order to be able to follow the story.

The fact that regular TV shows have become a characteristic of television has its origin in the economic benefits that come with regularly filled slots and a regular cast in the broadcasting schedule. More interestingly, detective and crime fiction adaptations appeared to be the most successful genre to broadcast since the literary versions already possessed a regular audience. But what probably draws in the audience the most is the accessibility that goes hand in hand with television. By now, it is rather common than rare to be in possession of a TV set and “as a domestic technology, it does not inhabit a ‘specialized time’ or a specialized place, but takes its place, in the midst of distraction, as part of everyday life, a way of passing or spending or wasting time.” (Caughie 19). However, in modern times, the regular time slot on television is no longer of much importance to the audience since several online streaming platforms, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, partially offer entire seasons of TV shows, thereby allowing audiences to choose the time of perception as desired. Moreover, such applications usually publish entire seasons at a time if the production has already been finalised. Because of this, episode after episode can be ‘binge-watched’ without the usual week in between as is the case with

television. The interrupted narrative, however, remains the same except for the sooner than later resolution of the cliffhanger at the end of the final episode.

However, not only are the narrative's segmentation and the accessibility important to the audience, but also the content is of great significance. British television has a long history of adapting literary classics into 'classic serials' and with good reason; it was and still is a relatively safe bet to adapt a literary work that has already gained certain prestige and value in its time and which even preserved into the present (Caughie 207). Audiences of the original are likely to watch the adaptation as well and even for those who have not read the literary original, interest might be awakened by the cultural knowledge of the respective text. Considering the success of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories back in the late 19th century, the adaptation of these very stories was basically an economic gold mine. This is probably also one of the reasons why there is such a vast amount of adaptations based on the consultant detective. The early adaptations were rather faithful to the original, as in the 1950s and 60s where Sherlock Holmes was played by Alan Wheatley in adaptations which took "a great deal of dialogue straight from Doyle's texts." (Davies 15). The rather direct translation from written into visual medium became less important with time and the "cultural identity and prominence of the figure of Holmes" (McCaw 21) became the focus of future adaptations. The amount of times that Sherlock Holmes found a place in an adaptation leads to the necessity of a "'relational reading' wherein each version of Holmes is inflected with elements of those that have preceded it more than the originating tales themselves." (ibidem 19). Holmes's character remains with each adaptation and even if the corresponding narrative changes, each version is influenced by a previous one and further influences what is to come.

This 'relational reading' calls for a shift in focus. In a way, it supports the postmodern perspective that various forms of repetition should be valued instead of modern

values such as originality (Caughie 231). This value shift is accompanied by the change in focus from the unitary work to the differences in both consumers and consumption (ibidem 232). Basically, accessibility and the audience's preferences, not the classics, become important. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the audience enjoys forms of repetition and finds comfort in a degree of familiarity and the fact that television serials are a form of interrupted narrative, the pleasure is even extended in contrast to the short enjoyment of a single publication.

[...] television [...] substitutes familiarity for identification, a familiarity which depends on recognition, repetition, and the extension of time. If the space of the look is foundational for our engagement in cinematic forms of narrative, the extension of interrupted time gives us forms of engagement, involvement, and subjectivity specific to television (Caughie 205).

And for those impatient to wait another week, on-demand applications offer a solution, which hardly undermines the feeling of “engagement, involvement, and subjectivity” (ibidem). What this amounts to is that television broadcasting played a great role in the popularisation of the serial narrative and on-demand online streaming platforms further helped to increase this popularity. It happened to be advantageous for both producers as well as consumers. In particular, the television series/serial is economically speaking the best choice for a broadcasting channel since regular spots are filled with a steady cast. For the audience, the pleasure of familiarity and the regularity of entertainment becomes a reason to keep watching. With advanced technologies in the form of online platforms, this entertainment is made more accessible than ever. Due to this new dimension of accessibility not only from home at regular times but now at all times, the production of series and serials has increased.

In the following chapters, I will discuss both Doyle's and BBC's Sherlock Holmes detective stories in light of different principles and concepts. First of all, I will analyse the serial character of both versions and investigate the use of cliffhangers in both written and

audio-visual Sherlock Holmes texts. The pleasure of familiarity will then be discussed in more detail and the question, how ongoing adaptations and everlasting repetition does not lead to boredom, will be answered.

3. NARRATION AND SERIALISATION

3.1. An Introduction

Before discussing the narrative structure and the elements that contribute to the seriality of Sherlock Holmes, a brief introduction to the terms narratology and seriality shall be presented and will serve as a basis for the analysis to follow. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), narratology is “[t]he study of the structure and function of narrative” and “the examination and classification of the traditional themes, conventions, and symbols of the narrated story” (online, n.p.). For this thesis, the narrative structure is a crucial element and will, in combination with examining the narrated story’s conventions, also be the focus of the first analysis. While serialisation describes “[t]he action of arranging or transforming something into a series,” the term seriality refers to the final “state of being arranged or ordered in a series” (see www.oed.com). A text can either be produced with the intention of serialisation from the outset or serialised in retrospect, as is the case when a novel is published chapter by chapter. Charles Dickens was the one to popularize this format with his first novel *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836-1837) (University of Victoria n.p.). However, what is of importance here is the connection between the two terms, namely how the narration of a text collaborates with serialisation. Oliver Fahle proposes a direct connection by claiming that, “[w]as durch Narration

zusammengehalten wird, wird durch Serialisierung getrennt²” (177). Therefore, I will examine respective techniques by which serialisation separates narration. But first, a discussion of which elements constitute a series is necessary in order to identify what classifies as series, which is a term used inclusive of all serialised narratives across all media. Upon a brief historical and theoretical background of serial narratives as a phenomenon, a discussion about structural possibilities in serial narration follows. The last step before analysing the narrative structure and seriality of both the written and audio-visual Sherlock Holmes versions is to introduce an analytical toolkit to meet the requirements of a transmedia analysis.

Scholars have proposed several definitions and approaches to narrow down what is constitutive of series. However, it is important to keep in mind that scholars have different perceptions of their pivotal elements. As components of a series, the *Longman Dictionary of Mass Media & Communication* lists “[c]ontinuity of cast, characters, or theme” (Connors 212). Connecting these elements with the conjunction “or” suggests that the constellation is optional, which means that not all three constituents have to occur in order to define a text as a series. This further enables the inclusion of written series in this definition for which “cast” is not a relevant element. Even though this definition broadens the spectrum of what counts as a series considerably, it is arguably the most productive way of defining series in order to avoid an endless list of counterexamples. More narrow definitions propose, for instance, reoccurring characters as crucial serial elements, such as Michaela Krützen (9), and fixed character constellation, as suggested by Werner Kließ (175). Both definitions would include Doyle’s as well as BBC’s Sherlock Holmes stories, which contain the well-known duo Holmes and Watson and several other characters. However, if reoccurring characters and fixed constellations are pivotal for defining a series, a television

² my translation, “What is bound by narration, is separated by serialisation”

show such as *Black Mirror* (2011-present) would not count as a series, since every episode features a new story with a new cast and therefore completely new characters and constellations. According to Ingrid Brück (88), only fictional narratives count as proper examples of series. While the Sherlock Holmes stories, again, fulfil this criterion, documentary series such as *Making a Murderer* (2015) or *Conversations with a Killer: The Ted Bundy Tapes* (2019) would not count, since they depict non-fictional events by using interviews, case files, police reports, and so forth. The list of counterexamples for narrow definitions is extensive. What these examples imply, however, is that in a field as complex and expanding as serial narratives, a broad definition seems to be the more reliable choice. Even though the *Longman dictionary*'s definition is both broad and inclusive of the subjects of this diploma thesis, a more suitable one is proposed by Tanja Weber and Christian Junklewitz, who state that "[e]ine Serie besteht aus zwei oder mehr Teilen, die durch eine gemeinsame Idee, ein Thema oder ein Konzept zusammengehalten werden und in allen Medien vorkommen können"³ (18). This definition complements the Longman dictionary's with the focus on transmediality and therefore suits the circumstances of this thesis more appropriately.

A broad definition for series is certainly only necessary due to the number of varieties and possibilities to serial narration that have emerged over time. In the early days of serialised storytelling, a definition would have been much easier developed than it is in the modern-day. Frank Kelleter (12) points out that humankind has been telling continuous stories since the beginning of storytelling itself. In the past, they were passed on from person to person within communities and over generations. The first written evidence of a successive story was in the form of serialised novels and was traced back to 1670 (Fröhlich

³ my translation, "a series consists of two or more parts, which are linked by a common idea, a theme or a concept and can occur in all media"

182). During the 18th century, serial publications increased but were mostly limited to already existing monographs, which were once again published in serialised form (Fröhlich 182). The Victorian era is considered the actual high time of serial narration (Hughes and Lund 4), which also correlates with the birth of the Sherlock Holmes detective stories. The reason behind the increasing emergence and popularity of serial narratives during that time might have to do with “rising literacy rates, urbanization, and growing prosperity“ (102), as VanArsdel suggests. A general societal acceleration accompanied the urbanisation and growing prosperity due to railways and industrialisation (VanArsdel 102). Because of this, it was more feasible to read short stories and parts of novels in newspapers and magazines, since they did not take up too much time and with the frequent publication, the audience was able to read an entire work in manageable portions over a longer period. The change in pace and publication frequency also affected the story’s narrative structure. While time and reception were important for the emancipation of serial narratives, other factors such as economic and distributional considerations also took part in this process (Fröhlich 605). The first appearance of Sherlock Holmes, for instance, was not in a series but in the form of the novel *A Study in Scarlet* (1887). Not until four years later, in July 1891, did Doyle publish his first short story with the intention of continuing it in *The Strand Magazine* in order to supplement his income (Wiltse 107). Thereby, albeit unknowingly, he created a milestone in serial narration. The magazine also benefited from Doyle’s short stories as he put it:

Considering these various journals with their disconnected stories it had struck me that a single character running through a series, if it only engaged the attention of the reader, would bind that reader to that particular magazine. On the other hand, it had long seemed to me that the ordinary serial might be an impediment rather than a help to a magazine, since, sooner or later, one missed one number and afterwards it had lost all interest. Clearly the ideal compromise was a character which carried through, and yet instalments which were each complete in themselves, so that the purchaser was always sure that he could relish the whole contents of the magazine. I believe that I was the first to realize this and the *Strand Magazine* the first to put it into practice. (Doyle 90)

Consequently, both Doyle and *The Strand Magazine* were able to economically benefit from the short stories. Doyle was able to enhance his income, and the nature of the narrative bound the reader to the magazine, which led to an increase of regular readers and subsequently buyers.

Since then, a lot has changed in terms of distribution as well as narrative inventions. Distribution of continuous stories is, without saying, easier now in the digital age and manifests in various forms amongst which are film, television, radio, books, on-demand online services and so forth. Narrative structures have expanded similarly and have grown far beyond the binary distinction between serial and series. The phenomenon of “transmedia storytelling” (Bourdaa 205) is proof of that expansion and extends continuity even beyond the original publication medium to other formats. Transmedia storytelling describes the practice of expanding a narrative into other media and thereby creating an entire universe around it (ibidem). This universe can span from books and television series over comics, video games, fan fiction and so forth, “with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole” (Jenkins 95). However, “[e]ach franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don’t need to have seen the film to enjoy [for example] the game and vice-versa” (Jenkins 96). This is especially important for occasional consumers so that they can immerse themselves into the story at any point and by means of the medium they prefer. This principle appears to be quite similar to cross-media adaptations (Bourdaa 205). However, these two concepts differ in so far as “transmedia storytelling is richer than crossmedia adaptations since it develops a whole universe instead of only adapting the same storyline to different platforms” (ibidem). The vast amount of detective stories based on the original Sherlock Holmes narratives account for both cross-media adaptations as well as transmedia storytelling. Several adaptations exist which take the original stories by Conan Doyle as their point of departure, such as BBC’s *Sherlock*

(2010). Particularly in the beginnings of Holmes adaptations, most of the stories were directly taken from the originals.

However, the detective found a place among many other platforms in the meantime, even though the stories vary significantly from the original once one looks beyond the main characters and Holmes's talent of deduction. The film *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) by Guy Ritchie, for instance, shows not only Holmes and Watson living on Baker Street, but also Miss Adler, Mycroft, Lestrade and Moriarty. However, the storyline differs vastly from Conan Doyle's original stories. Fanfiction also contributes to the Holmesian universe, where devotees have the opportunity to publish individual stories and upload a vast number of instalments to fan pages, which will, among others, be topic of chapter five. Moreover, several video games have been produced based on the consultant detective. *Sherlock Holmes* (developed by Frogwares 2002-2016, see bakerstreet.fandom.com) is one of those video games, which is even produced as a video game series. Out of this ten-part video game series, only a few share similarities to the original Sherlock Holmes stories and mostly present the audience with an inventive plot and storyline, while nevertheless featuring the main characters. Despite the fact that many of the texts are adaptations, the vast number of different approaches on various platforms show for transmedia storytelling and constitute an entire Holmesian universe for everyone to dive into at any point.

What makes this broad spectrum of appearances possible is, on the one hand, the classic and popular pattern of the detective story and the iconicity that accompanies the character of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. On the other hand, the narrative's complexity also plays its role in the possibility of expanding the Holmesian universe to such an extent and still, or probably because of that, hold the audience's interest. The iconicity and the benefits of franchising and adapting Sherlock Holmes stories have been discussed before. It seems obvious by now that the pattern of detective stories offers possibilities for expansion,

particularly if labelled with the famous name ‘Sherlock Holmes’. The name’s prominence is already proof that a character is often a more successful “brand name” than an author or a title could ever be (Wiltse 108). Frankly, when presented with the image in *Figure 1*, most would think of Sherlock Holmes with his remarkable deerstalker and the pipe. In addition to the character’s iconicity, it is important to note that the narrative structure of both the original Sherlock Holmes stories,



Figure 1: Sherlock Holmes Silhouette

as well as the BBC adaptation, display remarkable narrative techniques for their time and are further reaffirmation for the justified success and popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories.

3.2. Narrative structure – series, serials, and narrative complexity

Serial narration is, of course, pleasurable in itself; however, often it is also a means to an end. As implied by the quote by Doyle himself stated earlier on the publication of his short stories in *The Strand Magazine* (see page 24), this end is economical and manifests itself in the narrative’s financial success. It seems disillusioning to portray literature and entertainment in such a manner, but frankly, the continuity of the serial narration is highly dependent on its commercial success. Fröhlich (20) points out that this co-dependence even goes as far as serial narration being generally shaped by three factors: production, distribution and reception (see *Figure 2*). If the text does not regularly reach a certain audience, the narrative cannot continue due to economic deficiency. Consequently, the narrative has to be shaped accordingly in order to maintain audiences’ interest.

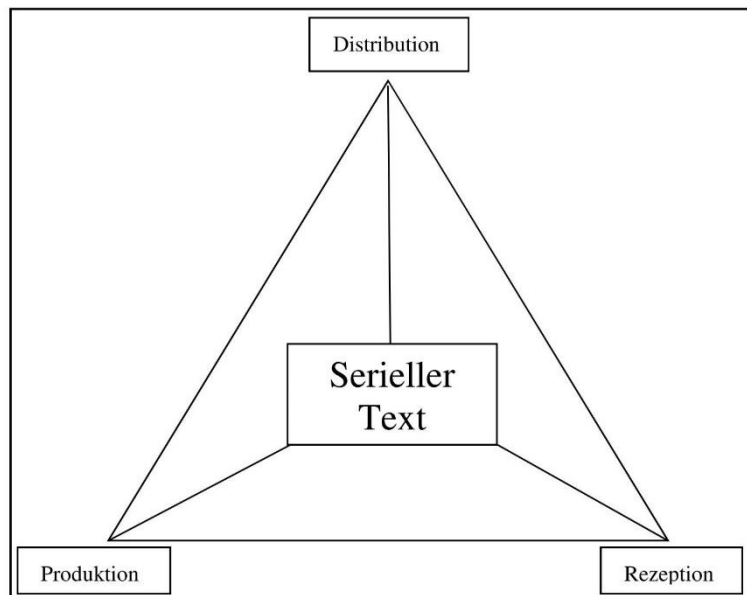


Figure 2: Reciprocity of production, reception, distribution and serial text (Fröhlich 20)

This reciprocal triangle in *Figure 2* demonstrates that narratives also benefit from economic success. An increased reception and the continuously expanding possibilities for distribution enhance the means for production; thereby increasing opportunities to develop recourses and innovative techniques for serial narration (Fröhlich 473). And in the end, the more advanced the serial narration, the more recipients consume it and so forth.

This interdependency and the resulting possibilities in serialisation play a part in shaping narratives, resulting in various narrative forms. The most basic typology in terms of serial narration is one that differentiates between the two concepts of *series* and *serials*, as was briefly mentioned in the previous chapter on television studies. However, I will refer to *series* as *episodic series* for the rest of this thesis in order to avoid confusion with the term *series*, which, again, refers to all serialised narratives in any medium. Furthermore, the terms will once again be discussed with respect to the transmedia analysis at hand, since they were only mentioned in the context of television studies. In that case, episodic series consist of individual micro-texts which (almost) always offer a conclusion to the issue at hand. This type of series predominantly achieves continuity by reoccurring characters and

format (Kerr 7). Florian Kragl (n.p.) postulates three main characteristics for episodic storytelling which are:

1. The micro-texts follow a more or less linear succession and contain a plot thread, which follows through the micro-texts in order to identify them as related to the same story.
2. The micro-texts revolve around one or more protagonists, which means that there is no fundamental change in acting main characters from text to text.
3. Despite the plot thread, the micro-texts are relatively autonomous and show for intrinsic closure.

These three characteristics provide further evidence that Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories perfectly fit into the category of episodic series as an example for written narratives. First of all, the plot thread that runs through the Sherlock Holmes stories is the detective with his faithful companion solving crimes using the science of deduction. Secondly, all the micro-texts revolve around the same two protagonists, Sherlock Holmes and John Watson, with some regular minor characters. The only characters that change regularly are the ones connected to the crimes at hand. Thirdly, Doyle's stories always present the readers with a conclusion and a resolution of the story's crime. As for the medium of television, the best example would probably be family sitcoms, which usually show an episodic structure, such as *Outnumbered* (first aired 2007). In the case of these sitcoms, the storyline always revolves around one (usually big) family and everyday problems they have to overcome. Despite the independence of episodes, certain character constellations do change over the time of the series since the characters develop and age; otherwise, the series would stagnate.

Serials, in contrast to episodic series, the narrative span goes beyond individual and independent micro-texts. As for the Victorian serialised novels, for instance, the separately

published parts told a continuous story and required a successive reading. All the segments needed to be read in order to understand the macro-text. Television serials, however, offer more possibilities in terms of continuity. A serial might deal with one major theme throughout the entire series, such as *The Fall* (first aired 2013), where one main police officer chases a single serial killer over three seasons. The television show *Bron*⁴ (since 2011), for instance, features four seasons and revolves around the same police force, but each season deals with a separate and entangled case to be solved. Even though the seasons deal with different cases, which are resolved by its end, character constellations change considerably as the serial evolves which trace an arc over the seasons. There are also “complex narratives” (Mittell 29) which go beyond the conventional episodic or serial nature (ibidem), such as *American Horror Story* (since 2011), which tells a continuous story over one season but changes plot and theme completely with the next season while maintaining the same cast, the members of which take on different roles. Audience ratings often determine whether the television serials are continued to yet another season. As long as viewing figures, and thereby the financial aspect, are satisfying and the cast available, there are hardly any limits to the continuation.

