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“There is nothing new under the sun. It has all been done before.”

**Sherlock Holmes in Contemporary Film
and Television Adaptations**

YANNIC BRÜCK

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MuK 199
Massenmedien und Kommunikation

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UNIVERSITÄTSVERLAG SIEGEN

2019

Bibliographische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie.
Detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet
über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Impressum

Umschlaggestaltung: Yannic Brück
Satz: Yannic Brück
Druck und Bindung: Uni Print, Universität Siegen
Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem holz- und säurefreiem Papier.

Siegen 2019: universi – Universitätsverlag Siegen
www.universi.uni-siegen.de

ISSN 0721-3271

Die Publikation erscheint unter der
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I. Introduction: Sherlock Holmes in the 21st Century

Sherlock Holmes, the famous fictional detective, who was originally invented by the Scottish writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “has enjoyed a long and complex screen career and is ... one of the most frequently represented fictional characters in film history” (Graham and Garlen 26). He has been portrayed by over 70 different actors over the years (Farghaly 1) and been reintroduced to and reinterpreted for new audiences of the 21st century in the last decade. Although Conan Doyle created his mastermind in the late 19th century, the character and his adventures have apparently experienced a renaissance within popular culture. With *Sherlock*, *Elementary*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*, and *Mr. Holmes*, several new television series and cinematic movies have been released since 2009¹ and with *Holmes and Watson* another one premiered last December.² At the present time, Sherlock Holmes seems to be more popular than ever (Porter, “Real Sherlock Holmes” 5).

With so many different incarnations of the character at hand, producers and screen writers are set before a difficult task: “Newer iterations of Sherlock Holmes must be recognizable as the Conan Doyle character but unique in the way Holmes is appealing to audiences. He must remain familiar but reveal something new about himself and allow audiences to be surprised” (Porter, “Introduction” 3). With other words, the reinterpretation of the Sherlock Holmes character and of Conan Doyle’s classic stories follows the adaptation process which can be described as a “repetition without replication ... [as part of which] change is inevitable” (Hutcheon XVIII), or as a “repetition with variation” (Hutcheon 8). All of the new versions of Sherlock Holmes are, thus, different interpretations and have their own special characteristics, but as products of the adaptation process they may also have several features in common, features that might be traced back to their literary origin.

One line which is uttered by Sherlock Holmes in his first adventure ever written by Conan Doyle, “A Study in Scarlet”, tells the reader that “[t]here is nothing new under the sun. It has all been done before” (*The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 15).

¹ Smaller productions, as well as animated films, have not been mentioned here, but in order not to forget about them: Barnes lists three further films – the two animated pastiches *Batman – The Brave and the Bold: Trials of the Demon!* (38), and *Tom and Jerry Meet Sherlock Holmes* (291), as well as the “mockbuster” (251) *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes*. Furthermore one has to mention the recently released computer-animated Paramount Pictures movie *Sherlock Gnomes*.

² At the time of writing the movie had not been published yet and will therefore not be considered within this book.

This line can be applied to the adaptation process: Sherlock Holmes has existed before the 21st century and he has been adapted time and time again before the last decade. But even though the character, his adventures, and mysteries might have changed due to adaptation, they are all still based on Conan Doyle's works. Whereas the adaptation of the iconic figure and the stories which he appears in has been done before, the question remains if there can still be something new under the sun of the Sherlock Holmes universe. How far have creators of contemporary Sherlock Holmes adaptations moved away from the original without leaving the connection to the source material unrecognizable? As Welch mentions, "the heart of the stories has remained the same over time, but in order to endure and entice new fans, the numerous Holmesian adaptations have re-imagined the main characters, amongst other elements, to continuously suit the ever-changing populaces" (133–134).

Welch's notion brings us to the central questions of this book: Which changes and shifts from the original to the contemporary adaptations can be identified as part of this re-imagination and what is the actual "heart of the stories" (Welch 133)? The analysis of references within contemporary adaptations to the stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is a complex and far-fetched field that can best be explored with a narrow focus of investigation. When people think of or talk about Sherlock Holmes they will most certainly have the character, the protagonist of the stories, or the fictional persona in mind. This book will, therefore, investigate potential shifts of Sherlock Holmes's characterization in the contemporary adaptations in comparison to Conan Doyle's character concept. This comparative character analysis shall help to see in how far there are alterations and if there are core features which we can find in all the Sherlock Holmes renditions. As seen in the quote above, it can be assumed that such alterations may be explained as reactions to the culture which the adaptations are part of (Welch 143). Thus, the analysis of this piece of classic detective literature may help to understand our own contemporary culture a bit better.

From the five adaptations that have been mentioned so far, one version of Holmes will not be part of this book's analysis. The following pages will not elaborate on Sir Ian McKellen's portrayal of the consulting detective in *Mr. Holmes*, which is an adaptation of Mitch Cullin's novel *A Slight Trick of the Mind* that is in turn an adaptation of or, more precisely, a sequel to the original. In contrast to the protagonists in the BBC's *Sherlock*, the CBS' *Elementary*, and the two Warner Bros blockbusters, *Mr. Holmes* tells the story of a retired detective in his nineties. In Conan Doyle's stories the reader only learns few aspects of Holmes's retirement and, as

well as in the other four screen adaptations, the focus is on the prime of his career. This makes the protagonist of *Mr. Holmes* hardly comparable to the other incarnations of the character and is, thus, an act which exceeds the main aim of this book.³

In consideration of the other contemporary Holmes interpretations: How can potential shifts in the characterization of the detective be made visible? Despite the already discussed basic notion that adaptation always goes along with interpretation and change (Hutcheon 8), one has to be aware of the fact that adaptations can move even further away from their literary source, leading to appropriation and “into a wholly new cultural product” (Sanders 35). When analysing the several Sherlock Holmes renditions in comparison to their literary origin, it will be important to closely examine which facets of the character remain the same, which are added, which are lost and which are changed by the processes of adaptation or appropriation. In order to do so and to present a comprehensible model of the features of the several Sherlock Holmes characters to the reader, the investigation will draw on prototype theory. The theory suggests “that when people categorize common objects, they do not expect them to be on equal footing ... [but t]hey ... have some idea of the characteristics of an ideal exemplar” (Aitchison 70), a so called “prototype” (Rosch, qtd. in Aitchison 70). Therefore, when one regards the original Sherlock Holmes created by Conan Doyle as the character’s prototypical example, one can compare the adapted Holmes renditions “by matching [them] against the features of the prototype” (Aitchison 70). We will come back to these theoretical notions about adaptation, appropriation and prototype theory in the second chapter of this book. For now it should be remembered that it is the aim of this work to identify the features of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes, as well as the features of the contemporary Holmes versions, and to point out potential alterations, changes, and shifts that emerge in the adapted characterizations of the protagonist. Just as Porter asks “whom [fans] envision” (Porter, “Real Sherlock Holmes” 10) when they think about Sherlock Holmes, we can reformulate: Have the features of the Sherlock Holmes prototype and, thus, the prototype itself changed in the 21st century? While drawing on prototype theory to answer this question, the approach further described in chapter 2.1 will be of a cognitive nature. While characterizations are interpretations done by readers or viewers, they are to a certain degree subjective. The following analysis, therefore, cannot claim to be entirely objective in its identification and categorization of character features. Explanations and arguments for

³ Also, the animated or rather humorous movies that were listed on the previous page (fn 1) will not be considered here.

choices and decisions made throughout this work will be provided to make them as comprehensible as possible to the reader.

Following the introduction, chapter two will define the theoretical terms more closely, explain in an exemplary fashion how character features will be identified and categorized, and so set the basis for the main part of this book. The next chapters will then point out the main features of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes (chapter three), the BBC's *Sherlock* (chapter four), the protagonist of the CBS series *Elementary* (chapter five), and the version of Holmes that was brought to the screen by Guy Ritchie for the two Warner Bros movies (chapter six). In each chapter the character features will be subdivided into the categories of outward appearance, personality and methods. At the end of every chapter a model of the different character features will be developed while making use of the theoretical notions of adaptation, appropriation and prototypes. By the time the reader reaches chapter seven, the conclusion, there will be four different *Character Features Models* of four different Sherlock Holmes renditions ready for comparison. With the help of these four models the final conclusive chapter shall answer the question which shifts in the characterization of Sherlock Holmes or the features of his prototype can be identified within the contemporary adaptations. The book will close with the presentation of a model for a contemporary Sherlock Holmes prototype.

Before we can begin our investigation, the current research state on contemporary Sherlock Holmes adaptations will be presented, and a short overview about the television series and movies to be analysed will be provided.

In the last 132 years since Sherlock Holmes's literary debut in 1887, the detective has already been the aim of analysis in monographs, essays or annotated versions of the canon several times. So applying literary theory or literary criticism to the Sherlock Holmes stories is a broad field at which we will have a short look. As pointed out earlier, the screen career of the detective from the Victorian and Edwardian era is a long one and has, amongst others, been summarised by Alan Barnes, and Mattias Boström. Although not analytical in their approach both works present a concise overview of the many movies and television series, and, thus, also of the ones that have been released in the last decade.⁴ The perhaps most prominent elaborations on the original stories are the annotated volumes that have been composed

⁴ Barnes, although his edition has been revised and updated, only covers adaptations until 2010. Boström, in contrast, also includes the more recent episodes of Sherlock Holmes's screen career.

by William Baring-Gould, and years later by Leslie Klinger⁵, but Daniel Smith's *Sherlock Holmes Companion* should also be mentioned here for its encompassing characterization of the protagonist. Considering especially the recent adaptations which are part of this book, several essay collections on the questions of identity (Porter, *Who is Sherlock?*), gender (Farghaly, *Gender and the Modern Sherlock Holmes*) or other aspects such as sexuality, heroism, technology and the adaptation process (Porter, *Sherlock Holmes for the 21st century*; Naidu, *Sherlock Holmes in Context*) have been compiled in the last few years. *Sherlock* has more often been the focus of analysis than have *Elementary* or the Ritchie movies and official companion books to the series (Adams; Tribe), as well as a monograph by Andreas Jache, who dealt with psychoanalytical and gender theoretical aspects in *Sherlock*, are solely devoted to the BBC series.

As becomes obvious from this, scholars have already analysed different aspects of the altered characterization of a 21st century Sherlock Holmes. What this book wants to add is a clear juxtaposition of the character features and its variations within the most prominent recent adaptations and – by drawing on prototype theory – a different theoretical approach to such an attempt. Ultimately, the creation of a Sherlock Holmes prototype model for the 21st century has never been done before and might be this book's biggest accomplishment to the research on the field.

Before we move on to the next chapter and get into the investigation, we will briefly have a look at the data that is analysed in the following chapters in order to identify the features of the different Holmes incarnations. The first set of data is compiled of the 56 short stories and four novels that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote about his detective between 1887 and 1927. Being set during the Victorian and Edwardian era, the stories were created in no straight chronological order, have originally appeared in magazines⁶ and were then collected in separate volumes⁷ (Smith

⁵ Klinger's annotated version (originally published 2004–2005) is an updated approach to Baring-Gould's *Annotated Sherlock Holmes* (originally published in 1967). It has to be mentioned that, although both works provide in-depth analyses of the canon, they treat the stories and characters as if they really existed and are therefore partly fiction as well.

⁶ Although *The Strand Magazine* is widely known as the most prominent publisher of the Sherlock Holmes short stories (Smith 20), the first two novels have appeared in different magazines: *Beeton's Christmas Annual* (Smith 21) and *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* (Smith 30).

⁷ "A Study in Scarlet" (1887), "The Sign of Four" (1890), "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" (1892), "The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes" (1894), "The Hounds of the Baskervilles" (1902), "The Return of Sherlock Holmes" (1905), "The Valley of Fear"

20). They are all self-contained cases and although scholars have tried to (re-)construct a chronology⁸, they only hardly show any continuity.⁹ Sherlock Holmes's companion, Dr. John Watson, functions as a narrator, who "frequently praises Homes's brilliance" (Porter, "Mind of Sherlock Holmes" 51) and tries to highlight "the methods of [his] friend" (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 111). However, there are also two short stories that are narrated by Sherlock Holmes himself ("The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier"; "The Adventure of the Lion's Mane") and another two in which a third-person narrator guides the reader through the case ("His Last Bow"; "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone").

The BBC series *Sherlock* was created by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss and encompasses our second set of data. The series casts Benedict Cumberbatch as Sherlock Holmes and Martin Freeman as his companion, Dr. John Watson. So far *Sherlock* has aired thirteen episodes of about 90 minutes length in four series (one episode being a television special before the start of series four) between 2010 and 2017.¹⁰ The story is set in the 21st instead of the late 19th or early 20th century and each episode can be considered as "a loose adaptation of a Conan Doyle story, with a teasingly altered title" (Walker 120). However, the episodes are not only renditions of the Conan Doyle adventures within 21st century London, but take the viewer into an entirely different direction and away from the original plot at some point of the adapted case.

The CBS series *Elementary*, created by Robert Doherty, can be considered as an "Americanization" (Porter, "Real Sherlock Holmes" 3) of the stories and as our third set of data. Within the series, the English detective Sherlock Holmes, a former drug addict portrayed by the Englishman Jonny Lee Miller, lives in 21st century New York and works as a consultant to the police department. His partner, a female Asian-American ex-doctor named Joan Watson, played by Lucy Liu, starts out as

(1915), "His Last Bow" (1917) and "The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes" (1927) (Smith 20).

⁸ Amongst others, Baring-Gould and Klinger have rearranged the stories into a chronological order in their respective annotated volumes.

⁹ One could argue that the two stories that show the strongest interrelation are "The Final Problem", in which Holmes supposedly dies (or is rather finished off by Conan Doyle in order for him to turn his literary potential to other works; Smith 16–17), and "The Adventure of the Empty House", in which Holmes's death is explained to have been a fake. All other stories can potentially be read and understood separately, even though they sometimes refer to one another.

¹⁰ The mini-episode "Many Happy Returns" that functioned as a teaser for series three is not taken into account here.

Holmes's sober companion, but eventually becomes his trainee and professional partner. *Elementary* differs from *Sherlock* not only in its setting, background story and character design, but also in its genre and format: It is a "procedural" (Walker 122), in which the focus of each episode is on the case and the crime solving with a stronger "restriction on the characterization and plot development" (Baker 152), and it is broadcast in an "American television format of twenty-two, 45-minute episodes" (Baker 152) per series.¹¹ In contrast to *Sherlock* "the individual episodes of [*Elementary*] are original cases, not adaptations of the stories" (Walker 122), although some of the episodes use names and plot structures from Conan Doyle's works. So far *Elementary* has aired 154 episodes in seven series between 2012 and 2019.

For the fourth set of data, the two Warner Bros movies *Sherlock Holmes*, and its sequel *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*, one has to be aware of the fact that the format of these two adaptations, which were directed by Guy Ritchie¹², is again different from the data sets from above. While Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes appears in print, Benedict Cumberbatch in a British television format with only few episodes per series, and Johnny Lee Miller in an American procedural, we can now add the American actor Robert Downey Jr. to our list of Holmes actors. He appears in the role of the detective "as a big-screen action hero" (Taylor, "A Singular Case of Identity" 94) in both movies of each more than two hours length. At his side Jude Law stars as Dr. John Watson and as a crucial difference in comparison to the other two adaptations, the stories of the movies are set in Victorian London, where Conan Doyle had imagined his detective to live and work in the first place. Both movies present original cases to the viewer, although *A Game of Shadows* loosely follows Conan Doyle's "The Final Problem".

With the data presented and the aim of this work explained, "[t]he stage is set, the curtain rises" ("The Abominable Bride") and we can turn to the next chapter of this book.

¹¹ Series 6 of *Elementary*, however, only consist of 21 episodes and the final seventh series only of 13.

¹² Although Ritchie directed the movie, the original idea for the character was introduced to Warner Bros by Lionel Wigam, who wrote the screen story (Barnes 192), and John Watkiss, who illustrated the character design (Boström 463–464).

2. Theoretical and Methodological Background

The following chapter will define the terms prototype and typical features and explain the idea for a *Character Features Model* as a basis for the comparison of the four Sherlock Holmes versions in question. In its second part, the chapter will then define the terms adaptation and appropriation and elaborate on the use of these definitions for the ongoing investigation.

2.1 Prototype, Typical Features and *Character Features Model*

It was described in the introduction that prototype theory can be used to explain the way in which people categorize common objects. The development of this theory goes back to experiments that were done by Eleanor Rosch in the nineteen-seventies. Her idea was that people have good and less good examples of certain category members in mind:

Let's take the word red as an example. Close your eyes and imagine a true red. Now imagine an orangish red ... imagine a purple red. Although you might still name the orange red or the purple red within the term red, they are not as good examples of red ... as the clear "true" red. In short, some reds are redder than others. The same is true for other kinds of categories. Think of dogs. You all have some notion of what a "real dog," a "doggy dog" is. *To me*¹³ a retriever or a German shepherd is a very doggy dog while a Pekinese is a less doggy dog. (Rosch, qtd. in Aitchison 68).

Other categories which are commonly brought up to exemplify the idea of prototype theory are *vegetables* or especially *birds*.¹⁴ In Rosch's experiment psychology students had to rate how well certain examples fit to a given category. For example, they had to decide in how far a *robin* or a *penguin* is a good example of a *bird*. For the latter category she found out that the students regarded a *robin* as the best example. "[S]parrow, canary, blackbird, dove and lark all came out high. ... Ostrich, emu and penguin came more than halfway down the ... rating, while last of all came bat, which probably shouldn't be regarded as a bird at all" (Aitchison 68). As Rosch's quote from

¹³ Emphasis added.

¹⁴ Compare: Aitchison 68; Rosch, "Principles of Categorization" 39; Lakoff 44–45; Redling 251.

above shows, there can be alterations in this kind of graded categorization for different people (hence the emphasis mentioned in footnote 13), but still there seems to be a consensus regarding better or lesser examples of a given category as the experiment suggests. The fact that there are central and less central category members from the viewpoint of different people is also referred to as “prototype effects” (Lakoff 41), which result from the comparison of a given example with the features of the prototype and a person’s “goodness-of-example judgements” (Lakoff 56). In other words, every category member can be grouped closer to or further away from the central prototype. To summarise this, we can again have a look at Aitchison’s understanding of Rosch’s experiment:

Rosch’s works suggested that when people categorize common objects, they do not expect them all to be on an equal footing. They seemed to have some idea of the characteristics of an ideal exemplar – in Rosch’s words, a “prototype.” And they probably decided on the extent to which something else was a member of the same category by matching it against the features of the prototype. It did not have to match exactly, it just had to be sufficiently similar, though not necessarily visually similar ... This was how unbirdy birds such as pelicans and penguins could still be regarded as birds. They were sufficiently like the prototype, even though they did not share all its characteristics. (Aitchison 70–71)

This summary hints at an important aspect of categorization according to prototype theory. A central member as well as the features or characteristics of this prototypical example have to be identified in order to be able to match other examples against them. The resulting prototype effects do not simply state if something is or is not part of the category in question, but also if it is in close or in distant proximity to the prototype (Aitchison 69).

