“Powers That are Hardly Human”: The Animals of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes Fiction

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Arthur Conan Doyle's historical, thematic, narrative, and theoretical strategies of representing the animal across his Sherlock Holmes canon. The question of the animal lies not only at the heart of the canon's thematics, but within the very narrative urge towards critical thinking, theorization, and questioning. Victims, villains, witnesses, and detectives in their own right–the animals of the canon become more than minor characters, but rather essential thematic and theoretical devices. I thus argue that Doyle consistently manipulates detective fiction conventions to challenge the conceptual animal/human binary. From the earliest appearance of Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet*, I propose that the trajectory of his theoretical approach has been one increasingly unfettered to crime and increasingly concerned with an analysis of organic relationships and behaviors. As animals become reflective of the very human behaviors, tendencies, and relations which establish tension within the canon, Doyle's detective fiction must struggle between a humane ethos of animal involvement, and the period's implicit scientific othering. Therefore, Holmes' deductive reliance on the animal asks the reader to consider what it means to be an organism participant in a theoretical ecosystem, while exercising the empathy this participation demands for an understanding of phenomenological attunement.

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INTRODUCTION: THE OLD HORSE

After a heart attack in 1929, Arthur Conan Doyle drew an autobiographical portrait entitled "The Old Horse" for his friends (Figure 1). A visual narrative, he placed in order the fixtures in his life's chronology, along with the accomplishments he saw as most important, most constitutive of his *self*. It is a tender reflection from Doyle as he approaches death, a kaleidoscopic consideration of what makes a man, what makes a life. Yet for Doyle, what constitutes a man is not necessarily to be human–as he depicts himself as a horse. From his birth in 1859 in Edinburgh, to the contemporary year, 1930, convalescent in bed–Doyle walks this chronological path, drawing a carriage containing packages of memories from his whaling trip to the arctic, to his medical career, and to the Sherlock Holmes canon, among others. The old horse that is Doyle approaches a group of vets (his doctors), bearing this brimming cart with the inscription "Life Work Carriage & Co.", and the caption of the self-portrait reads:

> *Consultation of Vets Webb-Johnson, Parkinson, and Mackintosh "The Old Horse has pulled a heavy load a long way. But he is well cared for, and with six weeks stable and six months grass he will be on the road once more."*

Unfortunately, Doyle would not pull the heavy load onwards, dying in 1930 from another heart attack.[1] The portrait is interesting not only for the insight it provides into what Doyle allowed a portion of the limited carriage space ('boxing', 'sport', and 'golf' are just as much a part of his life as 'Sherlock Holmes'), but also in the insight into Doyle's personal scale of the

[1] https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/wiki/File:Dedicace-sacd-1930-the-old-horse-livingstone.jpg

value of his achievements (his '500 lectures' package is considerably larger than the others, and the 'USA' boxes smaller). However, it is most compelling in the fact of Doyle's choice of a horse to embody himself. Looking back across his life through what would become his death bed, he sees himself not as a caricature of a great literary figure, perhaps a Shakespeare–but an old horse, head bowed and back dipping. This transcendence beyond the anthropocentric is not unusual for Doyle, who reflexively reaches towards the animal in his autobiographical works as equally as his fiction. In the sketch, his vision of himself as a horse aligns his massive oeuvre of life's work with the same work carried on by animals. The basic matter of a life's work becomes independent of an expressly human domain; whether writing fiction, practicing medicine, or carrying cargo–all work becomes equal in the shared experience of embodied living and dying. His writings' preoccupation with what separates the human and the animal, and their awareness *of* the animal thus culminates in this last representation of himself–where in his very self-image the distance between human and animal is entirely collapsed.

In his autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*, Doyle expresses his fundamental objection to sport hunting. Of it, he asks, "Have we a moral right then, to kill creatures for amusement?" and continues to discuss the guilt he feels in seeing the physical expressions of pain by hunted animals, such as pheasants or hares (*Memories* 264). He further likens the wounded hares' cries to the cries of a human child. Throughout the autobiography, Doyle will return to this concept of the physical indications of pain expressed by various animals, and to the cruelty of humans to inflict such pain. Simultaneously, he consistently anthropomorphizes animals and allots animal traits to humans–animality becoming a sliding spectrum of organic being, rather than the polarity of a binary, or a signifier of degeneration.

In 1880, when Doyle set out to work as surgeon on board the Steam-Whaler "Hope" in the Arctic, he was only 20 years old and a third-year medical student. Doyle's detailing of the massive and dangerous whales, and the "peculiar other-world feeling of the Arctic" is fascinating and indicates an environmental attunement bordering on reverence (*Memories 38)*. His poetic awe of the vast white landscape teeming with foreign animals evokes the sublime. Doyle's attention to animals, the anthropomorphizing of them, and the allotment of animal-attributes to humans, are again conspicuous. Of the first time he spotted a whale, Doyle writes, "there was the whale *in the air*. Its tail was curved just as a trout's is in jumping, and every bit of its glistening lead-coloured body was clear of the water" (*Memories* 37). Upon catching the whale, Doyle and the crew discover that it is covered in thick, red parasites–the irritation of which had most likely caused it to jump as widely as it had. Doyle then immediately holds the human up to this experience to evince understanding of that whale's experience, stating "if a man had short, nailless flippers, and a prosperous family of fleas upon his back, he would appreciate the situation" (*Memories* 40). To conceptualize the subjective experience of the whale, Doyle almost impulsively points to the shared animal within the human to elicit similarities. Wondering about the whales' reactions to the humans, he suggests one's "instinct urges" it to aim its tail at the whaling boat (*Memories* 38). This curiosity and perceptivity for the experience of the animal is evident in his autobiography, and I argue, evident across the entirety of his Sherlock Holmes novels and stories, which I will refer to collectively as the Holmes canon. Doyle is curious about the inner life of animals, as his autobiography continuously reveals. The interrogations of animal consciousness, being, and the intrinsic value of organic life are not passing whims, nor are animals merely instruments to the mechanisms of his detective fiction. Rather, these

phenomenological and ontological questions are preoccupations which inform his world-view and narrative lens.

I call attention to these autobiographical representations as they encapsulate the wider argument of this project: the curiosity central to the detective genre as an embodiment of the human reflex towards meaning, is intrinsically bound to the animal in the Holmes canon. The question of the animal lies not only at the heart of the canon's thematics, but within the very narrative urge towards critical thinking, theorization, and questioning. Further, this autobiographical context establishes the animal-centric, rather than anthropocentric, lens with which Doyle turned his eye upon the world and which consequently becomes embedded within the canon. For Doyle, to be human is to be animal. For Doyle, to write fiction about humans, about the analysis of human interaction, becomes writing about animals and their simultaneous interactions with that arbitrarily insular and conceptual human.

It is curiosity that drives detective fiction, both on the narrative level, and meta textually. Detective fiction not only provides entertainment but offers to its readers the rich complicity in a theoretical space, in analysis and critical thinking. This project thus seeks to examine the *curiosity* with which Doyle relentlessly approaches the limits between humans and animals. There is a gap between Holmesian scholarship and animal studies which has yet to be adequately filled, especially in light of Doyle's reflexive attention to the animal. Victims, villains, witnesses, and detectives in their own right, the animals of the canon become more than minor characters, but rather essential thematic and theoretical devices. Holmes' deductive reliance on the animal asks the reader to consider what it means to be an organism participant in a theoretical ecosystem, while exercising the empathy this participation demands for a universal

understanding of phenomenological attunement. Holmes thus models an ideal environmental ethos unique to his detective process, with animals lying at the center of this environmental awareness.

This project is divided into two parts. The first provides historical context—grounding the canon and its animals in the late Victorian period and considering the cultural and scientific discourse which both approached the question of the animal and objectified it. The second part considers the theoretical implications of Doyle's animals, connecting detective fiction with broader and more recent ecocritical and animal studies discourse. The two parts together examine the contribution of animals not only to a historicist approach to the canon, but also to the broader theoretical interrogation of detective fiction's generic form.

Belonging to part one, chapters one and two take a primarily thematic and historical approach to the animals of the canon. Chapter one considers the subversion of victim/culprit binaries as evoking a simultaneous subversion of the human/animal binary–arguing that the detective fiction convention of victim/culprit classification is harnessed by Doyle in a manner evocative of contemporary animal activist rhetoric. I posit that Doyle manipulates the victim/culprit binary to explore the animal/human binary. Chapter two focuses on the overlap between science and animals within the canon–arguing that there are two principle scientific attitudes, the first being the scientific detective's classificatory practices. The second belongs to what I name the 'scientific villain,' who malevolently treats animals as test-subjects, physically manipulating them and using them as scientific instruments. As a pair, these chapters are heavily informed by their historical contexts, interrogating the connection between the animal's contemporary sociocultural moment, and the canon's generic conventions and narrative fixtures.

Central to part one is Doyle's autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*, which contributes to the contextualization of animals within Doyle's contemporary life, and establishes an ethical perspective condemning animal maltreatment.

Belonging to the part two, chapters three and four are again framed by thematics, and continue to acknowledge historical context, while simultaneously broadening the theoretical scope. Drawing from the foundation established by chapters one and two, the second half of this project intervenes more broadly in the narrative and theoretical framework of the canon. As detective fiction has long been brought into conversation with psychoanalysis, I draw from popular psychoanalytic frameworks to consider how the animal interacts with the genre's narrative and theoretical conventions.[2] Chapter three focuses on animal prints–arguing that Holmes' interpretation of prints is not scientific, but linguistic. Chapter four is the most theoretical, considering the canon's preoccupation with dogs alongside a pre-existing likening of crime scene analysis to Freudian dream-analysis. I argue that attempting to understand dogs' subjective experiences provides Holmes with a unique entry-point into interpretation and meaning-making, beyond the manmade facade of deception. Holmes must incorporate a phenomenological and environmental approach to his detective strategy in order to succeed in meaning-making, enmeshing himself in the ecosystem of the crime scene. Through the animal, he harnesses powers of detection which become *hardly human*–derived from beyond the conceptual anthropocentric framework. Central in this second half are the established parallels

[2] Nicol, Bran. "Holmes and Literary Theory." *The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes*. Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 185-197.

between psychoanalytic theory and detective fiction, as well as ecocritical thought. Part two thus seeks to build upon the centrality of the animal, establishing a broader organicism unique to Doyle's detective fiction, while also indicating a wider environmental correlation with the genre.

Each chapter draws upon multiple Holmes stories or novels, with some recurrent across this project. Though recurrent, each chapter uses the texts differently to demonstrate the specific thematic or theoretical focus of the chapter. In using this variety of texts, I hope to demonstrate the overarching relevance of animals throughout the canon in its entirety.

This project thus posits that Doyle's detective fiction is an ideal ecocritical literary oeuvre in its implicit valuing of environmental awareness, with animals at the center of this environmental ethos. While the remarkable centrality of animals is unique to Doyle, detective fiction's generic relationship to environment is not. The enclosed and interrelating crime scene becomes synonymous with an ecosystem, in which the detective finds himself a contributing organism. Thus, the location of clues, the unraveling of the puzzle and of constructing meaning, is founded in an ecological ethos of attention. The human/nature/animal relationality posed by detective fiction is not one of commodification, like nature tourism, or aestheticization, as in the picturesque, or even of classification, as proposed by detective fiction discourse–but one of embodied work, of an embodiment of the animal, of skin to earth contact. However, both ecocritical scholarship and animal studies scholarship focusing specifically on detective fiction continue to lag behind their interrogation of other genres. Much of Victorian detective fiction scholarship remains unconcerned with the animal. Ruth Hawthorn and John Miller's 2022 collection, *Animals in Detective Fiction*, provides both a sweeping look at animals diachronically through the genre's development, and an important call for an increase in the synthesis of animal

studies and detective fiction. Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue," often considered the first detective fiction story, hinges on animality, on Dupin's discovery of brutal animal agency. Hawthorn and Miller, in their introduction, look further back to detective fiction's ancestors, proving this generic focal point to be one which is deeply ingrained in the genre's history, beyond Poe. This collection is an exciting and recent addition to the discipline but is one of few focused works on the animal in detective fiction. The wider lack of a close focus on these animals is thus a surprising oversight. Not only can the relationship between animals and the genre provide insight into generic mechanics, but I suggest, it can also support a wider environmental ethos belonging uniquely to the detective fiction genre–one of animal/human contact, of close attention, of enmeshment.[3]

In "The Final Problem" (1893), the story intended to mark the end of Holmes' literary life, Holmes tells Watson that "of late I have been tempted to look into the problems furnished by nature rather than those more superficial ones for which our artificial state of society is responsible" (*Memoirs* 250). Holmes explicitly challenges and disavows the arbitrary nature of human frameworks, which obscure and bias clear understandings of the organic. The organic is interesting; the organic is *real*. Solving human crimes serves merely as an intermediary work, a way to engage with the basic animal mechanisms underlying the deceit-like facade of the

[3] Though detective fiction lacks an extensive discourse with animal studies, Victorian animal studies is well-established. My analysis of animals within Doyle's Victorian detective fiction would thus not be possible without such existing scholarship on animals within the Victorian period. For further reference, Harriet Ritvo's *The Animal Estate* and Ivan Krielkamp's *Minor Creatures* have especially provided crucial context for my critical intervention.

conceptual human. His retirement as a beekeeper, as I will revisit, cements this existential interest in what is beyond-human.

Further, Holmes looks beyond the human in his investigations, searching for the animals which have been disregarded or objectified. His powers of ratiocination, which are explicitly called "hardly human," are so because they do not limit themselves to a reliance on the anthropocentric, and on its conceptual frameworks (*Return* 131). Holmes' powers are not *more than* human, or *super*human—but *hardly* human. His powers transcend the constraints of the human lens and are successful *because* of it. Holmes moves close to his case's animals, attempting to understand their subjective experiences through behavior and static impressions, ultimately welcoming them into the formerly human domain of critical analysis. Under constraints of the contemporary attitude towards animals, Doyle's detective fiction must struggle between what I argue is often an environmentally egalitarian ethos of animal involvement, and the period's implicit scientific othering. Doyle thus constructs ecosystems within his crime scenes in which the human and the animal dissolve into one another, both equally crucial as interconnected roots beneath the overstory of mystery. For Conan Doyle's Holmes stories, which established a foundational canon without which contemporary detective fiction would be much altered, the animal is inextricable.