Due to the differences in continuity, episodic series and serials require different narrative structures not only for the entire macro-text but also within the micro-text. In 1863, Gustav Freytag wrote *Die Techniken des Dramas* and laid out what has come to be known as Freytag’s pyramid. He argues for a five act dramatic structure, illustrated in *Figure 3* below. The plot starts with a familiar and non-threatening situation (*exposition*). An issue occurs (*rising action*) which finds its peak and turning point in the *climax* of the

⁴ Original Swedish title, German: *Die Brücke – Transit in den Tod*

micro-text and is followed by a resolution, the step-by-step return to peace (*falling action*) and a conclusion (*denouement*) (quoted in Fröhlich 74f.).

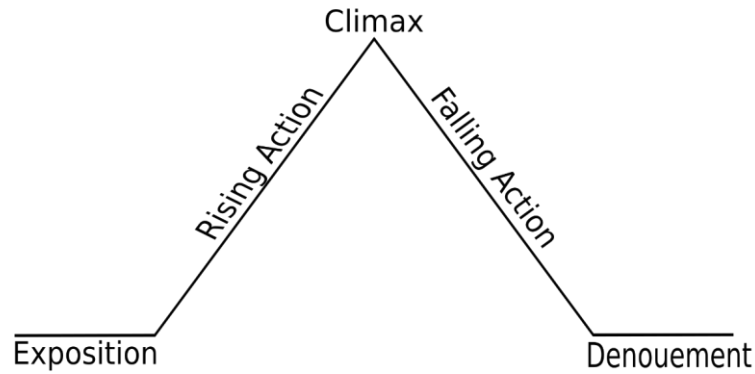


Figure 3: Freytag's pyramid

While this theory might seem outdated for modern purposes and counter-intuitive for this thesis considering the theory's dramatic context, I argue for it to be nevertheless applicable to my analysis. Scholars such as Jeremy Butler (2002) and Vincent Fröhlich (2015), for instance, also still make use of this structure in the context of television programmes. Andrew Wilsons, in his book *Write Like Hemingway* (199), even argues for Freytag's theory not only to be the perfect model for Hemingway's novels, but also for it to fulfil modern narratives' purposes. In regards to the difference between episodic series and serials, Freytag's structure is applicable to both forms but might take on different shapes, which is how the seemingly outdated theory will be adapted for this thesis' purposes. Moreover, analysing the texts according to acts will help compare narrative techniques, especially the use of cliffhangers for they are often situated at the end of the steps postulated by Freytag.

While the structure in episodic series roughly follows Freytag's pyramid, the structure in serials differs considerably in its form. In order to continue a serial's narrative and the storyline to the next instalment and beyond, the position of the *falling action* and

the *denouement* needs to be adjusted or delayed so that the audience has a reason to engage with the next publication. In order to connect the separated texts, specific narrative techniques are used to arouse tension and thereby the audience's interest, which will be discussed in due time. Fröhlich (76) visualised the different narrative structures between episodic series and serials, as shown in *Figure 4* below. Even though Fröhlich uses this differentiation in the context of television series only, it can nevertheless be seen as a reference point to a transmedia analysis as well. Moreover, because the written object of the thesis' analysis identifies as an episodic series and therefore roughly follows the original structure by Freytag, the fact that this figure was meant for television series does not affect the analysis per se, but is only supposed to serve the purpose of demonstrating the basic differences.

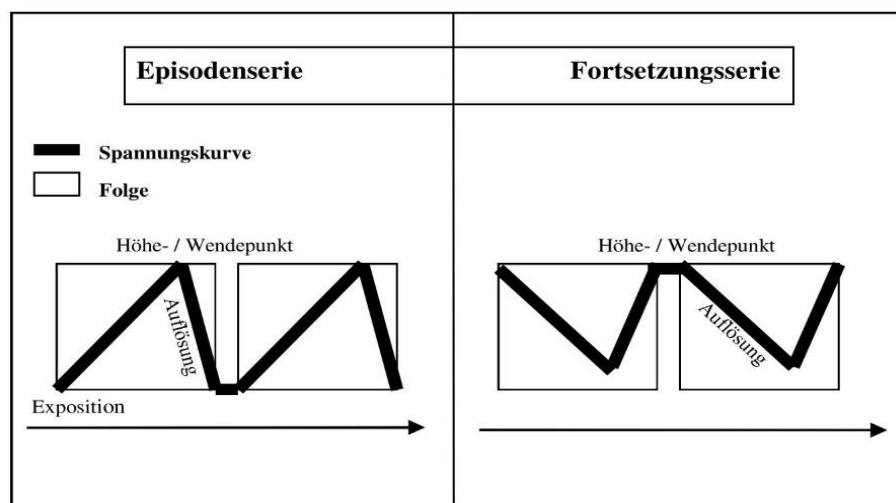


Figure 4: Structural visualisation of episodic series and serials (Fröhlich 76)

On the left-hand side, the similarity to the structure of Freytag's pyramid becomes evident, only with the climax slightly shifted towards the end of the micro-text. The micro-text ends with a conclusion, which is implied by the falling graph. In serials, the narrative structure is almost upside down compared to the episodic one. The serial does not necessarily start with a high point at the beginning of the instalment, as might be suggested by the graph. However, the crucial difference to episodic series is that the point of resolution does not

occur at the end of a micro-text. Rather than satisfying the audience with a resolution at the end, an unresolved event occurs which arouses suspense and motivation to find a solution in the next instalment. This becomes evident when looking at my two objects of analysis. Doyle's episodic Holmes stories roughly follow the pattern on the left-hand side in *Figure 4*, while *Sherlock's* episodes vary from micro-text to micro-text.

It is important to note that these visuals in *Figure 4* are only points of reference rather than fixed standards. Indeed the form of the graph may differ considerably from series to series and this is especially true for television serials nowadays. Most of all, by now it is quite common for series to include more than one collateral plot string and thereby combine characteristics of episodic series and serials. Mittell coins this phenomenon as “narrative complexity” (32) and defines it as such:

At its most basic level, narrative complexity is a redefinition of episodic forms under the influence of serial narration-not necessarily a complete merger of episodic and serial form but a shifting balance. Rejecting the need for plot closure within every episode that typified conventional episodic form, narrative complexity foregrounds ongoing stories across a range of genres. (Mittell 32)

Following this definition describing narrative complexity as a shifting balance between the binary serialised types, *Sherlock* (2010) identifies as a complex narrative. While each episode deals with a specific ‘minor’ crime, by the end of each episode unanswered questions remain. The very first episode “A Study in Pink” (2010) immediately shows for narrative complexity. Holmes solves the case and finds the serial murderer who poisoned several people. However, at the end of the episode, Sherlock comes to realise that this serial killer follows someone else's orders, namely Moriarty. Who Moriarty is, is left to be answered for Holmes and Watson as well as for the audience. If the episode had ended with catching the murderer, it could have been identified as a micro-text in an episodic series. However, due to the additional layer – an unknown criminal mastermind – through which a bigger picture is suggested with parts yet to be uncovered, the episode shows for an

ongoing story beyond the episodic nature. Serial narration has developed many layers which are not containable in a single definition or graph, which makes this research area the more fascinating.

3.2.1. Narrative toolkit for a transmedia analysis

In order to pursue an adequate transmedia analysis, it is necessary to establish an appropriate toolkit. It would surely be possible to analyse both written and audio-visual texts in terms of their media-specific analytical standards; however, a more topic-specific choice is to introduce analytical tools which can be used for both media for the analysis to be feasible and comparable. Therefore, a common denominator needs to be found between the written and audio-visual medium. In *Der Cliffhanger und die serielle Narration*, Fröhlich introduces an approach to a transmedia narrative analysis which will be adopted and adapted for this thesis. He concludes that the most basic aspect that all narrative media have in common is the act of communication, or more precisely, that they communicate something to the audience only in different ways (Fröhlich 599). For that purpose, acts of communication will serve as tools to analyse the discourse level of the series. More specific, communication acts will be analysed which are situated right before a break in the narrative; for instance, at the end of a micro-text (episode or short story), a chapter in the novel, or at the end of an ‘act’ provided a narrative break is introduced. This restriction for the analysis of communicative acts is vital, for the moments before a break are considered the most valuable in terms of seriality since they mark the point where the consumer decides whether it is worth continuing the story or not. These communicative acts on a discourse level in combination with analysing the story level surrounding these acts will lead to a discussion about different types of cliffhangers (Fröhlich 76). Fröhlich proposes a thorough definition of cliffhangers and describes them, in my translation, in the following manner:

A cliffhanger is an intended narrative interruption in a serial narration, positioned at a particular moment in the story which leaves the recipient anxious for it to continue. The cliffhanger always consists of two diegetic temporal components: the actual cliffhanger moment and the moment of resolution; added to that the non-diegetic element of the narrative break (127).

This thesis's focus is on the first diegetic temporal component, that is to say the actual cliffhanger moment.

As for the three types of communication acts for the analysis, Fröhlich proposes the “exclamatory”, “interrogative”, and “commissive” acts (Fröhlich 599). The exclamatory act of communication describes an act, as the name suggests, during which something is exclaimed or called out (ibidem). A situation is thereby either mediated or emphasised, depending on the context at the story level. The interrogative act is also self-explanatory and manifests itself in a question which is, as is in this case situated before a break, left unanswered for the time being. A commissive communicative act describes utterances, which hint at something in the future, such as a plan or an action (ibidem). For the analysis, it is to investigate whether communicative acts occur at all and how they benefit the continuity of the text. They will be analysed in terms of their position, context and effect.

The types of communicative acts at a discourse level positioned right before a narrative break, combined with an analysis of the story level (“histoire-Ebene” see Figure 5), results in different types of cliffhangers, as illustrated in **Error! Reference source not f**

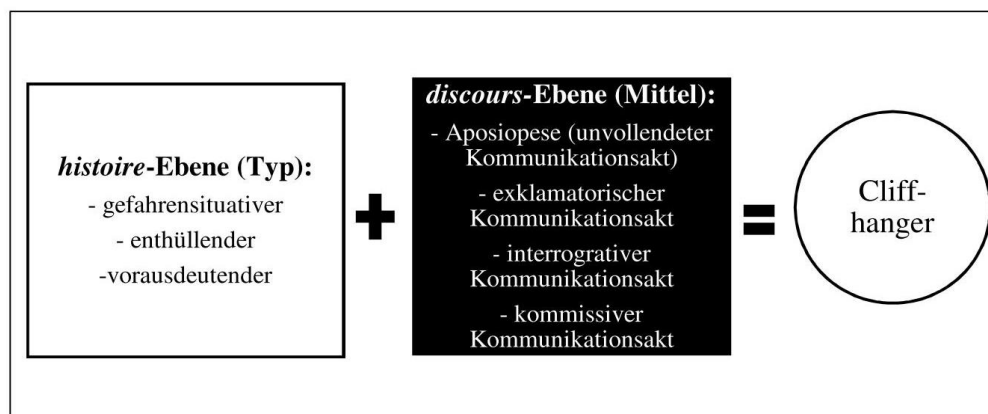


Figure 5: Type and narrative techniques combine to cliffhangers (Fröhlich 258)

ound. (ibidem 76).

Fröhlich named the different cliffhanger types according to their situational context, for which I will use translated terms. The “gefahrensensitive” cliffhanger (ibidem 585), which will be called **peril point-cliffhanger** in this thesis, is probably the most common type. As the name suggests, a narrative break occurs at a point where one character, mostly the protagonist, is involved in a usually life-threatening situation. This can be, for instance, the protagonist literally hanging off a cliff, a gun pointed at the audience’s favourite hero, or a car approaching in full-speed, to name only a few common events. The story is cut off at a point where the audience is left uncertain whether the protagonist will live to see another day, which is a great source of motivation to continue consuming the texts to come (ibidem 585). The “enthüllende” cliffhanger, for which I will use the term **disclosing cliffhanger**, usually introduces a critical turning point in the storyline (ibidem 590). It consists of an unforeseen revelation either to the audience, the character, or both. This cliffhanger is not the centre of an immediate threat but marks a point in the storyline which has a longer influential span on further events (ibidem 593). The third and last cliffhanger type is the “vorausdeutende” cliffhanger (ibidem 594), the **foreshadowing cliffhanger** in this thesis. It can be identified by a certain event which suggests that something is about to happen without either the characters nor the audience knowing yet what that something exactly is. This cliffhanger reveals just a hint at future events and may, for example, be a noise in the distance (ibidem 595).

Because the cliffhanger is not restricted to the end of a micro-text, but rather occurs before a narrative break, additional categorisations have to be introduced in order to differentiate the cliffhangers in terms of their position. The most common cliffhanger is the **finale cliff** (ibidem 584), which, as the name suggests, is positioned at the end of a micro-text. The **mini-cliff** (ibidem 582) describes a minor event which increases tension within the micro-text, but which is resolved rather quickly or at least within the instalment. The

internal cliff (ibidem 583) is a mixture of the two formers. It occurs within the narrative rather than the end, such as the mini-cliff; the difference is that it finds no conclusion within the same micro-text but offers a solution only in one of the following publications, as with the final cliff.

Doyle's, as well as the BBC's Sherlock Holmes stories, will be analysed in terms of both their discourse as well as their story level. On the discourse level, three types of communicative acts will be examined; the "exclamatory", "interrogative", and "commissive" acts. In order to narrow them down, the analysis will be restricted to communicative acts right before a narrative break. These acts of communication are part of the crucial cliffhanger moments, which, too, are categorised on two levels. On the one hand, in terms of their position, cliffhangers appear as either finale cliffs, mini-cliffs, or internal cliffs. On the other hand, they further differ in terms of their situational context and occur as either a peril-point cliffhanger, disclosing cliffhanger, or foreshadowing cliffhanger. These introduced terms support a narrower analysis of the narrative techniques. Because of these terms' comprehensive area of application, a more insightful analysis regarding the seriality of the respective media can be achieved. Each of the following sections will present an analysis of one of Doyle's stories coupled with the respective episode from the BBC adaptation. This approach allows me to produce a direct comparison and also contrast between the two texts in order to demonstrate the differences in narrative structure.

3.2.2. Analysis

3.2.2.1. *A Study in Scarlet* vs. "A Study in Pink"

While both Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* and the BBC's "A Study in Pink" feature basic similarities on the narrative level, they nevertheless display significant differences in terms

of their structure, in particular concerning the use of cliffhangers. On the narrative level, both texts feature a killer who poisons his victims, and in both, the killer is a cab driver. Even the discourse level is at times identical, for the adaptation partly uses dialogue fragments lifted from the original.

When looking at the two narratives in terms of Freytag's triangle, it is observable that the steps (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement) take place quite differently. Doyle structured his novel into two parts of seven chapters each. The first two chapters "Mr. Sherlock Holmes" and "The Science of Deduction" present the story's *exposition*, which introduces the main characters and circumstances. Besides the fact that John Watson recounts his immediate past, which led him back to London searching for a flatmate, the first two chapters give a rather linear account of events. The end of chapter two describes the moments after Watson first meets Holmes and ends with this dialogue between Watson and his friend Stamford:

'You'll find [Sherlock] a knotty problem, though. I'll wager he learns more about you than you about him. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye,' I answered, and strolled on to my hotel, considerably interested in my new acquaintance. (Doyle *A Study in Scarlet* 20)

While Stamford's utterance is rather meant as a kind warning, the vague statement seems to even increase Watson's interest in the person in question. However, this dialogue is not only supposed to give Watson an impression of the protagonist, but also already forms the readers' opinion. The chapter thus ends with a rather mild version of a commissive foreshadowing cliffhanger. By warning Watson about the peculiar character of his new acquaintance, Stamford foreshadows that rather extraordinary endeavours await Watson. While this cliffhanger does not particularly increase suspense, it certainly makes a promise to the recipients that reading on will be worth their time. Even though a new chapter begins after the dialogue quoted above, the narrative continues uninterruptedly.

While Doyle presents the *exposition* in a rather linear manner, BBC's *Sherlock* already furnishes the *exposition* with several cliffhanger moments before Sherlock even gets involved in the respective crime. The very first episode immediately makes use of the so-called *cold open*. This technique is used in order to engage the audience with the narrative as soon as possible (see Mac Millan Dictionary), as these pre-title segments partly reveal a key scene which leaves the audience eager to find out what happens. Thereby, television producers make sure that audiences continue with the episode during the opening commercials. The cold open in "A Study in Pink" introduces Watson to the audience, who learns that he is a war veteran and in psychotherapy due to an apparent PTSD. The teaser ends with the following conversation:

Therapist: John, you're a soldier. It's gonna take you a while to adjust to civilian life and writing a blog about everything that happens to you will honestly help you.

John: Nothing happens to me. (S1 E1 1:55-2:10)

Afterwards, the opening credits cut in. Watson's statement classifies as both an expressive as well as a commissive foreshadowing cliffhanger. On the one hand, he is expressing his feelings and state of mind. On the other hand, his claim that nothing happens to him is something that the audience knows is soon about to change. Thus, it resembles the first cliffhanger in *A Study in Scarlet* by hinting at future events the recipients can look forward to.

Afterwards, the introduction of Sherlock Holmes happens in two phases: First, his persona is indicated by dialogues between other characters and only then is he shown on screen for the first time for the actual introduction. The first implicit mentioning of Sherlock occurs during a press conference led by Officer Lestrade and Sergeant Donovan concerning multiple suicides shown beforehand. The conference is interrupted by anonymous text messages spelling "Wrong!" after every euphemistic lie that Lestrade tells the press. Afterwards, he receives another text "You know where to find me. SH" (S1 E1 7:02). These

text messages convey the impression that the sender is trying to get involved in the case and obviously already knows more than anyone else. The two police officers are leaving the room when Donovan says “You’ve got to stop him from doing that, he’s making us look like idiots,” to which Lestrade responds, “If you can tell me how he does it, I’ll stop it!” (S1 E1 7:10-7:16). This exchange shows that the relationship with this person might be a complicated one. Even though the audience is also interested in how the person behind the text messages manages to do what is done, the more pressing question for viewers is who sent these texts. The second conversation insinuating Sherlock’s introduction is the following between Watson and an old acquaintance about his living situation:

Watson: C’mon, who would want me as a flatmate?

[Stamford laughing]

Watson: What?

Stamford: You’re the second person to say that to me today.

Watson: Who was the first? (S1 E1 8:20-8:29)

This question precedes a cut to Sherlock Holmes’s first appearance. These two commissive speech acts by Lestrade and Watson both take over Sherlock’s introduction before he even appears on screen. The first one by Lestrade leaves only the audience in the dark, for the two officers know the person responsible for the text messages. In the case of Watson, the character shares the audiences’ lack of knowledge and is curious himself to whom his colleague is referring. The fact that both sequences leave an open question and anticipation for future events is suggestive of a foreshadowing mini-cliff. As can be seen so far, the *exposition* of both Doyle’s as well as Gattis and Moffat’s texts feature mostly commissive foreshadowing mini-cliffs. This seems plausible considering the type of act, since the *exposition* serves the purpose of awakening the audience’s interest and introducing the narrative’s circumstances in an engaging way.