Another interesting notion in this respect is, as Lakoff explains, that features can have different weight and that “deviations from the prototype in highly weighted features places a member [of a category] further away from the prototype than deviation in a less highly weighted feature” (Lakoff 115). A similar idea is expressed by “cue validity” (Lakoff 52), “the conditional probability that an object is in a particular category given its possession of some feature (or ‘cue’) ... For Example, if you see a living thing with gills you can be certain it is a fish” (Lakoff 52–53). This means that there can also be basic or mandatory features that all the members

of a category need to have. Gills in this case can be regarded as mandatory for the category *fish*. If a feature with high cue validity is absent, the example at hand is less likely to be positioned in close range to the prototype. Basically, the ideas behind feature weight and cue validity show that not only category members can be more or less typical examples of a category, but the same is true for the characteristics that represent the category's prototype. Hence, there are more or less (proto)typical features.

While the typical features of a prototype can, thus, be described as the characteristics which a prototype typically has, the latter can be defined as

(a) the model or proto-image of all representatives of the meaning of a word or of a 'category.' Thus Shakespeare can be regarded as the or a prototype, as the 'best example' of the category *poet*. But it is only in exceptional cases that an individual 'best example' exists, and even this only becomes such a one by virtue of its typical features. Thus, a prototype is (b) the bundle of typical features of a category. The prototype of *bird* can be any given sparrow, but also an eagle; a penguin, however, is a less 'good' bird, as it lacks some of the typical features, such as the ability to fly. (c) The features themselves can also be more or less typical, i.e. they can have a higher or lower 'cue validity'; thus *twittering* is less typical and specific to birds than *flying (by one's own strength)* ... In principle, the typical features of a category do not correspond to the necessary and sufficient conditions of the membership in a category ... The meaning of a word is thus an 'idealized cognitive model' (ICM). (Bussmann 963–964)

There are still other aspects to prototype theory than the ones mentioned above, but for the design of this book's analysis the definition is sufficient. For our study this leaves us with the following ideas: We have to be aware that a prototype of Sherlock Holmes is just a cognitive model and might be different for individual people. While some people will certainly have the iconic deerstalker hat in mind when they think of Sherlock Holmes, it is a typical feature that does – as the definition states – not correspond to the mandatory or necessary features or conditions of the category membership. Therefore, a character can still be categorized or recognized as Sherlock Holmes when the deerstalker is absent.¹⁵ For our analysis the original Conan Doyle-invented character will be used as a starting point to identify

¹⁵ This point will be proved later on in this book. Sherlock Holmes incarnations can be recognized as Sherlock Holmes even if the hat is not part of his physical appearance.

the bundle of typical features that represent him. He may be considered as an early prototype, but it is assumed within this book that it has changed over the last 130 years due to his cultural representation in illustrations, stage and screen portrayals, games, books, comics and more. The features of a contemporary Sherlock Holmes prototype, therefore, necessarily differ from the early one.

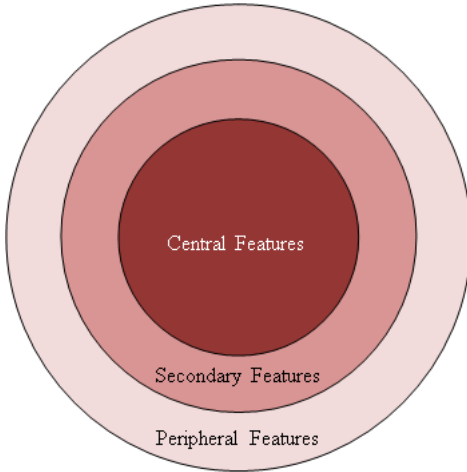


Figure 1. Theoretical *Character Features Model*.

As we have seen, features can be graded into being more or less typical of the prototype. It will, thus, be attempted to group identified character features of the several Holmes interpretations into different stages of typicality. Figure 1 illustrates the idea of such a *Character Features Model*.¹⁶ It has to be remarked again at this point that the model can only be understood as a cognitive one, meaning that – despite the attempt to remain as objective as possible – the identification and ranked categorization of character features is strictly related

to a reader’s or viewer’s interpretation of the character. In the same way, there are certainly people who will not agree with a robin being the best example of a bird in Aitchison’s model (69). This book just provides an idea of feature categorization and cannot claim to present an absolute truth. As a rule to identify each feature along clear cut boundaries¹⁷ as “central”, “secondary” or “peripheral” (Redling 251), it will be roughly analyzed how often each characteristic can be observed throughout the stories, and estimated how much weight a feature might have on Sherlock Holmes’s characterizations. Especially such estimations necessarily leave entirely objective grounds, but discussions of the individual features will help the reader of this work to follow the respective trains of thought.

¹⁶ The terminology (“central“, “secondary” and “peripheral“) refers to Redling (251) while the radial structure follows Aitchison’s “Birdiness rankings” (69).

¹⁷ The idea of clear cut boundaries aims at a simplification of the character feature categorization that will be attempted in this book. According to prototype theory these boundaries can, however, also be fuzzy (Lakoff 56).

Once the *Character Features Model* for Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes has been developed, the further investigation will not simply consider in how far the adapted characters are in close proximity to the original. By having a look at what adaptation encompasses, we can quickly see that such an approach would hardly make any sense as "change is inevitable" (Hutcheon XVIII) for the adaptation process. Rather, by comparing the features of the re-imagined characters to the features of the supposed prototype, alterations and differences may become evident. As these alterations differ for every Holmes incarnation, one model for each individual rendition will be developed proceeding from the one that describes the features of the early prototype. With the four models at hand it will then be possible to see:

- a) in how far features of the original Sherlock Holmes have been shifted from being more central to more peripheral and vice versa in each adapted Sherlock Holmes version.
- b) if features have been lost or added in each adapted Sherlock Holmes version.
- c) if there are mandatory features for the characterization of any Sherlock Holmes adaptation – after all, these features could be what is at "the heart of the stories" (Welch 133).

As pointed out, Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes can no longer serve as a sole basis to construe the character's contemporary prototype. Especially younger people might have watched the adaptations without ever having read the original. Because of this, the comparison of the four models will set the grounds for the development of a fifth model in this book's conclusive chapter that represents such a contemporary, 21st century prototype.

2.2 Adaptation and Appropriation

After having dealt with the idea of the development of *Character Features Models* as a basis for this book's investigation, we will now turn to the further theoretical foundations.

As might have become obvious on the preceding pages, adaptation is a term that is used to describe two different meanings because "we use the word for the process and the product" (Hutcheon 15). While the dictionary meaning compares adapting to adjusting, altering, or making someone or something suitable (Hutcheon

7), Hutcheon defines the term from three different perspectives: First, as a product of the “extensive transposition of a particular work ... [that] can involve a shift of medium ... or genre” (7–8); second, as a “process of creation ... [that] involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation” (8); third, as a “form of intertextuality” (8).

If we take this definition and have a look at what it means for the contemporary Sherlock Holmes adaptations, each aspect of it will become clearer.

First, as products of the adaptation process all of the three Sherlock Holmes adaptations have experienced a shift of medium and, as can be suggested, also a shift of genre. They all have been adapted from a written text to the screen and although they can all still be regarded as detective fiction, they also fit into different genre categories: *Sherlock* is a “crime drama” (Tribe 30), *Elementary* a “procedural” (Walker 122) and Guy Ritchie’s *Sherlock Holmes* and its sequel are “action” (Porter, “Real Sherlock Holmes” 3), “buddy” (Lavigne 22; Law, qtd. in Thomas 39) or even “superhero” (Downey Jr., qtd. in Marinaro and Thomas 65) movies. Whereas the genre shift hints at the necessity of an altered characterization of the protagonist, the medium shift inevitably takes away one of the stories most typical characteristics, the narrative perspective with John Watson as the narrator of his and Sherlock Holmes’s adventures. This gives the movies and series the chance to explore aspects of the story that were not part of the original canon, for instance by granting a look into Holmes’s mind (Porter, “Introduction” 2). Both types of shifts lead to a departure from the original. This again underlines that “change is inevitable” (Hutcheon XVIII) and that contemporary Sherlock Holmes representations potentially help to construe a proto-image of the character that is different from its early prototype.

Second, as process of reinterpretation and recreation the screen versions try to “preserve” the original, but also “speak to a new audience” (Hutcheon 8) and attempt to “entice new fans” (Welch 133). For the adaptations this means that no matter if the story is set in the 19th or 21st century, there need to be elements that address today’s audiences. Again the inevitability of change becomes obvious and evokes notions of a differing 21st century Sherlock Holmes prototype.

Third, there are instances of intertextuality within the screen adaptations: Characters, quotes, episode titles and plot elements constantly appear as references to the original and remind the viewer that there is an underlying text to the adapted versions. Even those references are often altered and also remind the viewer of the

change and variation that has taken place as part of the reinterpretation. Nevertheless, these references help viewers to leave the connection to the source material recognizable.

All of this leads to two important aspects for this book. One: It would be useless to measure the quality of the adapted Sherlock Holmes renditions on the basis of the original – all of them necessarily depart from their literary origin as a result of adaptation.¹⁸ Two: If we take a look at the *Character Features Models* later on, there will be features that have not experienced a shift per se, but still are presented differently in the 21st century. One example for this can be given by shortly thinking about the portrayal of technology in the contemporary renditions. As we will soon see, Conan Doyle's Holmes is very adept to the technology of his time, but by placing the character into the 21st century, as it is done in *Sherlock* and *Elementary*, being adept to technology inevitably leads to the creation of Sherlock Holmes as a “digital native” (Taylor, “The ‘Great Game’ of Information” 131) – someone who has “grown up with digital technology” (Porter, “Modernizing Victorian Sherlock Holmes” 19). The technology and its status within society have changed in the course of the two centuries. Thus, it is potentially possible to receive two *Character Features Models* with identical character features for Victorian and contemporary Holmes and still the characters could be quite different due to the fact that the understanding and representation of the features might have changed. Nonetheless, as will be proved, there are shifts that can be identified in the modern interpretations because the adaptations also reflect the society that created them (Mc Laughlin, qtd. in Welch 143).

This brings us to the other theoretical term that still has to be defined in this chapter, appropriation. Hutcheon introduces the term when she elaborates on adaptation as a “process of creation” (8). While she describes appropriation as a more aggressive way of preserving literary works, she also uses salvaging as a positively connoted alternative (8). Behind both concepts we find the idea that reinterpreted stories are more likely to appeal to new audiences when the source material is recreated on the basis of cultural desires. Sanders regards appropriation as a “decisive journey away from the informing text into a wholly new cultural product” (35) with

¹⁸ This does, however, not mean that it is impossible to stay close to the underlying text, as can be exemplified by the nineteen-eighties and nineties Granada television series with Jeremy Brett in the lead. The series stays extremely close to Conan Doyle's works. Still, if creators actually want to address contemporary audiences, one can understand why the same stories with the same characters are not told over and over again and one instead finds “repetition with variation” (Hutcheon 8).

“a more complicated, intricate and sometimes embedded relationship to their intertexts than any straight forward film version of a canonical or well-known text” (36).

We will again consider what this means for our Holmes adaptations to elaborate on these definitions. In the previous presentation of the sets of data for this book, we learned that the BBC series *Sherlock* often adapts the canonical stories, but surprises the viewers at some point by leaving the original plot structure and moving into a different direction. So given our definitions, the first part of these episodes could be considered as straightforward adaptations of the Conan Doyle stories, whereas the “decisive journey away” (Sanders 35) from them is factually an appropriation.

Of course, one could also stick to the term adaptation for both phenomena if one defines appropriation as one of its subcategories. However, this book will decisively differentiate between both terms in the same fashion that has just been exemplified because not only stories, but also character features can be appropriated. Let us quickly consult the following example to understand this thought: In Conan Doyle’s “A Study in Scarlet” Sherlock Holmes compares his brain to an attic (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 11–12) and by that creates a metaphor for his storage of knowledge. The BBC’s *Sherlock* take up this idea, but elaborates on it beyond the canonical descriptions by giving their hero a mind palace instead of a mere attic. The mind palace is also a visual representation of Sherlock’s brain, and it is a unique feature of the character that results from an appropriation of the canon’s brain attic.

The differentiation between adapted features and appropriated ones is of importance for the development of the different *Character Features Models* throughout the next chapters. It can be expected that an appropriated characteristic receives more attention in regard to the characterization of the adapted Holmes version as it potentially can be considered as a unique, defining and distinguishing feature. Because of this, we will assume that especially the appropriated features are the ones that are shifted from being more peripheral in Conan Doyle’s depiction to being more central or more typical of the character in the adaptation.

With the theoretical terms defined and this book’s approach explained, we can start to characterize Sherlock Holmes and his adapted counterparts, identify and categorize their features and develop *Character Features Models* for each Holmes incarnation.

3. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes

When Sherlock Holmes says in “A Study in Scarlet” that “[t]here is nothing new under the sun” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 15), the utterance itself is not new to the world, but a reference to the Hebrew Bible (Baring-Gould, *Volume I* 168).¹⁹ The additional sentence, “It has all been done before”, explains what is meant by the statement. Everything that is created by someone has its sources or is based on already existing knowledge and is per se not entirely new. Therefore, as the contemporary Sherlock Holmes renditions of the 21st century adaptations have their roots in Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, the latter has also been created on the basis of different other sources. Before Holmes there were already other fictional detectives that have influenced Conan Doyle: “Gaboriau had rather attracted me by the neat dovetailing of his plots, and Poe's masterful detective, M. Dupin, had from boyhood been one of my heroes” (Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* 62). But still Conan Doyle tried to distance his detective from the ones that already existed. In “A Study in Scarlet” his Sherlock Holmes even complains about the fictional investigators that existed before him, which can be understood as a metatextual notion:

Sherlock Holmes rose and lit his pipe. “No doubt you think that you are complementing me in comparing me to Dupin²⁰,” he observed. “Now in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow ... He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine.” “Have you read Gaboriau's works²¹” [Watson] asked. “Does Lecoq come up to your idea of a detective?” Sherlock Holmes sniffed sardonically. “Lecoq was a miserable bungler,” he said in an angry voice; “he had only one thing to recommend him, and that was his energy.” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 13).

No matter if Conan Doyle actually wanted to criticise aspects of Poe's and

¹⁹ „Holmes draws on Ecclesiastes, 1, 9: “There is no new thing under the sun”” (Baring-Gould, *Volume I* 168).

²⁰ “[H]ero of [Poe's] ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ (1841), ‘The Purloined Letter’ (1845) and ‘The Mystery of Marie Rogêt’ (1842)” (Baring-Gould, *Volume I* 162).

²¹ “The works of the French novelist Émile Gaboriau, 1833–1873, whose detective stories about M. Lecoq include five books” (Baring-Gould, *Volume I* 163).

Gaboriau's works in this passage,²² it seems that he hints at two features that he implemented in his Sherlock Holmes: Dupin's analytical genius and Lecoq's energy. But, nonetheless, Conan Doyle did not simply replicate the so far existing prototypes of the fictional detective and rather intended to create a figure that could forever change the perception of all fictional investigators to come:

[C]ould I bring an addition of my own? I thought of my old teacher Joe Bell ... If he were a detective he would surely reduce this fascinating but unorganised business to something nearer to an exact science. I would try if I could get this effect. It was surely possible in real life, so why should I not make it plausible in fiction? It is all very well to say that a man is clever, but the reader wants to see examples of it – such examples as Bell gave us every day in the wards. (Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* 62–63)

There is yet more proof that Conan Doyle used Joseph Bell, or at least his deductive method, as an inspiration for Sherlock Holmes. Years after the invention of Holmes he wrote a letter to his former teacher in May 1892:

It is most certainly to you that I owe Sherlock Holmes, and though in the stories I have the advantage of being able to place him in all sorts of dramatic positions, I do not think that his analytical work is in the least an exaggeration of some effects, which I have seen you produce in the outpatient ward. (Doyle, qtd. in Liebow 172)

Sherlock Holmes was not created out of nowhere. There is enough evidence that suggests that Gaboriau, Poe²³ and Bell are strong influences for the character. Interestingly, Bell describes in an essay how he came to start using deduction as a method for his medical practise (204²⁴) and in reference to that Klingner writes that

²² Baring-Gould remarks that “[i]t is Holmes, not Doyle who is being less than gracious here” (Baring-Gould, *Volume I* 162).

²³ Jacke discusses Poe's influence on Conan Doyle and elaborates on plot structures and motifs within the Sherlock Holmes canon that might have resulted from Poe's inspiration – including Poe's non-detective-stories (see 68–74).

²⁴ “There is nothing new under the sun. Voltaire taught us the method of Zadig, and every good teacher of medicine or surgery exemplifies every day in his teaching and practice the method and its results. The precise and intelligent recognition and appreciation of minor differences is the real essential factor in all successful medical

“Voltaire’s short novel *Zadic Memnon* is generally thought to be one of the earliest examples of ‘Sherlockian’ deduction” (Klinger, *The Novels* 204). This short introduction to this chapter shows that even the original Sherlock Holmes with all his exceptional characteristics was nothing entirely new under the sun at the time of his creation. On the basis of this notion, this chapter will point out the characteristics that Conan Doyle gave to his detective. All of the identified features can be found in the *Character Features Model* of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes at the end of this chapter (see Fig. 2).

3.1 Outward Appearance

Readers of the Sherlock Holmes canon already receive a detailed description of the protagonist’s physical appearance in the second chapter of the first Sherlock Holmes novel “A Study in Scarlet”:

His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing ... and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 11)

By reading the entire stories one occasionally gets further information on his outward appearance. Smith for instance summarizes the detective as a “tall spare figure” (25). In “The Crooked Man” Watson furthermore describes his face as having a “composure which had made so many regard him as a machine rather than a man” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 175).²⁵

As can be seen from this, the physical appearance of the detective is well described in the canon. Nevertheless, it will be argued that these descriptions cannot be considered as central features in the *Character Features Model* for Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes. Graham and Garlen note:

Watson’s description of the detective is not likely to have set many Victorian

diagnosis” (Bell 204).