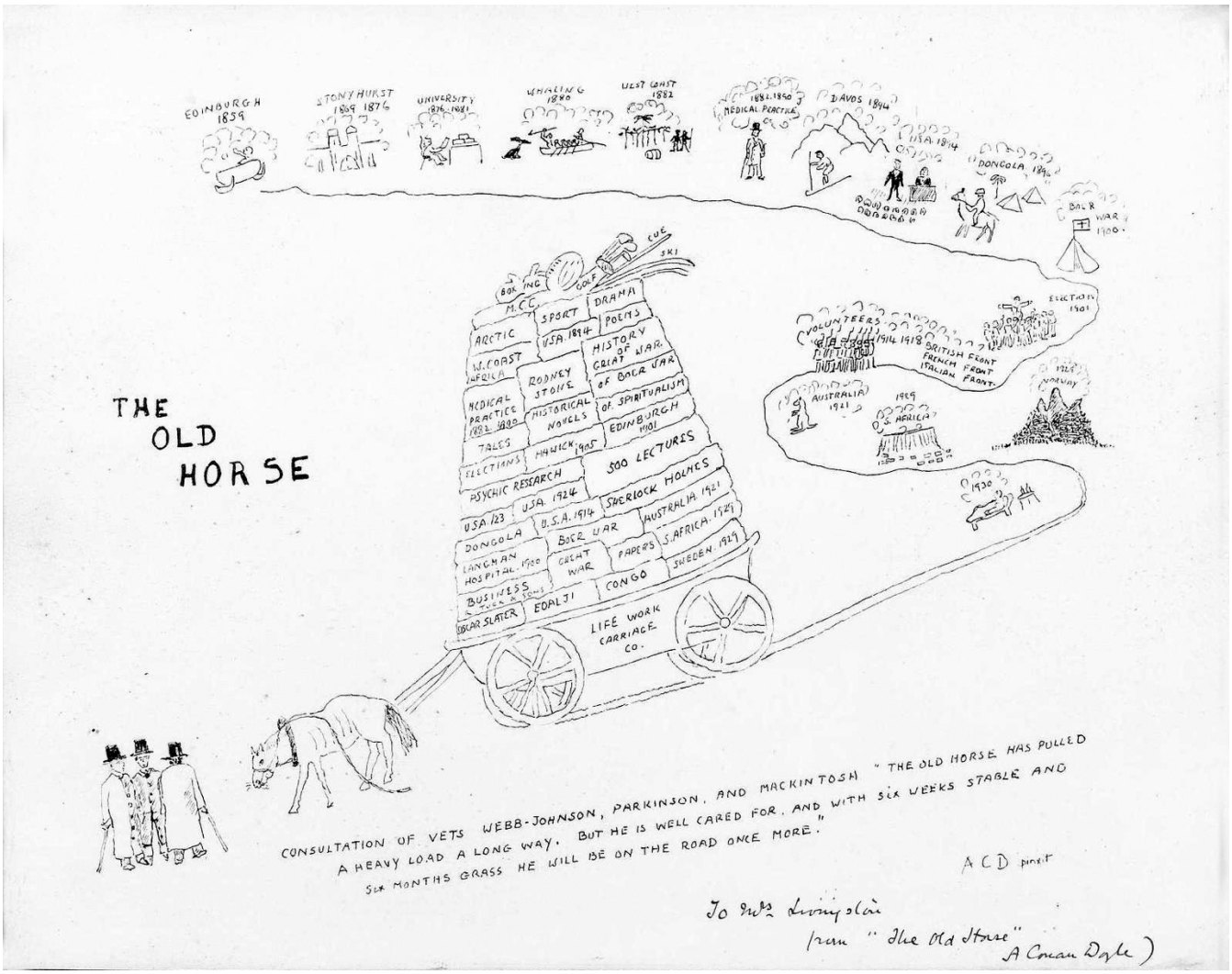

Figure 1. Doyle, Arthur Conan, 1859-1930. *The Old Horse*. Visual Arts Legacy Collection. Artstor. *JSTOR*, https://jstor.org.utk.idm.oclc.org/stable/community.13882576.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I: Victim or Culprit? Generic Animal Fluidity and Victorian Animal Activism

We were forced to raise our minds for the instant from the routine of life, and to recognise the presence of those great elemental forces which shriek at mankind through the bars of his civilisation, like untamed beasts in a cage.

–Conan Doyle, "The Five Orange Pips"

Before the founding of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1824, and 55 years before Sherlock Holmes made his first appearance in Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, one of Britain's first substantial legal animal protection acts was passed, Martin's Act of 1822.[4] Martin's Act primarily concerned the "cruel and improper treatment of horses, geldings, mules, asses, cows, heifers, steers, oxen, sheep, and other cattle," outlining any persons who "wantonly and cruelly beat, abuse, or ill-treat" such animals would face fines and possible jail-time.[5] By 1867, a newspaper article from the US' *National Police Gazette* stated that "the fever of humanity toward the brute creation seems on the increase, and every little act of chastisement or of urging used toward a quadruped is construed into cruelty to animals and the offender is 'hauled up' without delay."[6] In the aftermath of the founding of both the British and American Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs), the article details a social

[4] https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/whoweare/history
[5] https://statutes.org.uk/site/the-statutes/nineteenth-century/1822-3-george-4-c-71-cruel-treatment-of-cattle-act/
[6] Cruelty to Animals." *National Police Gazette*, 25 May 1867. *Crime, Punishment, and Popular Culture, 1790-1920*, link-gale-com.utk.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/WJDOON980963217/CPPC?u=knox61277&sid=bookmark-CPPC&pg=3&xid=216540d3.

atmosphere of increased sensitivity towards animal welfare, which, though "an excellent thing when conducted as it should be," in the fervor of its emergence in the social forefront "a majority of people" have "cruelty to animals on the brain," carried to an "absurd extent." Rapidly gaining traction, animal welfare and maltreatment secured a place in the forefront of social thought. By the end of the century, the question of the animal became unavoidable across political, scientific, and sociocultural discourses. Like Doyle's "elemental forces," the question of animals' places in English society seemed to shriek at mankind, reaching a fever pitch of unavoidability (*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* 105).

In examining animal activism tactics alongside Conan Doyle's detective fiction, a trend emerges in which both rhetoric and fiction press at the limits of what is animal and what is human. I argue Conan Doyle's fictitious deployment of this rhetoric indicates an awareness of the contested position of the late Victorian animal, as well as an interrogation of the power implicit within the animal's relation to the human. This chapter thus begins by establishing a historical context of the period's animal discourse. Such a context allows us to pair two of Conan Doyle's most animal-centric Sherlock Holmes stories alongside two RSPCA journal illustrations–making the argument that Doyle is conscious of, and employing, animal activist rhetoric in his manipulation of generic roles' power dynamics. These parallels also reveal Doyle's success in using detective fiction conventions, specifically victim/culprit speciation, to capture the Victorian animal's sociocultural oscillation.

Scholarship has established the trajectory of animal welfare across the period, agreeing upon 19th century England as a decisive moment in animal activism–with Britain's developments in both animal thought, and legal protections enacting a global ripple. Shira

Shmuely's "The Bureaucracy of Empathy: Law, Vivisection, and Animal Pain in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain" provides a comprehensive look at the culmination of these developments towards the end of the period with the 1876 British Cruelty to Animals Act which made vivisection, experimentation on live animals, illegal. Arguing that this act enacted a major social and systemic shift in empathy towards non-human animals, Shmuely dissects the scientific and moral tensions at odds within the act, and the demand it created for further philosophical determination of animal feeling and mental capacity. The English relationship to animal cohabitants was thus irreversibly altered by the legislative protection outlined by the Vivisection Law, itself a culmination of decades of animal activism. However, as Shmuely notes, the passage of this act was followed by three decades of inquiry, debate, and two Royal Commissions on Vivisection. While legislation was enacted, the moral and ontological debate between anti-vivisectionists and scientists was left open. This discourse is important in outlining the landscape of intense philosophical and ontological debate over the question of the animal's place. Though animal activism focused on other aspects of animals' treatments as well, vivisection provides a useful case study of debate and embodies one aspect of maltreatment contemporarily contested. While this chapter only focalizes activist rhetoric's deployment and subversion of power dynamics through the vivisection discourse, the concept of vivisection as a scientific practice will feature more heavily in Chapter Two.

The language of 'unnecessary' cruelty stated in Martin's Act would be a major throughline in animal activism, with the central debate against vivisection founded on the basis of its abusive nature as unnecessary to scientific progress, as its defenders maintained. One of the two primary perspectives on the issue belonged to those who supported vivisection for its

scientific and medical usefulness. In Claude Bernard's 1865 work, *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*, he reflects this perspective in stating, "No hesitation is possible; the science of life can be established only through experiment, and we can save living beings from death only after sacrificing others" (Bernard 102). The specific term *sacrifice* is indicative of the framing of vivisection as akin to a duty, on the part of animals as well as for the humans performing the procedures. Vivisection was thus, as Ricardo Waizbort and Andre Luis de Lima Carvalho state in their introduction to the debate between Frances Power Cobbe (formerly of the RSPCA) and Darwinists on Vivisection, a "necessary evil on behalf of humanity," necessary being a key term.[7] Men's right to dominion over Earth and animals thus lay at the center of this perspective–reinforcing not only the binary between the non-human animal and the human, but the implicit superiority of the latter as well. This dominion, or power, becomes entangled with the concept of human-hood. Frances Power Cobbe and Dr. George Hoggan contributed heavily to the antivivisection movement, founding the Victoria Street Society for the Protection of Animals in 1875.[8] Hoggan and Cobbe disagreed with vivisection primarily on the basis of it as an abusive practice, which was not *necessary* to scientific progress. In an 1876 letter in *The Morning Post*, Hoggan and Cobbe defined vivisection explicitly as "torture."[9] In another letter protesting the usefulness of vivisection, by Dr. George Hoggan, published in *The Morning Post*

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[7] Luis de Lima Carvalho, Andre & Waizbort, Ricardo. "Pain Beyond the Confines of Man: A Preliminary introduction to the debate between Frances Power Cobbe and the Darwinists with respect to vivisection in Victorian England (1863-1904). *História, Ciências, Saúde–Manguinhos,* 2010*,* p. 3. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-59702010000300002.

[8] https://www.navs.org.uk/about_us/go.php?si=24&ssi=0&id=299&page=

[9] "Vivisection." *Morning Post*, 21 Mar. 1876, p. 6. *British Library Newspapers*, link-gale-com.utk.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/R3210529642/BNCN?u=knox61277&sid=bookmark-BNCN&pg=6&xid=85c66c8d.

in 1875, Hoggan cited an experiment he had witnessed in which dogs who were taken to a laboratory to be experimented upon had exhibited clear fear, and had attempted to seek comfort in friendly advances towards researchers.[10] Here, not only is the practice not expressly necessary, but the clear expression of animal emotions is utilized to underscore its cruelty.

Conan Doyle's personal history with animal maltreatment provides a further reference point for his detective fiction's embedded ethical discourse on the topic. Five years after his graduation from medical school in 1881, Doyle attended an 1886 lecture given by two reverends about animal maltreatment and scientific experiments, in which the speakers held that vivisection, as a method akin to torture, was immoral, and against God's intended mercy. Doyle, however, opposed the speakers, asserting that it was as illogical to him for a reverend to speak on the law of medicine as it would be for a medical professional to speak on theology. He added that he believed vivisection, and similar animal experimentations, to ultimately be a necessary means for human welfare, stating "if a hundred thousand rabbits had been sacrificed to save that man's life it would have been worth the object and justifiable."[11] Further, Doyle asserts that he had never known vivisection to be performed without chloroform, which would lessen the pain of the subjected animal. Doyle's opinion is decidedly not anti-vivisectionist, however, he is not completely unconcerned with the experience of the animal, as demonstrated by his looking to the

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[10] Luis de Lima Carvalho, Andre & Waizbort, Ricardo. "Pain Beyond the Confines of Man: A Preliminary introduction to the debate between Frances Power Cobbe and the Darwinists with respect to vivisection in Victorian England (1863-1904). *História, Ciências, Saúde–Manguinhos,* 2010*,* p. 3. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-59702010000300002.

[11] "Vivisection and M. Pasteur." *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 17 April 1886, p. 2. https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/wiki/Vivisection_and_M._Pasteur.

usage of chloroform as a means of lessening harm. As a doctor, Doyle cares for the well-being of human patients, and, as stated in the lecture, if treating hydrophobia in humans (a symptom of rabies) could be furthered by experimenting upon the rabid dogs passing it on, the ends justify the means. Though Rev. R. A. Chudleigh stated at the lecture that "it was better even for man to suffer inconvenience than that such immoral and dreadful tortures should be inflicted upon animals," Doyle pauses to define 'torture' by the experience of pain. The dogs, he suggests, when administered chloroform, are not undergoing such gross maltreatments. The administration of chloroform negates pain, which for Doyle, negates the ascription of torture. A lack of pain appears to Doyle to be a central component of his personal ethical perspective.

This sentiment of visible, or observable pain as an indicator of cruelty is re-confirmed in his autobiography, where he writes of his experience as surgeon in 1880 onboard the whaling ship "Hope," an experience which, as I have established in the introduction, abounds with an almost sublime awe for the environment, and a deep curiosity towards the whales. He recalls of one encounter, that "the whale appears to have but little sensibility to pain, for it never winces when the long lances are passed through its body" (*Memories* 63). With their seeming lack of pain, this chapter on this whaling expedition appears absent of reflection on the ethics of whale-hunting. Such a practice carries a lighter ethical weight than his experience hunting for instance, where he asserts his fundamental disagreement with the killing of animals for sport, pointing to the "child-like wail of the wounded hare" as an indication of cruelty (*Memories* 159). He continues to express a strong sense of guilt and discomfort with the practice of killing animals without serious reasons beyond recreation, and when pain can clearly be observed. Conversely, he has no issue with fishing, or the instance where he killed a snake in Creektown, West Africa.

Though of the snake he confesses this was before he "learned later in life to give up killing animals" (*Memories* 37). Of fishing, Doyle writes that he is aware of his own inconsistency, though he simultaneously asks if perhaps there is an organization to animal values which validates his inconsistency, or at least lessens the degree of cruelty in killing a fish versus a hare. This sentiment is suggestive in his fiction's attitude towards horse versus snake, as I will explore. Doyle leaves this question of organization for the most part unanswered, though he does suggest that in seeing a fish take a fly just after breaking away from another one, that "one feels that their sense of pain must be very different from our own" (*Memories* 159). Again, Doyle turns to the capacity for sensing pain as a marker of moral value or consideration.

Further, it is important to acknowledge, despite this project's attempt to show the ways in which Doyle's fiction displays a unique consideration towards animals, as well as an interest in the proximity (or lack of), between animals and humans, that Doyle appears to believe in an ontological scale–where a hare carries more ontological weight than a fish, and perhaps even more than a whale. While Doyle appears to ground this scale in the capacity for feeling, it should be acknowledged that this classification of animals is perhaps as arbitrary as the classifying of humans versus animals which I argue that his fiction challenges. Doyle is not a perfect animal studies theorist, but his autobiographical contradictions and beliefs about animal issues help us to understand the contradictions and struggles with animals within his fiction.

In his autobiography, Doyle also addresses vivisection directly. Speaking of his former Professor Rutherford at Edinburgh University, who was "a rather ruthless vivisector, and though [Doyle has] always recognized that a minimum of painless vivisection is necessary, and far more justifiable than the eating of meat as a food, [he is] glad that the law was made more stringent so

as to restrain such men as" Rutherford (*Memories* 21). Doyle hints at a moral disagreement with the consumption of meat, which is unfortunately not picked up throughout the rest of the book, but paired here with vivisection, evokes a complex moral perspective. While he supports the restriction of vivisection, it appears less morally acceptable than animal consumption. To a modern perspective, the live experimentation upon animals may seem less ethical than the common consumption of meat. Yet, for Doyle as a medical man, the perceived necessity of scientific progress takes precedent. As in his opinions on what animals are acceptable to kill, Doyle expresses a clear personal moral perspective on animal maltreatment.

Returning to historical context, Darwin's contribution to the question of the animal further informs contemporary perspectives. Although Darwin was ultimately a proponent of vivisection for medical purposes,[12] his contribution to the animal welfare movement was complex, and not entirely harmful. Emma and Charles Darwin wrote a pamphlet on cruelty in vermin traps, and even approached the RSPCA in 1863 about sponsoring a design competition for a new, humane trap.[13] Along with his personal relationship with Cobbe and shared interest in animals' mental capacities, Ivan Kreilkamp establishes in his book *Minor Creatures* that Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* encouraged its audience "conceptually to approach the

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[12] Becker, L.C., & Becker, C.B. *Encyclopedia of Ethics* (2nd ed.). Routledge, 2001, p. 375. https://doi-org.utk.idm.oclc.org/10.4324/9780203952948 .

[13] Donald, Diana. "The Early History of the RSPCA: Its Culture and Its Conflicts." *Women against Cruelty: Protection of Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 1st ed., Manchester University Press, 2020, pp. 55–93. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org.utk.idm.oclc.org/stable/j.ctvr695bw.8.
Donald, Diana. *Women Against Cruelty: Protection of Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britian*, Manchester University Press, 2026.

human," evoking a conceptual spectrum (rather than a binary) of humanity and animality.[14] Thus, Darwin's work prompted further interrogation of the fundamental boundaries of what is specifically human, and not universally animal. Primal connections helped contribute to a conceptual spectrum of animality, which, though not an entirely new concept, was here brought into the popular sphere in a large and lasting way. Not only did this display of connection enact a spectrum of animality on which the human shifted towards the animal, but the animal too shifted toward the human. While Kreilkamp relates Darwin's conceptual animal-human to the Victorian focus on domestication as a result of shifting sentiments towards select animals as domestic counterparts, I would like to draw a further comparison between this idea of animality as a spectrum, and the rhetoric employed by animal welfare activists.