The *rising action* following the *exposition* bears the intention of building up suspense until the story's *climax*. In Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, the *rising action* spans from chapter three until the *climax* towards the end of chapter seven when Sherlock catches the killer. Chapter Three, "The Lauriston Garden Mystery," recounts how Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson start investigating a murder case and are asked for help by some of Scotland Yard's officers. The two go to the crime scene in the hope of identifying a killer. The chapter ends still at the crime scene as follows:

'There has been murder done, and the murderer was a man. He was more than six feet high, was in the prime of life, had small feet for his height, wore coarse, square-toed boots and smoked a Trichinopoly cigar. He came here with his victim in a four-wheeled cab, which was drawn by a horse with three old shoes and one new one on his off fore-leg. In all probability the murderer had a florid face, and the finger-nails of his right hand were remarkably long. These are only a few indications, but they may assist you.' Lestrade and Gregson glanced at each other with an incredulous smile. 'If this man was murdered, how was it done?' asked the former. 'Poison,' said Sherlock Holmes curtly, and strode off. 'One other thing, Lestrade,' he added, turning round at the door: "'Rache,' is the German for 'revenge'; so don't lose your time looking for Miss Rachel.' With which Parthian shot he walked away, leaving the two rivals open mouthed behind him. (Doyle *A Study in Scarlet* 57f.)

Sherlock is informing the officers and Watson of his deductions and thereby proving his detective skills. The obviousness with which he lists the murderer's features is not only suggestive of his intelligence, but also implies an arrogant side in that respect. He is basically 'showing off' that he is intellectually superior to the other gentlemen in the room. The fact that he is not elaborating on poison being the cause of death seems as if Sherlock assumes no further explanation is needed, since it is so obvious. With this passage, the narrator is providing the reader with a full account of Sherlock's skills in order to persuade the audience of his ability and thus forms the audience's opinion, which is both an admirable and an arrogant one. The fact that the chapter ends at this point without anyone knowing how he came about this detailed deduction is suggestive of a disclosing mini-cliff, initiated rather by a revealing monologue than a short speech act. At this point, detailed information on the killer, as well as a hint at his motive, has been revealed to both the other

characters as well as the reader. The mini-cliff is indeed rather minor, for Sherlock discloses his deductions to Watson in the pages to follow.

While chapters four and five do not make use of cliffhangers at the end of each chapter, chapter six comes with a rather obvious one. The chapter ends with Gregson at Sherlock's study, explaining to him how he managed to solve the murder case and claiming that the secretary Joseph Stangerson was the murderer. Just as Gregson is about to finish his story, Lestrade comes in rather startled:

[Gregson:] Have you managed to find the secretary, Mr Joseph Stangerson?

[Lestrade:] The secretary, Mr Joseph Stangerson [...] was murdered at Halliday's Private Hotel about six o'clock this morning! (Doyle *A Study in Scarlet* 102)

This dialogue at the end of chapter six is a textbook example of an exclamatory disclosing mini-cliff. It clearly marks a turning point in the narrative, for the audience was just confronted with a solution to the crime by one of the police officers, when suddenly the prime suspect is found dead in a hotel. At this point, the narrative intensifies. The second dead body turns out to be one of the prime suspects; therefore, the solution to the crime is in danger.

After this turning point, chapter seven uninterruptedly continues the scene from chapter six, where the four gentlemen further discuss the killings. The *climax* occurs at the end of chapter seven, which is also the end of Part 1, and ends with Sherlock handcuffing a cab driver who came to Baker Street in order to pick someone up. The four men, Holmes, Watson, Gregson and Lestrade, struggle to capture the man who tries to escape. After securing him on a chair, Part 1 of the story ends as follows:

'We have his cab,' said Sherlock Holmes. 'It will serve to take him to Scotland Yard. And now, gentlemen,' he continued with a pleasant smile, 'we have reached the end of our little mystery. You are very welcome to put any questions that you like to me now, and there is no danger that I will refuse to answer them.' (Doyle *A Study in Scarlet* 118)

This ending appears more difficult to classify as the previous one. On the one hand, it could be seen as a disclosing mini-cliff, since it marks a turning point in the story. The protagonist catches and reveals the killer's identity and leaves both the characters as well as the audience with open questions such as 'how did Sherlock know?' and 'who is this man in the first place?'. On the other hand, this speech act at the end also suggests a foreshadowing mini-cliff. Sherlock is not revealing any details yet, and the only clue the reader gets is that Sherlock captured a cab driver. Both are, however, introduced by a commissive speech act, which promises answers to all of the open questions which may arise after captioning the killer. This cliffhanger's ambiguity resembles Sherlock's character, as he is keen to show his intellectual superiority and again seems somehow arrogant while doing so, while at the same time he is eager to let everyone know the solution to the crime. Instead of providing both the other characters and the audience with the conclusion of the crime, he lets the characters ask for answers and the recipients read on to find out.

The novel continues with "Part 2 – The Country of the Saints". At first, it might seem rather out of context, but the reader soon realises that this second part of the book is a flashback, which tells the killer Jeffrey Hope's story and sheds light on his motive to come after Debber and Stangerson. Jeffrey's story is elaborated on in detail over five chapters until the sixth chapter of part two, "A Continuation of the Reminiscences of John Watson, M.D.," continues where the narrative left off after "Part 1". The rest of the novel goes on without further cliffhanger moments, which is suggestive of the narrative's *falling action*. The *falling action* does not require any techniques in order to further increase the suspense, for both the killer as well as his motive have been revealed. Hope is taken away by Scotland Yard and makes his last statement. At the beginning of chapter seven, the reader realises that the imprisoned Jeffrey Hope died and ergo no trial will be held. Interestingly, the captive's background story's length and detail has the effect of the reader

sympathising with him. He acted in the name of love, which might leave the audience feeling relieved that Jeffrey Hope is not tried and convicted, for he can now rest in peace.

Finally, the *denouement* comes at the end of chapter seven, the murder has been solved, justice has been served (by whom is left to the audience's interpretation), and the duo Holmes and Watson peacefully discuss the case. At last, they talk about the newspaper article giving Scotland Yard instead of Sherlock Holmes all the credit:

“Didn’t I tell you so when we started?” cried Sherlock Holmes with a laugh. “That’s the result of all our Study in Scarlet: to get them a testimonial!” “Never mind,” I answered; “I have all the facts in my journal, and the public shall know them. In the meantime you must make yourself contented by the consciousness of success, like the Roman miser — *Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo Ipse domi simul ac nummos contemplar in arca*⁵.” (Doyle *A Study in Scarlet* 222)

Rather than reengaging the audience with a cliffhanger at the end, the narrator promises to publish an account of their study in scarlet, which is exactly what the reader has just finished reading at this point. The final page of the novel thereby circles back to the beginning of the narrative, which finally closes the narration without leaving any open questions.

While Doyle’s text takes its time with explaining the motive following the *climax* and as well as Sherlock’s approach to solving the case, BBC’s “A Study in Pink” uses most of its time for building up tension during the *rising action*. It begins after Sherlock is notified of a fourth alleged suicide to which he bursts out in joy, “Brilliant, yes .. aah, four serial suicides and now a note! Ahh, it’s Christmas!” (S1 E2 16:06-16:11). Seconds after he runs off, he returns to ask Watson to join him. The following dialogue clearly initiates the rising action of the narrative, when Mrs Hudson asks whether both of them are going out:

⁵ English translation: The public hiss at me, but I cheer myself - when in my own house I contemplate the coins in my strong-box.

Sherlock: Possible suicides, four of them, there's no point sitting at home when there's finally something fun going on!

Mrs Hudson: You are all happy, it's not decent.

Sherlock: Who cares about decent! The game, Mrs Hudson, is on! (S1 E1 17:28-17:40)

This outburst of joy over a new crime qualifies as an exclamatory foreshadowing mini-cliff. The audience is about to witness the consultant detective in his element, solving a mysterious crime. What the audience also realises is that Sherlock does not really sympathise with the victims, rather the opposite, and only focuses on solving a mystery. From this point on, the *rising action* is sparingly featuring cliffhangers until the narrative intensifies towards the *climax*. The situation sharpens from the moment on when the cab driver, Jeff, appears at Sherlock's doorstep. Both Sherlock as well as the audience, at this point, believe that the cab driver is the killer and Sherlock's curiosity leads him to follow him. From this point forward, the sequences are getting shorter and interrupted more frequently in order to increase the tension. Sherlock is sitting in the back of the cab, obviously interested in how he killed all these people.

Jeff: You've got yourself a fan!

Sherlock: Tell me more.

Jeff: Soon you're gonna know .. in this lifetime. (S1 E1 1:06:49-1:06:58)

The cab driver's threat in disguise is halfway between a commissive disclosing and a commissive peril-point mini-cliff. While it suggests that Jeff is going to kill Sherlock Holmes, it does not pose an immediate threat to the protagonist since they are only talking at this point. However, the audience is aware that Sherlock is in danger. At gunpoint, the cab driver leads Sherlock into the faculty building and explains how 'the game' works as well as how he killed the four victims. Sherlock is supposed to choose one of two identical bottles containing one pill each. Whichever bottle he chooses, the killer will take the other one, which means that there is a fifty-fifty per cent chance of survival. If he refuses to choose either one, Jeff threatens to shoot him. At some point, Jeff reveals that there is

someone behind all of this, that he is not the one initiating the killings but rather only executing orders. The sequences frequently shorten and the threatening situation between Sherlock and Jeff is repeatedly interrupted by even shorter sequences of Watson running through campus and looking for his friend. The frequent sequence change is accompanied by music intensifying with each cut, thereby building up tension and alerting the audience that the narrative is about to peak.

The *climax* occurs after the killer says to Sherlock “Not bored now, are you?” (S1 E1 1:20:30-1:20:33). Just seconds before Sherlock is about to take one of the two pills and risk his life only to prove he can outsmart someone, Watson shoots through the window and hits the cab driver at the shoulder. His last words are then “Moriarty,” which is followed by Sherlock’s confused reaction, mumbling the name silently. The serial killer’s last word functions as an exclamatory disclosing internal cliff. The name behind the case’s serial killings is revealed to everyone. However, not a single person except for the dying cab driver knows who that is at that point. It is classified as an internal cliffhanger for it is only revealed two episodes later who this ‘Moriarty’ actually is.

The *falling action* occurs right after the *climax*, where Lestrade questions Sherlock about the shooter, whom he did not see. As Sherlock and Watson walk away from the crime scene, the following dialogue occurs:

Watson: What are you so happy about?

Sherlock: Moriarty

Watson: What’s Moriarty?

Sherlock: I have absolutely no idea. (S1 E1 1:26:49-1:26:55)

This dialogue functions as an interrogative disclosing internal cliff. Watson questions what, rather than who, Moriarty is, after which the audience realises that Sherlock knows as much about Moriarty as viewers do at this point of the story, namely nothing. This, however, does not include attentive recipients who read Doyle’s “The Final Problem,” in which Sherlock’s

rival's name is also Moriarty. The memory this name might trigger and the conclusions recipients might draw from this detail will, however, be topic of chapter 4.3. What the mentioning of this name implicates for every recipient at this point, though, is that the *denouement* is only partially achieved. While the hero was able to eliminate the immediate threat of the serial killer, the force behind these attacks is still existent. The episode ends with following dialogue between Mycroft and his assistant:

Mycroft: He could be the making of my brother, or make him worse than ever. Either way, we better upgrade their surveillance status. Grade 3, active.

Assistant: Sorry, Sir, whose status?

Mycroft: Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. (S1 E1 1:27:01-1:27:20)

This dialogue concludes the first episode with an exclamatory foreshadowing final cliff. Here, Sherlock and Watson are, for the first time, established as an entity. This is further encouraged by the medium shot, captured in *Figure 6* (S1 E1 1:27:22) below. The centred perspective puts Sherlock and Watson on the same level, rather than signalling superiority on someone's behalf. The blurry background emphasises the focus on the newly established detective duo and both their mimics convey the feeling of trust and excitement about future work together. Furthermore, Mycroft suggests by his precautions that this newly found duo might cause



Figure 6: Sherlock Holmes & Dr Watson

trouble, which the audience is able to look forward to. The *denouement*, in combination with the short dialogue about Moriarty, leaves several questions open, which combined serve as a great motivation to watch the next episode.

The comparison of the narrative structure between *A Study in Scarlet* and “A Study in Pink” emphasises the difference in structure discussed in Chapter 3.2.; namely, the fact

that episodic texts roughly follow the rules of Gustav's Triangle, while micro-texts in a serial deviate from this structure. This becomes evident by the fact that the *climax* in *A Study in Scarlet* occurs in the middle of the instalment, while the *climax* in "A Study in Pink" happens only minutes before the end. In order to avoid coming to an end too soon, Doyle makes use of a flashback so as to postpone the *falling action* and thereby maintain the suspense for the resolution. In "A Study in Pink," the rather late *climax* and therefore short *falling action* are used in order to avoid losing the audience's interest after the *climax*. The fact that the *climax* and the *falling action* are supported by cliffhangers is yet another technique to ensure that the audience remains interested in following episodes. The next episode of the analysis, however, is not the one following "A Study in Pink," but the finale episode of season 1, "A Scandal in Belgravia" and the respective Doyle text "A Scandal in Bohemia".

3.2.2.2. "A Scandal in Bohemia" vs. "A Scandal in Belgravia"

"A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891) is Doyle's first short story about the consultant detective after publishing the two novels *A Study in Scarlet* (1886) and *The Sign of Four* (1890) and realising that regular shorter publications might be more economic. While the text is only three chapters long, Doyle nevertheless makes use of cliffhangers in order to keep the audience interested. In comparison to the novel from the previous analysis, the narrative structure in the short story differs considerably. The respective episode from the adaptation *Sherlock*, "A Scandal in Belgravia", however, displays a rather similar structure to the previously analysed episode "A Study in Pink". On the story level, both texts feature the story of *the woman*, Irene Adler, in connection to an incriminating picture of her and a member of the Royal Family.

Doyle's short story begins in a rather mysterious way, which immediately catches the audience's attention. It does not necessarily begin with the *exposition*, but rather features – in televisual terms – a cold open. It first reads "To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the* woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex." (Doyle "A Scandal in Bohemia" 4). The cold open is only one page long and ends with "And yet there was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable memory" (Doyle "A Scandal in Bohemia" 5). This sentence does not yet mark the end of the first chapter, but is followed by a narrative break within the chapter with Watson narrating, "I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other." (Doyle "A Scandal in Bohemia" 5). The mentioning of a particular woman with no further explanation serves as a great source of motivation to continue reading. The information about Irene Adler before the narrative break can be classified as an exclamatory foreshadowing mini-cliff. It is rather foreshadowing than disclosing because the reader does not know anything about this woman at this point. Therefore nothing is actually revealed to anyone. The narrator is giving us information which the reader suspects will have importance for future events.

BBC's cold open in "A Scandal in Belgravia" leaves the audience with quite similar open questions. The episode begins with the finale peril-point cliffhanger of "The Great Game" (S1 E3). This episode was and will not be analysed, as has been stated before, since the episode as such does not benefit this thesis except for the finale cliff. The end of "The Great Game" and thereby the beginning of "A Scandal in Belgravia" shows Sherlock Holmes, John Watson and Jim Moriarty in a swimming pool at night. Sherlock is pointing a gun at a bomb, which would kill all characters present if he were to shoot at it. As the music intensifies, signalling a peril point, Moriarty's phone suddenly starts ringing. His ringtone is the song "Staying Alive" by the Bee Gee's, which serves as a comic relief

following the intense moment of danger. As the immediate threat has passed, the situation resolves with Moriarty saying on the phone “If you have what you say you have, I will make you rich. If you don’t, I’ll make you into shoes” (S2 E1 3:02-3:11). Right before the end of the sequence, Sherlock says “Someone changed his mind. Question is, who?” (S2 E1 3:30-3:39), which can be classified as an interrogative foreshadowing mini-cliff. It is more or less immediately answered by the following short sequence during which a woman in lingerie, who turns out to be the one Moriarty was talking to, walks into a room and asks “Well now, have you been wicked your Highness?” to which the female person bonded to the bed says “Yes, Miss Adler” (S2 E1 3:40-3:47). Hence, both Doyle’s, as well as BBC’s cold open, leave the audience with more or less the same information: There is a woman called Adler who will have something to do with the case. At this point, neither the readers nor the serial viewers know anything about this woman. What is fundamentally different about these two, however, is that there is a connection between the previously analysed episode “A Study in Pink” and “A Scandal in Belgravia” and this connection is Moriarty. In the case of “A Scandal in Bohemia,” these are entirely separate stories.

After the pre-title sequence has awakened the audience’s interest, the *exposition* serves the purpose of introducing the current situation and the crime of the micro-text. Hardly any characters, except for Miss Adler, have to be introduced anymore since the protagonists are already known from previous stories. The first chapter of “A Scandal in Bohemia” functions as the *exposition*, where Sherlock meets with his new client. The chapter ends after the discussion with the royal client and Sherlock saying,

[g]ood-night, your Majesty, and I trust that we shall soon have some good news for you. And good-night, Watson. [...] If you will be good enough to call to-morrow [sic!] afternoon at three o’clock, I should like to chat this little matter over with you. (Doyle “A Scandal in Bohemia” 24)

This is suggestive of a commissive foreshadowing mini-cliff. Sherlock’s salutation suggests that he already has a plan, but which shall wait until the next day.

The *exposition* in “A Scandal in Belgravia” is, again, rather similar to its written version. Sherlock and Watson are invited to the Buckingham Palace in order to discuss the urgent matter. While Mycroft is telling the detective duo all about *the woman* Irene Adler, she is receiving information on the consultant detective herself, suggestive of the fact that she already knows what Sherlock is up to. The end of the *exposition* and thereby the start of the *rising action* is positioned at the moment Miss Adler picks up the phone saying, “I think it’s time, don’t you?” (S2 E1 8:18-8:20). For the first time, the audience witnesses how the enemy is one step ahead of Sherlock, which increases interest in both the narrative as well as in the mysterious woman.

After the case to be solved has been established, both texts intensify their action by Sherlock and Watson tricking their way into Miss Adler’s home in order to retrieve the incriminating pictures. The *rising action* in “A Scandal in Bohemia” spans over the second chapter of the short story until halfway through the third one. The transition between the second and the third chapter features one last cliffhanger, which fulfils an important purpose. Towards the end of Chapter 2, the readers believe that Sherlock basically solved the case; he knows where the picture is and confidently claims that he will secure it the next day. At this point, the reader might think that the *climax* of the story took place while Sherlock was inside of Miss Adler’s home. However, the chapter ends with the following situation:

We had reached Baker Street and had stopped at the door. He was searching his pockets for the key when someone said:

‘Good-night, Mister Sherlock Holmes.’

There were several people on the pavement at the time, but the greeting appeared to come from a slim youth in an ulster who had hurried by.

‘I’ve heard that voice before,’ said Holmes, staring down the dimly lit street. ‘Now, I wonder who the deuce that could have been.’ (Doyle “A Scandal in Bohemia” 43)

This interrogative foreshadowing mini-cliff is most certainly not random but conveys the feeling that Sherlock missed something crucial. It thereby implies that Sherlock has not yet solved the case after all. Similar to the episode, the reader now realises that the criminal might be one step ahead of Holmes, which reengages the audience after feeling as if the case is theoretically solved. The short story's *climax* occurs soon after this incident, when Sherlock, in the companion of Watson and the Majesty, goes to Miss Adler's home in order to collect the photograph. While he is confident that the item in question is exactly where he thinks it is, the story climaxes at the point where Adler's housekeeper says "[...] My mistress told me that you were likely to call. She left this morning with her husband by the 15:15 train from Charing Cross for the Continent." (Doyle "A Scandal in Bohemia" 46). Sherlock is clearly irritated when, instead of the photograph of the Majesty together with Miss Adler, he only finds a photograph of her alone and a letter addressed to him. The *falling action* is then rather short, during which the three gentlemen discuss this unexpected turn of events. The *denouement* finally marks the end of the short story with Watson summarising:

And that was how a great scandal threatened to affect the kingdom of Bohemia, and how the best plans of Mr. Sherlock Holmes were beaten by a woman's wit. He used to make merry over the cleverness of women, but I have not heard him do it of late. And when he speaks of Irene Adler, or when he refers to her photograph, it is always under the honourable title of *the woman*. (Doyle "A Scandal in Bohemia" 50)

This story final is again evidence of the episodic nature of Doyle's detective story because instead of increasing the interest again, the story circles back to the beginning and closes the micro-text the same way it started: with the honourable Irene Adler.