²⁵ Holmes’s facial features reflect Watson’s description of him as an intelligent reasoning machine here (Bochman 152).

hearts aflutter; however, Sidney Paget's early illustrations for the *Strand* certainly did ... Much of what we believe about the physical appearance of Holmes depends upon Paget's illustrations ... Paget used his handsome brother, Walter, as the model for Holmes' figure, making him much more dashing than the raptor-like gent of Watson's description ... Sidney was the first to add the iconic deerstalker cap ... Paget's illustrations had a profound influence on later illustrators and performers, for the image of Holmes as slender, intense, and handsome was quite solidly established in the public imagination by the time of the artist's death in 1908. (Graham and Garlen 25)

We have to keep in mind, however, that Paget did not become the illustrator of Sherlock Holmes before the publication of the adventures as short stories in *The Strand Magazine* from 1891 onwards. There were other illustrators at work for the first two novels,²⁶ which suggests that Holmes's public image was something that developed over the years (Tribe 19), and yet, Paget's influence on Holmes's appearance must have been immense. His depiction of Holmes wearing a *deerstalker*, which "was, in fact, never mentioned in Conan Doyle's stories" (McDuffie 45), and an *Inverness cape*, could for the first time be seen with the publication of "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" (Doyle, *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* 53) in October 1891 (Smith 38), and, nonetheless, until Paget's demise people began to believe that one simply needed to "[s]tick a deerstalker on a melon and it is instantly recognizable as Sherlock Holmes" (Segal, qtd. in McDuffie 45). We can assume that the *deerstalker* and the *Inverness cape* were visuals that were strictly connected to Sherlock Holmes, even if one had no picture of his facial features in mind. As Porter mentions, both are "key components" ("Modernizing Victorian Sherlock Holmes" 18) to the character and will, therefore, be regarded as central features within the *Character Features Model* of this chapter. Although Conan Doyle himself never mentioned either of the two items, he approved of Paget's illustrations which were published alongside his text, and thus formed the character's prototypical image of the late 19th and early 20th century. Nowadays, "the hat [still] connotes detective work, even without a detective's head inside it" (Rich, qtd. in Porter "Modernizing Victorian Sherlock Holmes" 18).

There are yet two other items that we can include as central features of the character, the calabash *pipe* and the *magnifying glass*. As for the calabash, Walker states

²⁶ Among them was Conan Doyle's father Charles Altamont Doyle (Boström 33).

that it “is associated with Holmes not through Conan Doyle’s work, but through stage and screen portrayals” (119). The fact that Sherlock Holmes is a pipe smoker is mentioned several times in the canon, and the number of pipes smoked sometimes even correlates to the difficulty of the case (Little 11).²⁷ It is specifically the calabash pipe that never appears in them. Nevertheless, Paget drew illustrations of Holmes smoking other pipes (e.g. in “The Man with the Twisted Lip”: Doyle, *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* 91). The detective sitting in his chair in 221B Baker Street while smoking and thinking about a case is a common scene appearing throughout the adventures. Instead of identifying the calabash pipe as a characteristic, we will thus stay on a more basic level of word meaning and simply add *pipe* as a central feature that is part of Sherlock Holmes’s early proto-image. As for the *magnifying glass*: It appears in the canon several times, was also illustrated by Sidney Paget (e.g. „The Adventure of the Norwood Builder“: Doyle, *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* 473), and is commonly counted as one of the “omnipresent signifiers” (Taylor, “A Singular Case of Identity” 95) connected to Sherlock Holmes. It will as well be regarded as a central feature.

For this section that leaves us with the *deerstalker*, the *Inverness cape*, the *pipe* and the *magnifying glass* as central features, while others in regard to Holmes’s outward appearance remain debatable. The descriptions and illustrations do not give the reader a clear, but rather a contradictory image. Although “Paget’s version of Holmes ... was not so far from the text version as to alienate readers or the author” (Little 8), even his illustrations per se show inconsistencies that sometimes depict a handsome (e.g. in „A Case of Identity“: Doyle, *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* 42), sometimes an unhandsome “balding, almost gaunt Holmes” (Little 9; e.g. in „The Adventure of the Naval Treaty“: Doyle, *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* 313). The outward appearance of Sherlock Holmes is, thus, foremost shaped by the just mentioned iconic symbols, making it difficult to identify a 19th and 20th century proto-image of the man wearing and using them. The hawk-like nose, prominent chin, sharp and piercing eyes, machine-like composure and even his often portrayed handsomeness will not be included in the model for the early prototype because of the discussed inconsistent depictions that often do not portray these characteristics at all. One could even debate the exclusion of all the outward appearance features from the model and only include the iconic signifiers, but there are descriptions of Holmes as a *tall* and *slender* figure and Paget’s illustrations do not contradict this

²⁷ Holmes for example refers to the case of “The Red-Headed League” as “a three pipe problem” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 80).

image. The impact of the *tall* and *slender* characteristics are certainly not as defining for the character as are the signifiers, but the image of a tall and slender detective with a deerstalker cap, an Inverness cape, and a pipe or a magnifying glass in his hand serves as a good starting point for our comparison. *Tall* and *slender* will, therefore, be added as secondary characteristics. In general these findings suggest that the typical character features in regard to Holmes's outward appearance rather rely on visual objects than on actual facial or physical characteristics.

3.2 Personality

In consideration of Holmes's personality this book will not only focus on the personality traits of the fictional detective, but also have a look at habits and proclivities that are expressions of his personality.

In "A Study in Scarlet" John Watson tells the reader that "Holmes was certainly not a difficult man to live with. He was quiet in his ways, and his habits were regular" (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 11). In the fictional Sherlock Holmes universe this estimation of Holmes's ways takes place after Watson moves in to 221B Baker Street to share rooms with Holmes. In a later story ("The Adventure of the Dying Detective") he presents a different view on the matter:

Mrs Hudson, the landlady of Sherlock Holmes, was a long-suffering woman. Not only was her first-floor flat invaded at all hours by throngs of singular and often undesirable characters, but her remarkable lodger showed an eccentricity and irregularity in his life which must have sorely retired her patience. His incredible untidiness, his addiction to music at strange hours, his occasional revolver practice within doors, his weird and often malodorous scientific experiments, and the atmosphere of violence and danger which hung around him made him the very worst tenant in London. (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 398)

Even if one acknowledges that John Watson is in several respects an unreliable narrator and sometimes contradicts his own writing (Baring-Gould, *Volume I* 4), one can find several instances of Holmes's *eccentricity* within Watson's narration. This *eccentricity* is reflected in Holmes devoting his whole life towards being a consulting detective and he even notes: "I have chosen my own profession, or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world ... The only unofficial consulting detective ...

I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 40). While his *eccentricity* is most of all shown by his lack of social connections (Toadvine 52), his guardedness towards women (Lane 229) and those habits that have been depicted in Watson’s quote above, Sherlock Holmes’s statement about himself hints at a certain *arrogance*, and “an *idiosyncratic sense of justice*” (Taylor, “Return of ‘the woman’” 61). The latter feature can occasionally be found within the stories, when Holmes decides to spare a culprit from sending him to prison if his sense of justice tells him that he is no threat for society.²⁸

Furthermore, Holmes is described by Doyle to be “as inhuman as a ... [c]alculating [m]achine” (Doyle, qtd. in Graham and Garlen 24), and overall emotionless as Watson explains in “A Scandal in Bohemia”: “All emotions, and [love] particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He was ... the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 70). From this one can infer that emotions could be a distraction to Holmes’s mind and not having any helps his brain to function at an optimum level. Apart from that, he is also most obviously “not interested in sex” (Fratz 84). This *asexuality* even more evokes notions of him being machine-like. The lack of Holmes’s emotionality is sometimes also regarded as a result of Conan Doyle’s troubled relationship towards his creation. To him “the detective was always more appealing for the financial benefits than his literary potential” (Smith 16) and “perhaps the great tragedy of his life is that he could not bring himself to love and recognize his most perfectly realized creation” (Smith 19).

Sherlock Holmes’s arrogant, eccentric and emotionless ways lead Holmes into being a man that is isolated from social relationships. He simply maintains those connections that are of use to him as the ones to police inspectors, his landlady Mrs Hudson or people that occasionally help him – for example the Baker Street Irregulars, “a posse of ragamuffins known as ‘the Baker Street division of the detective police force’” (Smith 61). John Watson is, apart from Mycroft, “Sherlock’s elder brother by seven years” (Smith 22), the only person that has a close relationship to him. While Watson certainly also functions as a plot device or figure of identification for the reader that helps to understand Holmes’s methods and trains of thought, Holmes obviously values him as a friend and companion for overlooking his flaws and eccentricities (Porter, “Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 51),

²⁸ To give a few out of many examples, one can find such scenes in “The Boscombe Valley Mystery”, “The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot”, “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” and “The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton”.

for his medical knowledge (La Paz 87), as his biographer²⁹ and as an invaluable partner throughout his many inquiries.³⁰ In thought of this it is easy to identify Holmes's *relationship to Watson* as a central feature of his characterization. As for other characters of the canon: They will not be included into the model because they are rather features of the stories than of the protagonist.³¹ Sherlock Holmes, nonetheless, mostly lives in *social isolation*. It is a feature of his character that is not as central to him as his partnership with Watson, but still an important expression of his personality and his devotion towards his profession. It will be identified as a secondary characteristic for this chapter's *Character Features Model*.

Apart from Holmes's character traits, his habits and pleasures are also an expression of his personality. Despite the fact that Holmes is a heavy smoker of cigarettes, cigars and pipes (Smith 68), Watson informs the reader that Holmes also favours a 7-percent solution of cocaine³² – which was by that time not against the law – as a mental stimulus for his brain, especially when there are no cases that require his talents (Smith 90–70). In “The Sign of Four” Holmes describes his need for the artificial drug: “My mind ... rebels at stagnation ... Give me problems, give me work ... I can dispense then with artificial stimulants” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 40). Smith remarks that this habit vanishes in the further development of the detective's career (69). So while it is a typical feature of Holmes in the earlier stories, it is completely absent in the later ones. *Drug addiction* will, thus,

²⁹ In “A Scandal in Bohemia” Holmes declares: “I am lost without my Boswell” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 71). Boswell refers to James Boswell, the author who wrote “the *Life of Samuel Johnson*, one of the most celebrated biographies of all time” (Baring-Gould, *Volume I* 351). Even if Holmes's utterance is often regarded as sarcasm due to his frequent complaints about Watson's style of writing (Baring-Gould, *Volume I* 351), one can still infer that Holmes generally appreciates Watson's appraisal of his methods and brilliance. In “The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier” he even admits that “Watson's dramatic flair rather adds something to the tales” (Smith 184).

³⁰ In „The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier” he notes: “[I]f I burden myself with a companion in my various little inquiries it is not done out of sentiment or caprice, but it is that Watson has some remarkable characteristics of his own” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 427).

³¹ The same can be said about locations. 221B Baker Street and London are most definitely characteristics of the stories, but it seems far-fetched to include them as typical features of the character.

³² The first passage of „The Sign of Four”, however, also informs the reader that it is not only cocaine, but sometimes also morphine that Holmes injects into his veins, when Watson asks: “Which is it today, ... morphine or cocaine?” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 40).

be considered as a secondary feature.

Another one of Holmes's habits was pointed out at the beginning of this section: his addiction to music. The fact that Holmes "plays the violin well" (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 12) is scattered throughout the canon and shows his interest in arts. The feature of being a *violin player* is not important, however, for his profession. It is part of his character and even if the violin is an object that is typically connected with Holmes, it is normally not mentioned along the formerly discussed omnipresent signifiers. It seems reasonable to identify *violin player*, too, as a secondary feature.

The last aspect concerning the personality of Sherlock Holmes is connected to the depth of his character as it is described by John Watson. The focus of his narration is on Holmes's methods and on the adventures. By that, the reader only receives few pieces of information about other facets of his life. Also, Holmes does only make little progress regarding a character development and instead statically remains the brilliant and eccentric detective as which he is already portrayed from the beginning of the adventures. This does, however, not mean that there is no continuity or character development at all: Holmes has been a detective before Watson; both start to share rooms; Watson marries and moves out of 221B Baker Street; Holmes supposedly dies in "The Final Problem", comes back from the dead and is obviously cured from his drug addiction; Watson moves back in (and at some point in time out again) and Holmes solves further cases (with and without Watson) until he retires to keep bees in Sussex. In the course of all this Holmes's character, however, always remains true to his first depiction in "A Study in Scarlet". He can, thus, be regarded as static. The *static* feature is not at the heart of his characterization, but it is part of it and will be treated as a peripheral characteristic.

As already pointed out, there is only a loose continuity throughout the canon. The missing pieces of information about Holmes's personal life and past have inspired "the idea of Sherlockian scholarship, the 'game' of treating the stories as biography, not fiction" (Klinger, *The Novels* XIII). More so, some people even treat Sherlock Holmes "as if he were real and his creator fictitious" (Saler, qtd. in Lavigne 22). This game emphasises that the detective is to a certain degree an *opaque* character: The reader mostly receives information about Holmes as a consulting detective, not about many other facets of his biography. As with *static*, *opaque* will also be treated as peripheral because it is rather a result of the lack of other features that could add depth to the character.

To sum up this section Holmes's *relationship to Watson* was identified as a central,

drug addiction, violin player and social isolation as secondary and *static and opaque* as peripheral features. As for *eccentricity, arrogance, asexuality* and the *idiosyncratic sense of justice*: They are personality traits making it difficult to argue for them as central or secondary features. They are part of his character, nonetheless they cannot be observed in every story, which in turn makes them rather candidates to be identified as secondary. Similar arguments could be discussed for the feature *lack of emotions*. However, Holmes's unemotional or sometimes even inhuman ways are closely linked to his machine-like mind which – as we will soon see – is the basis for his most central character features: His methods. These will be identified in the next section, but for now the link between Sherlock Holmes's mind and his *lack of emotions* serves as the main argument to call the latter feature a central one. Other features that were pointed out in this section, such as his sometimes obvious tactlessness towards clients or the police or his guardedness towards women are facets of his arrogance, eccentricity, asexuality and lack of emotions and are, thus, not included in the *Character Features Model*.

3.3 Methods

In the preceding section it was noted that Sherlock Holmes's most central features are connected to what Holmes calls his "methods".³³ One can again read the first chapters of "A Study in Scarlet" for a first impression of Holmes's features in this respect. Watson describes in that chapter that Holmes has no knowledge whatsoever about literature, philosophy and astronomy, while his knowledge in politics, botany, geology, chemistry, anatomy and sensational literature ranks from "feeble" to "immense" (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 12). Whereas his knowledge is a central character feature, Watson's description of Holmes as a martial artist³⁴ only plays into solving a mystery in rare cases.³⁵ As Fratz writes, "while he is a proficient boxer and marksman, he favours mental weapons ... figuring him as a strategist rather than man of action ... Yet Holmes is active and energetic" (88) which can be

³³ The utterance „You know my methods" can at least be found in "The Sign of Four", "The Blue Carbuncle" and "The Musgrave Ritual" (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 50, 106, 169), and there are more instances of Holmes or Watson referring to the term in other stories.

³⁴ Holmes is described by Watson as "an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman" (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 12).

³⁵ For example, the reader learns that he makes use of his talents in "The Adventure of the Empty House" and "The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist".

seen in his constant field investigations. Unlike his brother he is not the type of character sitting in his chair and solely relying on his intellect (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 185). This juxtaposition of intelligence and energy might have its source in what has been discussed above as Poe's and Gaboriau's works. Because Holmes favours brain work over fighting, *martial arts* can be added as a secondary feature amongst his methods.

Returning to his knowledge, Smith suggests that one has to keep Watson's unreliability as a narrator in mind, because in the canon the reader finds Holmes quoting from literature or referring to philosophical topics (25), despite Watson's estimation that Holmes knows nothing about these topics. The most striking aspects in respect to Sherlock Holmes's knowledge are, however, that he has acquired knowledge in exactly those fields which he regards as important for his profession. It was discussed earlier that he devotes his whole life to being a consulting detective and for that purpose he is ignorant of some facts – for example “of the composition of the Solar System” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 11) – but has a profound *specialised knowledge* when it comes to what is necessary for his work. Holmes himself declares:

I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now, the skilful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it, there comes a time when, for every addition of knowledge, you forget something that you knew before. It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones. (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 11–12)

Sherlock Holmes's *specialised knowledge* is often the key to uncovering a case and, thus, most definitely a central feature of his characterization. It is not astonishing then that he says in “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle”: “It is my business to know what other people don't know” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 109). He

furthermore elaborates on his “attic theory” (Porter, “Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 49) in “The Five Orange Pips” in which he explains how to assess information that is not stored in a man’s brain attic: “[T]he rest he can put away in the lumber room of his library, where he can get it if he wants” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 97). The *brain attic theory* is not referred to more often than in those two instances and still it is very important to the character because it helps to understand how Holmes’s mind works. As we have grouped other features that cannot be found in every story as secondary, the same will be done in this case.

It shall not be forgotten, though, to have another look at the elaboration on the brain attic theory in “The Five Orange Pips” because it yet points out another feature of interest. Holmes is a “master of information ... that utilizes information resources” (Taylor, “The ‘Great Game’ of Information 128) to the fullest. When he does not have certain pieces of information in his mind, he knows exactly where to find or how to obtain them. In order to do so, he also makes use of “emerging information technologies (such as the telegraph and telephone) and informants” (Taylor, “The ‘Great Game’ of Information 128) like the already mentioned Baker Street Irregulars or for example, as in “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client”, the ex-criminal Shinwell Johnson.

Not only is the “Master Detective” (Taylor, “Return of ‘the woman’” 61) a *master of information*, but furthermore also a master of other skills. His “talent for disguise” (Taylor, “Return of ‘the woman’” 61), which again helps him to obtain information that suspects or informants would not share with him in person, constitutes a “‘master of disguise’ motif” (Poore 95). Being a *master of disguise* and a *master of information* are aspects that are central to many investigations³⁶ and, thus, central to Sherlock Holmes’s characterization.

Considering his methods, we have to lastly identify those features that Arthur Conan Doyle wanted to add in reference to his old professor, Dr. Joseph Bell. For the implementation of these into the *Character Features Model*, they will be subdivided into two aspects. First, “Holmes is credited for his pioneering methods and groundbreaking discoveries in the fields of forensics and crime scene investigations” (Freeman 7). The employment of this forensic method can be found constantly as part of his investigations. He relies on ballistics (Bochman 147), medical science (Bochman 149), chemistry, finger- and footprints and uses his room

³⁶ “Sherlock Holmes in Doyle’s stories is described as disguising himself on at least seventeen occasions” (Poore 85), and the reader constantly finds him using newspapers, monographs as well as the technological inventions of his time as information sources.

as a laboratory for scientific experiments (La Paz 85). All of this happens during a time when *forensic science* was not widely established within the field of detective work.