After their founding, both British and American societies for the prevention of cruelty towards animals began publishing several periodicals–all containing a variety of pieces: opinion pieces on animal welfare, calls to action against trends involving animal cruelty, specific news pieces, poems, and generally writing about animal-centric thinking. These journals were accompanied by illustrations, either depicting real stories, or functioning as visual animal welfare activism. The RSPCA's journals' *Animal World*, and *Band of Mercy Advocate*, deployed provocative visual rhetoric in the late 19th century, wherein animals often took the places of humans. As Monica Flegel posits in her article, "How Does Your Collar Suit Me?" The Human Animal in the RSPCA's Animal World" and "Band of Mercy," the journals reverse power

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[14] Kreilkamp, Ivan. *Minor Creatures: Persons, Animals, and the Victorian Novel*, University of Chicago Press, 2018, p.7.

dynamics to spark not only empathy in Victorian readers, but also, I suggest further, to participate in a continuing animal rights strategy of lessening the binary between the human and the non-human animal–a strategy persistent in animal rights rhetoric today, like that of recent PETA campaigns.[15] This strategy taps into the spectrum of animality which I have outlined in the context of Darwin's contributions, wherein the identity of the human and the identity of the animal are not entirely in opposition. Further, along with the spectrum, these images perform a similar "conceptual approach to the human" as Kreilkamp attributes to Darwin. Clearly, there is a common contemporary reflex towards interrogating where animals end and humans begin. Power and maltreatment are essential methods of this interrogation, as the very question of who possesses the right to wield the power of maltreatment becomes an ontological one. Though Flegel positions this role reversal to underscore the power relations affecting humans and animals equally, I would like to place these images alongside two of Doyle's most animal-centric short stories. Both Doyle's "The Adventure of Silver Blaze," and "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," feature animals who are initially maltreated by their keepers, but who inevitably strike out against them–thus moving themselves between the roles of victim and culprit, and simultaneously enacting literal reversals with their human villains. In doing so, Doyle's animals recall the RSPCA's journals' animal right campaign tactics of animal/keeper reversal. These affinities not only reflect the established instability of the Victorian animal, but also demonstrate that Doyle is conscious of, and employing, animal activist rhetoric in his manipulation of generic roles' power dynamics. These parallels further reveal Doyle's success in

[15] https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-49578130.

using detective fiction conventions, specifically victim/culprit speciation, to capture the Victorian animal's sociocultural oscillation.

My research thus draws from recent scholarship marrying animal studies and Victorian literature, especially *Minor Creatures*, which details the simultaneous and related shift in tenderness towards domestic animals as pets in the period. Kreilkamp further argues for a subversion of the anthropocentric lens often used in discussing the Victorian novel, noting instead Victorian literature's representation of animals as a means of establishing how the very structure of Victorian society and identity are entangled with the presence, care, and maltreatment of the animal.[16] Kreilkamp's concept of identity as being shaped by the animal provides a helpful basis for this chapter's exploration of the Holmes canon's interchangeable animal and human identities. Not only do the canon's animals deploy this very entanglement, but they do so through the framework of generic conventions. Doyle's animals not only provide a means of examining further the complexity of the Victorian human/animal relationship beyond recent scholarship's focus with the Victorian novel, but also feeds into the wider animal studies conversation, a discipline which has yet to delve extensively into detective fiction.

As the animal rights movement developed, so did the detective fiction genre. Detective fiction, as a popular genre, functions as a microcosm of its contemporary period's sociocultural concerns; with scholars like Nils Clausson, Christopher Clausen, and Charles Rzepka dissecting the various ways in which fin-de-siecle detective fiction, and the Holmes canon specifically, is

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[16] Kreilkamp, Ivan. *Minor Creatures: Persons, Animals, and the Victorian Novel*, University of Chicago Press, 2018, p.133.

able to acutely capture the fears and preoccupations of its time–especially in terms of social order, scientism, and colonialism. Yet, much of Victorian detective fiction scholarship is unconcerned with the animal–despite the period's heightened concern with animal welfare discourse, which I have outlined, as well as detective fiction's canonization as a genre being inextricable from the involvement of animal characters.[17]

In Doyle's "The Adventure of Silver Blaze," (1894) a racehorse, Silver Blaze, goes missing, with his trainer and caretaker, Straker, found dead. While Inspector Gregory believes that Bookmaker Fitzroy Simpson is the culprit behind both the horse's disappearance and Straker's murder, Holmes uncovers that it was Straker who lured Silver Blaze out of his stable in the night, in an attempt to lame him and throw an upcoming race. However, the horse, sensing danger, kicks and kills Straker, before running away. As he reveals the final details of the case, Holmes outlines this moment of animal agency to Watson:

> "The real murderer is standing immediately behind you." He stepped past and laid his hand upon the glossy neck of the thoroughbred…" Yes, the horse. And it may lessen his guilt if I say it was done in self-defence…" (*Memoirs* 30).

Importantly, it is the threat of human interference and manipulation which pressures Silver Blaze to react, to protect himself against danger, and ultimately move between generic classifications. Silver Blaze is not a natural-born murderer, nor does he possess a telling physiognomy of inevitable criminality, like that espoused by the period's emerging

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[17] Miller, John, and Ruth Hawthorn. "Origins and Evolutions: The Brutal History of Detective Fiction." *Animals in Detective Fiction*, Springer International Publishing AG, 2022, pp. 5-6.

focus on criminology–such as in Havelock Ellis' *The Criminal* (1890). The human exercise of power and violence *pushes* Silver Blaze to transform. Like Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue, Silver Blaze's mystery hinges on the search for a human culprit, while the crucial turning point lies in Holmes' discovery and reveal of animal agency. Unlike Poe's orangutan, however, Silver Blaze has acted out of fear, a sympathetic emotion, and his crime is thus permissible. The language Conan Doyle uses in this reveal allots a unique sense of mental aptitude to the horse as he tells Watson that Silver Blaze felt a "strange instinct" to defend himself and now might feel some sense of "guilt" for exercising this instinct (*Memoirs* 33, 30). Through this "strange instinct," Silver Blaze has consciously interpreted the present threat of Straker, who intends to lame him, and acts agentively, protecting himself and exercising some level of punishment on his attacker (*Memoirs* 33). Rather than the fear of social degeneration which animality and brutality often function as mirrors for in detective fiction, Silver Blaze's moment of animal agency is almost human in its motive; it is sympathetic and understandable.[18] Holmes does not blame the horse. Crucially, in this moment of revelation, Holmes reaches out to touch the animal, enacting a contact zone of empathy which is both mental and physical. As Silver Blaze plays the part of not only victim and culprit, but arbitrator of his own justice against his attacker, he not only transcends generic speciation, but animal/human speciation as well. In Silver Blaze's fluid inhabiting of both generic types, he gains purchase on the very humanity which, in not

[18] Clausson, Nils. "Degeneration, 'Fin-de-Siècle' Gothic, and the Science of Detection: Arthur Conan Doyle's 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' and the Emergence of the Modern Detective Story." *Journal of Narrative Theory*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2005, pp. 60–87. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30224620.

possessing, made legal reform for animals contested.

Further, in enacting this move between victim and culprit, Silver Blaze uses Straker's own weapon against him, inflicting a wound similar to the one intended for Silver Blaze. The horse strikes Straker in the head with his steel shoe, and in falling, Straker's "knife gashed his thigh," creating a "long, clean cut" like the one Straker himself planned to inflict (*Memoirs* 33, 13). Though Straker's intended cut was to be made subcutaneously, so as not to leave a trace, the horse still uses the same weapon, cutting the same part of the body as Straker intended to cut on Silver Blaze, effectively mirroring the intended action.

As Silver Blaze becomes culprit, Straker becomes victim–the two switching generic places and subverting the power hierarchies not only intrinsic to those generic places, but to Straker and Silver Blaze's personal relationship of keeper and charge. Thus, Silver Blaze, in exercising agency, takes Straker's place–not only as culprit, but as human subjugator, turning Straker's own weapon and crime against him. Silver Blaze *becomes* Straker. Detective fiction's generic speciation of the roles of culprit and victim is thus deeply complicated by animal subversion, as the animal pre-possesses not only an inequality of power as a victim, but also as a subjugated non-human.

An evocative image of animal suffering emerges, which, as established, inspires sympathy even from Holmes, who has himself stated in *The Sign of the Four,* and paraphrased across the canon, that "emotional qualities are antagonistic to clear reasoning" (*The Sign of the Four* 147). Just as Silver Blaze's suffering and agency have pressed at the divide between human and non-human and effectively evoked sympathetic reaction, so does the RSPCA's journals' illustrative rhetorics. I thus propose a pairing of Silver Blaze alongside an illustration

from an 1887 issue of the RSPCA's *Animal World,* to show Doyle's deployment of the themes central to animal activist rhetoric (Figure 2). This image depicts a bearing-rein race, a trend at the time where a rein would be attached to a horse's harness by its bridle headpiece, causing the horse's neck to be contorted into an arch, while its head is forced up.[19] As Flegel notes in her analysis of the image, the practice was entirely aesthetic, and ultimately damaged the horses' windpipes. In this depiction, however, it is not horses which are being raced in this manner, but human men. The illustration accompanies a fictional letter in the voice of a dog viewing the race, noting the race's "stupidity."[20]

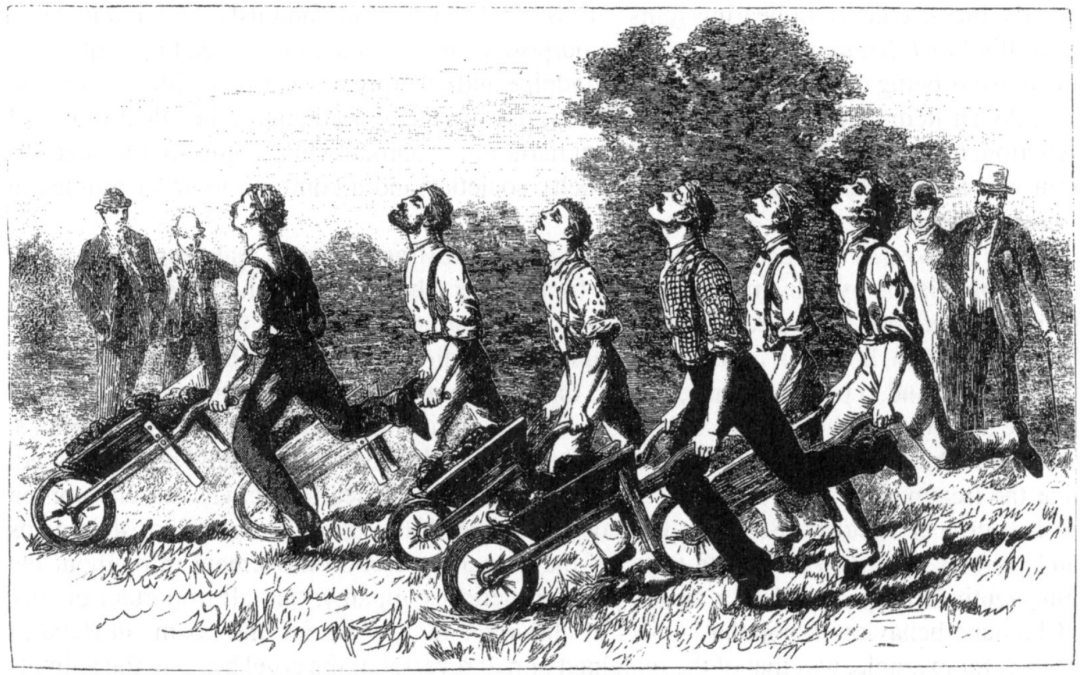

Figure. 2 Illustration accompanying "A Letter from Herr Max to John Mastiff, Esq., Chairman

[19] "Bearing Rein, *N.*" *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford UP, December 2025, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9194896032.

[20] "A Letter from Herr Max to John Mastiff, Esq, Chairman of the Animals' Jubilee Committee. *Animal World* 18. 216 (Sept. 1, 1887): 129-44, 133-34.

of the Animal's Jubilee Committee." Engraving from *Animal World* 18.216 (1 Sept 1887): 129-44.

In a literal embodiment of Straker and Silver Blaze's reversal, *Animal World*'s humans and animals swap places to evoke an emotional reaction of empathy and incredulity–similar to that of the reaction evoked by Straker's plan to lame Silver Blaze. Notably, this incredulity is expressed by characters in the context of the reveal that the murder is the horse's doing. Rather than the actual act of animal cruelty being the primary spark of protest in both image and fiction, contention occurs when the power relations between human and animal are reversed. Only then can onlookers and readers appreciate the extent of the cruelty. It is thus through a reversal of unjust exercises of power that *Animal World* seeks to call out common, yet implicit injustice. For the image's rhetoric to succeed, and for Holmes' case to evoke surprise, the commonplace must become bizarre.

In Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892), after Helen Stoner's sister dies in mysterious circumstances, Helen Stoner begins to hear the same strange whistling her sister claimed to hear just before her death. Seeking Holmes' help, Watson and Holmes discover the culprit to be Stoner's stepfather, Dr. Roylott, with the help of his pet snake. Holmes and Watson wait in Stoner's room, ambushing the snake when Dr. Roylott releases it through a vent, with Holmes lashing "so savagely" at it with his cane (*Adventures* 199). The snake retreats through the vent, and the two men find Dr. Roylott dead in his room, bitten and killed by his own pet.

> "Round his brow he had a peculiar yellow band, with brownish speckles which seemed to be bound tightly round his head…In an instant his strange head-gear began to move, and then reared itself from among his hair the squat diamond-shaped head and puffed

neck of a loathsome serpent." (*Adventures* 199-200)

Dr. Roylott is found with his companion, the snake, wrapped bodily around him. The snake has come back through the ventilation system installed by Roylott, bitten and killed his owner, and settled on top of him. Just as Dr. Roylott has used the snake to kill Helen Stoner's sister, and attempted to kill Helen Stoner herself, Dr. Roylott now finds himself facing, and falling victim to, his own weapon and crime. The snake and Roylott have switched places–rather than the snake who is under control of Roylott's stock and lash, the snake has become the figure with power in their relationship. In settling himself literally on top of Roylott too, physically binding him–he assumes Roylott's own identity as culprit. Notably, as Watson and Holmes enter the room, the snake is not initially distinguishable from Roylott's person, instead appearing like a garment, like a part of him. Again, the human exercise of power over their non-human animal companions inspires a moment of violent action, wherein the animal transcends their initial generic role, using their keeper's own weapons to take their keeper's place as culprit. Holmes comments to Watson:

> "It is a swamp adder! Cried Holmes; "the deadliest snake in India. He has died within ten seconds of being bitten. Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another." (*Adventures* 200)

Although the snake makes a similar move to Silver Blaze, breaking from its initial generic space to assume the role of culprit, the agency allotted by Holmes here is slightly different. Rather than an instinctual motive like Silver Blaze's, the snake's breaking from its role as victim, appears to be inspired by the violent character of his companion.