While the very beginning and the *exposition* of the two texts display many similarities, it is, at last, the *rising action* and the *climax* which mark clear differences between the original and the adaptation. The *rising action* in "A Scandal in Belgravia" also features Sherlock's scam to find the camera phone's place of concealment and Sherlock's

failure of retrieving the pictures, which means that Irene Adler gets away with it. Even though Sherlock seems to be confident that Irene Adler is not going to use the incriminating pictures, Mycroft nevertheless seems very concerned and wants to take measures into his own hands. Sherlock realises that it cannot be only incriminating pictures which worry Mycroft to such an extent.

Sherlock: Something big is coming, isn't it?

Mycroft: Irene Adler is no longer any concern of yours. From now on you will stay out of this.

Sherlock: Oh, will I?

Mycroft: Yes, Sherlock! You will! (S2 E1 40:15-40:32)

This exclamatory speech act can be seen as both a disclosing as well as a foreshadowing mini-cliff. On the one hand, the emphasis of Mycroft's words appears to reveal a hidden agenda behind retrieving Miss Adler's camera phone. At this point, the audience is quite sure that there is more to the story than some pictures, which also marks the additional layer to Doyle's original story. It also marks a turning point in the story where Sherlock seems to have failed to get the job done, which will have consequences for future events. On the other hand, this dialogue hints at the fact that Sherlock is probably going to ignore his brother's order and most certainly will stay involved. The *rising action* intensifies when Sherlock tries to impress Miss Adler, which leads to her feeding information to Moriarty. A peril point seems to get closer as Mycroft receives a text from Moriarty saying "Jumbo Jet. Dear me, Mr Holmes, Dear me" (S2 E1 1:09:28), which finally re-involves Moriarty, who has been absent throughout the story.

At first, the *climax* appears to be the sequence where the Holmes brothers joined by Miss Adler meet inside the aeroplane, where it is revealed that Sherlock helped Adler execute her plan and thereby not only lost but helped the wrong side win. Further on, the negotiation between Mycroft and Miss Adler, while Sherlock is listening and

contemplating the situation, seems as if the action is already falling. At this point, the story again resembles the respective short story which also includes Adler's defeat over Sherlock. But Sherlock Holmes would not be Sherlock Holmes if he did not have another trick up his sleeve. At last, he figures out the passcode to the camera phone and the story reaches the *climax* with the following dialogue:

Irene Adler: Everything I said, it's not real. I was just playing the game!

Sherlock: I know, and this is just losing. (S2 E1 1:21:36-1:21:46)

At last, Sherlock manages to conquer the villain of the story with his brilliant mind. At this point, there are approximately ten minutes left of the episode for the *falling action*. Mycroft meets Watson in a café, informing him of Miss Adler's death.

Watson: It's definitely her? She's done this before!

Mycroft: I was thorough this time. It would take Sherlock Holmes to fool me and I don't think he was on hand, do you? (S2 E1 1:24:30-1:24:44)

The episode concludes with Miss Adler seconds before her execution and her texting Sherlock a last good-bye when the screen turns dark. At once, the personalised text alert on Sherlock's phone rings out and Irene is back on screen. The audience realises that it is Sherlock standing above her holding a scimitar when he says "When I say run, run!" (S2 E1 1:28:13). Finally, we see Sherlock back in his study, chuckling at his phone saying, "the woman ... *the woman*" (S2 E1 1:28:39).

Interestingly, both "A Scandal in Belgravia" and "A Scandal in Bohemia" display unusual differences in terms of their structure in comparison to the other texts of the respective medium. While the *climax* in *A Study in Scarlet*, for example, occurs in the middle of the text, it is shifted very close to the end in the first Holmes-short story. This leaves only a short *falling action* until the *denouement* for the readers to enjoy. What is particularly interesting about the episode "A Scandal in Belgravia" is that it does not end with any kind of cliffhanger. The fact that Sherlock saves Miss Adler does not leave any

open questions, except maybe whether she will be back at some point, which is not the case. What this means is that the producers of this episode rely on the fact that Moriarty is still roaming the streets of London for the audience to be motivated enough to keep watching. However, it seems as if the audience did not mind, since 8.2 million people watched the following episode after the season-opening when it first aired on BBC1 (in comparison: “A Scandal in Belgravia” had 8.8 million viewers) (Plunkett n.p.). The final episode of the second season “The Reichenbach Fall”, which will be analysed next with its original “The Final Problem”, drew the least audience ratings from this season with ‘only’ 7.9 million viewers, according to overnight ratings after it was first aired on the 15th January 2012 (*Telegraph* n.p.). However, the episode became the second most-watched episode of 2012 on the BBC iPlayer and the analysis below might be an indication why.

3.2.2.3. “The Final Problem” vs. “The Reichenbach Fall”

Conan Doyle’s short story “The Final Problem” and the BBC series’ audio-visual equivalent “The Reichenbach Fall” are probably the most controversial stories about Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. This is due to the fact that Conan Doyle had the intention of ending the Sherlock Holmes detective stories for good and consequently killed off his protagonist. As Doyle believed that his detective stories distracted him from his more educated work, which was his historical novels, he decided to write one last story featuring his most famous character’s death. Due to public outrage after the intended last story, which will be discussed in chapter five on fandom in more detail, Doyle resurrected the beloved detective in the story “The Adventure of the Empty House” (1903).

Moffat and Gattis used this memorable short story of Sherlock’s death in order to produce an epic finale cliffhanger leaving the audience speechless. Both stories feature

Sherlock's intellectual equal and arch-enemy Jim Moriarty. While his name occurs for the first time in Doyle's "The Final Problem," Moriarty is no stranger to the *Sherlock* viewers. The short story by Doyle interestingly does not feature a specific crime which Sherlock tries to solve, but rather tells the encounter between Sherlock and Moriarty and how it ends with a fight at the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland, which ends in Moriarty's death and Sherlock's apparent death. The episode "The Reichenbach Fall," however, features several crimes all committed by the same criminal. While Doyle's short story only mentions several crimes committed by Moriarty, the television serial uses this opportunity and features the criminal in his quest. However, on a structural level, it can be said that Doyle's short story differs considerably from his other ones, in that it does not feature chapters but is rather told in one go.

Similar to "A Scandal in Bohemia" and "A Scandal in Belgravia", these two narratives again start with a *cold open*. The short story "The Final Problem" begins with the announcement that this is going to be the last account of Sherlock's adventures as it reads:

It is with a heavy heart that I take up my pen to write these the last words in which I shall ever record the singular gifts by which my friend Mr. Sherlock Holmes was distinguished. [...] It was my intention [...] to have said nothing of that event which has created a void in my life which the lapse of two years has done little to fill. [...] It lies with me to tell for the first time what really took place between Professor Moriarty and Mr. Sherlock Holmes. (Doyle "The Final Problem" 410)

After this, Watson continues by giving an account of the events leading to the tragedy, which subsequently change his life. However, at this point, we are uncertain about what this event might entail. This introduction to the narrative has the effect of preparing the readers of the outcome. This short passage, therefore, ends with a commissive foreshadowing mini-cliff. The narrator promises to give the reader the truthful story of what happened, while the reader only knows that something happened between Sherlock and a Professor named Moriarty, which probably ended dramatically.

Equally engaging is the *cold open* of the episode “The Reichenbach Fall”. Watson is at a therapy session, which he has not visited for months. The therapist realises the urgency of his visit:

Therapist: what happened, John?

Watson: Sherlock ...

Therapist: You need to get it out!

Watson: My best friend ... Sherlock Holmes ... is dead. (S2 E3 00:36-1:07)

Even though this beginning is rather similar to the short story’s, this statement has more of a revealing character. Thus, this *cold open* ends with an exclamatory disclosing mini-cliff. We are assured that Sherlock is dead, which marks an elementary turning point in the narrative and a devastating revelation to the audience. The opening credits immediately follow this first shock.

After the *cold open* awakens the recipients’ interest, the *exposition* establishes the circumstances. In the case of “The Final Problem,” this begins with the antagonist Jim Moriarty’s introduction and his importance to the situation. Sherlock tells Watson all about the Professor and how he first met him. In order to catch the villain, Sherlock proposes that Watson and himself leave the country, which is where the *rising action* of the story begins, for the journey is rather risky as Moriarty is on their heels. The *rising action* intensifies as Sherlock and John are at the Reichenbach Falls and Watson is forced to leave Sherlock alone following a mysterious letter. Even though the tension rises at this point, the narrative does not feature any further cliffhangers. The *climax* occurs at the moment when Watson returns to the Reichenbach Falls and finds Sherlock and the other gentleman gone and only Sherlock’s alpine-stock and a note to be found. The *falling action* features Watson’s deductions of what happened at the cliffs and his attempt to straighten the facts which the public has distorted. The short story, and for the moment the *last* story about the consultant detective, ends as such:

[...] if I have now been compelled to make a clear statement of his career, it is due to those injudicious champions who have endeavoured to clear his memory by attacks upon him whom I shall ever regard as the best and the wisest man whom I have ever known. (Doyle “The Final Problem” 442)

These were supposed to be the last words that came from Watson as a figure and narrator, which suggests that no indication for future events is intended. At this point, the audience shares Watson’s feelings towards Sherlock more than ever. This emotional end to the famous detective caused a public outrage, which will be discussed in chapter five.

In the TV series, the *rising action* of “The Reichenbach Fall” features more cliffhanger moments compared to the short story. After the initial shock of Sherlock’s death, the narration rewinds two years to a time when Sherlock’s popularity grew in the press. Afterwards, the audience witnesses Moriarty committing several severe crimes after which he has to stand trial. Sherlock grows suspicious and observes that “[t]he only reason he’s still in a prison cell right now is because he chose to be there. Somehow, this is part of his scheme” (S2 E3 18:49-19:52). This suspicion displays an interrogative rather than an exclamatory foreshadowing mini-cliff. Nothing is yet revealed to the characters or the audience, for nobody yet understands what this scheme is. However, the recipients’ interest increases in wanting to find out. The jury of the court finds Moriarty not guilty, after which he visits Sherlock in his study:

Sherlock: Why are you doing all of this? [...] What is it all for?

Moriarty: I want to solve the problem. Our problem. The finale problem. It’s gonna start really soon, Sherlock, the fall. But don’t be scared, falling is just like flying except there is a more permanent destination.

Sherlock: I never liked riddles.

Moriarty: Learn to. Because I owe you a fall, Sherlock. I ... OWE ... YOU. (S2 E3 25:28-26:49).

While Sherlock’s question what all of his actions are for is left unanswered for now, Moriarty introduces an exclamatory foreshadowing mini-cliff. At this point, nothing is revealed, but the audience realises that something big is coming.

The *climax* occurs at the rooftop of Saint Bartholomew's Hospital, where Moriarty and Sherlock engage in the ultimate intellectual conflict during which they want to demonstrate their own superiority to each other. The narrative peaks when Moriarty shoots himself in the head. By doing that, he eliminates the final chance to call off the shooters who are supposed to kill Sherlock's closest friends if he did not jump off the hospital roof. Six minutes are left of the episode when the audience and Watson watch Sherlock jump off the building and land on concrete (*Figure 7*, S2 E3 1:21:17-1:21:26). Interestingly,



Figure 7: Sherlock's jump

audiences see the jump from different perspectives rather than from Watson's. These different angles seem to suggest that the audience sees exactly what happens, which makes the jump look realistic and believable. However, the finale cliff tells a different story. After the fall, the audience sees Watson and Ms Hudson at the graveyard, mourning the death of their dearest friend. Watson says upon leaving:

‘There's just one more thing. One more thing. One more miracle, Sherlock, for me. Don't. Be. Dead. Would you do that? Just for me. Just stop it. Stop this! (S2 E3 1:26:46-1:27:03)

As Watson leaves, the camera pans over the graveyard, when suddenly a familiar silhouette fades in (*Figure 8*, S2 E3 1:27:38), which is immediately recognised as Sherlock Holmes

before the episode ends with its closing credits. This finale and epic cliffhanger is not initiated by a speech act, but by the simple image of a man thought to be dead. The camera pans



Figure 8: Sherlock's silhouette in the finale cliff

capturing Sherlock from the front in the last frame. The initial lateral perspective has the dramatic effect of slowly revealing that the protagonist, in fact, did not die. The slight over-the-shoulder perspective also emphasises the emotional bond between Sherlock and Watson and that Sherlock struggles with leaving his friend to believe he is dead. This last frame functions as a disclosing finale-cliff, which reveals to the audience, but not to the other serial figures, that Sherlock Holmes did not die when he jumped. The audience remains in anticipation to learn what happened and how this was possible, since the different camera perspectives from the jump let the audience believe that they actually saw him die.

From Doyle's intention behind his short story "The Final Problem," it becomes clear why the story hardly features any cliffhanger moments. The story was supposed to function as the last instalment of a beloved character instead of feeding the audience's desire for more. Due to the public's strong reaction to the detective's death, Doyle decided years later to continue the Sherlock Holmes series. Moffat and Gattis used this element of Sherlock's return wisely and thereby created a disclosing finale cliff which leaves the audience craving for answers. While the audience expects to find out what actually happened in the next episode, the readers of Doyle's text were not sure if they could expect anything ever again and when the day came, it was hard to imagine what this revelation might hold. In order to establish how the serialisation continued even beyond the protagonist's apparent death, both stories featuring Sherlock's return to Baker Street will be discussed in the following

analysis. While the audience was awaiting Sherlock's return, however, both Doyle and *Sherlock* fans actively participated in speculations about his death, anticipations about the future and engaged in an exchange of discussions and fan literature to keep the detective alive as long as possible. Due to the public engagement's impact and magnitude, chapter five will be later on dedicated to discussing this very important time in the history of the Sherlock Holmes detective stories.

3.2.2.4. "The Adventure of the Empty House" vs. "The Empty Hearse"

"The Adventure of the Empty House" and the equivalent episode "The Empty Hearse" are both texts which the audience at the time had eagerly been waiting for following the (staged) death of their favourite detective Sherlock Holmes. While "The Adventure of the Empty House" reveals the true story of how Sherlock managed to survive, "The Empty Hearse" leaves the audience in the dark about the truth and presents several different theories of the staged jump. The short story is, again, not structured by chapters but displays an uninterrupted narrative, which is why cliffhangers occur rather sparsely. The adaptation, however, uses cliffhangers wisely in order to compensate the fact that the protagonist's arch-enemy is no longer driving the narrative forward.

The *exposition* of "The Adventure of the Empty House" features the introduction of the short story's crime by Watson and his reunion with Sherlock Holmes. The *exposition* is rather long for only on page 18 of 37 is the *rising action* initiated as such:

'work is the best antidote to sorrow, my dear Watson,' said he, 'and I have a piece of work for us both to-night [sic!] which, if we can bring it to a successful conclusion, will in itself justify a man's life on this planet.' In vain I begged him to tell me more. 'You will hear and see enough before morning,' he answered. 'We have three years of the past to discuss. Let that suffice until half-past nine, when we start upon the notable adventure of the empty house.' (Doyle "The Adventure of the Empty House" 18)

Sherlock initiates the *rising action* with a commissive foreshadowing mini-cliff. The protagonist promises an important mission upon which the detective duo will engage shortly, and the audience grows interested in what the empty house might bear. It follows that the two gentlemen stake out from within an empty house across Baker Street where they await the criminal who attempts to finish the job Moriarty was unable to; to kill Sherlock Holmes. The tension increases as the killer enters the very same house in which Sherlock and Watson are hiding. The *climax* occurs shortly after, as Sherlock tackles the killer after he shot through the window of the Baker Street apartment. It appears as if Sherlock is back at his old habits and is, without a problem, capable of catching the criminal and once again saving the day. Even though the *climax* already happened at the caption of the killer, the short story nevertheless bears another turning point:

‘[...] I do not propose to appear in the matter at all. To you, and to you only, belongs the credit of the remarkable arrest which you have effected. Yes, Lestrade, I congratulate you! With your usual happy mixture of cunning and audacity you have got him.’

‘Got him! Got whom, Mr. Holmes?’

‘The man that the whole force has been seeking in vain – Colonel Sebastian Moran, who shot the Honourable Ronald Adair [...]. That’s the charge, Lestrade. And now, Watson, if you can endure the draught from a broken window, I think that half an hour in my study over a cigar may afford you some profitable amusement.’ (Doyle “The Adventure of the Empty House” 30f.)

All of a sudden, the criminal is not only the one who attempted to kill Sherlock Holmes but is also the one involved in the short story’s crime from the beginning. Again, Holmes announces this revelation as if it were an obvious conclusion from captioning Moriarty’s accomplice. Thus, the audience is relieved that their favourite detective has not changed after the long break.

The *falling action* ends up being rather long after the *climax*. This is due to the fact that there are still many open questions left unanswered, such as how Sherlock knew who Colonel Moran was, why he wanted to kill him, why he killed Ronald Adair and how Sherlock also knew about this. To answer all of these open questions is important in order

to find a healthy closure to the story. The short story ends with a hopeful look into the future:

‘[...] Meanwhile, come what may, Colonel Moran will trouble us no more, the famous air-gun of Von Herder will embellish the Scotland Yard Museum, and once again Mr. Sherlock Holmes is free to devote his life to examining those interesting little problems which the complex life of London so plentifully presents.’ (Doyle “The Adventure of the Empty House” 37).

Practically speaking, this cannot be seen as a finale cliffhanger since it only gives a rather vague outlook into the future. However, the audience is nevertheless encouraged to look forward to further detective stories by Conan Doyle featuring Sherlock Holmes. Even though the story does not end in a cliffhanger, the ending suggests that further issues and therefore stories might occur, which is not necessarily common with episodic series.

In the episode “The Empty Hearse,” the *exposition* is relatively long compared to other episodes. While the introduction of the characters and the episode’s crime usually happens rather fast, it takes up half an hour in this case. This has to do with the fact that the producers of the episode take their time to return Sherlock to London step by step, especially with the reunion of Sherlock and Watson. It is also interesting to note that the *cold open* is quite long as well and takes over eight minutes. It shows a manhunt and the capture of the target, who is then tortured in a cellar. It ends with Mycroft saying to the captive: “Sorry, but the holiday is over, brother dear. Back to Baker Street, Sherlock Holmes!” (S3 E1 8:26-8:37) and Sherlock’s face appearing before the opening credits cut in (Figure 9, S3 E1 8:37-8:40). Mycroft’s utterance in combination with the first glimpse



Figure 9: Sherlock's first reappearance

of Sherlock’s face in this episode forms an exclamatory disclosing mini-cliff. The audience

assumes prior to seeing Sherlock's face that the person opposite to Mycroft is actually Sherlock, but showing his face forms the final revelation to the audience that Holmes indeed has returned. The close-up (Bordwell 189) on the left hand might, at first, leave speculations of his true identity due to the disconcerting appearance. However, the camera zooms in to an extreme close-up (Bordwell 189) and reveals Sherlock's well-known smile when he realises that there is yet another mystery to be solved.