The second aspect is probably most central to the character of Sherlock Holmes: “The Science of Deduction”.³⁷ Sherlock Holmes has an almost supernatural talent for observation and is able to deduce and read a person’s life, habits, job, marital status, travels and even more from the observed facts. In “The Red-Headed League” one may, for example, find the following demonstration:

“Beyond the obvious facts that he has at some time done manual labour ... that he is a Freemason, that he has been in China, and that he has done a considerable amount of writing lately, I can deduce nothing else.” ... “How, in the name of good fortune, did you know all that, Mr Holmes? ... “Your hands, my dear sir. Your right hand is quite a size larger than your left. You have worked with it, and the muscles are more developed ... you use an arc-and-compass breastpin [, a sign of Freemasonry]” ... “Ah, of course ... But the writing?” “What else can be indicated by that right cuff so very shiny for five inches, and the left one with the smooth patch near the elbow where you rest it upon the desk?” “Well, but China?” “The fish you have tattooed immediately above your right wrist could only have been done in China ... in addition, I see a Chinese coin hanging from your watch chain ...” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 77)

Scenes that employ “Sherlockian deduction” (Klinger, *The Novels* 204) are found in every Sherlock Holmes story. They are the ingredients of distinguishing Sherlock Holmes from every detective that came before him. Thanks to an often baffled Watson, Holmes’s observations and deductions are always explained to the reader. The idea for this facet of Holmes can easily be grasped when one reads descriptions of Dr. Joseph Bell’s lectures during which he often practiced similar methods³⁸ and,

³⁷ The second chapter of „A Study in Scarlet” and the first chapter of “The Sign of Four” are called “The Science of Deduction”. It is a first hint at its monumental impact on the Sherlock Holmes stories and character.

³⁸ One example of Bell in the outpatient ward: “Well, my man, you’ve served in the army.’ ‘Aye, sir.’ ‘Not long discharged?’ ‘No, sir.’ ‘A Highland regiment?’ ‘Aye, sir.’ ‘A non-com. officer?’ ‘Aye, sir.’ ‘Stationed at Barbados?’ ‘Aye, sir.’ ‘You see, gentlemen, the man was a respectful man but did not remove his hat. They do not in the army, but he would have learned civilian ways had he been long discharged. He has an air of authority and

as discussed in the introduction to this chapter, Conan Doyle admitted more than once that Bell's deductive powers served as an inspiration for Holmes. We can, thus, safely add *observation and deduction* and *forensic science* to the heart of the *Character Features Model*.

In summary *observation and deduction*, *forensic science*, *specialised knowledge*, *master of information* and *master of disguise* have been identified as central character features, while *brain attic theory* and *martial arts* are secondary ones.

3.4 Character Features Model

Throughout this chapter character features of the canonical Master Detective have been identified and discussed. Figure 2 shows the *Character Features Model* of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, although one has to remember that the *deerstalker* hat and the *Inverness cape* were originally not Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's idea, but added to the looks of Holmes by illustrator Sidney Paget. Because these illustrations had to be approved of in order to appear on the same pages as the stories in *The Strand*, they have, nonetheless, been taken into consideration for the model presented here. In contrast, ideas that were added to the character through early stage portrayals, or even early movies, have not been considered. The focus was kept on what was presented to the readers with the serialization of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's adventures. Contradictory features have – as formerly shown – been excluded from the model.

The position of each feature as central, secondary or peripheral was already explained in the sections above. The clusters which can be observed within the model are related to the outward appearance, the personality and the methods of the canonical Sherlock Holmes. Features in connection to the detective's outward appearance can be found towards the top of the model. Features of his personality appear towards the bottom and his methods along the middle axis. Holmes's *relationship to Watson* is a singular feature that is placed between his methods and his personality, symbolizing on the one hand – in regarding Watson as Holmes's partner – his use to the investigations, and on the other hand – in regarding him as Holmes's friend – the detective's self-isolating personality that allows him only having one friend.

he is obviously Scottish. As to Barbados, his complaint is elephantiasis, which is West Indian and not British” (Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* 20).

The model is not only a means of comparison for this book; one can also draw conclusions for the original stories from it. One question that has been brought up at the beginning of this book was what the heart of the stories encompasses. Naturally, one should regard the protagonist, Sherlock Holmes, as central to the stories. Proceeding from that, we can theorize that the stories' heart is composed of two aspects: The Master Detective's methods and his relationship to John

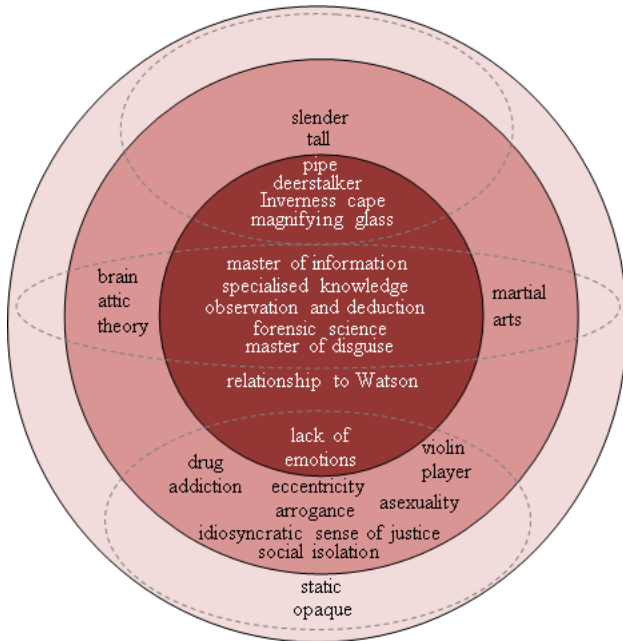


Figure 2. *Character Features Model* of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.

Watson. Although there are also aspects of the outward appearance and personality at the centre of the model, it is no coincidence that the methods and the

Holmes-Watson relationship have been located further to the centre. This idea is not new with scholars claiming that “[t]his relationship is at the heart of the original stories” (Toadvine 48) and often praising “Sherlock Holmes’s mind as

what separates him from those around him” (Porter, “Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 48). In addition, Kayalvizhi argues that Holmes’s “chief supremacy lies in the way he makes use of his intelligence to the core, and only that eminent quality distinguishes him from the other investigators” (qtd. in Porter, “Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 48). The model provided above supports and visualizes these ideas and still regards further features as central to the protagonist’s characterization for the reasons that have been discussed within this chapter. With the hypothesis for the heart of the stories and the identified central, secondary and peripheral

characteristics of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, we can move to the next part of this study and have a look at the adaptations of the 21st century.

4. BBC's Sherlock

Something new under the sun of the Sherlock Holmes universe was in prog some time into the 21st century when Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss developed the idea to “modernize one of the world’s most renowned literary characters ... and [to] bring Sherlock Holmes up to date” (Boström 1). It took them some years from the idea, which they discussed during several train journeys, to the process of actually developing a television series (Adams 3), but with the BBC’s *Sherlock* the two creators presented a version of the Holmes adventures to the world that was for the first time set in the 21st century. It has to be stated though that adapting a present-day Sherlock Holmes has already been done in the nineteen-forties and was, thus, realised before with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce as “Holmes and Watson, battling Nazis” (Adams 137).³⁹ Once again we find the quote from the original stories⁴⁰ reflected in the act of adaptation, but, nevertheless, *Sherlock* tells a new story of “a contemporary, young, technologically adept Holmes [that] still retains ... familiar trappings as the original characters, 221B Baker Street, and Holmes’ cape-like, flowing overcoat” (Taylor, “A Singular Case of Identity” 94). In the following chapter it will be analysed in how far the features of this 21st century incarnation have changed in the course of the adaptation process. As in the previous chapter, the *Character Features Model* of the BBC’s detective can be found at the end of this chapter (see Fig. 4). In addition, a version of that model will be presented that highlights the shifts and alterations in comparison to the early prototype (see Fig. 3).

4.1 Outward Appearance

One does not need to consult many sources, or needs to have seen many episodes of *Sherlock*, to be able to figure out that the stature features of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes also apply to Benedict Cumberbatch, who can most definitely be described as *tall* in comparison to other men appearing in the show and *slender*. Cumberbatch even seems to be a great casting choice in many other aspects

³⁹ Moffat and Gatiss never tried to hide the fact that the Rathbone movies have been an inspiration for *Sherlock* and even admitted that amongst all previous adaptations they “secretly liked the Rathbones best” (Gatiss, qtd. in Adams 2).

⁴⁰ “There is nothing new under the sun. It has all been done before” (*The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 15).

of the detective's physical appearance as he continues the tradition of "Holmes's transformation into heartthrob material" (Graham and Garlen 25) that was begun by Paget and quickly brought to stage and screen in the earliest adaptations of Conan Doyle's works. While *handsome* had to be excluded as a feature of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, the BBC's version has "been thoroughly transformed; where Conan Doyle saw a Babbage's Calculating Machine, we now see an icon of style, a model for the well dressed British male, an object of emulation, admiration, and desire" (Graham and Garlen 32). As Strosser notes, "[e]ven iconic screen representations of the character ... did not create the robust fan reaction created by Benedict Cumberbatch's portrayal" (181). It seems that in our contemporary culture fans no longer watch television series or movies just because they are fans of the stories, but also because they are fans of the actors playing roles in them. Fans of *Sherlock* are sometimes or even often also fans of Benedict Cumberbatch (and Martin Freeman), who especially attracts female fan groups. In the series the thought of a handsome Holmes who attracts the other sex is addressed in the form of Molly Hooper being obviously in love with the detective. In series three Sherlock furthermore has a fake relationship in order to solve a case. The fact that women fall for him is a clue to Sherlock's potential attractiveness. The two examples serve as legitimate arguments not only to include *handsome* as a feature in the *Character Features Model*, but to even identify it as a central characteristic of his modern representation.

Graham and Garlen take this notion a step further and claim that "[t]oday, sexy Sherlock is almost a given" (25). If that is true for the Sherlock Holmes prototype of the 21st century remains to be seen and will ultimately be answered in the conclusion of this book, but for *Sherlock* the idea of a handsome, sexy and likewise intelligent man is a recurring motif. In "A Scandal in Belgravia" it is explicitly addressed when Irene Adler says that "brainy's the new sexy".⁴¹ Sexy is a term of which we can assume that it is used more often nowadays than at the beginning of the 20th century and is contemporarily even an attribute that often goes along with being handsome. It will be considered as an addition to the *handsome* feature and appear as *handsome/ sexy* in the *Character Features Model*.

In contrast to this central feature, *tall* and *slender* will still be considered as secondary within the model. If Cumberbatch was a bit smaller and more muscular, fans would probably still accept and admire his rendition as Master Detective. This

⁴¹ A similar thought is expressed by Graham and Garlen who write that the utterance "sums up the qualities that make Sherlock Holmes such a potent icon today" (33).

idea suggests that being appreciated as handsome by the fans – although the concept of handsomeness is a question of subjective preference – is more important than the original *tall* and *slender* characteristics. These thoughts hint at an aspect which needs to be discussed: Are there at all typical outward appearance features for the character in the 21st century that result in casting a special type of actor for the role of Sherlock Holmes? In this study, it will rather be assumed that being perceived as handsome is most important and that it does not really matter which features construe this handsomeness. A further argument for this notion is that the three Holmes actors in question, Cumberbatch, Miller, and Downey Jr., are quite different in their physical appearance, but all attractive in their own way. We will come back to this discussion in the next chapters. As the further analysis throughout them will prove, there are at least tendencies in consideration of physical features. For the *Character Features Model* of the BBC's Sherlock this leaves us with the subjectively interpretable features *slender*, *tall* and *handsome/sexy*.⁴²

The features of Holmes's outward appearance which are more easily discussed are the ones that have been termed as signifiers for the early prototype. In *Sherlock* they have experienced a complete redesign. First of all, the *pipe* completely vanishes in the BBC series. In the first episode, "A Study in Pink", Sherlock refers to the canonical "three pipe problem" (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 80) as a "three patch problem" showing the viewer not only that "[t]he pleasure of the series derives ... from our recognition of the playful engagement with [the canon]" (Walker 121), but also that 21st century Sherlock is not merely based on "stereotypical" (Bochman 145) visuals. The viewer only sees Sherlock smoking a pipe in the Victorian special episode, "The Abominable Bride", which takes place in Sherlock's mind palace and provides more such references to the signifiers, but they are all no longer part of his central features. Other than the *pipe*, the *magnifying glass* is not a lost feature per se, but will still be excluded from the model. As Conan Doyle's Holmes, Sherlock uses a magnifying glass, which comes in the form of a pocket lens in the BBC series. However, this tool becomes less important in times of technical devices and because of this the viewer might rather have Sherlock using his mobile phone or laptop in mind than the pocket lens. In consideration of this the magnifying glass is no longer connected to his outward appearance but

⁴² This again emphasizes the cognitive nature of the *Character Features Model*. There are certainly people who do not consider Cumberbatch to be handsome or sexy. The inclusion of this feature is done here on the basis of him being widely regarded as such (compare Graham and Garlen 32).

merely a tool of investigation. Whereas the *magnifying glass* has been identified as a signifier of the original character it does not remain such and is no longer typical of the detective's physical appearance.

In contrast, the *Inverness cape* does not vanish, but is adapted for the 21st century. It becomes a black *overcoat* that is typical of the detective's looks. In the third series' first episode, "The Empty Hearse", Sherlock comes back from his supposed death and, upon returning to his life as a detective, asks for his overcoat right away, signalling that it is part of his professional image. The *overcoat* can be seen as an appropriation of the *Inverness cape* and is, thus, identified as a central feature. Another piece of clothing that the character often wears in combination with it is a *scarf*. While the *overcoat* is most obviously intended as a contemporary signifier and is – as just exemplified – specifically treated as an important visual, the *scarf* is rather an addition to his appearance and will be regarded as a secondary feature.

The *deerstalker*, the one signifier that was in the past instantaneously connected to Holmes, does also play a part in the BBC series. Bochman describes that it appears for the first time "in Season Two when Sherlock puts it on to be unrecognized by paparazzi. He is photographed anyway and, ironically, becomes famous for wearing it" (145). The way *Sherlock* treats the deerstalker pays tribute to the original where the cap is never mentioned and Holmes is, nonetheless, illustrated wearing it. In contrast to the readers of the original stories, the viewers of *Sherlock* do not only get to see single illustrations of the detective, but may observe him throughout his investigations. Because of this, they know that Sherlock does not actually wear the *deerstalker* often and do not connect it to Sherlock's typical appearance. As a reference to the original the feature can still be treated as peripheral in the *Character Features Model* of the BBC's *Sherlock*.

Concerning Sherlock's outward appearance, *overcoat* and *handsome/sexy* have been identified as central features; *Scarf* has been added as a secondary feature alongside *slender* and *tall*, while *deerstalker* has even been shifted into being a peripheral feature.

4.2 Personality

For the early prototype, *lack of emotions* was the only personality feature that could be identified as a central one. As will become evident in this section, the features of Sherlock's personality are more central to the BBC's character than they have been in Conan Doyle's works.

Especially during the first two series the protagonist does – like his predecessor – not seem to be capable of many emotions and resembles the original descriptions of Sherlock Holmes as a “cold [and] precise reasoning ... machine” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 70). However, occasional outbursts of “irritation, impatience, exhilaration, and ... righteous anger” (Fratz 91) during these episodes already point at the revelation of the third series when the viewer finds out that “Sherlock’s inner life is full of emotion” (Porter, “Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 60). In series three, viewers are presented with first clues about Sherlock’s past and in the last episode of series four, “The Final Problem”, his brother Mycroft explicitly states what might have come to the audience’s mind throughout the earlier episodes: “He was, in the early day, an emotional child.” One can conclude from this that Sherlock suppresses or rejects his “emotion in favor of logic” (Marinara and Thomas 76) as an adult – with the result of “theatrical coldness” (Fratz 91). Because of this, the feature *lack of emotions* has transformed into the feature *suppressed emotions* within the *Character Features Model* of the BBC’s Sherlock.

Not only in consideration of his emotionality, but also in consideration of other features, does *Sherlock* seem to treat aspects of Conan Doyle’s characterization as a facade for its protagonist. The detective’s sexuality is a question that puzzles scholars and fans alike. While the series constantly makes fun of a potential homoerotic relationship between Sherlock and John Watson and at the same time explicitly states that the detective is not interested in sex, it also hints at the fact that Sherlock actually “makes the choice of a monk, not the choice of an asexual” (Moffat, qtd. in Fratz 87).⁴³ This *chosen asexuality*, an appropriation of the original character’s factual asexuality, fits to the idea of the rejection of everything that might distract the mind from working properly. Other than for Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes, it is thus a central feature of the BBC’s protagonist.

For Sherlock’s Victorian predecessor his arrogant and eccentric ways or his social isolation were nothing that would have been strictly regarded as out of the ordinary within the Victorian society, but “what is ... ‘normal’ in one time and place might be interpreted very differently within a different cultural context” (Porter, “Introduction” 2). “Whereas Victorian Holmes was frequently viewed as an eccentric amateur ... contemporary Holmes is perceived as a ‘freak’ [and while] Victorian Holmes ... is considered a meddler at worst ... contemporary Holmes is

⁴³ One such hint is observed by Fratz who explains that Sherlock’s adversary in series three assesses “Sherlock’s ‘porn habits’ as ‘normal’ ... [while] genuine asexuality should have triggered ‘none’” (87).

called a ‘psychopath’” (Bochman 151). Sherlock “self identifies as a ‘high-functioning sociopath’” (Porter, “Real Sherlock Holmes” 2), but as we have already seen his self-identification rather construes the man he tries to be than the man he really is. Sherlock is not actually a sociopath, although his facade “further isolate[s] him from the mere eccentricity of his Victorian predecessor” (Bochman 146). “[H]e claims to be heartless ... or ‘married to his work’ ... or says that he does not ‘have friends’” (Fratz 83), but as the story continues, viewers find out that these claims are not true. His arrogance and eccentricity are – more than during the 19th or 20th century – aspects that make him appear as “Other” (Porter, “Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 56), but the relationships he develops throughout the series emphasize “that he is meant to be viewed as more than a deductive engine” (Bochman 146). Because of these relationships the feature of *social isolation* is lost in *Sherlock*. His *arrogance*, however, is often present in Sherlock’s view that he is more intelligent than everyone else; this characteristic shifts into being a more central character feature. The same is true for his *eccentricity*, but as the character starts out with certain sociopathic disorders and only develops into being more human and sociable, the feature *eccentricity* receives an additional attribute. Davis brings up the idea that modern Holmesian adaptations show a “trajectory ... toward a greater emphasis on Holmes’s addiction and neuroses” (Davis, qtd. in Walker 126). This book will go along with this idea and, without calling Sherlock a clearly defined sociopath, add the feature *eccentricity/neuroses* to his *Character Features Model*. Again, this can be seen as an appropriation of the *eccentricity* feature that was identified for the early prototype. Sherlock’s *eccentricity* goes beyond the lack of social relationships, tactlessness and strange habits of his Victorian predecessor. As per definition,

[n]eurosis refers to a variety of psychological problems involving persistent experiences of ... anxiety, anger, irritability ... behavioural symptoms such as ... impulsive and compulsive acts ... negativity and cynism ... Interpersonally, neurosis involves perfectionism, ... isolation, socioculturally inappropriate behaviours, etc.” (Boeree).