An 1896 article from the *Illustrated Police News*, entitled "Brute Resemblances,"

discusses a sub-genre of physiognomy, where humans may begin to resemble their animal companions, both in physical appearance, and in habit.[21] Their animal facial features can thus be read as indicators of their identity. Holmes himself makes a similar remark in "The Adventure of the Creeping Man," though the converse–of dogs mirroring human habits. While a slightly satirical pseudo-branch of physiognomy, the piece captures a real trend of a sentiment of human/pet permeability which I believe is reflected in the relationship between the snake and Roylott. I posit that this form of relationship further enacts an embodiment of Donna Haraway's later work with human/animal relationships, especially within *The Companion Species Manifesto,* in which companion species and their resulting "coconstitutive" relationships necessitate a relating which actively informs both partners' identities (Haraway 12). Though the conventional Victorian companion pet was perhaps not generally a snake, Dr. Roylott's exotic pets–the snake, a baboon, and a cheetah, among others–appear to be his most intimate friends, as he is described by Helen Stoner as violent and abrasive in *human* social company. In its intimacy, as we see in this moment of reflexive violence, the relationship between snake and human keeper embodies a deep quality of relating, wherein each partner is intrinsically shaped by the other. Holmes himself attributes the snake's violence to Roylott's character, with the snake as a manifestation of Roylott's own violence rebounding back upon him. Unlike Silver Blaze, the limits between human keeper and animal in this relationship are not expressly clear.

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[21] "Brute Resemblances." *Illustrated Police News*, 11 Jan. 1896, p. 14. *Crime, Punishment, and Popular Culture, 1790-1920*, gale.com.utk.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/ZAMKHA684383514/CPPC?u=knox61277&sid=bookmarkCPPC&pg=14&xid=13ac15c7.

Whereas a horse and trainer have explicit boundaries, the space between Roylott and the snake's individual identities has become blurred in their closeness as domestic co-habitants. In using the snake as a weapon, the snake has become an extension of Roylott. And in turning himself as a weapon back upon his keeper, the snake permeates this boundary further. Even after killing Roylott, the snake remains physically close, wrapped around Roylott's body.

However, this relationship is again unavoidably founded on a dynamic of power, objectification, and confinement. Though perhaps not facing the same crisis of danger as Silver Blaze, the snake was still under Roylott's control, used as a weapon for his own will, and kept in an "iron safe" (*Adventures* 200). The snake's life is not one of agency–it is one deeply coloured by the will and power of his keeper and companion. In this moment of victim/culprit reversal, therefore, the snake pushes Haraway's quality of relating even further–assimilating itself with Roylott's violence, and taking his place, like Silver Blaze, both generically as a culprit, and in their relationship's power dynamic. Pushed to the breaking point by human manipulation, the snake subverts generic and human/animal classifications, and in a sense, becomes his human keeper.

Further, the snake's culpability is approached differently by Holmes than Silver Blaze, who is immediately absolved, and allowed to continue racing. A clear distinction emerges, as Holmes removes the snake from Roylott's dead body by "throwing the noose" of Roylott's dog-whip around the snake's neck and drawing "it from its horrid perch…carrying it at arm's length," before throwing it into its safe and shutting it in (*Adventures* 200). In a stark contrast to Holmes' reaching out to pet Silver Blaze, he carries the snake at a distance. The familiar horse is allowed a level of indulgent humanity inaccessible to the snake, just as Doyle's autobiography

treats the killing of hares as cruel, unlike the lesser and acceptable crimes of killing a fish or more aptly, the West African snake. Speciesism is thus a probable latent factor. Certainly, the danger causing this distance may come in part from the threat of the snake's venom–and the racial implications of the snake's being not from England, but from India, should not be ignored. However, I suggest, it may also indicate a depth of relating which the horse, living outside the home, has not been exposed to–that of an intrinsic shaping of the Victorian domestic pet and human as reflected by the closeness valued in Victorian pet culture. As Kreilkamp establishes, for Victorian fiction, the domestic pet becomes synonymous with domesticity itself, and with the identity of the Victorian individual. Perhaps, as a domestic pet, the snake has become too much a part of Roylott to be so absolved as Silver Blaze and thus remains a danger.

Despite their differences, both animals enact a fluidity between generic levels of victim and culprit, and in doing so, enact a switch with their human keepers and victimizers. The human/animal binary, like the victim/culprit binary, is pressed at, and collapsed. This collapse indicates an instability of the animals' position, but also an instability of the human's. The period's established ontological concerns about the 'conceptual human' once again appear; power, a human condition in the human/animal relationship, no longer becomes solely human-held. This component of what separates man from animal, dominion, becomes no longer a sole marker of the human. Animals' flexibility between victim and culprit embodies a flexibility on the human/animal spectrum and interrogates the arbitrary representations of what makes one "human" in the sociocultural zeitgeist.

I pair the snake with an illustration from an 1892 issue of the *Band of Mercy Advocate* journal, entitled "How Does Your Collar Suit Me?", shown in Figure 3. In the image, a young

girl and her pet dog sit beside each other, while the girl wears her dog's collar. An interesting situation to use in activism, this is not a depiction of obvious cruelty, or explicit harm. Rather, it depicts a feature more personally familiar to everyday life for many Victorians than bearing-rein races, that of the domestic dog's daily 'garment.' However, in reversing the positions of animal and human, the girl's collar is oversized and bizarre–creating a distance of unfamiliarity which allows for a new perspective–one which acknowledges the bondage, or restriction, inherent to the dog's daily life. A dog's collar is not so provocative as the human's act of wearing it.



Figure 3. "How Does Your Collar Suit Me?" Engraving, from *Band of Mercy Advocate* 14.152 (June 1892): 45.

Again, it is not the injustice of the situation which evokes the viewer's reaction, but the reversal of the human and the animal. What is so provocative about the story and the image is not the mundanity of exercising power over a companion animal, but the uncanny sense that the separation between the familiar and unfamiliar, the human and the nonhuman, may be so easily collapsed.

Despite the provocative absurdity attempted by the RSPCA journals' rhetoric, an underlying and troubling concern emerges: in showing man's abuse of power, the illustrations seem to call for a positive use of man's power instead. Dangerously, this rhetoric of responsibility confirms man's intrinsic right to power, itself utilized as a pro-vivisection defense. Doyle's own complex ethical perspective, allowing for vivisection and experimentation as a means to human progress, is visible beneath his fiction's similar negotiations of power. Thus, what the illustrations and Doyle's animals reveal, is that even in instances where animals possess the agency to press at the human/animal binary, the relationships themselves are still deeply grounded in a hierarchy of power.

As we continue to explore the nature of our relationship to our non-human others within literature and without, it is important to interrogate further the subconscious assumptions of power embedded in those relationships. Conan Doyle's animals' generic fluidity, through his recollection of animal activist rhetoric, not only underscores the instability of animals' social positions, but navigates *how* these assumptions of power can be challenged. Doyle's own experiences with animals, and his expressed discomfort with animal pain, inform a reading of these instances of animal agency–wherein animals gain access to the power to challenge systems of injustice, and to protect themselves against harm. As his animal victims become their human

culprits, Doyle manipulates detective fiction conventions to participate in a key tradition of animal studies thought–that of interrogating the concreteness, and helpfulness, of the animal/human binary.

CHAPTER II: The Scientific Villain

You see my young master, or my young mistress, poring over one of their spiders' insides with a magnifying-glass; or you meet one of their frogs walking downstairs without his head—and when you wonder what this cruel nastiness means, you are told that it means a taste in my young master or my young mistress for natural history.

–Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*

Conan Doyle's animals stepped into a fin-de-siecle Victorian society which had recently intervened significantly on their part, while still holding in contention their capacity for feeling, and their value in relation to man's right. For many, scientific progress and animal ethics struggled to coexist, as reflected not only by the outlined pro and anti-vivisection debates, but also in the tension between detective fiction's scientism and its animals. A doctor himself, Conan Doyle was familiar with the practice of vivisection, having witnessed it first-hand in medical school. Yet, his position on the morality of the practice is not explicitly pro, nor against. His fiction grapples with this same duality of perspectives, using the victim/culprit binary to explore the animal/human binary.

This chapter discusses the involvement of popular science in Holmes' cases–both by Holmes himself, and especially by villains. These themes, of positive and negative scientific practices, are grounded once again in the animal, further displaying the centrality of the animal throughout the canon's thematic concerns. Its villains often delve deeper than superficial exhibiting and categorizing in instances which border vivisection. As discussed in the previous chapter, vivisection was made illegal by the 1876 Cruelty to Animals Act. Yet, as again stated, the restriction was far from universal and was followed by years of royal commissions on

vivisection to continue the discourse. Doyle's animals are often subjected to harmful scientific experiments, and a figure thus emerges within the canon which opposes Holmes' benevolent scientific tendencies–that of what I am calling the *scientific villain*.

Thus, I seek to show the ways in which deductive 'science,' the popularization of science, scientific approaches to natural history, and scientific experimentation co-mingle within the canon, and depend upon the animal. Doyle consistently places the animal under the forces of benevolent and malevolent scientific practices. This chapter discusses two brief case studies, culminating with a focused look on the most vivid scientific villain, belonging to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Object, test-subject, and point of reference, the Sherlockian animal is deeply entangled with science.

As established, Conan Doyle's autobiography and personal experience demonstrate an ethical perspective towards animal treatment and experimentation in opposition to acts which evoke observable pain. Yet, the distinction is not entirely binary. Doyle's complex perspective on animal maltreatment and vivisection, as outlined in the previous chapter, can be further traced within the Holmes canon. In *A Study In Scarlet* (1887), Holmes tests two pills belonging to the believed murderer on a sick dog, killing him. Holmes asks Watson to fetch "that poor little devil of a terrier which has been bad so long, and which the landlady wanted you to put out of its pain yesterday" (*Study* 64). When Watson carries in the dog, it exhibits labored breathing, and glazed eyes, demonstrating the dog is already close to death. Holmes then feeds the dog a half of one of the pills, from which nothing happens. When he feeds the dog the other pill, however, the "unfortunate creature's tongue seemed hardly to have been moistened in it before it gave a convulsive shiver in every limb, and lay as rigid and lifeless as if it had been struck by

lightening" (*Study* 67). The dog is then not discussed again in the novel. The terrier is not like the fish which Doyle details in his autobiography, or the snake he kills, whose deaths are discounted due to villainy (the snake's 'evilness') or a perceived lack of sensation. Why then, should our hero test out his hypothesis on this living terrier, and face no moral qualms–especially when a character like Straker of "Silver Blaze" is even more villainous for practicing his planned attack on a sheep before the horse? I posit that this incident is reflective of Doyle's own personal view towards animal participation in science and medicine–wherein an end which helps man justifies harm, but a lessening of suffering is ultimately the goal. However, within the canon as within his autobiography, which allows for fish, snake, and whale-killings, but not the hunting of hares and pheasants–some of these categories and boundaries appear arbitrary. As the following texts demonstrate, for the remainder of the canon after this first incident, the narrative frames the experimentation on animals in a villainous light. The relationship within the canon thus becomes reflective of Doyle's personal attitude, and a wider Victorian attitude–of a sensibility towards animals which existed alongside, though in conflict with, the ongoing use of animals for scientific progress and intellectual study.

The period's relationship to the sciences, in addition to the established discourse on the experimentation upon animals, further provides a complicated historical background, where the animal is an exhibited object, and a means for manipulating to unearth knowledge. Holmes is generally aligned with natural history's focus on classification, and villains with scientific experimentation–though this trend is at times subverted. In light of this subversion, neither mode of animal usage can be entirely positive, nor entirely negative. The canon thus becomes a ground whereupon Doyle navigates his own complicated relationship with animals through the period's

sciences, and the genre's reliance on scientific processes–the animal as both object of aesthetic display, and scientific experimentation–but also as a living being and beloved companion.

As Charles Rzepka has discussed in his book *Detective Fiction*, the scientific detective was first made popular by Doyle's Holmes, and is centered around the integration of scientific methods–in the "inductive references from material clues" which "could be used to sift multiple testimonies concerning unknown past events." [22] Holmes' "science of deduction" is a well-known refrain–a feature of the canon which has survived across adaptations and appears first as a direct quotation in chapter two of *A Study in Scarlet*, and more recently, in BBC's Sherlock (*Study* 17). And yet, discussions of Holmes' scientific approach, which laid the groundwork for the archetypal scientific detective, do not often dwell on the centrality of the animal within the canon's scientific concerns. Especially considering the period's exploitation of animals to further the popularization of science and natural history, it is important that we reconsider more closely how Doyle's animals interact, and are acted upon, with the sciences.

Scholarship has traced the many Victorian exhibitions and displays, of both live animals, as in the Smithfield Society's oxen-exhibitions and the annual Crystal Palace dog shows, and of natural history exhibitions. Cynthia Huff, in "Victorian Exhibitionism and Eugenics: The Case of Francis Galton and the 1899 Crystal Palace Dog Show," focuses specifically on these dog shows to express the period's linking of exhibition, pedigree, and breeding. These displays further evinced a link between the interest in popular science and the classifications of types. Public

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[22] Rzepka, Charles J. *Detective Fiction*. Polity, 2005, p. 36.

entertainment and the popularization of natural science were both crucial concepts behind the emergence and public favor for this genre of display.[23] Importantly, these two concepts depended on the animal as a simultaneous object of display and scientific spectacle. Huff cites Barbara T. Gates, who wrote that popularizations are "not illegitimate sources of scientific knowledge but legitimate aspects of cultural knowledge."[24] She further cites Gates, Bernard Lightman, Roger Cooter, and Stephen Pumfrey, who collectively call for greater attention to more than "authorized science," as general cultural markers of scientific activities, as displayed by the aforementioned exhibits.[25] A popular cultural interest is thus evident in the period, wherein the animal and the sciences become linked through exhibitionism and a focus on classification.

For Holmes, detection becomes intricately wound up in natural history, with his strategy itself a practice in classification. On a structural level, the detective narrative depends on classification and ordering into categories and types. For instance, Rzepka notes that "Detectives' designated prey is limited, so to speak, to the members of one species ('suspects') and confined within the boundaries of a single 'game preserve."[26] For instance, the previous chapter has outlined Doyle's deployment (and subversion) of the generic classification between victims and culprits. Willard Hungton Wright's, or S.S. Van Dine's, rules of detective fiction

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[23] Huff, Cynthia. "Victorian Exhibitionism and Eugenics: The Case of Francis Galton and the 1899 Crystal Palace Dog Show." *Victorian Review*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2002, pp. 1–20. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org.utk.idm.oclc.org/stable/27793492.
[24] Huff, Cynthia. "Victorian Exhibitionism and Eugenics: The Case of Francis Galton and the 1899 Crystal Palace Dog Show." *Victorian Review*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2002, p.5. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org.utk.idm.oclc.org/stable/27793492.
[25] Huff, Cynthia. "Victorian Exhibitionism and Eugenics: The Case of Francis Galton and the 1899 Crystal Palace Dog Show." *Victorian Review*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2002, p.3. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org.utk.idm.oclc.org/stable/27793492.
[26] Rzepka, Charles J. *Detective Fiction*. Polity, 2005, p. 14.

provide an example of the rigid boundaries ascribed to various aspects of a 'successful' detective narrative's construction.[27] Therefore, the puzzle formula of detective fiction relies on rules and conventions, rather than inventions. Set categories and configurations of possible narrative maneuvers thus emerge. While it is important to note the proliferation of detective fiction rule lists follows Doyle's canonization of the genre, the Holmes canon still adheres to certain formulas. As George Dove states, in his article, "Rules of the Game," adherence to these rules is crucial to maintain the essence of the "Fair Play" convention, wherein the detective fiction writer must "keep his reader as participant and player right up to the end of the game" (Dove 71). Generically, formulaic classifications of types become essential.

Thus, categorization becomes fundamental on a structural level, as well as for the detective. As Holmes tells Dr. Mortimer in *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1901), "The detection of types is one of the most elementary branches of knowledge to the special expert in crime" (*Hound* 34). Thus, not only is the scientific method, as Rzepka notes, inextricable from the emergence of detective fiction and the 'scientific detective,' but the scientific approach to natural history's methods of classifying and typifying is just as essential on the narrative level. Theodora Goss, in "Sherlock Holmes and Victorian Anthropology," likens Holmes' work itself to a practice of containing and categorizing, pointing to textual references which compare his deduction to the study of natural history. For instance, in "The Adventure of the Red Circle," he tells Watson, "you have one more specimen of the tragic and grotesque to add to your collection"

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[27] Dove, George N. "The Rules of the Game." *Studies in Popular Culture*, vol. 4, 1981, pp. 67–72. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/45018078.