The *exposition*, then, ends with the breaking news on television and the outcry on social media where the hashtag #SherlockIsAlive rapidly goes viral. After the world realises that Sherlock Holmes has returned from the dead, he is free yet again to practice what he does best: investigate. The *rising action* involves Sherlock getting closer to finding a suspect of the episode's crime. What finally increases the tension to a maximum is when Watson gets kidnapped and buried underneath a pile of wood, about to be burned alive. Sherlock and Watson's fiancée comes to rescue him at just the right time, which might be confused with a *climax*, which is why I will classify it as a mini-climax, for the hero saves an innocent man at a peril point. The *rising action* features another cliffhanger connected to the attack on Watson:

Watson: Last night ... who did that? And why did they target me?

Sherlock: I don't know.

Watson: Is someone trying to get to you through me? Is it something to do with this terrorist thing you talked about?

Sherlock: I don't know. I can't see the pattern. It's too nebulous. (S3 E1 58:23-58:39)

While this dialogue is not positioned before a narrative break, it is nevertheless significant for the story. The question who tried to kill Watson still remains unanswered. Sherlock is trying to connect it to the terrorist attack for which Mycroft summoned him back to London, but he is unable to see the connection. This dialogue, therefore, classifies as an exclamatory internal cliff. The type of cliffhanger is deliberately not identified, for it is obviously no

peril point, but it is neither a disclosing cliffhanger in that it reveals something nor a foreshadowing cliffhanger as in hinting at future events. All this dialogue does is leave an important open question which requires an answer. Why it is an internal rather than a mini-cliff, though, will become clearer when discussing the finale cliffhanger later on.

The *rising action* highly intensifies moments before the *climax*. Sherlock and Watson are in an abandoned tube carriage right beneath the Buckingham Palace. The carriage is wired with an explosive bomb and Watson suddenly realises that Sherlock is unable to disarm it.

Watson: Oh my god! This is it. Oh my god!

[...]

Sherlock: Sorry ...

Watson: What?

Sherlock: I can't ... I can't do it John! I don't know how. Forgive me!

Watson: What?

Sherlock: Please John! Forgive me for all the hurt I've caused you.

Watson: No, no, no, no, no. This is a trick!

Sherlock: No ...

Watson: Another one of your bloody tricks.

Sherlock: No ..

[after a short pause]

Watson: You were the best and wisest man I've ever known. Yes of course I forgive you.
(S3 E1 1:10:00-1:11:53)

After this point, the screen turns, implying that the explosion is about to happen. The fact that ten minutes of the episode are left classifies this as a commissive peril point mini-cliff. Watson promises to forgive Sherlock in what he believes to be his last moments. His last words to Sherlock resemble what he said while standing in front of Sherlock's grave. Back when Watson thought Sherlock was dead, he wished nothing more than to say these words to his face. Watson, therefore, uses the moment in the tube to tell him to his face what he thought of him, even though he knew Sherlock was the one to bring this mess upon them.

Instead of showing us either the explosion or what happened after, the episode switches to a video of Sherlock explaining how he faked his suicide. We see that Sherlock is telling this to Anderson, who is filming him. After Anderson experiences a nervous meltdown after Sherlock's account of events, which will be discussed in the last chapter, the screen turns white again. The audience is brought back to Sherlock and Watson in the tube carriage when we suddenly hear Sherlock laughing. This comic relief reveals that the two self-appointed detectives are not going to die and Sherlock only tricked Watson into believing it. The short sequence showing Sherlock and Anderson has the effect of extending the *climax* of the story for the tension to reach a maximum.

The *falling action* is only six more minutes long and features Sherlock making a statement to the press about the solved terrorist attack and his return to London. A similar dialogue as has been mentioned before occurs which shall remind the audience that Sherlock has not yet solved who tried to burn Watson:

Watson: I'm still waiting!

Sherlock: Hm?

Watson: Why did they try to kill me? If they knew you were on to them, why come after me? Put me in a bonfire.

Sherlock: I don't know. I don't like not knowing. [...] I don't know who is behind all this, but I will find out. I promise. (S3 E1 1:22:59-1:23:24)

Sherlock's utterance classifies as a commissive foreshadowing internal cliff. He promises to solve the matter, but this is left for another day. The last moments of the episode show a storage room where the audience witnesses a man watching the scene at the bonfire on

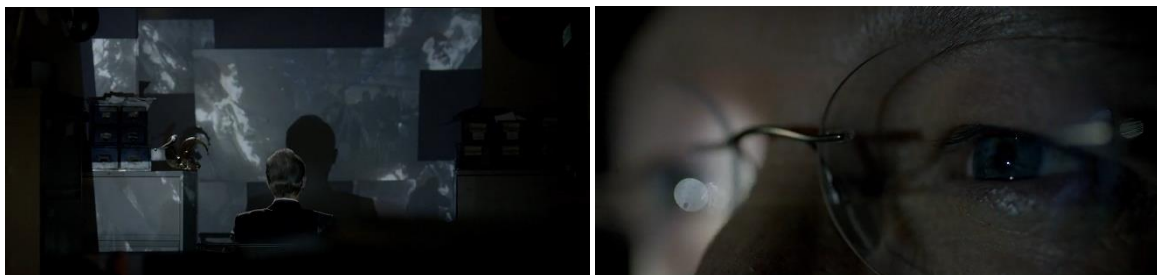


Figure 10: new criminal mastermind

repeat. All the audience sees of this individual is the back of his head and his eyes, which are not familiar to the audience yet (*Figure 10*, S3 E1 1:25:20-1:25:24). The medium long shot on the left side establishes the situation by showing enough of the background to see that the person is watching a video of the bonfire. The extreme close-up (Bordwell 189) on the left hand gives the audience only a glimpse of this man without revealing too much. The intense look in his eyes, however, suggests an obsession with the detective duo. This last image functions as both a disclosing as well as foreshadowing finale cliff. On the one hand, this scene of a strange man watching Watson almost die reveals that yet another criminal has cast a watching brief over the duo Holmes and Watson and wants to destroy them. On the other hand, it hints at the future events which will most certainly have to do with this newly introduced villain. This finale cliff also explains why the dialogue between Sherlock and Watson from before – when they were discussing who kidnapped Watson and put him in a bonfire – classifies as an internal cliff, for the identity of the person behind the incident is not revealed by the episode's end.

Conclusively, it can be observed that both texts featuring Sherlock's return to London show interesting elements in terms of their structure. The short story "The Adventure of the Empty House," for instance, has a quite long *exposition* with a rather short *rising action* and the *climax* quite early on in the story, leaving the *falling action* relatively long. While none of Doyle's texts discussed in this thesis show for a finale cliff, this story at least suggests future crimes, which will be tackled by the consultant detective. The episode "The Empty Hearse" also features a quite long *exposition* with the *rising action* only beginning after half an hour. It is also interesting to note that the episode includes a kind of mini-climax, where a situation of life and death is resolved halfway through the episode. The actual *climax*, however, is as usual positioned rather towards the end of the

episode. The episode finale reminds the viewer of the finale cliff in “A Study in Pink,” where a criminal mastermind behind certain events is revealed.

3.2.2.5. Interpretation

Following the analysis of the text-couples above, a certain trend is identifiable in terms of the use of cliffhangers. Bearing in mind the nature of the episodic series, it seems obvious that the novel and the short stories by Doyle do not feature finale cliffhangers. The stories are not designed to continue the narrative thread and therefore feature closed endings. These, however, mostly circle back to the beginnings, which round off the narratives neatly with the beginning. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the short stories do not feature any cliffhangers at all; they most certainly do. However, these are without exception mini-cliffs, meaning that none of the cliffhangers go beyond the respective story which is again attributable to the type of series.

Interestingly, having analysed the short stories, it is evident that all of the texts include the narrative acts according to Freytag’s triangle. However, they differ considerably in their use of these steps. In *A Study in Scarlet*, the *climax* is not immediately followed by a falling action, but with a flashback to what happened before the crime was committed. In “A Scandal in Bohemia,” the criminal Irene Adler is not captured, which leaves the *climax* to the fact that Sherlock was defeated by an honourable woman. In “The Final Problem” the *climax* is positioned relatively late in the story, leaving only a short *falling action* to digest the fact that the reader’s favourite detective has just died.

In the case of the BBC show *Sherlock*, it is rather difficult to identify a trend in terms of cliffhanger use. What the episodes do have in common is the fact that the *climax*

is always positioned rather towards the end of the micro-text, leaving only a little time for the *falling action* and the *denouement*. How the episodes end, however, differs considerably. While only one of the analysed episodes ends in a peril point finale cliff, the others either end with a foreshadowing one or with no cliffhanger at all. Even though it might be assumed that serials require an engaging finale cliff in order to keep the audience's interest, a complex narrative such as the one in *Sherlock* is also able to rely on only internal cliffs, which leave the audience with open questions. The internal cliffs, which are used to ensure the viewer's future engagement with next instalments, are concerned with one particular criminal; in the case of seasons one and two, this criminal is Jim Moriarty. Without Moriarty's shadow over Sherlock's cases, the episodes would have no connection and would, therefore, lack serial character. This fact is particularly endorsed by the third season. Moriarty died in the previous season finale, which is why the criminal mastermind who held the episodes together is missing. Therefore, at the end of the third season-opening, a new villain who is playing his games with Sherlock is introduced. This suggests that the serial relies on one major criminal as a story arc in order to connect the individual cases, which Sherlock solves. The varieties once again affirm Mittell's argument for complex narratives being more than just a merger of episodic series and serials (31).

What can generally be concluded from the analysis of these different media texts is that cliffhangers are definitely not media-specific, but rather specific to the type of serialisation. While both texts use cliffhangers throughout the individual instalment in order to increase tension during the reception, the type of cliffhangers differ according to the continuity; ergo according to whether it is an episodic series or a serial. This suggests that Doyle's episodic short stories featuring recurring characters are only using mini-cliffs in order to increase the suspense while reading the respective instalment. The complex narrative in *Sherlock* also features mini-cliffs for crimes within a single episode but uses

internal and finale cliffs in order to ensure continuity beyond single episodes. Interestingly, some of the short stories even feature what can be identified as a *cold open*. This suggests that even over a hundred years ago, written texts already used narrative techniques which are still popular on television to this day.

4. FAMILIARITY, INNOVATION AND ITS PLEASURES

In a previous chapter I claimed that serialisation was pleasurable in itself, but what does that exactly mean? What makes serial narratives pleasurable? According to Bernadette Casey, “[t]he unfolding of narratives is one of the principal sources of *pleasure* in media, including television, film or popular fiction” (101). Basically, human beings find pleasure in storytelling itself. While it might be true that we find general pleasure in all sorts of narratives, this chapter will present aspects which contribute not only to the enjoyment of serial narratives but also their serialisation. Before approaching this matter, the term pleasure itself and the notion of familiarity and innovation in serialised narratives will be discussed.

Pleasure is a rather difficult term to define since it is a subjective matter. While John Fiske suggests that the *pleasure* bears different meanings in different contexts (Fiske 73), scholars have, nevertheless, attempted to define the term. Roland Barthes, for instance, distinguishes between two types of pleasures. There is, on the one hand, the comforting pleasure, which manifests in familiar settings. Barthes calls this type ‘*plaisir*’ (quoted in Casey 112) and describes it as being “based on repetition, ritual and familiarity. And importantly, it is rooted in social patterns and conformity and thus linked to hegemonic relations” (ibidem). ‘*Plaisir*’ is, therefore, compatible with Fiske’s claim that pleasure is context-dependent; the context, in this case, is social systems. The second type of pleasure

manifests in “thrills, ecstasy, danger, going to the limits, excess in various forms.” (ibidem 112f.). Barthes calls this type of pleasure ‘jouissance,’ which represents the direct opposite to ‘plaisir’. In the context of serialised narratives, this theory suggests that while ‘plaisir’ addresses the audience’s desire for comfort, ‘jouissance’ pleases them with feelings out of the ordinary, uncomfortable even, but not at all in a negative sense. What counts as comfortable pleasures and what as rather uncomfortable ones is mostly subject to individual perception. However, pleasures are often also roughly defined by communities according to cultural values.

When discussing the pleasures of comfort and novelty, it is appropriate to recall the discussion about adaptations from the second chapter, where I already hinted at the desire for familiarity in connection to why adaptations are so popular despite often being considered to be repetitious. Ironically, in the light of the pleasure provided by familiar settings, it is particularly the fact that consumers recognise elements, which makes adaptations so successful. What is interesting about this is that audiences believe that they enjoy a narrative because of its innovations, while in fact, they find pleasure in the familiar scheme which satisfies an infantile need of repeatedly hearing the same story over and over again (Eco *The Limits of Interpretation* 86). ‘The same story’ in this context, however, means recurrent narrative schemes, which are superficially disguised (Eco *The Limits of Interpretation* 86). This shall not imply that innovation is not pleasurable to audiences, quite the contrary in fact. But what this is supposed to imply is how familiar patterns benefit the narrative by satisfying basic human needs.

Much as humans need familiarity, innovation, too, is a crucial element in our lives. The combination of static and repetitious scenarios with dynamic and innovative elements in narratives mirrors the experiences people encounter in their daily lives (Prugger 95). Despite humans being creatures of habit, the exact repetition of a single day is not desired

and this also accounts for the entertainment we seek. Therefore, novelty in between familiarity is a pivotal element in the pleasure we gain from the media we consume. This is also true for adaptations, for the familiarity is what motivates the audience to consume the text in the first place, but the innovation is what keeps it interesting.

Narratives offer various sources of pleasure to their audiences. While the interest often lies “in simply gaining a range of pleasures from a constantly evolving genre” (Casey 35) with familiar and recognisable patterns, there is more to it. Therefore, this chapter will, first, discuss familiar patterns of the detective story and its infinite character by novelty before analysing how recurring characters take part in satisfying the audience’s preferences. Memory and the act of remembering occupy the last instance of this chapter and illustrate yet another aspect of why the Sherlock Holmes story is so successful as a transmedia narrative. But most importantly, since these pleasures account for narratives in general, it will also be discussed how these elements addressing basic human needs contribute to the seriality specifically in Sherlock Holmes.

4.1. Idyllic world – the familiar pattern and its infinite character

The detective and crime genre has a long history and over time has manifested a familiar pattern which many authors pursue. While this pattern “evolves in a complex relationship with *audience*, media *institutions*, social contexts and other genres,” (Casey 32) some basic “core qualities” (ibidem) have emerged. The genre’s basis is that one individual, usually a police officer or a detective, – often accompanied by a faithful companion – solves crimes and beats the odds by catching the seemingly invincible antagonist. To increase the engagement on the audience’s side, these narratives “represent a ‘real’ world of recognisable identities, places, times and events in which stories unfold in familiar ways”

(ibidem 33). In the case of Sherlock Holmes, this accounts for London in the respective time of production. The protagonists adopt different approaches in solving the crimes and in the case of Sherlock Holmes, this is by intellectual means. While the audience enjoys the familiar pattern and the characters, most of the pleasure is achieved by the conflict between the police/detective and the criminal and the question whether the conflict will resolve in favour of the good or bad guys. However, we expect the good side to rule over the bad one and therefore, “[n]arrative resolution, and hence familiar pleasure, is achieved at the climactic and almost inevitable moment of capture or revelation” (ibidem 32). Thus, the pleasure which comes from the familiar pattern of a ‘hero’ chasing his or her antagonist comes from actually being uncertain about how this is going to turn out, despite the common genre conventions, which can therefore be classified as *jouissance* due to the thrill of the chase. The final pleasure comes with the turning point where the criminal is caught.

While the police and detectives are fighting outlaws, it appears as if they often use techniques which do not adhere to legal conventions themselves. Casey puts forward that often the force behind restoring societal peace operates freely “outside legal convention[s]” (32). Sherlock is no exception to this. “[R]ather than being wholly restrained by the system, [Sherlock] often employ[s] the system to work for him – thus proving his superiority and the seeming superiority of the outsider individual over the bureaucratic system” (Busse and Stein 226). Strictly speaking, Sherlock is not allowed to work on the case since he is, as officer Davison repeatedly points out, an amateur. Sherlock, however, identifies himself as a “consultant detective” (S1 E1 18:38-18:40), which is not a real occupation, but by creating this position for himself, he puts himself again on a different level than everyone else. Unlike others, Sherlock feels no necessity for an appropriate education but sees himself as a natural talent. “Holmes then is a self-styled expert [...], requiring no formal qualification to provide him with his professional authority” (Kayman 50). Interestingly, neither the

police force nor the audience questions Sherlock and his abilities to solve complicated cases. In Watson's words, "So accustomed was I to his invariable success that the very possibility of his failing had ceased to enter into my head." (Doyle "A Study in Bohemia" 25). In Doyle's stories, the fact that Watson is the narrator and readers perceive Sherlock through his eyes presupposes that they share Watson's opinion and that they are probably unlikely to consider the possibility of Sherlock's failing. Therefore, the audience even condones Sherlock's apparent drug addiction and nevertheless celebrates him as a hero, since the narrator does so too. But maybe it is exactly the fact that our hero is a flawed person, goes out of his way and works partly outside of legal conventions that we find his journey so pleasurable to follow, as it provides the story with an edge of unpredictability.

While detective and crime narratives are inscrutable and provide thrilling plot twists, certain elements are introduced which help the audience to figure out details despite the narrative's unpredictability. To capture this phenomenon, Eco (*The Limits of Interpretation* 86) proposes that a narrative's familiarity rewards the audiences' ability to foresee. In the course of either reading or watching a narrative, we make assumptions and suspect the outcome. If the speculations are true in the end, we attribute the right assumption to our own abilities instead of the obviousness of the narrative (ibidem). As Eco puts it, "We do not think, 'The author has constructed the story in a way that I could guess the end,' but rather, 'I was so smart to guess the end in spite of the efforts the author made to deceive me.'" (ibidem). In "A Study in Pink" (S1 E1), for instance, viewers may be convinced that they have identified the murderer even before Sherlock does. An uncalled for cab driver appears just moments before Watson locates the victim's phone in 221B Baker Street. For the audience, however, this is the clue that the phone and ergo the murderer have something to do with the cab that is awaiting Sherlock. The viewer's assumptions are immediately proven right.

Doyle uses similar techniques and also provides the audience with clues to convey the feeling of foreseeing, without giving away all of the details so as to spoil the end. In “A Scandal in Bohemia” (1891), a person hurries by 221B Baker Street and, while walking by, wishes Sherlock a good night. This happens on the same day that Sherlock first encounters Miss Adler, although he is convinced that she is not aware of his disguise. At this point, the reader can assume that the information about the “slim youth in an ulster” (Doyle “A Scandal in Bohemia” 43) is not random, but that it was most likely Miss Adler, equally in disguise, who rushed by. The reader’s assumptions are confirmed when Sherlock reads out Miss Adler’s note. She confesses to Sherlock that she already knew who he was when he stepped into her home after being in a fight and that she was the one who wished him a good night the same evening.

In Doyle’s “The Final Problem,” the reader also immediately suspects the sick English woman’s letter from the hotel to be written by someone else in order to distract Watson and leave Sherlock alone. While the narratives are consciously organised in such a manner so that we, as consumers, might suspect something, we attribute foreseeable events to our own abilities. What these examples imply is that while we enjoy the concept of a hero saving the day, the familiar and also predictable pattern provides the audience with a feeling of being able to save the day themselves. Certain clues are revealed deliberately in order for the audience to engage in solving the crime, which again contributes to the pleasure of the genre. In the end, audiences admire the hero and at the same time identify with the protagonist, since they were able to predict the outcome and practically figures as heroes themselves. However, in the case of Doyle’s detective stories, we perceive the narrative through Watson’s perspective and thereby only know as much as he gives away. In that case, audiences probably identify even more with Watson, while nevertheless enjoying guessing the outcome themselves.