All of these can be found as part of Sherlock’s personality: He occasionally shows emotions, acts impulsively when he is in rage or anger; he is compulsive in regard to his profession and negative or cynical towards people he dislikes. He believes to be cleverer than everyone around him and tries to keep up this perfectionist view, isolates himself (at the beginning of the series) from other people and acts rude or

inappropriate in certain situations. This clearly emphasises the exceedance of the *eccentricity* feature and the emergence of the *neuroses* attribute.

If one follows the other aspect mentioned by Davies, one has to also discuss the emphasis on Sherlock's drug addiction in the BBC series. It is already in the first episode, "A Study in Pink", that the police search his rooms for substances and when asked by the culprit if he has ever done drugs, he answers that he has not done so lately. From series three onwards the emphasis on Sherlock's drug addiction becomes stronger though. John Watson finds Sherlock in a drug dealer's house in "His Last Vow", and although Sherlock claims that he is only there for a case, viewers get the impression that he is, in fact, drugged. The special episode "The Abominable Bride" takes place in Sherlock's mind for most of the time and gives the viewer further insights into his inner life and past. It "reveals a darker history for Sherlock's substance use by indicating that, without Mycroft's intervention ... Sherlock's addiction might be fatal" (Fratz 89–90). While the addiction is quite present in Conan Doyle's early stories and vanishes later on, it is the other way around in *Sherlock*. As in "The Abominable Bride", Sherlock again takes drugs to solve a case in the second episode of series four, "The Lying Detective". Conan Doyle's Holmes never does so to solve a case, but specifically as a brain stimulus when there is no case at hand. Sherlock's *drug addiction* is an important part of the character, not only an occasional habit. It can safely be said to have shifted from a secondary to a central feature.

Not all of the personality features identified for the early prototype do shift into the centre of the model, however. Sherlock as a *violin player*, for instance, remains a secondary feature. As in the original, it is a habit of the detective that is certainly connected to his personality, but that is not as central as the just mentioned ones, simply because it is not central to his profession. In contrast to this characteristic, the *idiosyncratic sense of justice* is not as present in *Sherlock* as in Conan Doyle's works. One could even question if it is part of Sherlock's personality at all as sparing a culprit is nothing one could connect to Sherlock. However, the feature can still be observed when he shoots Charles Augustus Magnussen in "His Last Vow" in an act of self-administered justice – or as his only conclusion of how to stop his adversary. It is a different facet of this feature and there are not many more scenes in which viewers can observe it at all. In *Sherlock* it can only be described as peripheral.

The passages above could already clarify that Sherlock's past and inner life are explored by the viewer step per step, and that he develops from a sociopathic lone

wolf into a more sociable, albeit still eccentric and neurotic fellow. His sociopathic disorders do not simply disappear from one episode to another and he is still reserved towards other people, but does keep more than one deep relationship. The series describes this development as Sherlock's "journey from being a great man to a good one" (Porter, "Mind of Sherlock Holmes" 59). With Inspector Lestrade stating in "The Final Problem", the last episode of series four, that "he's a good one", the journey seems complete and could even mark the series' end.⁴⁴ Because of these notions, Sherlock cannot be described as *static*, but as *dynamic* and even though the character is not fully explained, he is less *opaque* than his Victorian counterpart. Both features are lost or, in the case of *static*, replaced in the BBC series. The fact that Sherlock is *dynamic* and open to a character development is not as central as the features that remain stable in his characterization, but this development is important to the character concept. Because of this, *dynamic* will be regarded as a secondary characteristic.

Even if Sherlock keeps more than one relationship, his friendship to John Watson is the most central one. It is the one that opens the possibility of developing other friendships with Molly Hooper, Inspector Lestrade and his landlady Mrs Hudson. Without John, Sherlock could not experience the journey into becoming a good man. Despite the fact that John is not the all admiring biographer from Conan Doyle's tales, but rather a friend that can stand up to Sherlock, the *relationship to Watson* is still "at the heart of the stories" (Toadvine 48). It has changed, been adapted for the 21st century and shows a more equal friendship that is only on an intellectual level dominated by Sherlock, but it is still a central character feature of Sherlock Holmes.

In summary, Sherlock's personality features have mostly been shifted into a central position within this chapter's *Character Features Model* (*suppressed emotions, eccentricity/neuroses, chosen asexuality, drug addiction and arrogance*). *Violin player* has remained in its position as a secondary feature, while the *idiosyncratic sense of justice* has become a peripheral one. *Social isolation* and *opaque* are features that have been lost, and *static* has been replaced by *dynamic* which is treated as a secondary characteristic within the model.

⁴⁴ As of now it is not certain if there will be a fifth series of *Sherlock*.

4.3 Methods

For the early prototype of Sherlock Holmes his methods have been identified as most central features of his character in the previous chapter. For *Sherlock* they mostly remain in that position of the *Character Features Model*. Nevertheless, there are some alterations and unique characteristics for the BBC's detective.

Sherlock is – perhaps even more than during the late 19th and early 20th century – a *master of information*. Conan Doyle's Master Detective already shows an excessive use of contemporary technologies and this has been taken up by the BBC's show creators. Bochman notes: "One of the most striking aspects of this new adaptation is an updated appropriation of technology for Holmes, including the use of laptops, smartphones, and modern forensic equipment" (144). Rather than an appropriation, it will be considered as an adaptation to the 21st century within this section. It is the interpretation of how Victorian Holmes might use 21st century technology as a method for his investigation – "whether tracking a phone remotely via an internet application or searching the weather conditions on his smartphone to determine a victim's whereabouts" (Lane 225). It is, however, not only technology that is used by Sherlock as an information source. Like Conan Doyle's detective, he makes use of informants. Instead of the Baker Street Irregulars, he for example employs a homeless network to learn about everything that is going on in London (Taylor, "The 'Great Game' of Information 131). Although one might get the feeling that technology receives a greater emphasis in *Sherlock* than in Conan Doyle's original, the feature *master of information* is a central characteristic in both stories and for both *Character Features Models*. It has already been discussed in chapter 2.2 that this is due to the fact that technology per se plays a more important role within our contemporary society.

One of the quotes from above tells us that Sherlock uses new technologies in the field of *forensic science*, which also is a method that remains central to his characterization. The viewer sees the 21st century detective in a laboratory upon his introduction to the series, and that is not the only scene that marks him as a man of science. Sherlock has a "specialized knowledge of forensics ... [and] like Victorian Holmes, ... [he] is ahead of the forensics investigations of his day; he is [for example] able to detect a virtually undetectable poison that the victim's autopsy did not reveal" (Bochman 150). Concerning the *specialised knowledge* feature, viewers learn that he not only excels in forensics, but also in other fields of knowledge. He carries out experiments in anatomy, as for example beating corpses to detect how long

bruises can be inflicted post mortem in “A Study in Pink”. He “has a website in which he catalogues the 243 types of cigarette ash” (Lane 222), and he is able to learn foreign languages with ease, as exemplified in the first minutes of “The Empty Hearse”. He keeps a “human head from the morgue in his refrigerator at home in order to study the manner in which saliva collects after death” (Bochman 150), and he is as ignorant to knowledge which he believes to be unimportant as Conan Doyle’s version. His lack of interest in the solar system is adapted in “The Great Game”, but in the adaptation Sherlock acquires knowledge about it by chance and uses it later on to solve a case. Even if his *specialised knowledge* is focused on scientific areas in the BBC show, it also remains a central feature.

What is true for one of the characteristics that has originally been developed on the basis of Dr. Joseph Bell’s methods, the method of *forensic science*, can furthermore be confirmed for the other one, the method of *observation and deduction*. Like his predecessor, Sherlock uses everything he observes to deduce from it. We see this characteristic from the start of the show when he is able to tell that John Watson has been a soldier in the war on the basis of his complexion and his posture.⁴⁵ Often viewers are even invited into following his observations when text pops up on the screen as a visual, but unspoken aid to what Sherlock sees. In “A Study in Pink” it is furthermore revealed that these deductions usually alienate people and are one further reason for Sherlock’s sociopathic disorders. When Sherlock deduces that John has a sibling with alcohol problems just from the looks of his phone, John reacts with amazement, which is not, as Sherlock tells him, how people normally react. The feature *observation and deduction*, thus, remains at the heart of the model for the BBC’s *Sherlock*, even if the detective’s environment reacts less admiring to it.

So far Sherlock resembles Conan Doyle’s character in consideration of his methods, but there are also differences regarding them. Other than the 19th century Holmes, Sherlock is never mentioned or shown as a boxer, swordsman or *martial artist*. This feature is completely lost in Moffat’s and Gatiss’s version and helps to keep the focus on Sherlock’s mental abilities. As for the *master of disguise* motif, Poore claims that “Benedict Cumberbatch’s Sherlock disguise[s] himself less, and ... less effectively, than the canonical Holmes” (83). This claim can be verified by a direct comparison to the canon, where Holmes uses the method of disguise not only more frequently, but often as a surprise to the reader who experiences the stories from

⁴⁵ The scene of Sherlock’s and John’s first meeting is an adaptation of Holmes’s and Watson’s first encounter in “A Study in Scarlet”.

Watson's viewpoint. In the television adaptation viewers watch the series from their own perspective and are less likely to be surprised because disguises are more easily predictable. "The Final Problem" serves as a good example for this. When Sherlock and John try to enter a secret governmental institution, the viewer can right away spot Holmes in disguise. However, the revelation of Mycroft Holmes as the man behind the mask comes as a surprise to the viewer who does not focus on the man in the background, who turns out to be Sherlock wearing a wool cap as much simpler means of disguise. This book will not elaborate on reasons for the lack of disguises in *Sherlock*, but the example shows that a scene like this cannot be employed frequently to fool the viewer. Sherlock does not use this method on many occasions and, therefore, the "ability to gain information and possibly mislead another character must come from somewhere [else]" (Lane 229). In *Sherlock* disguises are often not physical ones and can rather be described as a disguise of his personality which is employed by acting. To provide one example of that, Sherlock uses acting in "His Last Vow" when he misleads his adversary's secretary into having a relationship with him in order to get access to his office. With only some disguises used throughout the series, and acting as a facet of it, the *master of disguise* motif has still in every respect shifted into being a secondary feature.

After series one, and especially because of the competition with other contemporary Holmes renditions, *Sherlock* needed a unique feature that could ultimately distinguish the BBC's Holmes from his competitors. The series has emphasised such a characteristic since series two in form of the already discussed appropriation of the canon's brain attic. Instead of an attic, Sherlock frequently retreats into his *mind palace* which was introduced in "The Hounds of Baskerville". The mind palace construct is originally a technique to memorize knowledge and was first described by the Greek poet Simonides of Ceos (Poerter, "Mind of Sherlock Holmes" 56). The series addresses this origin in "The Abominable Bride" when Mycroft refers to it as a memory technique and is corrected by Sherlock who claims that, to him, it is much more than that. Throughout the series "Sherlock employs the 'mind palace' as a method of actively interacting with data and making it human ... [It] has been expanded behind the 'memory technique' real-world definition ... [and] become a defining feature of the BBC's Sherlock Holmes" (Porter, "Mind of Sherlock Holmes" 50–51). Especially with the lack of a narrator, the mind palace serves as a means to help the audience following Sherlock's trains of thought, observations and deductions. As an appropriation of the brain attic theory, the *mind palace* follows the other appropriated features in their shift from a secondary to a

central character feature.

In conclusion of Sherlock's methods, the *Character Features Model* for the BBC series presents *master of information, specialised knowledge, observation and deduction, forensic science* and *mind palace* as central and *master of disguise* as a secondary feature, whereas *martial artist* has been lost as a characteristic.

4.4 Character Features Model

Figure 3 shows the shifts and alterations of Sherlock's character features in comparison to the early prototype model of chapter 3.

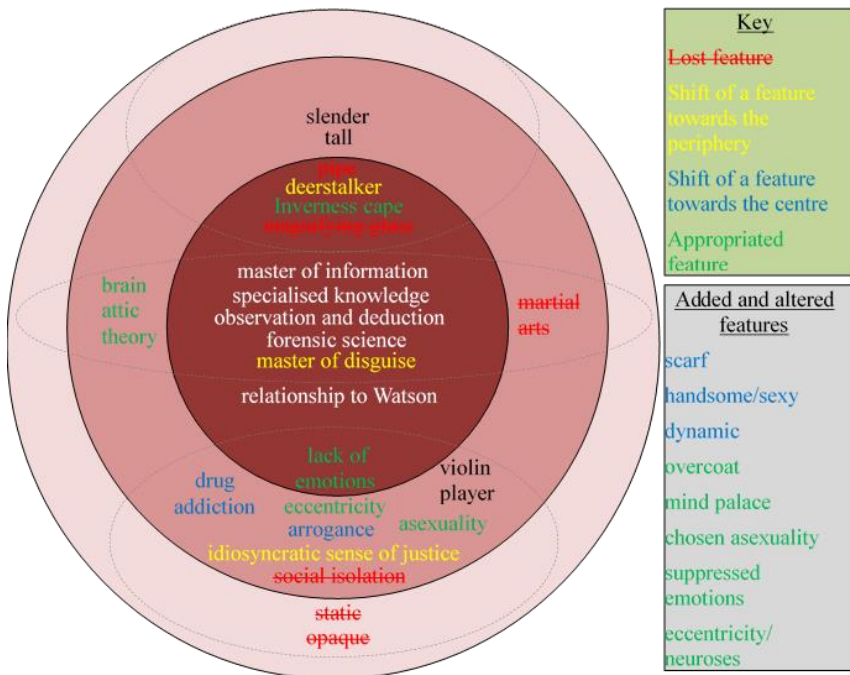


Figure 3. Shifts and alterations of *Sherlock's* character features in comparison to Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.

As the key in the upper right corner states there are features that have been lost (red), features that have been shifted into being less central to the character (yellow) and features that have been shifted into being more central to it (blue). Features that

are not coloured other than white (central features) or black (secondary and peripheral features) have not experienced a shift, but as mentioned above they might still have changed in their 21st century setting. The green features are such that have been appropriated beyond the canonical ideas. All of these have also shifted into the model's centre. In the grey box on the right hand side one may find all the characteristics that have not been part of the model presented in chapter 3.4. The blue features in this box have been added as new features and the green ones are the appropriations which replace the green features in the actual model. For example, the *overcoat* is an appropriation of the *Inverness cape* and replaces it in the *Character Features Model*.

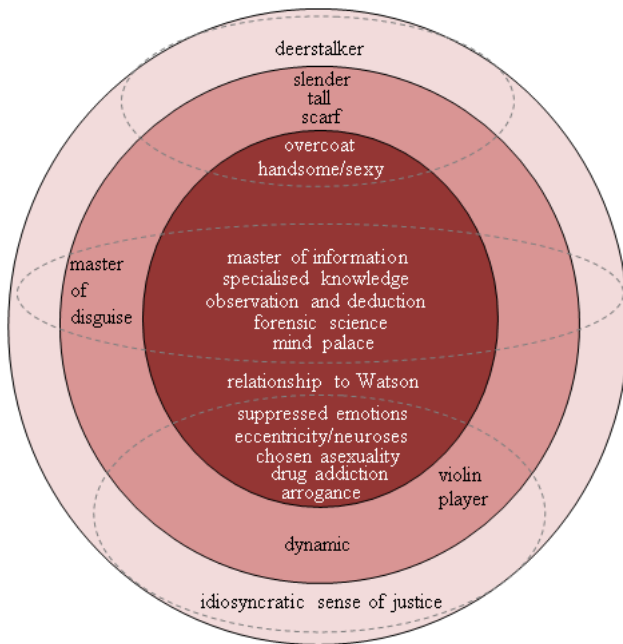


Figure 4. *Character Features Model* of the BBC's *Sherlock*.

Figure 4 shows the model after the shifts and changes. As one may observe, Sherlock's methods and his relationship to Watson have remained central to the character. His looks have changed to the degree that the signifiers have undergone a drastic change and are no longer part of his formerly typical appearance. In the series especially the personality of the detective and its

development throughout the show move into the centre of attention and, thus, also into more central areas of the *Character Features Model*. Hence, in contrast to Conan Doyle's ideas, the BBC series does not solely focus on the detective's brilliance, but also on his flaws, and on top also tries to explain what makes the character the way he is. Although this leads to the loss of his original's opacity, he still remains a puzzle

that viewers want to solve (Lane 243) – a new version of the Sherlock Holmes character whose features are nothing entirely new under the sun, but remarkably altered.

5. CBS' *Elementary* Sherlock Holmes

After the success of *Sherlock*, CBS contacted the BBC with the idea of creating an American version of the show, but was denied the opportunity to do so by the producers (Porter, "The Process of Elimination" 126). This led show creator Robert Doherty to follow his own plans of an original series that – despite being set in the 21st century – bears little resemblance to the BBC's Sherlock Holmes interpretation. "*Elementary* showcases as sexually active, recovering drug addict who recuperates in one of his father's brownstone properties [in New York]. Here he works with a sober companion, Joan Watson" (Farghaly 1–2), who eventually starts to become interested in crime investigation and is taken on by Holmes as his protégé. A comparison of this short abstract of the show's plot with what has been discussed in the previous chapter already suggests that, although there might be similarities, CBS' Holmes is distinguishably different from *Sherlock*. The following chapter will draw the comparison to Conan Doyle's Holmes and also provide comparative notes in regard to the BBC's detective. The reader may again find the *Character Features Model* (see Fig. 6) and the model highlighting shifts and alterations in comparison to the early prototype (see Fig. 5) at the end of this chapter.

5.1 Outward Appearance

In comparison to Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock, Jonny Lee Miller's Sherlock Holmes moves even further away from Conan Doyle's detective in respect to his outward appearance. As we have seen throughout chapter 3, the typical appearance of the early prototype is strongly shaped by iconic visuals. A character wearing or carrying those visuals (for example on stage) could easily be recognized as Sherlock Holmes irrespective of his or her physical or facial features. In *Sherlock* the iconic signifiers have been shifted, lost, redesigned and references to them have been provided. The series does not heavily rely on them, and tries to recreate Sherlock Holmes separated from the visual stereotypes – nonetheless, they are not completely absent. *Elementary* goes one step further and eliminates (almost) all of the signifiers. There is no *pipe*, no *deerstalker* and no *Inverness cape* in the show and there are no explicit references to them. Concerning the *magnifying glass*, viewers can observe a gadget attached to Holmes's mobile phone that can be considered as the tool's 21st century shape in the first two episodes of the series. However, this gadget vanishes afterwards and Holmes rather relies on his senses. In the *Character Features Model* the

magnifying glass will, thus, be excluded from his outward appearance. As in *Sherlock* the tool is still there, at least at the beginning of the show, as a means of investigation, but in both series it is not anymore typically connected to Holmes's looks. For *Elementary* none of the stereotypical signifiers can, therefore, be connected to the detective's outward appearance.