(*Bow* 80). Not only does Holmes classify types of dirt and cigarette ash in his detective process, but his cases themselves become specimens to be collected, and organized.

What thus emerges in opposition to Holmes as a scientific detective, is the scientific villain. Often as a precursor to further violence, and occasionally in connection to their transcendence of generic classification, Doyle's animals are deployed as scientific test-subjects onto which culprits' methods of violence are practiced. This test-subject archetype is highly suggestive when considered alongside the detective fiction genre's relationship to scientism and the scientific method.[28] As Holmes embodies the scientific detective's role of maintaining a stable social formalism through his adherence to rational, deductive thinking, his form of scientific thinking must persevere against the unknowable uncanny of the crime, of the seemingly supernatural impossibilities. Animals, in their literal bodily subjugation to science as test subjects, thus embody a struggle within Doyle's detective fiction–that of reckoning with its own formal reliance on scientific thinking, and the simultaneous extratextual contemporary issue of such thinking often being related to vivisection and animal maltreatment.

Doyle's detective fiction must therefore struggle between what I argue is often an egalitarian and sympathetic ethos of animal involvement, and the period's implicit scientific othering. Thus, a duality of science emerges–that practiced by the human villain–and that of Holmes' practice, which is ultimately rational while being at its core, compassionate. I argue Doyle's villains use science as a method of their violence, and in doing so, place Holmes against

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[28] Rzepka, Charles J. "Part I: Narratives of Detection and the Sciences of History." *Detective Fiction*, Polity, 2005, pp. 7-48.

them, aligning Holmes in part with the sentiments expressed in the previous chapter of anti-animal maltreatment proponents like Hoggan and Cobbe. A complicated position thus emerges, wherein the close contact to animals which this thesis explores is a positive signifier for the heroic detective, and simultaneously becomes a tool wielded by villains. While the villainous relationship to animals is generally one of objectification and use as I will demonstrate, Holmes himself also participates in this trend, as shown in *A Study in Scarlet.* The binary Doyle attempts to construct between 'good' scientific thinking and 'bad' scientific thinking is thus not entirely concrete.

I have discussed "The Adventure of Silver Blaze," though I have purposefully left out a key data point in Holmes' deduction process–that of the sheep. The silver instrument which Straker intended for Silver Blaze and which the horse wielded back upon his attacker was used successfully by Straker prior to the night in question–but on another animal. As Holmes is leaving the stables, struck by sudden inspiration, he asks the stable-boy who attends the sheep in the paddock if anything has been amiss with them. The stable-boy answers, "not much of account, but three of them have gone lame, sir" (*Memoirs* 27). Though for the stable-boy this detail is not highly significant, their lameness is immediately clarifying for Holmes, who asks Inspector Lestrade to turn his attention to the "singular epidemic among the sheep" (*Memoirs* 27). Looking for the abnormal amongst the normal, Holmes understands that the sheep's behavior is indicative of human intervention.

It emerges that Straker practiced the tendon-nicking which he intended for Silver Blaze upon the stables' sheep first. The cataract-knife, as Holmes relays with Watson's consultation, is a knife intended for delicate operations. Further, as Holmes evaluates from his observation of the

lame sheep, it is intended to make a "slight knick upon the tendons of a horse's ham, and to do it subcutaneously, so as to leave absolutely no trace" (*Memoirs* 32). The nicked-horse would then develop a slight lameness, which would be seen as a strain in exercise or rheumatism, but most likely not attributed to intentional harm. Such a delicate procedure, Holmes deduces, would not have been undertaken by "so astute a man as Straker" without practice. This practice is then confirmed by the presence of the lame sheep.

Straker, the *astute* villain, has exercised his knowledge of animal anatomy, tested, and confirmed his theorized plan of attack before attempting to carry it out. This form of cruel and needless harm is thus explicitly villainous. The colonel, upon hearing of the Straker's plan, cries out: "villain! Scoundrel!" (*Memoirs* 32). This is not the same experimentation which passes without reference as Holmes' euthanasia of the dog in a *Study in Scarlet*. Rather the villain is so *astute* in part due to his familiarity with animals, and the malicious knowledge it provides. He has misused his animal-knowledge for villainous purposes, disregarding entirely the experience of his sheep test-subjects–thus becoming a scientific villain.

In "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire" (1924), a similar scenario emerges. One of a couple Holmes stories which attempts to recreate the gothic atmosphere of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (along with "Shoscombe Old Place" and The "Adventure of the Creeping Man"), the story begins with suspected supernaturality and unfurls in an old English estate in the country. When Mr. Ferguson's wife is found rising "from a kneeling position beside the cot," with blood upon her baby's "exposed neck," and blood around her own mouth, her husband suspects vampirism (*Case-Book* 113). As in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Holmes denies the initial assertion that the solution is supernatural. Upon consulting his reference index, Holmes

physically throws the book down "with a snarl of disappointment," saying it is "rubbish!" (*Case-Book* 109-110). He denies having anything to do "with walking corpses who can only be held in their grave by stakes driven through their hearts," which is "pure lunacy" (*Case-Book* 110). Watson poses an interesting contribution when he suggests a vampire may not only be a dead man and may in fact be a living person sucking the blood of the young to retain youth. This suggestion will prove more prophetic than Watson or Holmes suspect.

The culprit of the case is discovered to be Ferguson's first-born son from his previous marriage, Jack. An odd and off-putting child, the boy is jealous of his father's attention to his new baby with his second wife and has been poisoning the baby with South American arrows on display in the home dipped in curare "or some other devilish drug" (*Case-Book* 128). Rather than sucking her baby's blood for vampiric purposes, the mother has been sucking its wounds to draw the poison out. Not wanting to cause her husband emotional distress by a revelation of his son's villainy, she has kept the true cause a secret.

Just like "Silver Blaze," the crux of Holmes' realization of the true method of harm lies in his observation of what seems to be merely a background animal. Instead of sheep, it is the family dog in which Holmes notices a difficulty in walking, an irregular movement of its hind legs, and lack of mobility in its tail. These symptoms, Ferguson states, have been put down by the vet to a passing paralysis, possibly Spinal meningitis. Despite Ferguson's dismissiveness of the dog's case, like the stable-boy's dismissiveness, Holmes presses for more details and appears to see an importance in it which is later revealed further. In exceedingly similar language to the 'astute' Straker, Holmes states, "if one were to use such a poison, would one not try it first in order to see that it had not lost its power?" (*Case-Book* 128). Importantly, Holmes admits he "did

not foresee the dog," just as within Silver Blaze, where the sheep were "a very long" final shot, and primarily a whim in passing the sheep (*Case-Book* 128, *Memoirs* 27). However, he does "*understand* [the dog]", a crucial inter-species extension of understanding and consideration which Holmes consistently displays throughout the canon, and which simultaneously acts as a crucial deductive tactic (*Case-Book* 128). Seemingly unimportant animals thus become the principal grounds for Holmes' retrospective reconstructions of these cases–where these minor animals demonstrate symptoms which mimic the primary ones Holmes investigates. To ignore the animal, however seemingly unimportant, is to miss crucial evidence, and chapter four will discuss further Holmes' treatment of animal behavior as empirical evidence.

For these scientific villains, the animal is a place to secretly test their crimes–with these lesser creatures being so marginalized as to generally resist acknowledgment, and with it, suspicion. To the scientific villain, the animal is a zero-risk ground to execute their own malicious scientific method upon. The scientific villain feels no guilt in harming more beings than their one ultimate target and utilizes a scientific process of hypothesizing and testing for malicious means. What the scientific detective embodies, of a persistent success in ordered and rational scientific processes of deduction, is wielded by the very villains who the detective combats. This scientism which is crucial to the rise of the detective fiction genre thus doubles–possessing the capacity for good and bad. However, Holmes, embodying a heroic scientific method and heightened animal awareness, moves contrary to this general expectation of animals as mere backgrounds. With his attention to animal behavior and scientific thought, he is thus able to combat the scientific villain's attempt to wield science in malicious ways.

Perhaps one of the most aesthetically memorable scenes across the proliferation of Sherlockian film adaptations belongs to the 1988 *Hound of the Baskervilles* film starring Jeremy Brett, wherein the audience is shown a slow pan of villain Dr. Stapleton's entomology collection. Composed of hundreds of perfectly straight rows of dead butterflies, moths, and other insects in glass boxes, this room displays Stapleton's careful dating and cataloguing of these species' belonging uniquely to the moor for his personal study. This room and Stapleton's research is accurate to the novel. As Theodora Goss points out in "Sherlock and Victorian Anthropology," the specimen room, the symbol of intellectual order and symbol of Holmes' own excellence in classification and organization, becomes something dark and dangerous in this novel. The villain, Stapleton, is like Holmes–passionate about animals, and eager in his study.

Stapleton is entirely "devoted to Nature" in a way which feels earnest and human–a collector type recognizable both within the Holmes canon (as in "The Three Garridebs" and its lovable collector, Nathan Garrideb) and for the contemporary reader (Doyle 72). As established, popular at the time were various methods of displaying collected organisms, live or dead–from the London Zoo to dog shows, to menageries, and to natural history museums. Specimen displays in Victorian natural history museums, as Stephen Jay Gould states in his article, "Cabinet Museums: Alive, Alive, O!" were organized to prioritize diversity, with the underlying goal of encapsulating British colonial and imperial ventures. National expansion and 'progress' were reflected in the range of global diversity of species and types. The specimen display, then, should be parallel with Holmes's heroism, with both as emblems of upholding British national

identity and social order.[29] Yet, in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Stapleton's display of the range of the region's lepidopteral biodiversity is fundamentally British, and eerily villainous.

Stapleton has moved to Dartmoor to carry out his villainous plans of claiming Baskerville Hall and the Baskerville fortune, but as he tells Watson in his cover story, he has found "an unlimited field of work" in Dartmoor, with his "strong tastes for botany and zoology" (*Hound* 72). While much of Stapleton's conversations are veiled in lies to protect his true identity and culpability, Holmes later tells Watson at the end of the novel in his retrospective of the case that a key clue in discovering Stapleton's identity was the one real piece of information he accidentally let slip. This one true piece of information is disclosed in the monologue in which Stapleton discusses his contentment with the potential of study in Dartmoor, when he mentions the school he was schoolmaster of prior to moving to the moor. In Stapleton's showing Watson his collection of Lepidoptera, which "is the most complete one in the south-west of England," he cannot keep his genuine self separate (*Hound* 72). Stapleton allows himself to get close enough to Watson to accidentally reveal true biographical information because he is genuine in his revelation of his depth of passion for entomology. In this scene, it becomes entirely believable, therefore, that Stapleton's passion for zoological study is just as much a part of his identity as his plans to kill.

The dangerous, unfeeling criminal who has killed and is prepared to kill again in pursuit of the Baskerville fortune presents a more complex, dimensional antagonist when considered

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[29] Gould, Stephen Jay. "Cabinet Museums: Alive, Alive, O!" *Dinosaur in a Haystack: Reflections on Natural History.* New York: Harmony Books, 1995, pp. 238-47.

against other villains in the Holmes companion. He becomes all the more terrifying because of this depth of personality and knowledge. Scholarship has established the shift in late 19th century detective fiction towards a focus on the detective, rather than the criminal, as being foundational to the genre. Alyse Von Rothkirch, in her article, "His Face Was Livid, Dreadful, With a Foam at the Corners of His Mouth': A Typology of Villains in Classic Detective Stories," discusses that for the tradition within fin-de-siecle detective fiction, the focus is firmly on the detective and on the art of detecting, not on the criminal who is responsible for the outrage.[30] What follows within Doyle's Holmes canon is a precession of more than 60 villains, most of whom are one-dimensional, un-developed criminal archetypes, serving primarily as narrative mechanisms for Holmes' ratiocinative exercises. Even Moriarty, considered by Holmes as the most extraordinary criminal mind of their time, or the "Napoleon of crime," only interacts directly on-page with Holmes in "The Final Problem," and is mentioned again only in "The Adventure of the Empty House" and *The Valley of Fear*, and only as passing references in "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder," "The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter," "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client," and "His Last Bow" (*Memoirs* 239). Doyle is not concerned with allowing the reader to get to know the criminal, because the focus of the fin-de-siecle detective fiction lies upon the detective and the all-conquering nature of ratiocinative thinking and empirical data.

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[30] Rothkirch, Alyce Von. "His Face Was Livid, Dreadful, With a Foam at the Corners of His Mouth': A Typology of Villains in Classic Detective Stories." *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 108, no. 4, 2013, p. 1042. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.5699/modelangrevi.108.4.1042.

One exception, however, is Dr. Stapleton. Stapleton, unlike many of his fellow villains, is a central character in the novel, whom Watson and the reader get to know intimately, and who is more present than Holmes himself (who is absent for the majority of the novel). It is Stapleton, rather than Holmes, who accompanies Watson across the Dartmoor landscape for the first time, who acquaints him with the dangers of the mire, and who discusses the case at length, sharing his thoughts on the mysterious cause of Sir Henry's death (though later revealed to be a misdirection). A major aspect to his depth of characterization is this devotion to nature, this passion which seems just as core to his aspirations, if not more so, than his impulse towards murder. As Slavoj Zizek argues in his book, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, a crime scene is made unintelligible through the criminal's projection of deceit over the case. For Zizek, it is thus through an awareness of the film-like layer of purposeful deceit that the detective is able to establish true meaning, seeing through the doubleness of truth and falsity. It is not the meaning of a clue which must first be established, but the presence of deception. Like Straker and Jack, Stapleton uses his scientific knowledge in the plot maliciously in his manipulation of the hell-hound. However, in the narrative construction of his seemingly genuine character, a more evocative layer of deceit emerges. While Sherlockian conventions suggest a villain should be one-dimensional, and that Holmes' alignment with classification and order should be uniquely protagonistic–Stapleton's character itself is made deceitful through the misdirection of his passionate scientific pursuits.

Interestingly, this false sense of genuine humanity is also strengthened by his sliding across the spectrum of animality towards the animal. Stapleton is a passionate entomologist, and the only character in the novel who is able to traverse the deadly Grimpen Mire. He does so in

front of Watson in pursuit of a species of butterfly, in doing so, becoming like one himself. Adrian Tait's "Quantum Entanglements in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles," asserts that the novel contains instances of "intra-action" which occur when the landscape and living beings entangle, with the individual thus being shaped by their environment. Just as the escaped convict Selden, through what Tait calls the "contact zone" of Dartmoor, presses against the man/animal binary, in his regression into criminal wildness, so does Stapleton, who, through his study of butterflies, begins to resemble one himself.[31] Holmes tells Watson, as their plan to kill the hound and confront Stapleton develops, that "before tomorrow night he will be fluttering in our net as helpless as one of his own butterflies" (*Hound* 138). Further, as Stapleton pursues a butterfly into the mire, "his grey clothes and jerky, zigzag, irregular progress made him not unlike some huge moth himself" (*Hound* 70). The convict Selden's living like a wild and hunted thing on the moor has inspired a trans-species collapse of binaries, reinforcing his criminality, while Stapleton's intense study and affinity with the mire and its creatures has opened up another contact zone between non-human and human. Stapleton's immersion in the natural through his studies informs his very identity. Through these more-than-human intra-actions with his environment, and the scientific study which encourages them, Stapleton thus becomes a more sympathetic and developed villain.