While these patterns and genre conventions may be typical of monographic narratives, Arthur Conan Doyle, Mark Gattis and Steven Moffat deploy these features in order to carry forward their serial narrative. They use these conventions and the pleasures that come with them differently to appreciate the full potential of the consultant detective. These differences in making use of the genre conventions can foremost be explained by looking at the narrative structure from Chapter 3. Doyle presents the reader with self-contained narratives, which offer the entirety of the familiar detective genre in each narrative. This means that each narrative, as discussed before, features the introduction of the crime, the chase after the villain and the resolution at the very end of the narrative. For the BBC serial *Sherlock*, the pattern is altered. While each narrative indeed tells of a crime which is resolved by the end of the episode, there are still open questions that need to be answered. In the season finale “The Great Game” (S1 E3), for example, the idyllic world is not restored. The season ends with Sherlock pointing a gun at a bomb while Watson, Moriarty and himself are standing around closely. At this point, the audience does not know the outcome and is forced to wait until the next season to find out. The pleasure that comes from the curiosity of how the situation will turn out and whether Sherlock will manage to save the day without losing his life in the process. While the short stories by Doyle please the audience by immediately serving them with a resolution and peaceful finale, an idyllic for now, Gattis and Moffat make use of the pleasure for a happy ending as well as an idyllic world by delaying the resolution by making use of cliffhangers as discussed in the analysis in Chapter 3.

While the pattern heavily relies on familiarity, as has been repeatedly claimed in this chapter, it is important to note that it also needs innovation to keep audiences’ interest. The repetitious character of an item without innovation would adhere to modern aesthetics, but even then it is not considered art but an industrious product. However, it seems evident

by now that certain patterns with elements of innovation have emerged over time and proven to be successful in the media and among consumers. Although often the principle of variation within conventions is the focus of research, Eco proposes a different perspective on the matter. He claims that “[t]he problem is not one of recognizing that the serial text works variations indefinitely on a basic scheme (and in this sense it can be judged from the point of view of the “modern” aesthetics). The real problem is that what is of interest is not so much the single variations as “variability” as a formal principle, but the fact that one can make variations to infinity.” (Eco *The Limits of Interpretation* 96). Thus, Eco does not see the value of a series in the fact that they work on a basic pattern with variations, but sees value in the infinite character of variations. “What becomes celebrated here is a sort of victory of life over art, with the paradoxical result that the era of electronics, instead of emphasizing the phenomena of shock, interruption, novelty, and frustration of expectations, would produce a return to the continuum, the Cyclical, the Periodical, the Regular.” (ibidem). At first, it would seem that Eco’s claim contradicts what I am trying to argue in this thesis, for I am arguing in favour of interruptions and novelty and expectations to ensure serialisation. However, that is exactly the point. I do not disagree with Eco’s claim that it is not in the power of “shock, interruption, novelty, and frustration of expectations” (ibidem) to continue a serialised text to infinity. Fortunately, my thesis focuses on the techniques which are used to serialise a text in the first place, rather than ensuring endlessness.

The familiar pattern of detective and crime stories with the vast possibilities in variability within the stories satisfies audiences’ needs on various levels. First of all, the narrative provides a real-world, recognisable scenarios and an admirable hero to support in his or her conquest to free society from evil. Furthermore, the means by which the crimes are solved offer a source of pleasure, for protagonists often operate outside of legal

conventions or by rather unusual means, contributing to the audience's *jouissance*. While sharing the thrill with the protagonist during the chase, audiences are encouraged to solve the crime on their own. This is done by deliberately including clues which hint at the outcome, which do not convey predictability, but rather reward the audience's ability to foresee (*ibidem* 86). How the pleasure of the familiar pattern contributes to the seriality, though, is reflected in the respective structure of the narrative. While Doyle provides readers with the satisfaction of a peaceful world at the end of each story, Gattis and Moffat delay this satisfaction and thereby stretch the narrative over several episodes. What they have in common, though, is that the micro-texts display novelty with each instalment in order to keep the audience's interest. This is not only done on the story level, introducing a new crime with each text, but also on a formal level. The analysis from the previous chapter also shows that the texts have certain flexibility within the genre conventions and thereby also vary in structure. At one point, the hero does not even catch the criminal without disrupting the audience's pleasure. What the texts also have in common and which is also the subject of the next subchapter is the fact that while the serialised narratives rely on familiarity and innovation, they also rely on the recurring characters responsible for restoring peace with each instalment.

4.2. Never change a winning team – recurring (main) characters

Recurring characters are an essential element in most serialised narratives. While there are main protagonists such as Sherlock Holmes and Watson, there are also recurring minor characters such as Moriarty, Mrs Hudson, Lestrade, Molly and Miss Adler. Until now, I repeatedly used the term (recurring) characters. Even though this is a general term which applies to the subjects of analysis so far, Mayer proposes a different perspective on this matter arguing for a significant difference between “series characters” and “serial figures”

(Mayer 9). While the former “denotes characters in a closed fictional universe,” (Mayer 9) the latter refers to “figures that are more loosely connected by means of their status as cultural icons or stereotypes yet move across media and medial forms.” (Mayer 9). Since we have established the iconicity and the transmediality of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, this definition perfectly categorises the subjects of this analysis. In order for the serial figures to be recognised as such, they need to fulfil certain criteria. According to Mayer, the figures are “flat, immediately recognizable, iconic, and fated to execute a stock repertoire of actions and attitudes in ever-changing settings and contexts, against a backdrop of increasingly complex scenarios and devices.” (9). This holds true for both Holmes and Watson. Sherlock is the eccentric and arrogant “high-functioning sociopath” (S1 E1 58:00-58:02), as he calls himself, and Watson is the sentimental counterpart to Sherlock’s cold-hearted figure. This dynamic is quite important for the narrative’s relatability, for Watson is the character both Doyle readers and *Sherlock* viewers identify with. Hence, the recipients approach Sherlock’s odd nature through a more relatable character. His typical behaviour and stock repertoire of actions include his talent of deduction and how he applies it at crime scenes, as well as his rather inappropriate attitude considering the circumstances, as he lacks the empathy to sympathise with victims and those affected. Watson’s repertoire of actions and attitudes involves his blog writing, the thrill he experiences while solving crimes, even though simultaneously feeling anxious about it, and his sentiment which brings Sherlock back to earth.

Besides the recurring main and minor serial figures, each micro-text features new characters according to the specific crime of the instalment. The changing characters with each micro-text are supposed to convey the impression that the stories are ever-changing while the narrative scheme remains the same (Eco *Im Labyrinth der Vernunft* 305). For the audience to be able to follow the narrative and the who-is-who, all of the characters need

to be introduced. For the main characters, this happens at the very beginning of the macro-text; after the first introduction and the establishment of the role in the narrative, the main characters do not have to be reintroduced again. Both Doyle and the BBC series adopt more or less the same approach to introduce Holmes and Watson, starting with the stories' narrator, Watson. The BBC adaptation begins with a scene in which he is having a nightmare, followed by a therapy session where he talks about the trauma he suffered during the Afghanistan war. The first introduction of Sherlock, too, happens quite similar in both the original and the adaptation. He is immediately portrayed as somehow strange, since he is first introduced while he is in the middle of forensic evidence testing. The first sight of him in the audio-visual narrative actually is shot from within a body bag, from the perspective of the corpse (see *Figure 11*, S1 E1 8:32). The circumstances under which we first encounter Sherlock immediately convey the character's strangeness, which will be enhanced throughout further encounters. After the two main characters are introduced, the audience expects them to be



Figure 11: First appearance of Sherlock Holmes

featured again in following instalments. This is to say, “we rely on the consistency of characters and space; it is part of what makes the show comfortable to watch” (Butler 24). While this is true for the television series nowadays, it was not necessarily true for the time of the Victorian Sherlock Holmes. As has been discussed in chapter 3, Doyle’s interrelated short stories were an invention for the time being, since episodic series with continuing characters was not an established narrative form in the Victorian era. However, this

invention nevertheless provided readers with the comfortable familiarity of weekly publications.

While the main characters are thoroughly introduced once and do not need further introduction as the narrative evolves, circumstantial characters have to be introduced to the audience with each micro-text in order to understand their role in the story. As mentioned before, Eco (*Im Labyrinth der Vernunft* 305) suggests that these circumstantial characters are needed in order to create the feeling of a new story; in the case of the detective story, these characters are mostly just new villains caught by the same detective. The introduction of the criminal in the respective story happens rather incidentally while the narrative evolves. Interestingly, while the villain Moriarty plays a crucial role in the BBC adaptation, he is introduced in much more detail in Doyle's story where he only plays an active role in one short story. Doyle gives readers a more detailed account of Moriarty's past, his professional career and how he becomes one of the most dangerous men in London. In Gattis and Moffat's version, Moriarty is at least mentioned in every episode for the first two seasons, but the audience does not know anything about him except that he appears to be a genius, just like Holmes, and that he is a criminal whom people fear with good reason.

When discussing recurring characters, it might also be worth mentioning which characters reoccurred in the adaptation and how they contribute to its serialisation. While Sherlock and John obviously found their way into the remediation, several other characters, among which are some minor ones, also play a role in the BBC adaptation. The most interesting characters in this respect would probably be Jim Moriarty and Miss Irene Adler. While they are the centre of one short story each in Doyle's narratives, they have a quite bigger impact on the stories broadcasted by BBC. Moriarty is in both versions portrayed as Sherlock's arch-enemy, who is behind several unsolved cases. In Doyle's short story "The Final Problem," Sherlock introduces Moriarty to Watson by telling him that he has been

suspicious of a criminal mastermind behind several unsolved crimes. He gives an account of numerous crimes in order to create a picture of the kind of person Moriarty is. However, this is done on approximately one page. Gattis and Moffat use the same background story in terms of multiple unsolved crimes, but extend these over several episodes and in greater detail, partially showing Moriarty in the act of committing the crime. Irene Adler also seems to play a special role in Victorian Holmes' life, as she is only referred to as "THE woman" (Doyle "A Scandal in Bohemia" 4) and apparently left a memorable impact on the consultant detective. The curious name of "THE woman" (ibidem) sticks to her in the adaptation as well. Both Moriarty and Adler seem to be one of Sherlock's most important enemies in the original stories, which is probably why they both have important roles in the adaptation.

One important aspect in why specifically Moriarty and Miss Adler play such crucial roles in both Holmes versions is that they are portrayed as Sherlock's intellectual equals, as his "Doppelgänger". Stories featuring a hero tend to create villains who operate on the protagonist's eye-level. These antiheroes are usually the most difficult to defeat and have a crucial impact on the protagonist and his psyche. While the narrative usually implicates a Doppelgänger dynamic between protagonist and antagonist, this ambivalent relationship between Holmes and Moriarty is pointed out explicitly. This becomes already evident in Doyle's short story "The Final Problem," but Gattis and Moffat take this to a new level and use the Doppelgänger theme intensively. Dialogue fragments, such as the following one, give the audience a feeling of closeness between the two "(Jim to Sherlock) All my life I've been searching for distractions. You were the best distraction [...]" (S2 E3 1:09:07-1:09:11) and at the same time a sort of ambivalence where they admire each other's mind, but despise how they use it:

Sherlock: [...] but I'm not my brother, remember? I am you – prepared to do anything; prepared to burn; prepared to do what ordinary people won't do. You want me to shake hands with you in hell? I shall not disappoint you.

Moriarty: Naah. You talk big. Naah. You're ordinary. You're ordinary – you're on the side of the angels.

Sherlock: Oh, I may be on the side of the angels, but don't think for one second that I am one of them.

Moriarty: No, you're not. (blinks, then closes his eyes briefly. Sherlock does likewise.) I see. You're not ordinary. No. You're me. (S2 E3 1:15:34-1:16:47)

This scene depicts the character's connection on two levels. On the one hand, the dialogue explicitly states their similarity. On the other hand, Sherlock mirrors Moriarty's mimic and gesture as if being the same person (see *Figure 12* below, S2 E3 1:16:29-1:16:31). Moreover, the over-the-shoulder shot in both frames emphasises the emotional and yet ambivalent connection between the two. This moment of equality captures Moriarty's realisation that he has to do the same exact thing as Sherlock in order to defeat him: he has to die.



Figure 12: Sherlock mirroring Moriarty's

Moriarty's last gesture of shaking Sherlock's hand (*Figure 13*, S2 E3 1:17:03) symbolises what Sherlock says just seconds before, "You want me to shake hands with you in hell? I shall not disappoint you." (S2 E3 1:15:48-1:15:52). During this scene, the audience realises more than ever that Moriarty and Sherlock are equals, hero and antihero, but at the same time put themselves above everyone else.



Figure 13: Moriarty & Sherlock "shaking hands in hell"

Miss Adler is also an interesting character with respect to the Doppelgänger phenomenon. She represents Sherlock's female counterpart and is therefore honourably referred to as "THE woman" (Doyle "A Scandal in Bohemia" 4). In Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia," Miss Adler even manages to outsmart Sherlock and get away. However, Holmes is not at all disappointed but deeply impressed by her skills and her intelligence. This attitude towards Adler resembles the admiration Holmes articulates towards Moriarty. In the television adaptation "A Scandal in Belgravia," in contrast to the short story, he does not immediately acknowledge her cleverness, as he only calls her "moderately clever" (S2 E1 27:38). But he soon learns to appreciate her. Another similarity to Moriarty is how the relationship between Adler and Sherlock is portrayed in the adaptation. The *climax* where Sherlock realises how to defeat her plan is also shot from an over-the-shoulder perspective. However, Adler is portrayed in a medium-close-up (Bordwell 189) rather than a close-up (ibidem) such as Sherlock (*Figure 15*, S2 E1 1:20:25-1:20:28). This distance suggests that

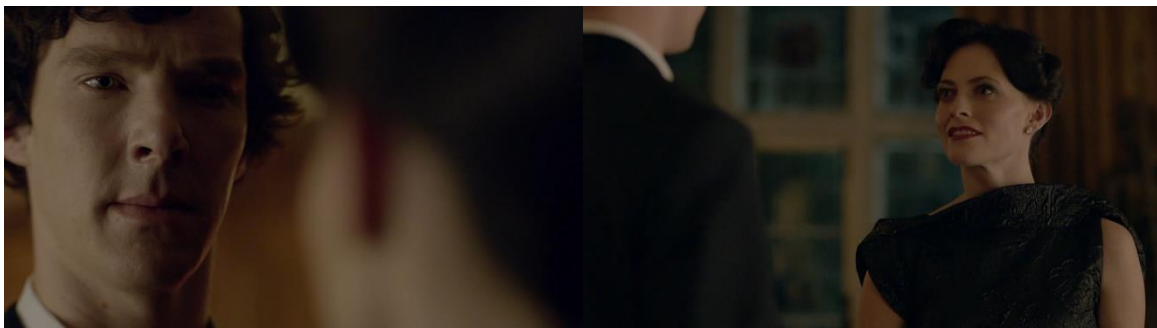


Figure 15: Sherlock & Irene Adler

she is still of the impression that she won this fight and that Sherlock is the one who has feelings for her rather than the other way around. As soon as Adler's true feelings are exposed, the frame captures her face in a



Figure 14: Irene Adler Close-up

close-up (Bordwell 189) (*Figure 14*, S2 E1 1:20:50). This change in distance suggests that Sherlock was right to assume her feelings for him, for a close-up is used to emphasise facial

expressions and emotions (Bordwell 189). At this point, both Adler and the audience realise that Sherlock was again able to outsmart his opponent.

The combination of the detective stories' familiar pattern and the recurring characters were the main elements which held Doyle's narratives together and constituted the seriality of the stories. However, Doyle's character constellations did not suffice for the BBC adaptation. Therefore, some of the characters were altered for the television series. The apparently most significant criminals were used to create new layers to the adaptation. This might be particularly interesting for those who have read Doyle's stories before and afterwards watch the adaptation. At the end of the very first episode "A Study in Pink", the audience is confronted with the name "Moriarty". Holmes-devotees are familiar with this name from the short story "The Final Problem". They also know what is connected to it, namely Sherlock's 'fake' death. Hearing the name again in the adaptation but in the context of another case might raise the audience's suspicion and encourage them to think about possible connections or try to foresee what is going to happen. Miss Adler is a similar case. She is not as prominent as Moriarty, but additional layers alter her character as well. The story's basic scheme is the same as in Doyle's story featuring "THE woman" (Doyle "A Scandal in Bohemia" 4). However, in the BBC adaptation, she is also connected to Moriarty and poses a greater threat to society than 'only' ruining a Royal's life. This altering of characters is an important factor in maintaining the serial character of the *Sherlock* television show. The episodes each feature one case, which is resolved by the end of the episode, but the fact that particular criminals are nevertheless running loose adds another layer to the narrative and thereby creates a continuing story arc. The fact that characters remediated for the purpose of adaptation are recognised by the audience who have read Doyle's detective stories brings me to my next point: memory. While this connection seems

obvious, the next subchapter will introduce different levels on which memory takes part in making serial narratives pleasurable.

4.3. Memento – How forgetting is crucial for remembering

Memory is not only crucial in the context of adaptations and how characters are reinvented for the purpose of remediating a narrative, but also within the serial narrative itself. This specifically holds true for serials, featuring interconnected micro-texts, which, taken together, are pivotal for understanding and being able to fully appreciate the macro-text. However, both aspects, the memory which Sherlock Holmes fans from the beginning apply and also the memory necessary to enjoy the individual serial narrative, will be discussed in this chapter. Sielke is of the opinion that memory basically works in a serial manner, that recollection presupposes the act of forgetting and that recollection is not so much important for the past but for both the present as well as for the future (390). What this means for serial narration is that pieces of information which trigger our memory help us to remember something from the past, which in turn affects the present. This process of recollection is also used in order to interpret future events in light of this memory. To forget some of the information is also an important part in the process so that the audience finds joy in “remembering” something and drawing conclusions from it in the new context. This has also to do with the concept of repetition with variation, meaning that something familiar is remembered, but this familiarity is embedded in an unknown context. Before discussing the satisfaction behind remembering which Doyle readers experience while watching *Sherlock*, an introduction to the role of memory in narratives will be presented which is followed by an analysis of the role of memory in complex narratives and techniques which are applied in order to trigger memory for the benefit of the narrative.

Memory is often seen only in connection to the past. In the context of serial narratives, however, it definitely involves more. While serial narration is only a small matter of inquiry, it is nevertheless interesting to note that cognition studies no longer consider memory and remembering as only saving and recalling of information, but rather as a continuing-processual reshaping of something already known while focusing on the future rather than on the past (Sielke 390f.). This implies that each memory we recall is reshaped by the new context. Moreover, this reshaped memory influences future events that we encounter and vice versa, meaning that the memory of past events is often adjusted according to newly acquired information. One example of reshaping a memory due to newly acquired information is when Moriarty is introduced in the swimming pool scene at the end of “The Big Game” (S1 E3). Attentive viewers immediately recognise him. However, we do not recognise him as Moriarty right away, but as Molly’s boyfriend Jim, whom she introduces to Sherlock in the laboratory while he is working. At the time, audiences are not suspicious of the newly introduced character, who also works at the laboratory. But as soon as we encounter him again as Sherlock’s enemy, we rethink the situation of the first encounter with Jim. Have we missed some important information during that scene? Was it obvious? We naturally conclude that he deliberately chose Molly in order to inconspicuously get close to Sherlock. As a viewer, we reevaluate the situation we first thought of to be completely innocent. It is Moriarty’s way of humiliating Sherlock and in part the audience for not realising that the most dangerous man in London was right in front of our faces.