Regarding other aspects of the character's looks, one receives similar results. The idea of a sexy Holmes as a given (Graham and Garlen 25) gets further support by Miller portraying Holmes as an object of sexual desire. His appeal can, like Cumberbatch's, be described as handsome, and when one takes into account that Miller's Holmes is sexually active throughout the show and is occasionally shown to have sex with different women, he is created as a figure of attraction for the female sex. His sexual desire is yet not connected to emotions and instead serves as a mental stimulus which the drug addict in recovery can no longer obtain from artificial substances. In addition, he is often shown shirtless, which emphasises that we can add the same attribute to the *handsome* feature as has been done for Sherlock. *Handsome/sexy* will, hence, be identified as a central characteristic of *Elementary's* Sherlock Holmes.

The scenes in which Holmes appears shirtless furthermore show viewers that he is "fit and heavily tattooed" (Walker 123). As having *tattoos* is a remarkable and unique feature in comparison to the other contemporary Holmes renditions, it is certainly typical of *Elementary's* protagonist. At the same time it is not an omnipresent feature – he does not appear shirtless all the time – and will be added as a secondary characteristic. Being fit furthermore helps us to question the idea of a slender Holmes who was called "excessively lean" (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* 11) in the canon. Instead of *slender*, the *Character Features Model* for *Elementary's* Holmes will add the feature *athletic*, which groups alongside *tattoos* and with the same argumentation as a secondary characteristic. When we now take into account that Miller is only of regular height and does not stand out as a tall figure next to most of the other men appearing in the show, we can conclude that all the features that were identified as characteristics of Holmes's outward appearance in the model of the early prototype have been rejected in *Elementary*.

Nonetheless, there are some clothes that can be described as typical of Miller's Holmes incarnation, although they do not seem to be related to Conan Doyle's vision of the character. "[L]ike his BBC counterpart, [he] wears a scarf around his neck, [and a] coat [that] is far from cape-like" (Porter, "Real Sherlock Holmes" 3). Both features, the *scarf* and the coat – or rather *overcoat* – are however no clothes

that Holmes constantly wears and he frequently changes his wardrobe. In comparison to the overcoat in *Sherlock*, the series does not try to implement any new signifiers to the characterization of its detective, which makes the three features candidates to be identified as peripheral. As the non-cape-like *overcoat* does not evoke a comparison to the early prototype's Inverness cape, it will apart from that not be treated as an appropriation of it.

In summary, *Elementary's* concept for the character's outward appearance rejects most of the canon's descriptions, continues the idea of a handsome and fashionable detective, but beyond that focuses on the character's mental abilities, his methods and his personality, as will be argued in the next two sections. The *Character Features Model* includes *scarf* and *overcoat* as peripheral and *tattoos* and *athletic* as secondary features, whereas the still ambiguous *handsome/sexy* feature is the only characteristic that can be described as central to the character.

5.2 Personality

In chapter 4 it could be shown that many of the personality features that were identified as secondary for the early prototype shifted into being more central characteristics in *Sherlock*. While these shifts suggest that the series invites viewers of the BBC show to uncover the man behind the signifiers and brilliant mind, *Elementary* chooses a similar attempt and places Holmes's background, personality and character development in the centre of attention. As has been discussed in this book's introduction, the procedural genre, however, focuses on the crime solving of each episode, which leads to the fact that uncovering the protagonist's past and personality takes longer and viewers only receive few – if any – new information on character developments per episode. Nevertheless, seven series of the show is a wide data base that provides our analysis with enough material to identify the personality features of *Elementary's* Sherlock Holmes.

What was called *lack of emotions* for Conan Doyle's Holmes and has become *suppressed emotions* by appropriating the feature in *Sherlock* takes a very different shape in *Elementary*. Here, Holmes "is a man at war with himself" (Walker 129), someone who has loved – as viewers find out in series one – and is able and willing to fall in love again – as is suggested by a new relationship in series four. He is also someone who is able to show anger, irritation and frustration. His drug addiction is a major topic throughout the show; it is "not merely ... a weakness ... but ... a mark of his failures" (Walker 127) that has left him an often unhappy man struggling with his

private and sometimes even professional life, but he certainly does not lack emotions or suppress them. The feature is lost in Miller's Holmes. Interestingly, viewers once in a while find his emotions distracting him from rational decisions. Contrary to Conan Doyle's and the BBC's detective, who both cast aside emotions as distracting factors, *Elementary* shows the outcome of emotions clashing with a brilliant mind. In the CBS show it is, thus, no surprise that the viewer finds Holmes crashing a suspect's car ("Pilot") or hurting other people in rage (for example in series' one episode "M." or series' three episode "A Controlled Descent"). Even if presented differently, Miller's and Cumberbatch's version both reject the original's depiction of an unemotional machine.

In *Elementary* the clash of brilliance and emotions has led the character into his drug addiction prior to the pilot episode. Within series one, it is revealed that Holmes was "occasionally dabbling in narcotics to combat boredom or fatigue ... [and] became increasingly erratic and dependent on drugs, to the point that Scotland Yard declined to use his services any further" (Walker 127). Viewers furthermore find out that it was not only boredom, but also lost love that led him deeper into his addiction. Potentially, the character is intended to have been eccentric prior to his drug abuse, but as a drug addict in recovery he has become neurotic and isolated from other people. Similar to *Sherlock* we find his *drug addiction* experiencing a shift towards being a central characteristic. In addition, viewers may observe an appropriation of the *eccentricity* feature towards neurotic behaviour which becomes evident in his discontent with himself, his sometimes nervous movements and occasional irrational actions. At the same time "[a]n effort is being made ... to rescue [him] from the 'addiction and neuroses'" (Walker 129) that have been discussed in chapter 4. As a result of his rehab and acquaintance to Joan Watson, Holmes starts developing deeper connections to some police officers, especially to Captain Gregson and Detective Bell, goes to meetings with other drug addicts and finds a friend in his sponsor Alfredo. In series three he takes on a new protégé, Kitty Winter, and in series five he and Joan Watson train the ex-criminal Shinwell Johnson in becoming an informant. The show adapts canonical characters like Gregson, Winter and Johnson, but also introduces new ones like Bell, to emphasize Holmes's social development. His *social isolation*, hence, vanishes as the series progresses, but he is never fully freed of the danger of a relapse into addiction. Because of this, the *eccentricity/neuroses* character feature becomes central to his characterization in the show.

Holmes's relationship to Joan Watson changes several times throughout the

series. She starts out as Holmes's sober companion, becomes his protégé, finishes her training, and becomes an investigator that is able to work on her own. Conclusively, she becomes a "true partner to [Holmes], a woman who thinks of herself as an investigator, not an investigator's sidekick" (Walker 125). The partnership is a more equal one than in the original, and also a more equal one than in *Sherlock*. However, both shows are alike in their idea that it is Watson who rescues Holmes from his isolated being. In the final episode of *Elementary*'s sixth series, "Whatever Remains, However Improbable", Holmes explicitly states that had he not met Watson, he never would have withstood the danger of a relapse and even would have died had he not undergone the character development that the series so far presented. Like in the original and the BBC's *Sherlock*, Holmes's relationship to Watson is central to the character and fans of the series even speculated for some time if the two could end up as a couple upon the show's finale.⁴⁶

The examples of self-administered justice from the previous page occur more frequently in *Elementary* than in *Sherlock* and because Holmes and Watson also regularly break into buildings and apartments as part of their investigations the *idiosyncratic sense of justice* feature is addressed more openly within the series. Similar to *Sherlock* it does not become evident in its original idea of sparing criminals from prison, but instead the show deals with the responsibilities of Holmes's actions. More than once, the viewer finds Holmes in trouble with the law and series' two episode "Tremors" even deals with Holmes appearing in court to justify for his doings. The feature clearly shifts into being a central characteristic and, in this form, also underlines the struggles Holmes encounters in his profession.

The struggles Holmes often also has with his own person are not only central to the character, but a part of the show's concept, and also visible in other facets of the detective's personality. Like his BBC counterpart he sometimes acts in "offensive ways, characterized by arrogance ... but with a crucial difference: it is represented, more often than not, as behaviour he regrets" (Walker 126). In the same manner as Conan Doyle's Holmes and Cumberbatch's *Sherlock*, he is aware of "his intellectual difference from everyone around him, although he expresses a greater emotional reaction to his Otherness" (Porter, "Mind of Sherlock Holmes" 63). As he realizes in series' three episode "Enough Nemesis to Go Around", he sees himself rather

⁴⁶ Show creator Robert Doherty „has indicated that a love affair between the two protagonists might always appear to loom in the forecast, but he rather enjoys the challenge of exploring their complicated coexistence outside the confines of romance" (Freeman 15).

as a teacher than a show off. Especially in connection to his emotionality, his *arrogance* is a less important feature in comparison to *Sherlock*, but also in comparison to Conan Doyle and shifts into the peripheral area of the *Character Features Model* for *Elementary's* detective.

In addition to that, it has been elaborated on the fact that Holmes is not asexual in the CBS series, but *sexually active*, which is a defining and, thus, central feature of Miller's Holmes incarnation. Concerning his violin habits, viewers are early on in the show presented with Holmes's musical taste and also learn that Holmes has played the violin in the past, but gave up on it in the course of his traumatic past and drug abuse. *Violin player* is a feature that is not lost, but loses impact on the character and can eventually only be identified as a peripheral characteristic of Miller's Holmes.

What becomes obvious from the so far mentioned aspects is that *Elementary's* Sherlock Holmes is just like the BBC's detective not a *static* character. Like Sherlock, he develops from a lone wolf to someone who "depends and respects not only Watson, but also [other characters like] Gregson and Bell" (Walker 129). He learns to cope with his past and resolves the issues he has with his brother (in series two) and his father (in series four). He is a *dynamic* figure that is – again like Sherlock – not as opaque as Conan Doyle's mastermind. However, there remain parts of his character that still have to be explored by the viewer, as his relationship to his mother that is touched at the end of series five. Hence, *static* and *opaque* are lost as features and *dynamic* is added. By employing the same argumentation as in the case of *Sherlock* the latter one can be regarded as a secondary characteristic.

In conclusion, the *Character Features Model* of *Elementary's* Sherlock Holmes lists *drug addiction*, *eccentricity/neuroses*, *sexually active* and *idiosyncratic sense of justice* as central character features, *dynamic* as a secondary one and *arrogance* and *violin player* as peripheral.

5.3 Methods

In consideration of the methods that Jonny Lee Miller's Sherlock Holmes uses to solve crimes, we receive similar results as in chapter 4. Most of the methods remain central features of the detective's investigations, but they are still sometimes portrayed differently in the 21st century.

In *Elementary* only one of the method features shifts from the centre of the model towards the periphery, the *master of disguise* motif. Poore remarks that

Elementary's Holmes "appears to have no interest in changing his appearance to solve cases" (88). His description fits the facts to that degree that Holmes does not disguise himself to change his physical appearance. However, we have already elaborated on the idea that the talent to "mislead another character must come from somewhere" (Lane 229). As in *Sherlock*, Miller's Holmes uses acting or pretending to be someone else as a method to obtain information from other people. In series one, viewers find out that he is even befriended with an actor, Alistair Moore, who trains Holmes in the art of faking accents. Nevertheless, the *master of disguise* feature shifts from being central in the model and other than in *Sherlock*, where at least some physical disguises can be observed, it can only be counted as a peripheral Holmes feature in *Elementary*.

Whereas disguise has no great impact on the show, the other method features have. Holmes uses technology, informants, field experts (for example for mathematical questions) and, from series two onwards, a hacker collective called "Everyone" ("We Are Everyone"). Holmes possesses knowledge that no one else seems to have, and that not even appears to be important in any other scenario than crime detection. In the pilot episode, he detects a secret safe room in the victim's apartment because he knows that such a room's extra weight can cause a slope in the floor of between one and five degrees. This is only one example of his *specialised knowledge* and viewers are regularly confronted with it. Concerning the storage of this knowledge, the canon's idea of a brain attic is reflected in the show. Holmes knows what he needs to know and he can obtain every bit of information that is necessary, but not in his mind, from somewhere or someone else. *Master of information* and *specialised knowledge*, thus, remain central features of *Elementary*'s Holmes. The *brain attic theory* is even specifically addresses at the beginning of the show. In the second episode of series one, "While You Were Sleeping", Holmes explains in reference to Conan Doyle: "I've always believed the human brain is like an attic – storage space, facts. But because that space is finite, it must be filled only with things one needs. ... It's important, therefore, not to have useless facts ... crowding out the useful ones." In series' three episode "End of Watch" the brain attic theory appears again in the form of a blog that someone sets up after Holmes mentions the *brain attic theory* in a drug addict meeting. Just like in Conan Doyle's stories the theory is mentioned on no further occasions, but is still crucial to Holmes's character. In the *Character Features Model* it remains a secondary characteristic.

With the brain attic staying true to the original, Holmes's mind is not visually

represented by a mind palace or a similar visual aid in *Elementary*, although the finale of series 5 shows Holmes imagining his dead mother, who appears in the episode as a mental representation of his mind. Normally, however, his intelligence is illustrated by his actions as Porter notes:

In *Elementary*, especially during the first season, Holmes astounds Watson by the way his mind works. He can mentally write a book several chapters long and ask if she wants to hear the latest chapter ... Throughout the series, Holmes keeps copious notes and charts during cases that illustrate the diverse data he is recombining in his head. Such illustrations reinforce to audiences that Holmes is a unique thinker. (“Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 51–52)

This unique thinking not only becomes obvious in his knowledge or storage of it, but once again also in the observations and deductions he makes. Upon Holmes’s and Watson’s first meeting, he astounds Watson with a typical example of Sherlockian deduction when he is able to tell that, despite being a sober companion, she never had any troubles with drugs or alcohol herself, that she is an ex-surgeon, and that she has a car that might have been parked nearby. Again, this is only the first example the series provides, but it underlines that the *observation and deduction* feature seems to be mandatory for any Sherlock Holmes rendition. It remains at the centre of this chapter’s *Character Features Model*.

As typical of American crimes series, forensic science also has a huge impact in *Elementary*. What is different in comparison to the canon, and to *Sherlock*, is that Holmes “relies upon the information and data provided by autopsies, ballistic reports and so on” (Walker 129) instead of collecting the data himself. In this respect the show rather follows the examples of other American crime shows than Conan Doyle’s canon: The viewer knows that there is an investigative team behind the data reports. Nonetheless, Holmes carries out his own scientific or ballistics experiments in his apartment and often demonstrates his knowledge in the fields of science. *Forensic science*, therefore, also remains central to his characterization.

What might be one of the more obvious differences in comparison to *Sherlock* is the show’s depiction of the detective’s *martial arts* talents. Although, like his Victorian predecessor, he does not frequently engage in fights, he nevertheless makes self-defence and single-stick fighting part of Watson’s and, in series three, Kitty Winter’s training program. Staying supposedly true to Conan Doyle’s depiction of it, the *martial arts* feature joins most of the other method features in remaining

in their original position. As we have seen, *master of disguise* is actually the only method feature that experiences a shift at all, while all of the other features in connection to Holmes’s investigative methods remain in the same position as in the early prototype’s model.

5.4 Character Features Model

As in chapter 4, the first model below shows the alterations of *Elementary’s* Holmes in comparison to the early prototype (see Fig. 5). It has been discussed in the

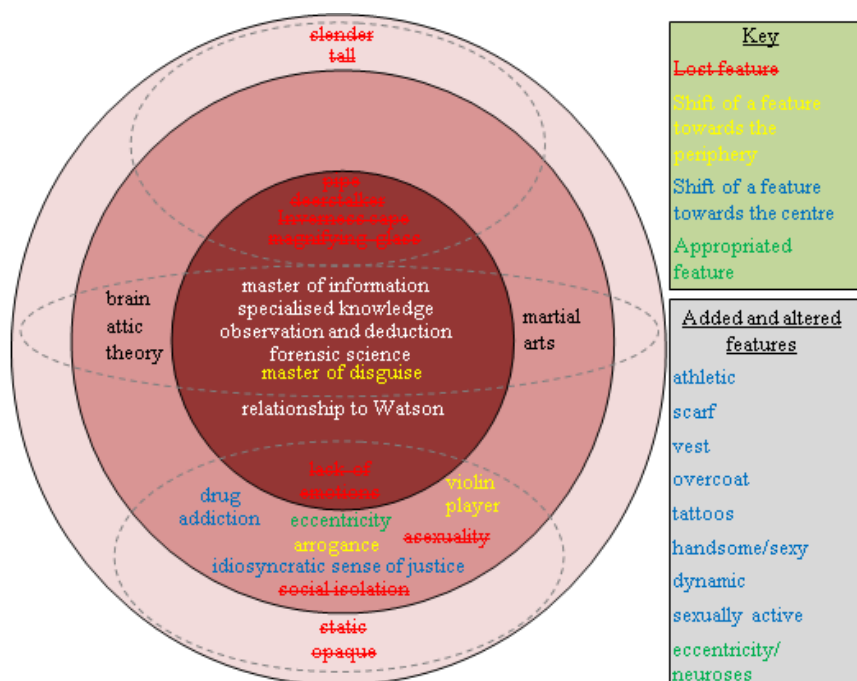


Figure 5. Shifts and alterations of Holmes’s character features in *Elementary* in comparison to Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes.

sections above that the outward appearance of *Elementary’s* Holmes rejects all of the features that have been identified for Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes, but stays close to the original in respect to the investigative methods that are employed. Like

in *Sherlock*, the personality of the detective is moved into the centre of interest and viewers see Miller's version experiencing a similar character development as Cumberbatch's incarnation.

While the concepts of both shows are certainly different, their two protagonists show some striking similarities in regard to their methods, their drug addiction, their eccentricities and neuroses, and their journey away from social isolation. Nonetheless, the other personality features (*asexuality* vs. *sexually active*; different emphasis on the *idiosyncratic sense of justice*; and especially their *arrogance* and their approach on how to deal with emotions) construe distinguishably different versions of Sherlock Holmes who furthermore find themselves before a different personal background and in a different environment that both underline the

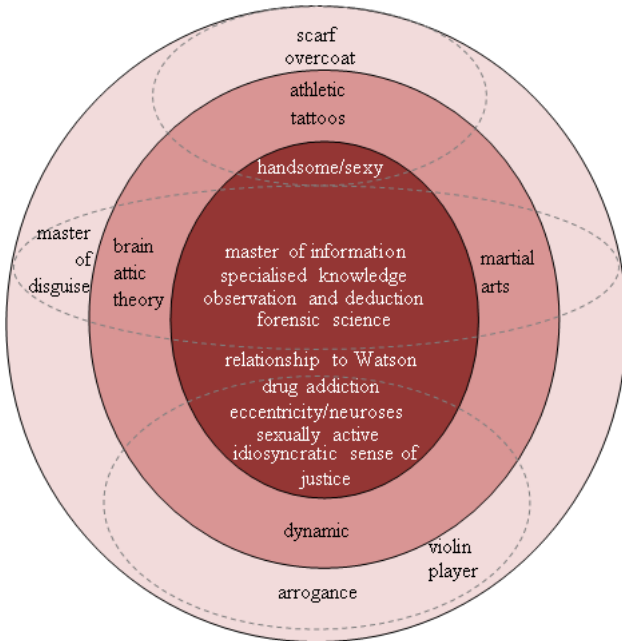


Figure 6. *Character Features Model of Elementary's Sherlock Holmes.*

character differences even more. Figure 6 shows the *Character Features Model* for *Elementary's* Sherlock Holmes after all shifts and alterations have been added to it.