The Grimpen Mire, which swallows ponies, spaniels, and nearly Holmes himself, is therefore knowable, and penetrable–not by a force of good, but of evil. Stapleton is both a fellow

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[31]Tait, Adrian. "Quantum Entanglements in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles." *Animals in Detective Fiction*, edited by Ruth Hawthorn, and John Miller, Springer International Publishing AG, 2022, p. 24. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utk/detail.action?docID=7152949.

student and observer of the natural, like Holmes, but simultaneously willing to manipulate and harm animals to serve his will, like the other scientific villains I have outlined. Thus, his interest in the study of the natural sciences make him a more fully fleshed villain than his colleagues, and all the more sinister in his simultaneous submersion in the benevolent practice of classification and malevolent experimentation. I argue that Stapleton, in his alignment with the heroic scientific detective and antagonistic scientific villain, is the canon's most compelling and frightening villain. The devout Sherlockian reader would expect no less from the canon's most gothic and atmospheric story.

If his scientific classification is not inherently evil, his villainity must emerge from something different–his manipulation of living animals. Slightly different from the scientific villains so far discussed, Stapleton does not utilize his hound to test out a punishment or strategy meant for someone else. Rather, the hound becomes itself a living, ongoing experimentation in scientific manipulation. Stapleton performs a kind of live-experimentation, engineering the hound to become a mythological figure which is both artificial and natural. This story thus becomes the most vivid grounds for a reflection of Doyle's and the canon's embedded vivisection discourse–where the manipulation of a living animal creates something supernatural, monstrous, and horrifying. Unlike the detached study and classification of the animal, as embodied by Holmes' scientific detection, this manipulation of a living animal, carried even beyond the calculated experiments of "Sussex Vampire" and "Silver Blaze", is made even more explicitly villainous by how science has pushed the hound into a realm beyond the physical and natural.

Despite scholarship contesting the scientific accuracy of Stapleton's "cunning preparation" of phosphorus onto the hell-hound, the hound's story is steeped in scientific experimentation–fantastical or realistic (*Hound* 158).[32] As Michael Cook, in his article, "That Forbidding Moor': The Hound of the Baskervilles, a Ghost Story?" writes of the moor, the hound is spectral and mythologized. The novel's tension relies in part on the absence of the hound as it looms in the background, haunting the narrative through the myths relayed secondhand, its material footprints, and its disembodied howling. Thus, an oscillation between the spectral and the material emerges alongside the oscillation between the hound's manmade and natural qualities. The very "settled order of nature" is incompatible with the story of the hound, as Dr. Mortimer tells Holmes in his initial consultation (*Hound* 24). The hound, he says, cannot "be any animal known to science…it was a huge creature, luminous, ghastly and spectral" (*Hound* 24). And yet, Mortimer himself has just given evidence of having seen "the footprints of a gigantic hound" beside the dead body of Charles Baskerville (*Hound* 21). Thus, the hound is in part so fear-inducing due to its very unknowability, or its resistance to classification as either natural or supernatural. Adrian Tait's work with the novel combines Donna Haraway's theories of animal/human relationality, while simultaneously making gestures which recall Stacy Alaimo's theory of trans-corporeality.[33] As Tait asserts, "Doyle's apparition appears to threaten the order of the rational mind itself," this threat to rational mind being embodied by the constant

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[32] Hall, Matthew D. "Phosphorus and the Making of a Hellhound." *The Baker Street Journal*, vol. 74, no. 3, Autumn, 2024, pp. 46-53,76. *ProQuest*, https://utk.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/phosphorus-making-hellhound/docview/3127734223/se-2.

[33] Alaimo, Stacy. "Trans-Corporeal Feminisms and the Ethical Space of Nature." *Material Feminisms,* edited by Susan Hekman and Stacy Alaimo, Indiana University Press, 2008, p. 218-242.

danger faced by the novel's predominantly scientifically inclined humans.[34] Holmes relies on deductive science; Mortimer is a physician fixated with the study of skulls; Watson is a doctor; and even the villain, Stapleton, is an entomologist. Science, in various capacities, becomes just as central to the novel as the Gothic, or the animal. Further, as Mathew Hall states in his article, "Phosphorous and the Making of a Hellhound," such an amount of phosphorous would have been immensely poisonous.[35] It is thus through an inhumane application of science that danger arises–both to the hound and its human victims, and to generic foundations. The very spine of the detective genre is embedded in the prevalence of scientific reason against the unknown. For the hound to thus be an incomprehensible amalgamation of the real and unreal, natural and supernatural, is thus not only an uncanny threat to the novel's rational minded humans, but to the framework of the genre itself.

As the narrative comes to a head and Holmes and Watson confront the hound, there is a moment of chaotic, supernatural uncertainty which stretches, threatening to break the very rational boundaries which hold the canon together. As the reader, along with Watson and Holmes, gets the first complete glimpse of the hound, its looming absence throughout the narrative is suddenly replaced by a very material, deadly presence:

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[34] Tait, Adrian. "Quantum Entanglements in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles." *Animals in Detective Fiction*, edited by Ruth Hawthorn, and John Miller, Springer International Publishing AG, 2022, p. 20. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utk/detail.action?docID=7152949.
[35] Hall, Matthew D. "Phosphorus and the Making of a Hellhound." *The Baker Street Journal*, vol. 74, no. 3, Autumn, 2024, pp. 46-53,76. *ProQuest*, https://utk.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/phosphorus-making-hellhound/docview/3127734223/se-2.

> A hound it was, an enormous coal-black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have ever seen. Fire burst from its open mouth, its eyes glowed with a smouldering glare, its muzzle and hackles and dewlap were outlined in flickering flame. Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more appalling, more hellish, be conceived than that dark form and savage face which broke upon us out of the wall of fog. (*Hound* 149)

Part of the raw terror in this scene is grounded in the hound's seemingly real supernaturality, and its nonconformity with everything that Holmes has founded his career upon. If this hell-hound is real, the entire textual career of Holmes is negated. Rationality and deductive thinking no longer support control. Yet, the moment of terror dissolves as Holmes and Watson successfully shoot the hound, who lets out a cry. This cry indicates vulnerability, which means "he was mortal, and if we could wound him, we could kill him" (*Hound* 149). This realization of the hound's mortality "[blows] all of [their] fears to the winds," with the establishment of the shared mortality between man and animal lessening the imagined species-divide, and with it, lessening the fear (*Hound* 149). The spectral hound, the embodiment of an unscientific other, is made familiar in its shared vulnerability to death. Like the crying hares which Doyle sympathizes with in his autobiography, expressed pain makes the animal familiar. Myth thus becomes a tactic by humans to obfuscate, or avoid, the very mortal and complex ways in which animals and nature are entangled with man. However, myth has been fabricated by Stapleton through scientific manipulation.

In Tait's new materialist theory of the formative interactions between individuals and their environment, "identity emerges iteratively and performatively from…quantum

entanglements."[36] These quantum entanglements are the established moments of intra-action which recall trans-corporeality–meaning, as Tait states, that "a subject-and object-shaping dance of encounters" emerge, "each one generating new and specific versions of the self."[37] Like Watson's sense of the moor permeating his soul, the hound's being literally shaped by Stapleton is a further enactment of Tait and Alaimo's theories, and even recalls the snake's absorption of Roylott's identity in "The Speckled Band." The hound has been engineered by Stapleton to become a pseudo-natural being–both myth and reality, man-made and animal. It is a "bogy hound" (*Hound* 165). As Holmes inspects the hound's dead body, it becomes a compilation of fragments– he is neither pure bloodhound nor mastiff, and even in the face of its material death, is still called the "family ghost" by Holmes (*Hound* 150). As Holmes inspects the body of the dead hound, the fiery glow around its "huge jaws" is revealed to be phosphorous, specifically "a cunning preparation of it" by Stapleton (*Hound* 150, 158). Stapleton has exercised his scientific knowledge to physically alter the hound, using "artificial means to make the creature diabolical" (*Hound* 158). Thus, Stapleton has taken a hound which is already naturally the "strongest and most savage" in its dealers' possession and exploited unnatural means to blur the hound's physical reality. The hound becomes a living "device," as Watson calls it, or as Tait aptly asserts

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[36] Tait, Adrian. "Quantum Entanglements in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles." *Animals in Detective Fiction*, edited by Ruth Hawthorn, and John Miller, Springer International Publishing AG, 2022, p. 21. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utk/detail.action?docID=7152949.
[37] Tait, Adrian. "Quantum Entanglements in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles." *Animals in Detective Fiction*, edited by Ruth Hawthorn, and John Miller, Springer International Publishing AG, 2022, p. 21. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utk/detail.action?docID=7152949.

"a Frankenstein" (*Hound* 160).[38] In his final remarks on the case, Holmes reflects that "an ordinary schemer would have been content to work with a savage hound," and thus, "the use of artificial means to make the creature diabolical was a flash of genius" (*Hound* 158). The hound here has been *made* diabolical, not only *used* in a diabolical manner. He has undergone a literal transformation which has shaped his very identity, or self–and in doing so, collapses the divide between human animal and non-human animal. Inhumane scientific experimentation has shaped the identity of the hound, just as the organic environment shapes Stapleton, Selden, and even Watson.

However, despite all of its myth and mystique, the hell-hound, that savage beast that the narrative has been chasing, is only a dog–a dog that has been subjected to human cruelty. The true villain has not been killed, but rather an unwilling extension of the villain, a victim itself. The hound begins to recall the victim/culprit oscillation which I have already outlined as a key theme in the canon; it is an "accomplice…who could never give [Stapleton] away" (*Hound* 160). In the wake of the dog's death, the reader may recollect the hound's "long, low moan, indescribably sad," which "from a dull murmer…swelled into a deep roar and then sank back into a melancholy, throbbing murmur once again" (*Hound* 68). This moan, previously mainly indicative of the mire's capacity to 'intra-act' with its animal inhabitants, becomes now a tragic reminder of the hound's abjected fate. Very quickly, the real horror becomes not only the hound which blurs the boundary between the natural and the supernatural, the human and the animal–

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[38] Tait, Adrian. "Quantum Entanglements in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles." *Animals in Detective Fiction*, edited by Ruth Hawthorn, and John Miller, Springer International Publishing AG, 2022, p. 27. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/utk/detail.action?docID=7152949.

but the human hand orchestrating the animal cruelty through scientific means. This victimization is a further bind between humans and animals in the novel, wherein their shared victimization at the hands of Stapleton constitutes an additional link within the complex systems tying organic life together.

Stapleton thus not only embodies a contemporary method in criminology of attributing qualities of animal passions to criminal motives in his alignment with the animal, but he begins to enact a bodily transformation which culminates in his being subsumed within the Mire– literally disappearing into nature.[39] His humanity and his individuality blurs with the animal and the natural, collapsing the space between the human and the animal, until the space disappears entirely and the human Stapleton is never found. A kind of reversal of the Darwinian human evolution occurs, embodying what Nils Clausson outlines in his article "Degeneration, 'Fin-de-Siècle' Gothic, and the Science of Detection: Arthur Conan Doyle's 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' and the Emergence of the Modern Detective Story" as detective fiction's concern with degeneration, or the encroachment of a primitive past on the rapidly developing modern order. Stapleton's humanity does not exist on a binary; the non-human animal is not an exceedingly distant ancestor. In the primordial landscape of Dartmoor, man can become like nature and can fade into nature itself. It is through his scientific interests, both benevolent and malevolent, that this transformation is encouraged.

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[39] Georgina Rychner. "Temporary Fits, Animal Passions: Insanity in Victorian Capital Trials, 1890–1935." *Health and History*, vol. 20, no. 1, January 2018, pp. 28–51, https://doi.org/10.5401/healthhist.20.1.0028.

Thus, Stapleton's close contact with the animal and with nature, through his entomological study and his close contact with the physical landscape, enables him to slide along the spectrum of animality, embodying an animal criminality which devolves into the primordial organic matter of the Grimpen Mire. However, the connection between his animality and criminality does not detract from his character, nor does it lessen the depth of identity. Rather, in his passion for zoology and botany, Stapleton becomes a unique villain in the Holmes canon–one with interests, passions, and drive–and above all, real dimension. Yet, these scientific interests simultaneously enable him to manipulate the hound in such an evocatively villainous manner. Stapleton is human to the reader, despite his animality, despite his criminality.

Stapleton inhabits both of the canon's scientific spaces–the benevolent classification practiced by the scientific detective, and the malevolent animal experimentation by the scientific villains. The depth of character evoked by this complication emphasizes the former's value in the canon and narrative form, where his embodiment of the latter ultimately places him firmly in the domain of the villainous.

PART TWO

CHAPTER III: Animal Prints: The Crime Scene as Human/Animal Dialogue

Every contact leaves a trace.

–Locard's Exchange Principle

Scholarship has established the Holmes canon's overarching anxiety about social structure, degeneration, and scientific rationality. Less canvassed, however, is the canon's constant preoccupation with the question of prints–if they will be visible, who has left them, how they have been left, and what information they can relate. The contemporary development of fingerprint analysis contextualizes the canon's integration and foregrounding of prints as key clues. Disturbances to environments due to temperature, weather, time, and human interference, etc., become threats to the readability of prints, and thus the readability of the crime scene as a whole. Prints thus carry a semiotic importance which make crime scenes textual for Holmes, who interprets prints, compiles the information derived from them, and finally transcribes, or translates this information into a conclusion. I thus posit, through an exploration of his relationship to print-analysis, that Holmes is a reader, and prints, whether animal, human, or other, are crucial semiotic signifiers. In decoding prints, however, the language Holmes must read is not English, nor a human language, but rather a universal language grounded on physical impression. This language thus becomes equally as accessible to animals as it is to humans. Through the following exploration of selected cases, I argue that Holmes' interpretation of animal prints as clues enacts a dialogue between animals and Holmes as a human–thus positing the process of detection as a means of moving beyond the limits of human language, and again lessening the distance between human and non-human. Through his readings of crime scenes, animals are able to communicate information which grants them access into the detective process as equally as human witnesses, defendants, and culprits.

In Doyle's historical moment, animals had contemporarily been left out of criminal courtroom proceedings. A satirical newspaper article and illustration from an 1896 edition of Boston's *Illustrated Police News* details a trial in which a defendant, charged with cruelty to animals, announces that he has a witness outside.[40] This witness is revealed to be his mule, who the judge examines as a witness, checking for bodily marks of maltreatment. Though the case treats the event humorously, it reflects the real absurdity around an animals' presence within the courtroom, and their ability to preside as witness. Historically in the Middle Ages, animals appeared as defendants in European trials, though as Peter Dinzelbacher states in "Animal Trials: A Multidisciplinary Approach," these cases were much less common in England. Dinzelbacher discusses the two central types of animal trials in the period–secular trials, where primarily domestic animals, most frequently pigs, were executed. Often a pig, dog, or other domestic animal would harm a human, generally a child, and would be sentenced to public execution in these cases. Dinzelbacher asserts that the public executions served to warn other animal owners to be more cautious in their animal keeping so as to prevent further incidents. The other principle types were ecclesiastical trials, where animals were more seriously called to court proceedings, often ordered to appear at a certain time and given actual judgements–generally either orders to leave villages/towns, excommunication, or even exorcisms. For instance, as Dinzelbacher again supplies, in a 1478 case in Berne, cockchafer larvae jeopardizing the town's food supply were

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[40] "Mule as a Witness." *Illustrated Police News*, 15 Feb. 1896, pp. 11+. *Crime, Punishment, and Popular Culture, 1790-1920*, link-gale-com.utk.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/LBLYXM298800798/CPPC?u=knox61277&sid=bookmark-CPPC&pg=11&xid=614153b4.

invited "to appear before the bishop in order to tell their story."[41] Similarly, in 1515 or 1516, officials at Troyes directly addressed insects ruining their vineyards, stating that they must depart the vineyards or be anathemized. [42] Yet many disagreed with this precedent at the time, stating that animals, not possessing speech and an understanding of right/wrong, could not exercise the intention to commit a crime, with punishment being contingent on intention. This thinking aligns more closely with that of Doyle's time, and the dominating Cartesian philosophical tradition, where animals are not recognized as capable of the same human agency which constitutes guilt.[43]

For late Victorians and beyond, legal accountability, and the privilege of being allowed to represent oneself in the judicial system, generally necessitates an acknowledgment of consciousness historically denied to animals. Yet in the Middle Ages, as Dinzelbacher points out, a popular belief of animals' ability to speak at Christmas time has been well documented. Thus, in the time period where animals were more popularly allowed into criminal investigations, indications of differing cultural attitudes towards their consciousness, and mental capacity, arise. An expectation of animals' abilities to comprehend and adhere to court rulings presupposed an animal consciousness, however limited, which becomes much altered by the 19th century. As the history of animals' involvement within criminal proceedings demonstrates, communication, especially as an indicator of mental capacity, was a deciding factor in animals' ability to enter

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[41] Dinzelbacher, Peter. "Animal Trials: A Multidisciplinary Approach." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2002, p.412. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3656215.
[42] Dinzelbacher, Peter. "Animal Trials: A Multidisciplinary Approach." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2002, p.412. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3656215.
[43]Miller, John, and Ruth Hawthorn. "Origins and Evolutions: The Brutal History of Detective Fiction." *Animals in Detective Fiction*, Springer International Publishing AG, 2022, pp. 5-6.

into criminological spaces. Not only does this provide a background for the history of animals' presences within criminal cases, but in connecting this historical foundation with the following detective fiction, Holmes' involvement of animals in his cases bears a deeper significance. I argue that Holmes' use of prints as a means of human/animal communication allows for animals to re-enter into the criminological sphere in a way contemporarily denied to them. In the dialogue which emerges within Holmes' crime scenes, the animal is once again involved, and in a way, allowed to offer their own information (though interpreted by Holmes) as the print signifies the animal's action and experience. The animal thus begins to speak for itself.