While some recipients might be cognitively attentive and invested to such an extent that they remember important detail on their own, many instances of remembering something in serial narratives include being reminded. Remembering, however, presupposes the act of forgetting a piece of information. Humans absorb information

selectively in order to avoid an excessive load of input that needs to be stored. “Remembering everything all the time means going mad” (Wallmannsberger 598), therefore, we have strategies to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information. Sherlock serves as a perfect example as he seems to deliberately ‘forget’ things, as he makes clear in this dialogue with Watson about the solar system:

Watson: Not important? It’s primary school stuff. How can you not know that?

Sherlock: Well, if I ever did then I’ve deleted it.

Watson: Deleted it?

Sherlock: Listen. This is my hard drive [pointing at his head] and it only makes sense to put things in there that are useful. Really useful. Ordinary people fill their heads with all kinds of rubbish and that makes it hard to get to the stuff that matters. (S1 E3 4:34-4:55)

Here, Sherlock puts himself above “ordinary” people by explaining how his brain works even beyond natural information selection. Apparently, he is able to deliberately delete information not relevant to him. In reality, people do not remember all ‘kinds of rubbish,’ of course. However, “[w]e know very little about how the human mind goes about forgetting, but it is quite obvious that different kinds of forgetting are vital for the the [sic!] economies of cognitive processing” (Wallmannsberger 597). Wallmannsberger suggests that “[w]hat we remember and forget are signs whose varying degrees of recoverability depend on a complex matrix of factors, such as salience, relevance or associative potential” (598). So we do remember and forget according to relevance, and do not fill our heads with all kinds of rubbish, as Sherlock suggests. Sometimes, we might not particularly forget something, but due to relevance, the information might not be as easily retrievable as others. In order to help the consumer remember important information that might have slipped, “efficient tricks to trigger the memory” (Bourdau 203) are used.

One of these tricks to trigger memory and help the audience remember important information is the addition of dialogue. These dialogues often seem redundant but are crucial to keep the audience in sync with important plot developments. Jeremy Butler

relates these redundant dialogues to the benefit of re-establishing characters and their situation (28). To draw on the example of Moriarty again, the character is indeed re-established in the swimming pool scene.

Sherlock [not seeing Moriarty yet, talking into the room]: Who are you?

Moriarty: I gave you my number. I thought you might call [appears in the swimming pool].

[...]

Moriarty: Jim Moriarty. Hiiiiii! Jim? Jim from the hospital? Oh. Did I really make such a fleeting impression? But then, I suppose, that was rather the point. (S1 E3 1:21:41-1:22:36)

This dialogue has two major effects. Moriarty re-establishes himself and reminds both Sherlock as well as the audience that he made an appearance before. However, he re-establishes himself as a different person. While he was first presented as Molly's boyfriend Jim, he now reveals who he really is, the consultant criminal Jim Moriarty. In a mocking way, he is trying to remind Sherlock of the fact that they have already met and confesses that it was the point to come close to him.

While dialogues have the purpose of re-establishing characters, they also contribute to revealing information about the character's past. Butler (24) claims that while we are often conscious about the characters' histories, their past is often depicted rather vaguely. Interestingly, we know a lot more about Watson's past than Sherlock's. This begins with Sherlock deducing several personal details about Watson in one of the most famous displays of Holmes's deduction talent in all of the Sherlock Holmes detective stories:

[without having had a conversation yet] Sherlock: Afghanistan or Iraq?

Watson: Sorry, what?

Sherlock: Which was it, Afghanistan or Iraq?

Watson: Afghanistan [harrumphs] sorry how did you [interrupted by Molly's entering]

[...]

Watson: We don't know a thing about each other, I don't know where we're meeting, I don't even know your name.

Sherlock: I know you're an army doctor and you've just been home from Afghanistan. I know you have a brother who's worried about you, but you wouldn't go to him for help because you don't approve of him. Possibly because he's an alcoholic, more likely because he recently walked out on his wife. And I know your therapist thinks your limp is psychosomatic, quite correctly I'm afraid. That's enough to be going home with, don't you think? [turns around, walks away and stops in the door] The name is Sherlock Holmes and the address is 221B Baker Street! [winks] (S1 E1 10:00-11:51)

While this display of Sherlock's talents is impressive and serves as proof of his abilities, this short monologue also provides the audience with personal details about one of the main characters.

These elements in dialogues, which are particularly but casually inserted in order to remind the audience of important details, have different effects. For viewers who follow the serial narrative on a regular basis, these are just redundant bits of information, which might be satisfactory because they remembered on their own. For irregulars, these small pieces of information are relevant in order for them to be able to keep up with the narrative. Some information might have slipped, or often the narrative is not consumed with a lot of cognitive effort. For those instances, these triggers are crucial for both the regulars as well as the irregulars to find pleasure in the serial narrative. This holds particularly true for the complex narrative in *Sherlock*, since "narrative complexity surely implies that TV viewers have to remember details of the narration and of the story arcs" (Bourdaa 203). Complex narratives, therefore, require more cognitive effort on behalf of the audience, since particular details might be relevant for a longer period of time or over several interruptions of other plotlines.

While the complex narrative demands a certain degree of cognitive effort in itself, the fact that *Sherlock* is an adaptation adds another layer to possible situations to remember for those who know the stories by Doyle. In this context, the statement "Wir erinnern nicht rückwärtsgewandt, sondern mit dem Blick nach vorne" (Sielke 390) becomes particularly

relevant. With the memory of Doyle's stories in mind, the episodes in *Sherlock* bear numerous clues, which engage the viewer in making assumptions about future outcomes based on the connection to the original stories. In this case, memory becomes an act of recontextualisation in the process of the information we remember integrated into the new context (Sielke 391). In terms of the Sherlock Holmes stories, this process offers pleasure foremost in connection to the characters. Strictly speaking, most of the remembering forward in *Sherlock* originates from the occurrence of the villains, Sherlock's enemies. As previously discussed, Holmes' opponents Moriarty and Miss Adler occur again in the television serial, but are altered and feature in more than one episode.

Moriarty has a special role in the process of remembering details from the original while watching the adaptation. Doyle features the criminal Moriarty in only one short story, "The Final Problem," which was supposed to be Sherlock Holmes' end. Doyle created an equal minded genius, operating for London's criminal network, in order to, at last, be the one to defeat the famous Sherlock Holmes. Before the final scene at the Reichenbach Falls where both Sherlock and Moriarty fall down the cliff and allegedly die, the two only meet one single time in person. However, Sherlock tells Watson about the 'history' they have together.

[Sherlock to John in their study:] 'For years past I have continually been conscious of some power behind the malefactor, some deep organizing power stands in the way of the law, and throws its shield over the wrong-doer. Again and again in cases of the most varying sorts – forgery cases, robberies, murders – I have felt the presence of this force, and I have deduced its action in many of those undiscovered crimes in which I have not been personally consulted. For years I have endeavoured to break through the veil which shrouded it, and at last the time came when I seized my thread and followed it, until it led me, after a thousand cunning windings, to ex-Professor Moriarty, of mathematician celebrity.' (Doyle "The Final Problem" 415).

However, there is not a lot of detail on the battle between Holmes and Moriarty until this point, but Holmes paints a picture of the situation for the audience. Sherlock continues to tell Watson about the so far failed attempts to bring the professor down and finally says, "I

tell you, my friend, that if a detailed account of that silent contest could be written, it would take its place as the most brilliant bit of thrust-and-parry work in the history of detection” (Doyle “The Final Problem” 417). Moffat and Gattis apparently took Sherlock by his word and created ‘the most brilliant bit of thrust-and-parry’ over the course of two seasons, providing the viewer with a full account of their battle.

The excitement for the Doyle-appreciator begins with the very first episode “A Study in Pink”. This episode’s already discussed final cliff has a particular effect on Doyle-devotees:

Watson: What are you smiling about?

Sherlock: Moriarty!

Watson: What’s Moriarty?

Sherlock: I have absolutely no idea. (S1 E1 1:26:49-1:26:54)

This is where it gets interesting for the audience; those who have read the stories by Conan Doyle know exactly who Moriarty is. In this particular moment, the viewer has privileged information, which is not even revealed to the genius detective at this point. The viewer finds pleasure in recognising the name and knowing exactly that Moriarty is Sherlock’s arch-enemy and intellectual equal, who eventually might bring destruction to Holmes.

The first time Holmes and Moriarty meet also has significance in terms of memory for the audience. In *A Study in Scarlet*, they first meet in Sherlock’s study. Sherlock is reconstructing the first meeting with Moriarty to Watson:

‘You evidently don’t know me,’ said he.

‘On the contrary,’ I answered, ‘I think it is fairly evident that I do. Pray take a chair. I can spare you five minutes if you have anything to say.’

‘All that I have to say has already crossed your mind,’ said he.

‘Then possibly my answer has crossed yours,’ I replied. (Doyle “The Final Problem” 418f.)

The last two lines are so prominent and depict the relationship of the intellectual equals so well that they found their place in the first official meeting between Holmes and Moriarty

in “The Big Game” as well. In the episode, when they first meet at a swimming pool at midnight, Moriarty has captured Watson and put a bomb-vest on him.

Moriarty: You can’t be allowed to continue, you just can’t. I would try to convince you but everything I might say has crossed your mind.

Sherlock: Probably my answer has crossed yours. (S1 E3 1:28:06-1:28:25)

In the BBC show, the episode ends at this point with the last frame of Sherlock pointing a gun at the bomb vest, as has been discussed during the analysis of cliffhangers. The scene is continued in the next episode where Moriarty takes a phone call, receives an important piece of information from someone and afterwards turns to Sherlock with the words “Sorry, wrong day to die,” (S2 E1 2:44-2:49) and “you’ll be hearing from me, Sherlock” (S2 E1 2:55-2:58). For those who have read “The Final Problem,” this is not an empty threat. At this point, the attentive recipient believes that he or she is able to foresee what is going to happen, which is a ‘fight’ between the two during which at least one of them dies.

For the knowledgeable Holmes fan, the very beginning of the episode “A Scandal in Bohemia” also bears important information. After Moriarty leaves the swimming pool, a cut brings us to another short scene: A woman’s hand on the phone and then entering a room, dressed in lingerie, with the words “Well, have you been wicked your Highness? Yes, Miss Adler,” (S2 E1 3:40-3:46) which is followed by the opening credits. After the excitement about meeting Moriarty for the first time, the recipient is now confronted with the name Miss Adler, which is a familiar name, also known as “THE woman” (Doyle “A Scandal in Bohemia” 4). Due to the fact that she also occurs in connection to a member of the Royal Family in the Doyle story, this scene rings an immediate bell for the attentive viewer. However, the question arises of how and why Miss Adler is connected to Moriarty. The memory of the original Sherlock Holmes stories is triggered, but there are nevertheless several question marks after the teaser. How will the battle between Moriarty and Sherlock end? What does Irene Adler have to do with Moriarty and with the case? What kind of

information could Miss Adler possibly give to Moriarty that is so important for Moriarty to keep Holmes alive?

Even though the adaptation *Sherlock* is particularly pleasurable in the light of memory for those who have read the original detective stories, both versions play with the concept of memory within the story. Narratives insert details which might not seem relevant at the time, but appear important for the plot at a later point. In order for the audience to make these connections, certain elements are inserted to trigger the memory, such as dialogues or clues. Especially in complex narratives, such as *Sherlock*, memory plays a pivotal aspect in enjoying the full story. However, in order for the familiar pattern to remain pleasurable, the surroundings and the storyline need to carry a certain degree of innovation. A certain balance needs to be achieved in order to ensure entertainment. In the case of *Sherlock*, altered characters and stretched story arcs take part in the variation from the original. This is not only pleasurable for recipients who first encounter the Sherlock Holmes detective stories, but also for the ingrained fans who are already familiar with most of the characters for they are able to draw connections according to the original stories. On this note, it is time to acknowledge that without a consistent fan base, not so many adaptations would have been made about the consultant detective. Consequently, the following and thereby last chapter of this thesis will discuss the fans' involvement in the popularisation of Sherlock Holmes.

5. FANDOM

While many differences have been discussed so far between Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories and the BBC adaptation *Sherlock*, this chapter will focus on an aspect which they have in common: The Sherlockian Fanbase. The consultant detective's popularity did not come from nowhere and indeed not from only a small number of individual readers who

enjoyed the detective stories. Conan Doyle initiated an entire fanbase with creating the character of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson and this fanbase developed into an entire community of Sherlockians over time. This fandom around Sherlock Holmes manifests itself in various forms. A prominent feature of a fanbase is the communication between recipient and author, recipient and media platforms and also among recipients (Fröhlich 248). In this last chapter, fan culture, in general, plays a crucial role in order to understand the importance of the topic in connection to seriality. In order to do this, I will outline stereotypes and public opinions towards fans in contrast to what fans de facto contribute to culture. At last, this chapter offers an insight into the active participation of fans and how this participatory culture shapes and influences the Sherlock Holmes detective stories.

5.1. Stereotypical Fan culture

A fan community often carries a rather negative connotation, where the members are more or less portrayed as ‘nerds’. Fans are often victims to labels due to the fact that they identify so strongly with a fictional world. Jenson even claims that many academics and the educated “aficionados” (23) of high culture took part in this labelling process. By differentiating between ‘them’ and ‘us’, they contributed to pegging fans of popular culture as obsessed individuals or members of a hysterical crowd (see Jenson 13 & 23). While Jenson discusses the general peripheralisation of devotees of popular culture, Jenkins gives a more detailed account of how stereotypical fans are classified and portrayed. He argues that fans are often prejudged as being “misfits and ‘crazies’ [...] ‘a lot of overweight women [...]’; as childish adults; in short, as people who have little or no ‘life’ apart from their fascination with this particular program” (11). Interestingly, the television series *Sherlock* (2010) makes use of exactly these stereotypical images of obsessed fans. In the

Christmas Special “Many Happy Returns” (2013), which is only seven minutes long, the former forensic scientist Phillip Anderson is portrayed exactly as in the prejudice connotations mentioned above. He seems as if he has let himself go, he grew a beard and his hair is messy in contrast to his well-styled hair in previous episodes and his clean shaved face. In “Many Happy Returns” (2013), Gregson even says to Anderson, “I see that you lost a good job fantasising about a dead man coming back to life [...]” (“Many Happy Returns” 3:06-3:11). This statement by Gregson endorses the claim by Jenkins about the fans having “little to no life” (11). In *Figure 16* (S3 E1 56:46), which is taken from “The Empty Hearse” (S3 E1) Anderson is shot in a distorted close-up (Bordwell 189). This kind of shot usually emphasises “facial expression, the details of a gesture, or a significant object” (Bordwell 189). In this case, the facial expression is the feature in focus. At this exact moment, he shows aversion over a



Figure 16: Anderson

fan’s theory of Sherlock and Moriarty being romantically involved and that they conspired to fake their deaths. This thought seems to upset him, with his facial expression indicating disgust. The distorted frame protrudes Anderson’s face and the perspective makes it look like as if he is looking down at us, thereby breaking the fourth wall. This perspective makes him appear rather threatening and ‘crazy’. The screenshot occurs during a scene, which shows ‘The Empty Hearse’ fan club discussing theories about how Sherlock managed to fake his death, for they believe that he is still alive.

Moments after, one of the other fan club members (*Figure 17*, S3 E1 30:00) is shown, which is the one claiming the romantic relationship between Sherlock and Moriarty.

Looking at the character and after the establishment of a fan club which spends its free time theorising about a famous person, it is assumable that it was intentional for her to be a little overweight, as suggested by the stereotypes. The frame in which she



Figure 17: Fan club member

is shown encourages the image of the obsessed fan. As she is shot from a medium close-up (Bordwell 189), the background is visible, even though blurry. The perspective makes her less threatening and fanatic than Anderson, for we meet her at eye-level rather than from a slightly lower perspective as with Anderson. The background shows a stereotypical pinboard where all the information on the object of obsession is collected and connected with threads in order to spin a web of theories and conspiracies. This is once again suggestive of the ‘crazy’ behaviour fans supposedly show.

At last, Sherlock explains to Anderson how he faked his death, after which Anderson appears to have a nervous meltdown. In *Figure 18* (S3 E1 1:19:00-1:19:37) on the next page, you can see how he is ripping everything off the pinboard. The breakdown

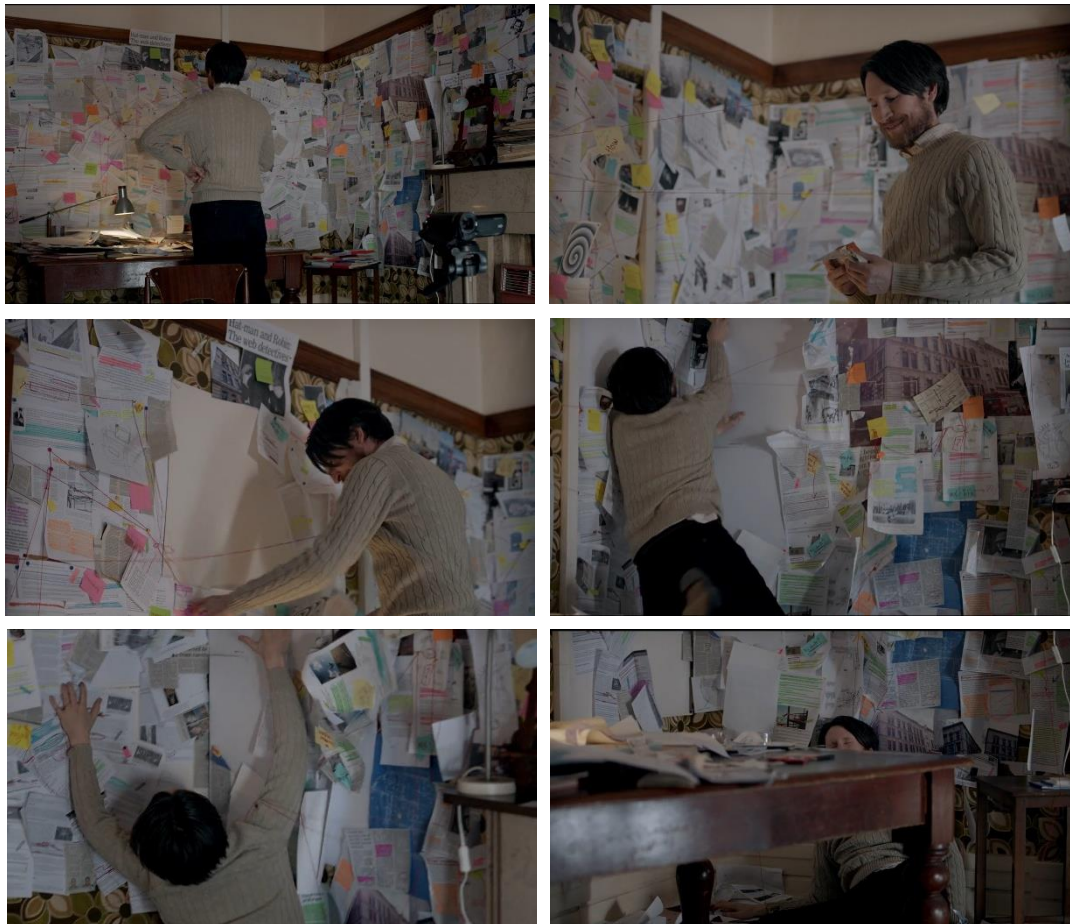


Figure 18: Anderson's nervous breakdown

originates from Anderson questioning the truthfulness of Sherlock's story, for he finds loopholes which keep him wondering about certain issues, such as the position of Watson during the fall. The emotional outburst during which he tears down everything he has worked on and devoted his entire time to shows for the degree of emotional investment on behalf of the fans. This is also endorsed by the fact that he still questions the method of Sherlock's fake death, since he is so caught up in the story that he continues to find loopholes. Anderson's behaviour again fulfils the stereotypes and portrays him as the crazy devotee, who has a nervous breakdown out of despair.