The model has its similarities to the original, but also its own note to it. There are fan groups who “do not consider [*Elementary*] a Holmes story ... [but treat the series as if] it's just by accident [that

several characters] share some names” (Baker 157). This idea shows that adaptation does not simply work by using names and references to a literary work, but that certain features of the source material have to remain intact in order to leave the

connection to it recognizable. If one has a look at the changes that the adaptation offers in contrast to Conan Doyle's canon – New York instead of London and a female Watson who eventually starts to match Holmes's investigative successes – one can quickly assume that the potential problem of denying *Elementary* its recognition as a Sherlock Holmes story might come from plot elements or Watson's character design rather than from Holmes's characterization. As both models show, Holmes's character in *Elementary* does not offer significantly more feature alterations than the highly appreciated BBC series. This book does, hence, not support the idea of *Elementary* not being a Holmes story. Instead, it is a series in which the processes of adaptation and – in thought of the location and Watson's sex – especially appropriation create a new story that is, like *Sherlock*, still rooted in its literary source material, but simply moves a bit further away from it.

6. Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes*

Although the Warner Bros film series is the last set of data at which this book will have a look, it is, chronologically speaking, the first of the three adaptations in question. In 2009, the cinematic release of *Sherlock Holmes* marked the starting point of the current Sherlock Holmes renaissance. Producer Guy Ritchie explains the idea behind the movies' recreation process as follows: “[We] made a decision ... that if we were going to do this we'd have to dust off Sherlock Holmes and create what we thought to be, to some degree, an authentic Conan Doyle version of Sherlock Holmes” (qtd. in Little 7). By dusting off the character, Ritchie refers to the idea of not taking earlier adaptations into consideration, but actually focusing on Conan Doyle's text as primary source for the reinterpretation. The movie producers also claim to have rejected Sidney Paget's illustrations when they came up with the character design for their Sherlock Holmes (Little 8). At the same time, Ritchie states that he “wanted something more ... than the traditional stodgy Holmes and Watson ... [and rather] a more equal couple” (qtd. in Thomas 36) and “approached Sherlock Holmes ... with the connection he had drawn between [the two buddy movie characters] Butch and Sundance and Holmes and Watson” (Thomas 36). Being set in Victorian London and often termed as a bromance, “[a] portmanteau of ‘bro’ and ‘romance’” (Thomas 38), the two movies, *Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*, put a slightly different emphasis on the Master Detective than the two already discussed television adaptations. The following chapter will conclude the interpretation of the data sets and provide another *Character Features Model* (see Fig. 8), as well as another model showing shifts and alterations in comparison to Conan Doyle (see Fig. 7), at the end of it.

6.1 Outward Appearance

As the producers intended to stay away from Paget's illustrations, it is not astounding that the movies' casting choice and character representation do not have much in common with the early prototype. Graham and Garlen describe Downey Jr.'s appearance as Holmes:

Downey is undeniably handsome, and he bears very little physical resemblance to Conan Doyle's original vision. His puckish, bad boy looks make him a credible leading man and a hit with female audiences, but he is not particularly

lean and ... he appears more muscular than wiry ... Downey is much too short for the lanky Holmes ... Visually, then, Downey seems very much the opposite of the Holmes character ... (30)

This description of Downey Jr.'s looks in comparison to Conan Doyle's ideas fits into the obvious trend of making Holmes more handsome than originally intended. We can safely exclude *slender* and *tall* from the *Character Features Model* for Downey Jr.'s Holmes rendition, and add *handsome/sexy* and muscular – or rather *athletic* – to it in central and secondary position by employing the same argumentation as before, when these features have been discussed for Miller's performance. Just like in *Sherlock* and *Elementary*, the character is able to attract women and, as will be discussed in the next section, perhaps even men. He can be seen shirtless and naked in the first movie, and his muscular and athletic appeal fits the movies' action hero intentions without making it the most central trait of his representation. To sum up the handsome and sexy Sherlock Holmes development:

The idea of a naked Holmes sitting handcuffed on a bed [in the first movie] must have had Sir Arthur Conan Doyle spinning in his grave, but it is only the logical end point of the cultural revision of the character that has been going on ever since Paget's first illustrations made the hero more attractive than the author had intended. (Graham and Garlen 31)

Contrary to the early prototype, a handsome and even sexy Holmes seems to have become common in Sherlock Holmes adaptations and Downey Jr.'s portrayal of the detective might be the prime example of it.

By neglecting Paget's illustrations, the producers have, furthermore, hinted at the elimination of the signifiers. Downey Jr.'s Holmes does not wear a deerstalker or an Inverness cape. He is also not commonly seen with a magnifying glass in his hand and ultimately underlines that this signifier is only hardly connected to Holmes's outward appearance in the 21st century anymore. The only one of the four signifiers identified in the early prototype that also appears in Ritchie's vision is the *pipe* – and the movies do a lot to make sure viewers notice it. Although it is “perhaps not as essential in helping the detective solve cases” (Little 11) as it was in Conan Doyle's stories, it is still present in all kinds of scenes – even such that make it seem humorous. To give an example of this, Holmes jumps out of an upper floor window right into the Thames with his pipe in his hand in the first movie. The *pipe* is, in

conclusion, not only the last signifier that remains part of Downey Jr.'s Holmes version; it is the only characteristic amongst all of the early prototype's outward appearance features that is not excluded from this chapter's model.

In consideration of the features already discussed throughout this book, the *Character Features Model* presented at the end of this chapter only includes *pipe* and *handsome/sexy* as central and *athletic* as a secondary feature in regard to the detective's looks. The fact that there are no other clothes that can be described as typical of him must be seen before the background of format. Two movies do not give viewers the same opportunity to get used to a certain clothing style as several series of a television show.

6.2 Personality

Holmes's personality is not characterized by obvious developments or character explorations that explain the ways of the detective in Guy Ritchie's movies. This might again be explained by the film format that just does not provide enough screen time for elaborate personality changes or journeys into Holmes's inner life or past without taking the attention away from the actual plot. Downey Jr.'s Holmes, thus, remains *static* and his life apart from his profession stays *opaque*. The first movie hints at a potential past relationship with the movie's female lead, Irene Adler, however, neither *Sherlock Holmes* nor *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* elaborate on it. The viewer further learns nothing about the detective's background, how he started to be a consulting detective or how he and Watson met. These notions are not important for the plot developments of the respective movies. In regard to the two features, the movies show a similar trend in comparison to the original: The case at hand that has to be solved by Holmes dominates the scenery. *Static* and *opaque* are, therefore, no features that bring the characterization of the detective to a whole new level. They will, like in the early prototype's model, be treated as peripheral features and mark – even in that peripheral position of the *Character Features Model* – a huge difference in the character concept in comparison to the two television adaptations.

In addition, the film format has further impact on the detective's characterization. While several personality features were shifted from the secondary into the central area of *Sherlock's* and *Elementary's Character Features Model*, the two movies do not focus on a variety of these characteristics, but just on some of them. As a result of this, more screen time is provided to focus on Holmes's buddy

relationship to Watson and the plot of the case. Viewers do not see Holmes playing the violin, although it appears at the beginning of *Sherlock Holmes*. They do not see him taking drugs, although he drinks what is meant for eye surgery at the beginning of the first and another chemical substance at the beginning of the second movie. Viewers are not presented with exploits of scenes that move his *idiosyncratic sense of justice* into the centre of attention, although Holmes breaks into buildings, has fights in public places and gets into trouble with the law. They do not experience Holmes's *social isolation* as an important facet of his characterization, because it does not become evident on a case, and his interactions with Watson, Adler (in the first movie) and gypsy Madame Simza (in the sequel) conceal the existence of it. All of these features appear throughout both movies to a certain degree. They are noteworthy, especially in consideration of the early prototype as a role model for the movies' protagonist, but they lose the impact they have in Conan Doyle's work and are obviously decentralised in comparison to the two television adaptations. For the *Character Features Model* of this chapter *violin player, drug addiction, idiosyncratic sense of justice* and *social isolation*, hence, shift from being secondary features into being peripheral ones.

Furthermore, the movies show an alteration of another feature that has also been changed in the television adaptations. Contemporary Holmes adaptations generally seem to reject the idea of Sherlock Holmes as an unemotional machine. Downey Jr.'s incarnation shows little machine-like tendencies, but diverse emotions and even adds *wit* to the character. Holmes still shows an unnatural devotion to his profession and for that reason sometimes evokes notions of a lone wolf (especially in those scenes in which Watson or the female lead are absent), but he is not unemotional in them. "[O]ne gets the distinct impression that Holmes has loved and even experienced sexual intimacy, but he recoils – perhaps due to past negative experience or a tug of war between personal life and career" (Freeman 16–17). *Lack of emotions* is eliminated from the model, but his troubled emotions instead move his *eccentricity* into its central area. Whereas the idea of a reasoning machine is rejected, Holmes's untidiness, strange practices and tactless manners, which the original Watson describes as part of Holmes's eccentricities in the canon, are emphasised. The untidiness becomes obvious in those scenes in which the viewers are granted insights into his rooms. His strange practices become evident when there is no case around: In *Sherlock Holmes* he is found in his darkened rooms catching flies and conditioning them to the sound of music; In *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* he runs through his rooms in a camouflage suit and tries to be invisible to Watson and

the viewer. His tactlessness is introduced in the first movie when he deduces the profession and earlier, broken up engagement of Watson's fiancée, Mary Morstan, in a rather rude fashion. This facet is then continuously shown in other conversations, no matter if with authorities, Watson or other characters. To sum up all of these notions, "[t]he films ... show a frequently manic, dishevelled, fighting [and] drinking Holmes" (Little 8) who does however not show signs of his competitors' neuroses. Still the *eccentricity* feature is clearly shifted into being central to the detective.

As for his *arrogance*. Contrary to Miller's incarnation, but similar to Cumberbatch's, Downey Jr.'s Holmes occasionally likes to show that he is cleverer than everyone else. However, he is not explicitly stating it – like Sherlock does in the BBC series – and seems to be aware of the potential outcome of his words. In the scene of *Sherlock Holmes* in which he makes deductions about Watson's fiancée, he first does not want to do so. Mary, however, insists to be given a demonstration of Holmes's methods which ultimately leads to deductions that offend her because, fond with his own conclusions, Holmes becomes arrogant enough to make one deduction too much by claiming she might be interested in Watson only for his social standing as a doctor. This awareness is regarded as a clue to identify *arrogance* only as a secondary feature in Holmes's characterization in the Warner Bros movies. He does, on the one hand, not engage in the behaviour that is portrayed in *Sherlock*, where the detective more directly addresses his intellectual superiority, but he is, on the other hand, not as regretting as Miller's Holmes in *Elementary*. Because of this, the *arrogance* feature will remain in the same position within this chapter's model as in chapter 3.

Additionally, Guy Ritchie's remarks on the idea of a buddy movie emphasise the central role of the Holmes-Watson relationship within both movies. In the previous chapters it was made clear that this relationship is central to all the adaptations and the original, and this notion is not different for the two Warner Bros movies. Nevertheless, the relationships presented in all of the Holmes adaptations differ slightly. In Conan Doyle's works Watson is the biographer, admirer and highly appreciated companion of Holmes. In *Sherlock* he starts out as his one and only friend, and is regarded as family by series four. In *Elementary* Joan Watson is Holmes's protégé at first, and becomes an independent investigator who is more than Holmes's sidekick (Walker 125); In *Sherlock Holmes* and its sequel Watson is also a companion and a friend to Holmes, but it is the only adaptation that has explicitly been compared to other buddy movies and has been called a

bromance, which is “more narrowly defined in *Merriam-Webster* as ‘a close *non-sexual* friendship between men” (Thomas 38).⁴⁷ Although non-sexual, the relationship of the two protagonists questions Holmes’s sexual orientation throughout the movies. The two regularly behave “[l]ike an old married couple” (Freeman 11) and notions of him being a “bisexual rouge” (Graham and Garlen 31) go further than *Sherlock*’s witty comments on homoeroticism. In fact, other than in *Sherlock* where the detective is devotedly asexual, or *Elementary*’s sexually active protagonist, Downey Jr.’s version is *sexually opaque*. A lot of the character’s *wit* has to do with comments on sexuality or emerges from the interaction of the supposedly “old married couple” (Freeman 11). While the relationship to Watson remains a central feature in the Warner Bros movies and his sexual opacity can also be claimed as a distinguishing central feature, his *wit* will be added to the *Character Features Model* as a secondary characteristic – a typical but not omnipresent characteristic.

In summary, this section has presented *eccentricity* and *sexually opaque* as central features of Downey Jr.’s Sherlock Holmes incarnation. In addition, *arrogance* and *wit* have been identified as secondary, and *static*, *opaque*, *violin player*, *drug addiction*, *idiosyncratic sense of justice* and *social isolation* as peripheral ones.

6.3 Methods

Again it has to be referred to the movie format of the Guy Ritchie adaptations that also has its influence on the methods at the centre of Sherlock Holmes’s characterization. So far, it has been stated that the lesser screen time in comparison to television shows restrict certain potential character developments, but in addition, it also restricts the opportunity to depict a variety of different investigative methods. Being a buddy and an action movie, a lot of scenes are employed to emphasise the Holmes-Watson relationship and the action-based facets of the protagonists. As an outcome of this, the movies show a similar approach to Holmes’s methods than to his personality features: Some are only touched upon and decentralized, while others are even more emphasised throughout the movies.

To start with the decentralised and lost features, both movies do not excessively feature Holmes’s use of *forensic science*. Although this feature has been crucial to other adaptations and the original, it has less impact on the story and the

⁴⁷ As per definition, the relationship in *Sherlock* could also be termed a bromance. However, Cumberbatch’s and Freeman’s performance is not necessarily related to the genre of buddy movies.

character in the Ritchie films. Holmes has chemicals and laboratory equipment in his rooms at 221B Baker Street, but viewers only hardly see him using them. Once the movie's respective mystery has been set up, the focus is on field investigations, interrogations and fights, but the detective does not heavily rely on autopsies, ballistics, foot- or fingerprinting. In *Sherlock Holmes* viewers get a glimpse of this facet of his character, when he and Watson use some tools from Holmes's equipment bag to conduct a shortened autopsy of a dead body, but they quickly head off to pursue the clues taken from that somewhere else and end up in a fight. *Forensic science* is part of Holmes's methods, but it shifts out of the centre of the *Character Features Model* and becomes a secondary characteristic throughout both movies.

Furthermore, the films also hardly make use of the *master of information* feature. There are no informants, no Baker Street Irregulars or exploited use of technology as a means to obtain information which could point out such a feature. Information is, nonetheless, collected by Holmes in other ways, but it mostly comes from his deductions or his own knowledge. Upcoming new technologies at the end of the 19th century are addressed in both movies. For example, Holmes states as a final line in *Sherlock Holmes*: "Imagine being able to control any device simply by setting a command via radio waves – it's the future, Watson." But despite the notion of new technologies, the detective is not shown to use them for the collecting of information. The exclusion of the *master of information* feature for the model is debatable, but as there are at least some means to it, it will be treated as peripheral.

In contrast to that, none of the movies addresses the protagonist's brain attic theory or a similar construct. Holmes does not explain how he stores his knowledge and the insights into his mind that the movies provide focus on his fighting strategies, not on the storage of knowledge. On the basis of this, the *brain attic theory* feature will not be part of this chapter's *Character Feature Model*.

In consideration of the *master of disguise* feature, the movies present different notions of it. While more elaborate disguises are used in *Sherlock Holmes* – for example to follow his former adversary and potential love interest, Irene Adler – *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* sees Holmes wearing "the most terrible disguises with a comic insouciance" (Poore 89). When Holmes dresses as a woman in that movie, he admits that "it's not [his] best disguise." The detective uses disguise as a method, but especially when there is no time to do it properly, the notion of a master of this art gets sometimes lost. Because he is also seen in more elaborate disguises in the first film, it can be assumed that he is, nonetheless, able to employ them, but

that changing, fast-paced times do not allow for perfection all the time. This could also be an argument for the decentralization of this feature in the television adaptations, and for this chapter's data set it serves as an argument to shift it from the model's centre to the area of secondary features.

Other than the just mentioned characteristics, the passage above hints at the fact that *specialised knowledge* and *observation and deduction* are as central to the adapted Holmes version as in the early days. In the first movie the mystery can only be uncovered due to Holmes's knowledge of a rare poisonous plant that momentarily cuts off the pulse and lets whoever takes the poison seem dead. Also, he explains how an ancient Egyptian recipe for glue made of milk and honey plays into his adversary's supposed resurrection. In the second movie the plans of Holmes's arch nemesis, Professor Moriarty, can only be stopped because of Holmes's knowledge of domestic horticulture, which gives him the idea of how to encode Moriarty's notebook that contains all of his syndicate's data. All of these examples show that Holmes not only has a *specialised knowledge* in several fields, but that it is also crucial to his performance as a consulting detective. In addition to this feature, this book has claimed countless times that the *observation and deduction* feature must be described as the Master Detective's most typical characteristic – his trademark. This is not different in both movie adaptations. From the start of movie one, when the deduction scene concerning Mary Morstan introduces Holmes's abilities to the viewer, he observes aspects that no one else observes and he makes deductions from it that take “on something of the fantastical” (Porter, “Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 48).

Another trademark of Downey Jr.'s Holmes version is his frequent use of martial arts. “Conan Doyle's references to Holmes's boxing days and knowledge of ... martial arts ... [serve] as a sort of justification for the intense action of the film[s]” (Little 8). In contrast to the adaptations which have been discussed in the previous chapters, the movie producers of the Warners Bros films have taken the *martial arts* feature and made it a central characteristic of their version of the detective. They even combined it with Holmes's mental abilities and introduced a new method, “Holmesvision” (Little 10), to the character. It “shows Holmes mentally walking through the steps he will take to defeat his adversaries before the actual fight takes place” (Little 10) and underlines that Holmes is not only brilliant in deducing, but also in predicting information (Porter, “Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 55). *Holmesvision* is a unique feature of Downey Jr.'s Holmes and can, just like *martial arts*, be identified as a central feature.

In conclusion, *specialised knowledge, observation and deduction, martial arts* and *Holmesvision* are the characteristics that can be found in the central area of this chapter's *Character Features Model*, whilst *master of disguise* and *forensic science* have been identified as secondary and *master of information* as a peripheral feature.