In understanding Conan Doyle's personal lens, it emerges that Doyle himself, like Holmes, is somewhat aware, and attuned to, animals' capacity for expression. As established in the introduction, in his autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*, Doyle discusses his moral objection to hunting, describing the haunting nature of various animals' deaths, noting how "worse still is it when you hear the child-like wail of the wounded hare" (*Memories* 159). To Doyle, animal verbal expression indicates an articulation of experience which is almost human, *child-like*. In looking closely at Holmes' relationship to animal prints, I believe this awareness of animals' ability to convey a level of subjectivity is reflected in the text, wherein Doyle injects animal communication into their literal bodily impressions. Similar to Doyle's experience as a hunter, in listening, interpreting, and understanding animal expression to indicate pain, to enter into the animals' dialogic space within a crime scene, the detective must see, imagine, and remove their own narrativizing biases. Through prints, animals involved communicate information to Holmes. In this, Holmes places the animal witness or victim in an equal position to its human counterpart. Both, to Holmes, indicate an opportunity for expressing clues and

information. Doyle thus asks us to consider if language is the sole method of articulating information. Perhaps, through the sympathetic awareness of animal expression, especially through physical prints, a shared human/animal language emerges.

Further historical background on the science of fingerprint investigation is useful in contextualizing Doyle's prints. Edmond Locard, the French criminologist, is often referred to as the 'Sherlock Holmes of France.' Though foregrounded by other crucial contributors in both the field of fingerprinting and in forensic science, Locard's fingerprinting techniques and exchange principle ('every contact leaves a trace') shaped forensic science immeasurably.[44] Doyle's Holmes stories had a legitimate impact on Locard's development of forensic techniques, with for example, Locard citing Holmes' practice of analyzing dust and mud stains as an inspiration.[45] Several of Holmes' other techniques can be compared with Locard's real research, which Fabienne Courouge does in detail in "Edmond Locard, the Forensic Pioneer Inspired by Sherlock Holmes," drawing from Locard's own statements about Holmes. Locard's first work, *L'identification des Récidivistes* (1909) put into practice and expanded upon dactyloscopie, a technique of grouping and classifying fingerprints, first invented by Vucetich, an Argentinian police official, prior to the turn of the century, and canonized by his 1904 book, *Dactiloscopía*

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[44] Courouge, Fabienne. "Edmond Locard, the Forensic Pioneer Inspired by Sherlock Holmes." *The Baker Street Journal*, vol. 75, no. 2, Summer, 2025, pp. 16-25,74. *ProQuest*, https://utk.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/edmond-locard-forensic-pioneer-inspired-sherlock/docview/3232213194/se-2.

[45] Courouge, Fabienne. "Edmond Locard, the Forensic Pioneer Inspired by Sherlock Holmes." *The Baker Street Journal*, vol. 75, no. 2, Summer, 2025, pp. 16-25,74. *ProQuest*, https://utk.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/edmond-locard-forensic-pioneer-inspired-sherlock/docview/3232213194/se-2.

Comparada.[46] Vucetich was in turn inspired by Francis Galton, whose work derived from various other contributors. As early as the 1880s, Henry Fauld wrote a letter detailing a missionary trip to Japan, where he was interested in fingerprints on pottery, and studied the fingerprints of different monkey species.[47] This fact posits an interesting affinity between fingerprinting and detective fiction–wherein both histories are entangled with animals.

The impact of Francis Galton's 1888 and 1892 publications on scientific investigations is reflected in a 1903 issue of *The Spectator,* which details a burglary case in which Galton's science of fingerprinting was successfully put into practice. The article even mentions Sherlock Holmes and his creator, and their popularization of similarly scientifically-centered methods of crime scene analysis. The article details that "there is no physical characteristic by which a man can be more easily and certainly identified than the print of his thumb."[48]

However, despite this clear affinity between the scientifically progressive Holmes and the simultaneously emergent field of fingerprinting science, the canon makes few references to human fingerprinting, and Holmes does not employ the science to its full scope. In "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder" (1903), Holmes notices a fingerprint which has appeared in a supposedly murdered man's home after his disappearance, using it only to prove that the man must still be alive. Locard himself notes this lack, as Courouge asserts, stating that "there is an

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[46] https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/visibleproofs/galleries/biographies/vucetich.html
[47] Kadane, Joseph B. "Fingerprint Science." *The Annals of Applied Statistics,* vol. 12, no. 2, 2018, pp. 771–87. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26542553.
[48] "Finger-prints as Detectives." *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature (1901-1907)*, vol. 140, no. 2, Feb., 1903, pp. 254. *ProQuest*, https://utk.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/finger-prints-as-detectives/docview/89792443/se-2.

almost total absence of references to fingerprints, even if it seems that he was somehow aware of their great potential as identification evidence."[49] Instead, Holmes' study of ears more closely recalls *The Spectator'*s language of fingerprint science than any of his references to actual prints. In "Adventure of the Cardboard Box" (1893), Holmes tells Watson, "as a medical man, you are aware, Watson, that there is no part of the body which varies so much as the human ear. Each ear is as a rule quite distinctive and differs from all the other ones" (*Memoirs* 52). As a man involved in the sciences, and concerned with contemporary detective innovations, Doyle would have been aware of the similar singularity of fingerprints, as Locard also states–and thus aware of the detective possibilities the emergent science posed.

While Holmes may not be concerned with fingerprinting science, however, he is constantly concerned with the study of prints in general. As I have outlined, the canon possesses a throughline of anxiety over the preservation of prints, traces, marks, and tracks–human, non-human, and other. Thus, I suggest that in examining Holmes' proliferating analyses of prints and marks, his relation to prints becomes dialogic, or linguistic, rather than scientific. Rather than empirically classifying, Holmes observes and interprets embedded meanings. In light of Holmes' unconcern with dactyloscopy, which was quickly and irreversibly altering his profession, his relationship to analyzing prints becomes like one of a reader of a text, or more broadly, a participant within a discourse. As my exploration of the following cases will show, prints

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[49] Courouge, Fabienne. "Edmond Locard, the Forensic Pioneer Inspired by Sherlock Holmes." *The Baker Street Journal*, vol. 75, no. 2, Summer, 2025, pp. 16-25,74. *ProQuest*, https://utk.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/edmond-locard-forensic-pioneer-inspired-sherlock/docview/3232213194/se-2.

become a means of gathering information, of attending to non-verbal, and non-human, modes of communication.

Detective fiction is grounded in communication and in the spread and attainment of information. As a dialogue-heavy genre, speech, and clever ways of twisting it allow the detective to gain crucial amounts of information. However, often Holmes must look to other venues of non-verbal communication for the remainder of his information. From his recollection of his first case in "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott" (1893), Holmes proves his affinity for language systems and codes, de-coding an encrypted letter sent to a friend's father which has resulted in the father's death. In "The Adventure of the Dancing Men" (1905), Mr. Hilton Cubitt approaches Holmes for help after discovering illustrations of dancing men left in and around his property. His wife, Holmes reveals, was connected with an American gang member, Abe Slaney, whom she ran away from. Slaney has traced Mrs. Cubitt to Riding Thorpe Manor, and now leaves messages which are encoded to appear like a child's random illustrations.

However, Holmes deciphers the code and even writes a new letter using the hieroglyphic-like system in order to lure Slaney to the manor. Again, Holmes' affinity for modes of communication is clear as he uses "the rules which guide us in all forms of secret writings" to deduce what letter each symbol represents (*Return* 74). Starting with E, as the most common language in the alphabet, Holmes is able to use even the shortest initial message to discover which dancing figure represents it. Holmes then works methodically through each sample message which Cubitt brings him, testing words, eliminating impossible letters, and finally wiring to a friend in the New York Police Bureau to furnish additional contextual information on the culprit. Holmes is able to not only decode and translate the hieroglyphic messages, but also to

reconstruct an entire message from his established bank of letters and their equivalent symbols. Holmes gives this final letter to Watson, telling him to attempt to read it; yet as Watson looks, "it contained no words, but this little line of dancing men" (*Return* 81). Holmes states that he has ultimately turned the language of the dancing men to positive use. Certainly, he has wielded translative skills to not only read the messages, uncovering the culprit and his intentions towards Mrs. Cubitt, but he has also wielded them to enact a dialogue between himself and the foreign American. Holmes has learned, adopted, and entered freely into this alternative dialogic space of dancing men.

Slavov Zizek, again in *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*, discusses the idea of a clue within detective fiction as a similar signifier to a Freudian dream object. What we must do, when understanding a dream, is to "translate the objects back into words, replace things by words designating them," as like a rebus puzzle, "things literally stand for their names."[50] This parallel between psychoanalysis is not unfounded in detective fiction scholarship, with Freud's real 'Wolf Man' relating in his memoirs that Freud was a regular Holmes reader. Notably, this interest was not only for pleasure, but as a study of detective procedure.[51] Both Zizek and Bran Nicols, in his chapter, "Holmes and Literary Theory," from *The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes*, point out that that Jacques Lacan

[50] Slavoj Žižek. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." Looking Awry : An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture. The MIT Press, 1991, p.51.
[51] Slavoj Žižek. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." Looking Awry : An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture. The MIT Press, 1991, pp. 48-66.

and Derrida famously debated Poe's "The Purloined Letter."[52] The intersection between the disciplines is thus rich for exploration.

I am apprehensive about asserting that the crime scene becomes a literal text, as the textualizing of the landscape can become reductive and counterintuitive to ecocritical thought in its imposition of human frameworks of language onto nature. Further, in light of Zizek's parallel between dream-content and rebuses wherein he posits that the crime scene puzzle becomes like a dream space, the detective analytic interpretation of signifying animal clues becomes more than textual. Rather, through a linguistic study of these signifying prints, similar to dream objects, the physical objects (impressions) stand for themselves. It is up to Doyle to enter the dialogic 'dream-space' of the crime scene. This chapter thus posits a linguistic interpretation of Holmes' study of animal-prints, and simultaneously brings animal prints into detective scholarship's analytic theory of clues, where their unique significance as clues created by animals has been largely ignored.

I believe Holmes consistently uses animal prints in a similar manner to the hieroglyphic marks of the dancing men–analyzing prints as semiotic marks and extracting embedded information. Just as he does with the dancing men, Holmes adopts and enters into these spaces of animal semiosis, using his acquired knowledge of their prints as a method of obtaining information, of communicating. Rather than a scientific study of prints, like that of mud or ears, his treatment of impressions recalls more closely his linguistic analyses, like that of the dancing

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[52] Nicol, Bran. "Holmes and Literary Theory." *The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes*. Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 185-197.

men. In “The Adventure of the Priory School” (1904), the Duke of Holdernesse’s son, Henry, goes missing from his boarding school in the night along with the German master, Herr Heidegger. A single bicycle has gone missing as well. Holmes and Watson trace a bicycle’s track through a neighboring moor. This location is important because the Lower Gill Moor is intersected by a watercourse, which in some parts creates a morasse. Due to the dry weather, and the fact that it has been three days since the boy’s disappearance, Holmes despairs at the delay, stating “you start me on the investigation with a very serious handicap. It is inconceivable, for example, that this ivy and this lawn would have yielded nothing to an expert observer” (*Return* 108). Holmes thus turns to the wetness of the moor and its morasses as his only hope for tracing the bicycle, and he then successfully discovers its tracks. In a sentiment recollecting Locard’s exchange principle, Watson relates as they cross the green morass streaking across the moor that “if the lad had gone homeward, he must have passed this, and he could not pass it without leaving his traces” (*Return* 117). However, at the end of the tracks they discover only the dead body of Heidegger and his crumpled bicycle. With only one bicycle missing, which has now been found, and with no traces of a horse or other vehicle which may have carried the child, Holmes and Watson appear to be at an impasse. However, after visiting a nearby inn and looking into its stable, Holmes recalls that the bicycle’s track and the surrounding path were covered in cow prints, though neither he nor Watson saw a single cow. Mimicking his reconstruction of the language of the dancing man, Holmes then reconstructs the cows’ prints using breadcrumbs:

> “Can you recall that the tracks were sometimes like that, Watson—: : : : :—“and sometimes like this”—: . : . : . : .—“and occasionally like this”—. . . . . “Can you remember that?” (*Return* 124)

Watson does not remember this exact arrangement, or syntax, nor does he immediately understand the implications. Holmes translates each formation of hoof prints into their corresponding meanings of movement types, telling Watson it is a "remarkable cow which walks, canters, and gallops" (*Return* 124). Almost as if performing a reverse conjugation, Holmes uses crumbs to exactly repeat the different forms of cow prints, and from them deduced the types of movement (like tenses) which they represent. This is the key to the case, as when Holmes inspects a horse in Reuben Haye's stables, he confirms that it has been newly shod with old shoes. The Duke, it transpires, has another, illegitimate son, disguised as his secretary, who has kidnapped Henry with the help of Reuben Hayes and his horse (or pony, as Doyle uses both terms here) with cow-shoes. Before leaving Holdernesse Hall, Doyle asks the Duke about the origins of the shoes. The Duke recounts that the shoes are from the Middle Ages, belonging to his ancestral Barons of Holdernesse. They were used historically to throw pursuers of the tracks of the Barons' horses.[53] Like fossils, they were excavated from the Hall's moat, and are now kept in the hall's museum as artifacts. These, Holmes notes, are the "second most interesting object" he has seen in the North (*Return* 136). Thus it transpires that one of Holmes most personally noteworthy details in a case which he himself declares a "classic," is the villain's tool which disguises animal prints (*Return* 125).

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[53] While I am unable to verify the reality of such a historical object, a 1922 article in the US *The Evening Independent* discusses moonshiners who wore fake cow hooves to evade prohibition agents: "Shiners Wear Cow-Shoes." *The Evening Independent*, May 27, 1922. https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=BvtPAAAAIBAJ&sjid=t1MDAAAAIBAJ&pg=3581%2C6959265.