This negative view spoils the beauty of the engagement, which the fans experience with whatever they admire, let it be an artist or a character or a serial figure. Jenkins (24), however, turns this negative connotation around and argues for active participation instead of passive obsessed subjects. He suggests that fans do not function as mere "audience for

popular texts; instead, they become active participants in the construction and circulation of textual meanings” (24). While the active participation and its role in influencing narratives will be discussed in chapter 6.2 below, it shall at this point communicate a perspective in which the fan is not a passive lunatic, but a co-constructor of culture. Unfortunately, as Jenson suggests, “there is very little literature that explores fandom as a normal, everyday cultural or social phenomenon” (13). Rather, fans are portrayed as the stereotypical crazies as suggested above. These stereotypes used in the media further encourage negative connotations. As discussed just now, Gattis and Moffat make use of the stereotypical fan. An ordinary person with no emotional attachment engaging with a serial figure would hardly fulfil an entertaining purpose. Entire television shows are built on this principle of nerdy fans, such as *The Big Bang Theory* (first aired 2007). Naturally, it can be entertaining, and it might even give other recipients the feeling of normality. However, it certainly does not do justice to those devotees who are not obsessively crying over a celebrity but find pleasure in enjoying popular culture beyond passively reading or watching a narrative.

Unfortunately, the media portrays the lunatic fan for entertaining purposes instead of valuing active fan clubs for what they are, namely co-constructor of culture. While they are usually portrayed similar to the character of Anderson, fans of popular culture engage rather differently with their favourite stories and narratives rather than organising pinboards to connect conspiracy theories.

All popular audiences engage in varying degrees of semiotic productivity, producing meanings and pleasures that pertain to their social situation out of the products of the culture industries. But fans often turn this semiotic productivity into some form of textual production that can circulate among – and thus help to define – the fan community. Fans create a fan culture with its own systems of production and distribution [...] that lies outside that of the cultural industries yet shares features with them which more normal popular culture lacks (Fiske 30).

Basically, by actively engaging in the cultural process of exchanging and renegotiating meaning, fans define their own culture, which functions within its own set of rules. This engagement becomes manifested in various forms, such as writing their own stories featuring their favourite characters or continuing the story before the next instalment is even published (Fröhlich 473). The following chapter deals with this active participation on behalf of the fans, which contributes to an altered popular culture. I will thereby discuss how the fans shape the narratives and create new narratives in the process.

5.2. Participatory Culture in Convergence Media - how the fans shape the story

Fanfiction published by the community does not only serve to entertain other fans and readers. Active recipient engagement can go far beyond mere entertainment and can actually shape the respective story and actively contribute. Jenkins conceptualizes this as “participatory culture” and defines the term as, “[r]ather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands” (3). The active involvement in the form of commentaries and discussions increases the number of recipients and further activation in the community (Fröhlich 249). During discussions about past instalments, the readers are basically offered a summary, what would be called a *recap* in television, which maintains and increases the audience’s interest due to the constant engagement (Fröhlich 249).

While participating in popular culture is much easier in the digital age due to easily accessible communication technologies, fans started to engage with their favourite stories long before the invention of the Internet. Back in the 19th century, during the ascension of

Sherlock Holmes to fame, readers already wrote reader's letters to either the author or the newspapers and magazines which they were published in (Fröhlich 248). This kind of engagement resulted in a dialogue between recipients and the production side, such as readers commenting on the last or anticipating about future instalments (Fröhlich 248). However, what triggered the greatest response was indeed the death of the Sherlockians' favourite character. In 1893, Conan Doyle decided to end the life of the, by that time, already famous consultant detective. The public outrage was immense. As a result, almost twenty thousand people cancelled their subscriptions to *The Strand Magazine* following the alleged last detective story (Conan Doyle Info n.p.). Doyle had been considering killing Sherlock Holmes long before, since he had a rather ambivalent relationship to his fictional character. While the short stories supplemented his income, he felt that this type of fiction was distracting from his better work, which consisted of historical texts. Two years prior to "The Adventures of the Final Problem," the story featuring Holmes's death, Doyle wrote in a letter to his mother "I think of slaying Holmes... and winding him up for good and all. He takes my mind from better things" (Baker Street Fandom n.p.). Her response to his thoughts on Holmes was probably quite similar to what the audience thought after they realised the end of Sherlock Holmes, which is "You won't! You can't! You mustn't!" (Baker Street Fandom n.p.). After the publication of "The Final Problem", fans wrote letters to Conan Doyle, accusing him of murder and in some cases even insulted him.

Since then, a lot has changed in the mode of distribution and publication frequency. However, television channels very often also broadcast television shows on a weekly basis and thereby offer the audience a narrative break during which they can engage with and reflect on the story. This means that today, recipients still, or even more so, have the possibility to speculate, anticipate and comment on individual instalments until the next one. In terms of television series, this is especially prominent in-between seasons, which

usually have longer breaks. With *Sherlock*, this narrative break in between seasons takes up to three years before the new season airs. In the meantime, the audience can reflect on past instalments. Even though the macro-text is not published in its entirety, audiences can engage in speculations about the future, which also encourages a dialogue between the recipients (Fröhlich 256). Mittell describes this output as “collective intelligence” (31), which refers to the exchange of information, interpretations and discussions inviting to active participation (103). New interpretations might encourage others to reinterpret the text, and thereby new meanings are created. Perception and interpretations are subjective, and by sharing knowledge with each other, the audience creates this “collective intelligence” (Mittell 31) introduces.

Thus, in the light of participatory culture and textual production on behalf of actively engaging fans, it can be said that Doyle also initiated something positive by killing Sherlock Holmes. After the audience thought that there would be no more of their favourite stories, people started to write continuations of the detective stories themselves in order to prolong their pleasure. They began to theorise about how Sherlock might have survived or continued the stories otherwise. The fans basically ensured the continuity of the detective and his faithful companion, and since the original author declined to do so, they simply did it themselves. However, due to the extent of the public’s outrage, Doyle decided to publish yet another story featuring Sherlock Holmes. Unfortunately, it was not what the audience expected. Although thirty thousand people subscribed as soon as “The Hound of the Baskervilles” was published again in *The Strand* (Conan Doyle Info n.p.), readers soon realised that Sherlock did not rise from the dead. The story was set in a time before 1893, which means that Doyle published a prequel before his death. The audience nevertheless enjoyed the fact that they had yet another story about Sherlock Holmes. Doyle soon realised that the audience wanted more, which in due time resulted in the short story collection “The

Return of Sherlock Holmes”, published in 1903-1904, ten years after “The Final Problem”. Without the audience protesting against the end of Sherlock Holmes, Doyle would have never continued the Sherlock Holmes stories. This degree of influence on the production shows the power that fan culture possesses and implicates that a fanbase is relevant for a narrative’s survival.

While Doyle’s fans operated outside of the narratives and thereby shaped the story, Moffat and Gattis embed the phenomenon of the fanbase into the narrative of *Sherlock* itself. This becomes especially evident with the aforementioned Christmas Special “Many Happy Returns” and the beginning of “The Empty Hearse”. “Many Happy Returns” is a mini-episode, which is only approximately seven minutes long. This short instalment is published as a prequel to season three and is used in order to give the audience a taste of what is to come. Season two ends on the 15th of January 2012 with Sherlock’s fake death. Season three was supposed to air on the 1st of January 2014, which is a rather long time for the audience eager to find out how Sherlock faked his own death. The prequel features Anderson and Lestrade during a discussion, for Anderson is convinced that Sherlock is still alive. He tries to prove it to Lestrade by pointing out that several extraordinary cases have been solved, which he believes can only be Sherlock’s doing. While marking the places where these incidents occurred, Anderson realises that Sherlock appears to be coming closer to London and interprets this as proof that Holmes is about to come home. The mini-episode was aired in-between season two and three, exactly on the 24th of December 2013. Interestingly, the first novel by Conan Doyle was also published during the Christmas time of the respective year, which was in retrospect seen as a perfect ‘Christmas Present’. “Many Happy Returns” can also be seen as a small Christmas present to the viewers who cannot await the return of the consultant detective. Even though the audience knows that Sherlock is still alive due to the cliffhanger at the end of the season finale, it is still a thrilling wait in

order to see how he managed to fake his death and what happened to Watson in the meantime. The mini-episode contributes to the seriality of the television show in so far as that it reminds the audience of what is to come in order to ensure as many viewers as possible for the next season. Furthermore, speculations are encouraged by the short instalment since the audience is speculating together with Anderson about what happened since Sherlock jumped off that roof.

Rather than contacting the producers as in the Victorian era by writing to the author or letters to the magazine, the audience of today uses the Internet to interact with each other and engage with the narrative, let it be about the original stories or any form of adaptation. Several websites exist for the sole purpose of discussing the detective stories and collecting knowledge in order to grasp as much of the narrative as possible. Usually, anyone is allowed to contribute to the pool of fanfiction and discussions. These textual products are mostly not created for profit but serve the purpose of contributing to the fan culture and being part of a community, which finds equally strong interest in the same thing. However, some fanfiction does indeed get published and ends up being profitable for the creator. One of these published fan fictions is the novel *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* by Nicholas Meyer, published in 1974. Rather than portraying Holmes as the hero everyone believes him to be, Meyer tells the story of how Sherlock's cocaine addiction gets out of control and Watson brings him to Vienna in order to meet Sigmund Freud, who is supposed to treat him. Despite the rather critical approach to the otherwise celebrated detective, the Sherlock Holmes fans nevertheless enjoyed the critical narrative; apparently so much that it was even adapted into a film. This shows for the fact that fan fiction can take on various forms. Some of the fans produce texts for mere entertainment within the community, but there are also fans who are writers themselves who are in fact able to publish their fan fiction. Moreover, while many of the fan fiction probably portrays Sherlock and Watson as they are known

from the original stories, others might take the liberty of changing his image considerably in their story. Howsoever the approach to extending the transmedia narrative, each production, however small it might be, contributes to the Sherlockian universe which offers fans all over the world the opportunity to dive into the world of their favourite character by all kinds of means.

The fact that this extensive fan culture and its output exist for both the written as well as the audio-visual Sherlock Holmes detective stories emphasises the convergence media and culture, which Jenkins introduces:

By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want (2).

Sherlock Holmes certainly accounts for a transmedia narrative which spans over several media. And it is exactly the fan culture presented in this chapter which shows for the ‘migration’ from medium to medium in order to experience the narrative in as many ways as possible. Thus it can be said that the introduction of Sherlock Holmes as a transmedia narrative built up to exactly this last chapter in which the aspect of the audience finally closes the circle of convergence media and, in this sense, a converging narrative.

6. CONCLUSION

An analysis of the Sherlock Holmes detective stories offers vast possibilities and several potential approaches. While the BBC adaptation *Sherlock* would probably serve enough material to study on its own, my interest lied upon the television serial compared to Arthur Conan Doyle’s original stories from the late 19th and early 20th century.

From watching television in the 21st century, people are used to techniques which ensure the seriality and the connection between episodes. While there are episodic series

which consist of independent instalments with recurring characters holding them together, there are also serials which stretch story arcs over several episodes and even seasons. Alongside recurring characters, techniques such as the cliffhanger are used to ensure maintaining the audience's interest. While these are common techniques nowadays, I was interested in how Conan Doyle serialised his stories over a hundred years ago. Were cliffhangers already a common technique? How did Conan Doyle manage to keep the audience's interest? And how was the adaptation altered to fit the needs of a 21st-century audience?

To be able to answer these questions, insights on the topic of adaptations and television studies, in general, seemed appropriate. Considering the fact that the whole thesis consists of discussing an adaptation and its 'original,' prior input was necessary in order to grasp the concept and understand various perspectives on the matter. Before analysing the texts, an introduction to narrative structures, techniques and serialisation is offered. Thereby, the basic difference between episodic series and serials is discussed, while the result of this discussion led to the claim that most of the serialised narratives nowadays go beyond this binary description and display a hybrid use of different structural techniques. But most importantly, in this chapter, it becomes clear that the distinction between episodic series and serials was already existent during Doyle's time. Doyle's narratives are classified as an episodic series due to the independent character of the texts with recurring characters to connect them. Interestingly, this was an innovative form of narration back in the day. Usually, novels were published periodically, which rather resembles a serial. Doyle set a milestone in the genre of detective stories and at the same time a milestone in narrative structures with regular publishing intervals of independent but connected stories.

In order to be able to analyse and compare Doyle's texts with the episodes in *Sherlock*, a transmedia narrative toolkit needed to be introduced which was adopted from

Fröhlich and adapted to my needs. In the end, it was clear that the stories would be analysed in terms of their use of cliffhangers, the position of the cliffhangers and finally the type of cliffhangers, all introduced by speech acts. What can be concluded from this analysis is that both texts, despite the difference in media as well as episodic series and serial, use cliffhangers. Doyle's texts, however, only feature mini-cliffs and no internal or finale cliffs. However, considering the episodic nature of the instalments, the use of internal and finale cliffs was unrealistic to begin with. The stories were not designed to continue on a story level but to be recognized as connected by the use of recurring characters and themes. *Sherlock* features all three kinds of cliffhangers. Even though it might be assumed that every episode ends with a finale cliffhanger, the complex narrative of the text enables the episodes to rely on internal cliffs in order to continue to the next instalment without the need of a big finale to increase the tension.

After establishing the structure of the two media texts and the fact that they use similar narrative techniques, the focus shifted to further elements for maintaining audience engagement. What is it that people find joy in while watching the same detective solve crimes for over a hundred years now? In this respect, the concepts of familiarity and innovation in narratives were discussed. It is important to note that both concepts play a vital role in the success of narratives. While the human being is a creature of habit and enjoys familiarity and comfort, innovation and novelty are crucial in order to avoid boredom. Narratives need a perfect balance between comfortable patterns and innovative elements in order to keep the audience's interest (Eschke & Böhne 17). The established detective genre offers the needed familiarity, while at the same time the audience has the feeling of watching a completely new story with each instalment due to the change in the storyline (Eco *Im Labyrinth der Vernunft* 305). What changes specifically are the villains and the crime to be solved. Doyle's story indeed presents a different villain with each

instalment. *Sherlock* does so as well, but adds another layer of a criminal mastermind who cannot be defeated within one episode but, in the case of Moriarty, takes up over two seasons to bring down.

For the repetitious pattern to stay interesting, certain techniques are employed. One of these techniques is the use of memory and inserting clues and hints to trigger this memory. Narratives are not always consumed with a maximum of mental effort. Some small details are overlooked and authors deliberately insert reminders for important elements. These include dialogues between the characters to remind the audience of a certain situation or thought. Sometimes, certain clues are inserted which give a hint at the outcome, which gives the recipient the feeling of being able to foresee (Eco *The limits of Interpretation* 86). The engagement with the narrative is then rewarded by the fact that the outcome of the story was guessed right. The audience then feels on eye-level with the hero and believes that they could have solved the case on their own as well.

The last instance of this thesis was meant to round off the analysis by discussing the most important aspect to keep the narrative alive: the fans. The economic success of a continuous story lies with the recipients, and the bigger the fandom the more successful the narrative is. Unfortunately, many narratives fail due to the mere reason of not enough people being interested in purchasing the instalments. While it is crucial for the audience to buy and read or watch the narratives, many fans go a step further and actively engage with the text. Often, these kinds of fans are stereotypically labelled as nerds and outcasts, but they are in fact participants in creating culture. This participation manifests in various forms among which are fan fiction, fan club meetings, theorising about their favourite characters and so on. The fans' engagement is proof of the convergence culture which emerged over time with the amount of art and media being produced and distributed. All media influence each other and co-exist in a huge pool of media platforms, genres and

narratives. Fan culture is a crucial element in this convergence culture and shows that not only media influence each other, but the recipients influence the media as well. If it was not for Sherlock's ingrained fans of back in the 19th century, the detective stories would have ended with "The Final Problem" and maybe this exact thesis would have never been written. The part which fans play in culture and the entertainment which circulates every media platform imaginable seems underrated.

Finally, I was able to gain several insights from this transmedia analysis. The most interesting one is that while I expected similarities between the two different media texts, I was surprised about how many to be believed modern techniques were already used over a hundred years ago. Not only were both episodic series and serials established formats in the Victorian era, but cliffhangers were frequently used and Doyle's short stories even display instances of what modern media studies call a *cold open*. Therefore, it can be concluded that seriality is not media dependent, but is conducted according to format. Moreover, this shows for the interdependency of media and that all media derive from and co-exist with other media. Even though technology, the way we consume media and the media itself has developed considerably, I believe that every innovation to come will trace back to the roots of media production.

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Appendix

Abstract English

In times of modern technology and a vast amount of broadcasting channels and applications, serial narratives are omnipresent. While it seems as if continuous storytelling is a rather modern form of entertainment, the act of serialising narratives has been practised for quite some time now. The aim of this thesis is to show, by the aid of the original written Sherlock Holmes stories by Conan Doyle and the respective BBC television adaptation *Sherlock* by Steven Moffat and Mark Gattis, that seriality has already been used over a hundred years ago. What is of particular importance is the difference in medium and how seriality is implemented in the respective texts. This thesis examines the narrative techniques used by both media texts and whether similar elements such as cliffhangers occur in both. Moreover, the concepts of familiarity and innovation are discussed which are pivotal elements of the detective genre and also in the process of adaptations. At last, the common denominator of the different Sherlock Holmes stories, its fanbase, rounds of the analysis and is the last constituent in complementing the convergence culture supported by Sherlock Holmes' everlasting popularity.

In dem Zeitalter moderner Technologien und großer Anzahl an Sendern und Streaming Plattformen sind serielle Erzählungen omnipräsent. Obwohl es scheint als wäre kontinuierliches Geschichtenerzählen eine moderne Form der Unterhaltung, wird die Serialisierung von Geschichten schon seit langer Zeit praktiziert. Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, anhand der originalen verschriftlichten Sherlock Holmes Detektivgeschichten von Arthur Conan Doyle und der respektiven TV Adaption *Sherlock* von Steven Moffat und Mark Gattis aufzuzeigen, dass serielles Erzählen bereits über hundert Jahre existiert. In diesem Kontext besonders wichtig ist der Medienunterschied und wie die Texte jeweils die Serialisierung umsetzen. Diese Arbeit untersucht die narrativen Techniken und welche, beziehungsweise ob überhaupt, ähnliche Elemente, wie zum Beispiel der Cliffhanger, in beiden Texten aufkommen. Darüber hinaus werden die Begriffe der Familiarität und Innovation diskutiert, welche grundlegende Bestandteile des Detektivgenres und des Adaptionsprozesses sind. Zuletzt rundet der gemeinsame Nenner der verschiedenen Sherlock Holmes Geschichten, nämlich die Fangemeinde, die Analyse ab und bildet somit die letzte Komponente der „Convergence Culture“, welche durch Sherlock Holmes‘ immerwährende Popularität befürwortet wird.