6.4 Character Features Model

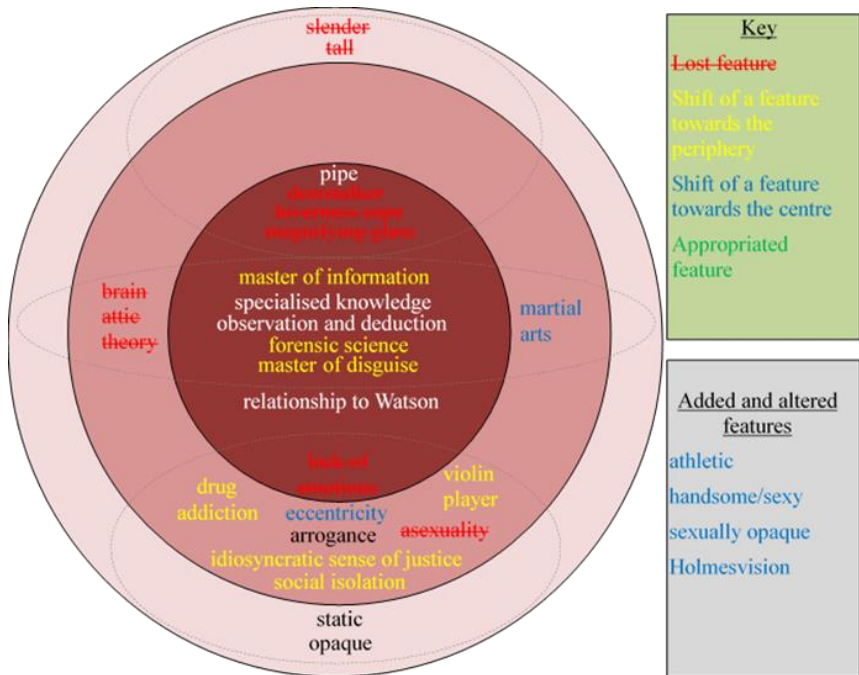


Figure 7. Shifts and alterations of Holmes's character features in the Warner Bros movies in comparison to Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.

Just like in the previous chapters, the first model of this section shows the shifts of the adapted Holmes characterization in comparison to the early prototype (see Fig. 7).

The sections above have pointed out that the model for the Warner Bros rendition of Sherlock Holmes features fewer personality traits at the centre of it than the models of the two television adaptations. There seem to be more restrictions for the focus on a variety of personality features in the movies than in

the television shows. Because of that, we can identify only some features that are centralised and more that are decentralised. The character, furthermore, remains quite static and there are fewer revelations about his past and explanations for his behaviour. It has already been elaborated on the fact that these differences in the focus of the characterization might be best explained by the film format which does not allow for deeper character explorations without distracting viewers from the actual movie plot. Nonetheless, at least one of the personality features shifts into the model's centre and underlines the trend of a contemporary concentration on Sherlock Holmes's personality flaws. In contrast to the personality features, his methods – first of all the method of *observation and deduction* – and his immense knowledge have already been typical of the character in the early days, and they remain central within this chapter's model. In addition, it seems that some method features have to move out of the centre in order to open up the possibility to explore others (*martial arts* and *Holmesvision*) in greater depth. Three of the method features have shifted out of the centre and two have been added into the central area.

Figure 8 shows the *Character Features Model* for the Warner Bros movies. In addition to the facts mentioned above, it presents only few typical outward appearance characteristics and joins the other adapted Holmes renditions in their divergence from the looks of the early prototype. Apart from that, three of the features discussed throughout all of the chapters seem to be mandatory ones: *observation and deduction*, as well as *specialised knowledge* and the Master Detective's *relationship to Watson* have been identified as being central in all of the four *Character Features Models* of this book.

In general, the model for Downey Jr.'s Holmes version supports the idea that most of the character features are nothing entirely new, but rooted in the original. For example, the unique and newly added characteristic, *Holmesvision*, is simply an exaggeration – and to some degree also an appropriation – of the character's mental and observational skills combined with the action based *martial arts* method feature.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, *Holmesvision* is an example of how adaptation and appropriation can be used to create and add new facets to an adapted work. Downey Jr.'s Holmes is, just like Cumberbatch's and Miller's version, rooted in the source material. All of them are no completely new characters, but due to the creative reinterpretations within the 21st century, they are, nevertheless, something that the Sherlock Holmes universe has never seen before.

⁴⁸ Because *Holmesvision*, however, cannot be called an appropriation of one single feature, it has not been highlighted as such within the model.

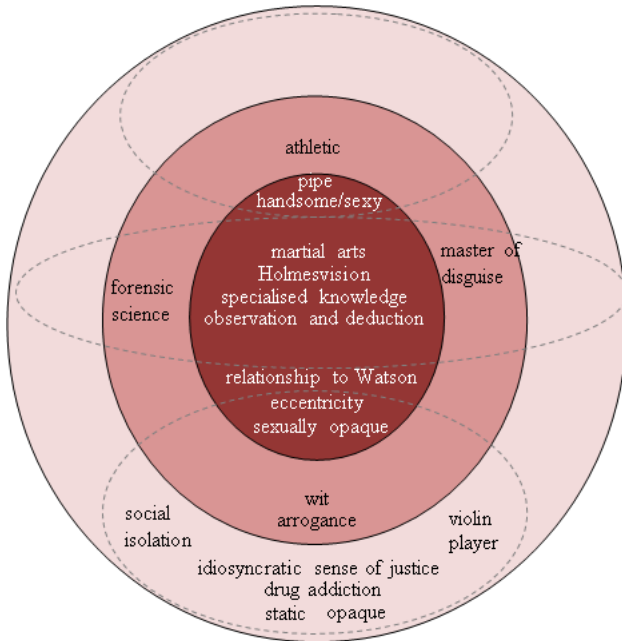


Figure 8. *Character Features Model of Guy Ritchie's Sherlock Holmes.*

7. Conclusion: A Contemporary Sherlock Holmes Prototype

After the previous chapters have intensively dealt with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and the three contemporary adaptations *Sherlock*, *Elementary*, and the *Sherlock Holmes* film series, the following conclusion shall present a concept for a 21st century Sherlock Holmes prototype. In addition, shifts in the characterization of the protagonist from the early to the contemporary prototype will be reconsidered, and some interesting aspects that the findings highlight will be discussed.

As pointed out above, all the Holmes incarnations are still rooted in Conan Doyle's detective stories, but have received new facets and skills on the basis of the original's character concept. Features have been adapted to new or different settings and times, and appropriations of original characteristics have added unique and distinguishing features to the contemporary Sherlock Holmes characters. As prime examples for appropriated features Downey Jr.'s *Holmesvision* and Cumberbatch's *mind palace* have to be mentioned, while *Elementary*'s most striking appropriation of an original feature is not directly linked to the detective's characterization, but to the setting (New York) and Watson's gender (Dr. Joan Watson). Appropriations like these – or also the appropriation of the detective's sexuality as part of which the *asexuality* feature is lost – give each adaptation a personal note that leaves the connection to the original recognizable, but still adds something to it that makes viewers curious. Features like these emphasise that we are not dealing with mere repetitions of Conan Doyle's works, but with creative reinterpretations, reimaginings and redesigns.

In order to create a Sherlock Holmes prototype model for the 21st century the four *Character Feature Models* will be used and brought together by using statistics in the following approach.⁴⁹ Each feature's position within the respective models will be looked at individually. There are four possible options for every feature within the models above: Central, secondary, peripheral or not in the model. Each feature receives a score for its position within each model – 3 for being central, 2 for being secondary, 1 for being peripheral and 0 for not appearing in the model. The scores that a feature receives for each model are then added together and divided by four, the number of models used, to determine each feature's average score. Not only the models of the adaptation, but also the model of the early prototype is taken into

⁴⁹ The statistics approach is based on methods that are commonly used in social sciences. Compare Bortz and Döring (8–9).

account. This is necessary because a contemporary prototype is not solely construed on the basis of contemporary adaptations, but also on the basis of the Conan Doyle's works: There are still people who read and have read the underlying text and because of this a 21st century prototype model has to account for this. Similarly, other screen adaptations, as well as novels, games, comic books and more that have been released throughout the last century could play into the construction of such a model. As mentioned throughout this book the models provided here are, however, cognitive in nature, based on the interpreted sets of data, do not claim to represent an absolute truth and can, therefore, primarily show tendencies.

To give an example of the statistics approach: *Observation and deduction* is at the centre of each of the four *Character Feature Models* and, thus, receives an average score of 3.00.⁵⁰ It has therefore not shifted in any way from being a central character feature. In contrast, we can determine an average score of 1.00 for the *deerstalker*,⁵¹ claim that this feature has experienced a decentralisation and merely consider it as peripheral for the contemporary prototype.⁵² Table 1 shows the average score for every feature that is mentioned in the four *Character Feature Models*. In addition, the position of each feature within the early prototype's model is mentioned and different shades of red highlight shifts that the features have experienced. Darker shades of red symbolize more central characteristic – just like in the *Character Feature Models* of the previous chapters – while the red shades become lighter the further a feature moves away from receiving the maximum average score of 3.00.

⁵⁰ $(3 + 3 + 3 + 3) / 4 = 3$

⁵¹ $(3 + 1 + 0 + 0) / 4 = 1$

⁵² It might even be possible that the hat is nowadays rather linked to the detective profession than to the character of Sherlock Holmes (Porter "Modernizing Victorian Sherlock Holmes" 18).

Table 1. Average feature score in comparison to the feature positions in the early prototype's model.

Feature	Average Score	Feature category in the early prototype's model (Assigned Score)
Observation and deduction	3.00	Central (3)
Specialised knowledge	3.00	Central (3)
Relationship to Watson	3.00	Central (3)
Forensic science	2.75	Central (3)
Eccentricity/neuroses	2.75	Secondary (2)
Master of information	2.50	Central (3)
Handsome/sexy	2.25	None (0)
Drug addiction	2.25	Secondary (2)
Master of disguise	2.00	Central (3)
Arrogance	2.00	Secondary (2)
Martial arts	1.75	Secondary (2)
Idiosyncratic sense of justice	1.75	Secondary (2)
Pipe	1.50	Central (3)
Violin player	1.50	Secondary (2)
Asexuality	1.25	Secondary (2)
Deerstalker	1.00	Central (3)
Athletic	1.00	None (0)
slender	1.00	Secondary (2)
tall	1.00	Secondary (2)

Overcoat	1.00	None (0)
Brain attic theory	1.00	Secondary (2)
Dynamic	1.00	None (0)
Inverness cape	0.75	Central (3)
Magnifying glass	0.75	Central (3)
Scarf	0.75	None (0)
Mind palace	0.75	None (0)
Holmesvision	0.75	None (0)
Social isolation	0.75	Secondary (2)
Sexually active	0.75	None (0)
Sexually opaque	0.75	None (0)
Suppressed emotions	0.75	None (0)
Lack of emotions	0.75	Central (3)
Tattoos	0.50	None (0)
Static	0.50	Peripheral (1)
Opaque	0.50	Peripheral (1)
Wit	0.50	None

The most striking notions that the table hints at are the already discussed decentralisation of the signifiers (*deerstalker*, *Inverness cape*, *pipe* and *magnifying glass*), the decentralisation and even loss of Holmes's unemotional ways and of his *social isolation*, the shift towards the centre for the *drug addiction* and *eccentricity/neuroses* features, the emergence of a *handsome/sexy* characteristic, the decentralisation of the *master of disguise* motif, the shift from a rather *static* and *opaque* to a more *dynamic*

character that still “remain[s] partially an elusive mystery” (Lane 243),⁵³ and the potential notion of the three mandatory features *observation and deduction*, *specialised knowledge* and *relationship to Watson*.

More generally speaking the adaptations show a divergence from the original’s outward appearance and a concentration on the detective’s personality flaws while remaining true to his methods and abilities. In other words, although there is a slight tendency for tall, athletic or slender actors to play the part of Holmes, virtually anyone could impersonate the Master Detective, as long as the portrayed character has Dr. Watson as his companion, and a superior intellect that manifests in exceptional observational and deductive skills as well as exceptional and specialised knowledge. Figure 9 shows the model of a potential 21st century Sherlock Holmes prototype based on the table above. Other than the four *Character Features Models* of the previous chapters, this model does not only include three stages of typicality, but instead makes use of the determined average feature scores and, hence, keeps the boundaries between the features more variable.⁵⁴

The model still contains the clusters that subdivide the features into the detective’s outward appearance, his personality and his methods. In the 21st century, Sherlock Holmes is still typically related to those features that have been given to him by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in reference to Joseph Bell’s methods: Knowledge, forensic science, observation and deduction. As idiomatic expressions “Sherlock” or “Holmes” have even found their ways into everyday language and refer to “someone who is clever or perceptive” or “one’s pal or buddy” (“sherlock”). Seemingly, this idiomatic language use reflects the most central prototypical Sherlock Holmes features of the 21st century: Cleverness (knowledge), perceptive skills (observation and deduction) and the idea of Sherlock Holmes as a pal or buddy (relationship to Watson).

⁵³ Compare to pages 53–54 of this book.

⁵⁴ Compare to the notions on clear cut and fuzzy boundaries on page 20 of this book (also fn 17).

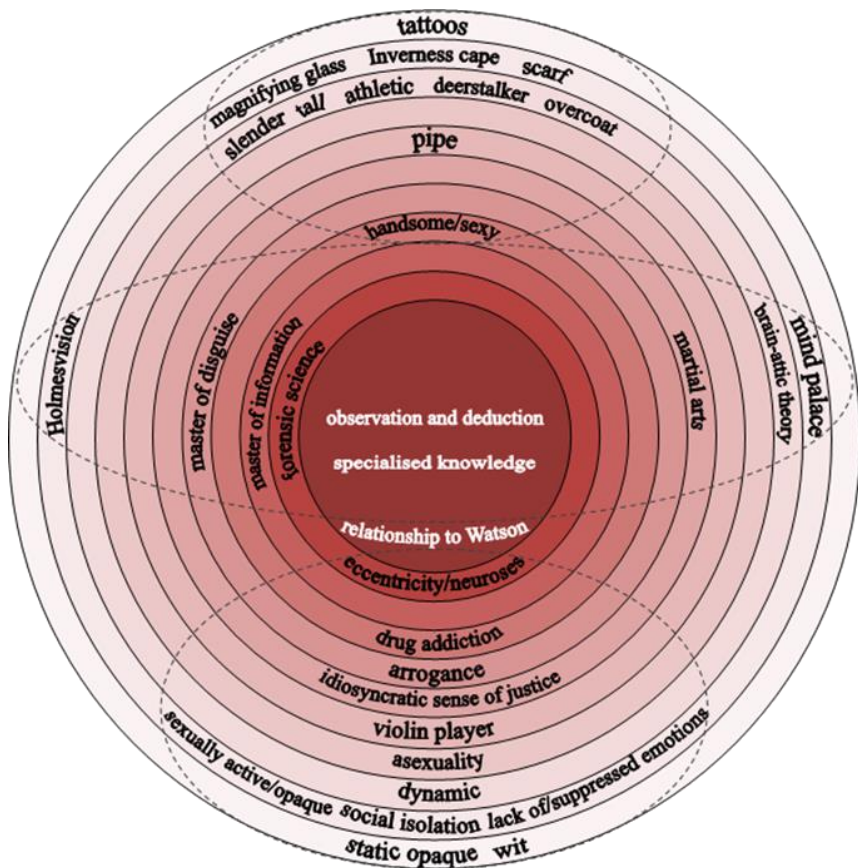


Figure 9. Model of a 21st century Sherlock Holmes prototype.

“[S]eparating the omnipresent signifiers ... from the fundamental characteristics ... does not negate ... [Holmes] as recognizable” (Taylor, “A Singular Case of Identity” 95) and, therefore, contemporary adaptations rather try to tell the story of the man behind the facade. Apart from his methods, Sherlock Holmes is connected to eccentricity, arrogance, neuroses and possible drug addiction in the adaptations, which generally “focus on Sherlock Holmes’s Otherness” (Porter, “Mind of Sherlock Holmes” 63) that results from his intellectual superiority. The most important shifts from the early to the contemporary prototype lead away from stereotypical, superficial visuals and towards more character depth, explanation and exploration. Contemporary Holmes renditions, hence, not only encompass his

brilliant mind, but also his flaws and the interrelation between both. “Reflecting shifting social values, exploring sexuality, occasionally challenging gender roles and often taking [a] sexier [identity], Sherlock Holmes ... [has] come a long ways since ... 1887” (Freeman 7).

The “sexualisation of Sherlock Holmes” (Graham and Garlen 25), his “more action-oriented” (Freeman 8) ways and the concentration on his “unusual technocratic intelligence” (Bochamn 145) can easily be explained by tendencies and desires within popular culture:

[I]n many ways, adaptations reflect the society in which they are created. The principles that are embraced, charged, or rejected are indicative of the society and culture that make those choices. Just as the original texts are reactionary to their contemporary society, so too are the adaptations. (Mc Laughlin, qtd. in Welch 143)

On the basis of McLaughlin’s idea, the models developed within this book could be used for any comparison between works created in past societies and their contemporary adaptations to make cultural shifts visible. For this book’s case study, it is less surprising to find more action, more references to sexuality or exploits of technology in these adaptations, but that we find a tendency towards more character depth and personality developments in a society that is said to have become more and more superficial.

Sherlock Holmes has “evolved as our society has” (Lane 225). He has fascinated people in the past and present, and he will certainly continue to do so in the future. He will probably keep evolving hand in hand with the culture he is part of, and will always and again be a reflection of contemporary societies and contemporary culture. Although new facets of his characterization are, therefore, likely to appear in future adaptations, the utterance from “A Study in Scarlet” which has accompanied this book throughout all the chapters should always be kept in mind. However, as a final remark, a slight addition to it might be given in order for it to remain true: “There is nothing [*entirely*] new under the sun.” (Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*). Whatever seems new has its roots in such that the world has already encountered, but creative processes can add new facets to all that has been done before.

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Sherlock Holmes, the famous fictional detective from Baker Street, was originally invented by the Scottish writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the late 19th century. Over the years he has appeared in different mass media formats and been portrayed on screen by several different actors. A 21st century renaissance of the character and his stories has helped to reintroduce Conan Doyle's work to new audiences, but adaptation and appropriation processes have also shaped the reinterpretation(s) of Sherlock Holmes. Thus, especially films and television series have portrayed a slightly changed version of Sherlock Holmes in the 21st century in comparison to its 19th century prototype. This book provides an analysis of the character features of the iconic detective on the basis of Conan Doyle's tales, the contemporary BBC and CBS television series *Sherlock* and *Elementary*, as well as the Warner Bros movies *Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* and tries to identify character feature shifts, changes and alterations. By employing prototype theory and creating *Character Features Models* for each Holmes incarnation, a potential 21st century Sherlock Holmes prototype is identified as an outcome of this work.