Almost as if the shoes have translated horse prints into cow prints, Holmes has successfully read into these prints, translating them back into indications of horse movements (cantering, galloping, and walking), and finally using them as key evidence to solve the case. The presence of prints, which at the onset of the story threatens to be non-existent, is once again, as it is throughout the canon, a turning point for the case. Yet, Holmes is the only figure who is able to read so deeply into the marks, and to interpret their true meaning. Watson, the average mind, remembers the presence of cow prints, though he cannot remember their exact construction, nor is he able to see that the tracks which Holmes reproduces with breadcrumbs are the tracks of a horse, not a cow. Holmes again possesses a singular linguistic ability; in his ability to notice, interpret, and extrapolate from prints, he reads the crime scene as a text. Effectively, in his immersion in this textual landscape, Holmes constructs a dialogic space using animal prints. This space might be simply a text, with Holmes as passive reader, if he were only interpreting the animals' prints. However, his reconstruction of the prints using crumbs, just as he reconstructs the dancing men, indicates an entering-into the animals' language and dialogue. The animal presence in "The Priory School," and across the canon, becomes equal in informative importance to human witnesses, through Holmes' ability to not only read their prints, but to enter into the animals' very dialogues.

Returning to the helpful framework of detection as analysis, I posit that the superficially imposed unity of a crime scene, like a dream's superficial unity, is made understandable through the isolation of animal prints, as a dream is through isolating the concealed filler element. As Zizek posits that both the crime scene and the dream share a "secondary revision," which makes them initially heterogeneous and unintelligible, I further argue that the presence of the physical

impressions by dynamic, living creatures as static, objectified clues is crucial for Doyle as writer in creating this dream-like 'secondary revision.'[54] It is then through the detective process of entering into the dialogic space, de-conjugating, and de-unifying that the apparent signifying whole of a crime space, is broken through. Animal prints in the canon consistently function like the psychoanalyst's filler elements or place-holders, and when isolated allow Holmes to see beneath the revised layer of homogeneity. Thus, the superficial unity of a dream is mimicked in the unity of a crime scene–as in the field within "The Priory School," and the seemingly natural presence of cow prints. It is up to the detective to de-unify this scene, and discover the aspects which signify a lack of homogeneity–the irregularity of those prints. The cow prints, like a dream's place-holders, thus break the illusion of unity. The organic whole of a field with cow prints is made heterogeneous by the detective's linguistic understanding that the language of cow-movement does not include trotting and galloping. I am not positing that Doyle's crime scenes are entirely psychoanalyze-able dream-spaces, nor entirely texts–but rather, amalgams of the two, with animal prints as crucial elements of analysis.

Nevertheless, Freud and Zizek's work helps us as detective fiction critics to build a wider theory from the practice of analyzing animal prints. Holmes often encounters hats, or pieces of clothing, which he may perform a similar psychoanalytic interpretation upon, but it is through the static impressions of dynamic, living creatures, that a wider dialogue emerges, which bears wider implications for meaning-making (the detective's ultimate goal). As a part of the crime

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[54] Žižek, Slavoj. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." *Looking Awry : An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*. The MIT Press, 1991, p.52. EBSCOhost, research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=380bdd24-27fe-309c-98ef-6082a4ce2fb5.

puzzle, animal prints as natural occurrences contribute to the puzzle's imposed unity. A natural unity occurs which appears unconnected to the superficially imposed narrative film of impassibility, contributed to by a villain's addition of a secondary layer of deceit.[55] In again considering the field of cow prints–the true, latent meaning of their unnatural manner is initially obscured by the familiar fact of a field near farmland naturally possessing the prints of cattle. Holmes and Watson nearly overlook the heterogeneity of the actual nature of the prints' strangeness in the dream-like secondary revision of their seeming natural-ness. Thus the aim of the villain using an animal is to construct a more thorough secondary revision, or a heightened facade of a "totality of meaning," so that the onlooker is temporarily blinded to the fragmented significance–perceiving rather an organic whole.[56] Holmes is able to break through this dream-like space, just as the dream-interpreter, by starting with an isolation of the one point of irrationality–that of the irregular nature of the prints.

However, the recognition of this irregularity demands an attention to the animals' language of movement, and the ability, as established, to enter into this unique dialogic space. Zizek draws from Freud to establish that the clue, like a dream's signifying material, is an irregular feature which has been "doubly inscribed," possessing both a false meaning and a true, helpful meaning.[57] As he asserts, drawing from Shklovsky's similar work, the 'doubly inscribed'

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[55] Slavoj Žižek. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*. The MIT Press, 1991, pp. 55-56.
[56] Žižek, Slavoj. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*. The MIT Press, 1991, p.52. EBSCOhost, research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=380bdd24-27fe-309c-98ef-6082a4ce2fb5.
[57] Žižek, Slavoj. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*. The MIT Press, 1991, p.54. EBSCOhost, research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=380bdd24-27fe-309c-98ef-6082a4ce2fb5.

element consists of "nonlinguistic material," though it is structured like a language, just as I have established the animal impressions are themselves structured.[58] The false solution in "The Priory School," is the inconspicuous cow print, while the underlying inscription becomes the horse's presence. Unlike a purely material object as a clue, this animal print as the doubly inscribed clue possesses a level of latent linguistic material. As I have expressed, Holmes must learn to not only read animal prints, but enter into these dialogic spaces to fully understand the 'double inscription' at play. It is not the same as his classifying the origins of dust on a hat ("The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle"), but an analysis which necessitates a level of communication with the animal. As in the dream space, it is this doubly inscribed animal clue which the crime puzzle hinges upon–with Holmes' understanding of the cows' prints' significance as the case's turning point and beginning of the narrative's denouement.

Holmes is an impartial detective, willing to recognize the importance and depth of information left by animals as equally as other prints and other modes of communication. In the following discussion of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, I will draw a further connection between this non-anthropocentric ethos and animal studies' discourse on animal consciousness, looking to Derrida and Thomas Nagel's theories. The tracks of a cow carry just as much information, for the ecocritical detective, as a human witness' testimony, if not more.

The animal print thus becomes a microcosm of the detective narrative as a whole. If we take as fact the assertion that the detective story is a mission of narration, of filling in voids of

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[58] Žižek, Slavoj. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*. The MIT Press, 1991, p.54. EBSCOhost, research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=380bdd24-27fe-309c-98ef-6082a4ce2fb5.

meaning and creating a linear form of meaning, then Holmes' narrativization of prints becomes an embodiment of the mission of detective fiction as a genre (as in his narrativization of cow prints). In this, the animal print's significance is even more consequential. Unlike other clues, animal prints are the static imprinting of dynamic, living and sentient creatures, with their own habits and ways of interacting with their environment–thus possessing a depth of semiosis, of signifying, which demands a sort of reading and interpreting unique to the ecocritical detective. In his entry into the dialogic space of the animal print, the detective constructs a wider narrative– how the animal was moving, what species of animal left the print, etc.– mimicking the work he will do in the narrative as a whole. Thus, my work proposes a theoretical approach further developing the already constructed link between psychoanalysis and the narrative structure of the detective fiction genre–that which takes into consideration the separateness of the animal print from other signifying clues. The animality intrinsic to the print demands an attempt at ontological understanding by the detective. In this theoretical approach, animal studies may even further enter into detective fiction's critical discourse.

Even when Holmes is not actively re-creating the language of prints, he continues to extrapolate information from the physical impressions left behind by animals. Contact zones thus emerge between the human and the non-human animal, wherein Holmes continues to allow animals into the predominantly human field of criminology, accepting their contributions equally. Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* as I have established, is a peculiar fixture in the Holmes canon–it brims with the Gothic, ghost stories, and elegiac nature writing–all overstoried by a troubling sense of the uncanny. This uncanny nature can be traced to the novel's foundational reflex against the binary, towards a mélange of the familiar and the unfamiliar.

Through its convergences of human and nature, the uncanny Dartmoor landscape opens a space of contact between distinctions–where the animal becomes human, the human animal, and nature itself becomes a body. In this collapse of distinctions, many impressions, both concrete and psychological, occur. The hound leaves his prints on the moor, the moor imprints itself on Watson's very spirit, and the land itself is scarred by the mark of prehistoric man. Prints and marks thus become representative of the complex ways in which land, life, nature, history, and mythology are entangled and embedded in the eerie Dartmoor landscape. In the landscape's entrenchment in real history and supernatural mythology, the prints of the past, human and non-human, have become unerasable. Whereas traditional ecocritical readings of impressions in Earth primarily tend to indicate the penetrability of the Earth by man, and the power and violation implicit in this practice–the novel presents a peculiar subversion of this wherein man both impresses and is *impressed upon*.[59] In its foregrounding and complication of prints, the novel presents a danger to Holmes' canonical reliance on them.

The novel opens in 221B Baker Street, where Holmes and Watson analyze a walking stick left behind by an unknown visitor. In his typical fashion, Holmes is able to read into the stick a plethora of details which together form the composite of an identity–the stick is a presentation from Charing Cross Hospital (indicated by the inscription of CCH), given to what must be a middle-aged house-surgeon or house-physician upon his leaving the hospital for a country practice five years ago (the date also inscribed). However, more interesting deductions

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[59] Hiltner, Ken. Place, Body and Spirit Joined: The Earth-Human Wound in "Paradise Lost." *Milton Quarterly*, May 2001, Vol. 35, No. 2 (May 2001), pp. 113-117. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24465224

appear in Holmes' analysis of the teeth marks upon the stick. Holmes is able to deduce from the size of the teeth marks the size of the dog's jaws, and from their location in the middle of the heavy stick, the general size of the dog. He deduces that these marks are too broad for a terrier, though not broad enough for a mastiff. Just as Holmes deduces the dog may have been a curly-haired spaniel, the owner of the stick, Dr. Mortimer, and his dog, a curly-haired spaniel, enter the room. Holmes' guesses have once again been confirmed, and Holmes has not only used this physical object to sketch an outline of a human, but to further extract information on the human's non-human companion. The novel's opening in this manner indicates how central prints and marks will be for the remainder of the novel.

Further confirmation of this theme arrives at the close of chapter two, after Dr. Mortimer has explained the history of the Baskerville family, and the myth of the cursed hound which allegedly killed the former Hugo Baskerville and has apparently returned, as evidenced by the mysterious details surrounding Charles Baskerville's recent death. Holmes is for the most part uninterested in supernatural explanations here, as he consistently is throughout the canon. The reader may look to "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire," in which Holmes calls vampires' "pure lunacy," or to "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot," where, when faced with a case which is supernaturally "devilish," Holmes states that "if the matter is beyond humanity it is certainly beyond me" (*Case-Book* 110, *His Last Bow* 153). In *The Hound*, Holmes almost dismisses the case upon hearing Dr. Mortimer's tale of a mythological hound, calling it a "fairy-tale" (*Hound* 16). What finalizes Holmes' interest and involvement in the Baskerville case is thus not the supernatural nature, or even a sympathy for the dead Charles Baskerville and his grieving friend,

Dr. Mortimer. Rather, his interest is piqued when Dr. Mortimer tells him that he observed something not mentioned in the inquest–that being the presence of footprints. Holmes asks:

> "A man or a woman's?" Dr. Mortimer looked strangely at us for an instant, and his voice sank almost to a whisper as he answered: "Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!" (*Hound* 21)

Though the line is iconic in its intrigue, and its confirmation that the hound, whether truly a mythological hell-hound, or a natural being, has at least some grounding in reality–it is further indicative here in its solidification of Holmes' interest. The materiality of the print, and especially its animality, inspires his interest and involvement in the case. Prints, as in "The Priory School," or "Silver Blaze," where Silver Blaze's prints ultimately lead Holmes to the missing horse, are a favorite and most edifying method of obtaining information. For Holmes, a singular print contains a sprawl of information–if one is only willing to look, observe, and enter into the unique language of material impressions, objectively. Thus, with the promise of animal prints, he takes the case.

It is important to note that Holmes' interpretations of these marks and prints are not instantaneous, holistic narrativizations. Rather, he insists on collecting information objectively, print by print, before making conclusions–leaving his final narratives to the end of his cases, when his hypotheses have been confirmed. In this manner, Holmes is truly entering into these spaces of animal semiosis as an objective observer, resisting an anthropocentric, or subjective narrativization. Holmes confirms this process throughout the canon, but again repeats it in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in his instructing Watson to "simply report the facts in the fullest possible manner," and refusing to reveal his own initial threads of suspicion in order to "not bias

[Watson's] mind" (*Hound* 53). Biased interpretations must be avoided throughout his detective process, and it is especially crucial in his analysis of prints and marks. The human subjective lens cannot colour the animal impressions. I will return to Timothy Morton in the following chapter, but his suggestion that environmental thinking necessitates an abandonment of man-made conceptual frameworks is highly indicative in this practice.[60] Thomas Nagel's essay, "What Does it Mean to be a Bat," further posits that much of one's understanding of consciousness is grounded in subjective experience, and to attempt understand another's, especially another species' consciousness, one must step outside of their own subjective experiences, constructing understanding not through "impressions," but through objectivity.[61] Holmes' reliance on prints, which he attempts to observe detachedly and uncoloured by biases, as well as his closing summaries of narratives–where he attempts to reflect the consciousnesses of those involved in the cases retrospectively, upon final compilation of empirical evidence–are indicative of Nagel's resistance to impressions.

Similarly, Derrida warns in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, that "the experience of the seeing animal, of the animal that looks at them," in reference to Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, Lacan, and Levinas, "has not been taken into account in the philosophical or theoretical architecture of their discourse…In sum they have denied it as much as misunderstood it."[62] Holmes, in his objective and impartial immersion in animal impressions, explores how to resist

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[60] Morton, Timothy. *Being Ecological*. The MIT Press, 2018. pp. 24-25.
[61] Nagel, Thomas. "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 83, no. 4, 1974, p.444. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/2183914.
[62] Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Translated by David Wills, Fordham University Press, 2008, p.14.

the anthropocentric, biasing lens, and to attempt to understand this animal experience. It is through the objective study of animal prints that Holmes becomes a model of this theory of Nagel's and Derrida's (and their wider theoretical discourses). Doyle's personal interest in animal phenomenology, as I have established through his autobiographical attention to animal experience, lays the foundation for his fiction's prophetic exploration of this contemporary animal rights discourse. His fiction thus gives Doyle the creative space to expand on his existential questions of the animal's lived experience, using Holmes as an ideal figure who, as a moldable invention, can be forcibly detached by Doyle from Holmes' character's biasing lens. Human conceptual frameworks and expectations must not affect the prints of animals, who are not under the same influence of human social systems, or linguistic modes of communication. Their dialogue exists outside of human language and must be approached as such. To attempt to understand the implications of their bodily prints through a human framework would be reductive and warping–providing inaccurate criminological data.

Prints continue to color the novel–and it becomes at its center a question of what it means to leave a trace, and who, or what, can succeed in leaving them. Aside from the seemingly supernatural hound who has left a very concrete print, the land itself is both physically and tonally imprinted by history, enacting a deep entanglement between man, animal, time, and nature. The landscape of Dartmoor is thus rich with possibilities for ecocritical readings. Again, Adrian Tait's article illumines the established 'intra-action' occurring between man and environment, wherein humans are intrinsically informed by the eerie, pre-Edenic landscape. As I have established, this intra-action results in animals and men being equally subject to natural phenomena. Certainly, as Tait points out, the novel's land leaves its own impressions. Like the

teeth marks on Dr. Mortimer's stick, the landscape makes an impression upon Watson's mind as he reflects that his "life has become like that great Grimpen Mire" (*Hound* 72). A reciprocal relationship thus emerges, where both man and animal imprint upon the land (in footsteps, and more evocatively, in the form of pre-historic man's huts and mining trenches), and land itself imprints on man in turn.

Animal, too, is intangibly printed upon–with the hound's evocation of terror being so heavily inspired by the moor's gloomy atmosphere, for instance. However, in tracing Tait and Cook's exploration of the novel's penetrating landscape, I posit further that the mire's relationship to physical prints becomes a foil to Holmes' impartial print-reading. Where Holmes considers prints equally, the Grimpen Mire acts as an arbitrator of who is able to leave a print at all. In exercising this agency, the mire disrupts Holmes' ability to read and interpret animal and human prints, effectively erasing the textuality of the crime scene, and inhibiting my established theory of human/animal communication. Both animals and man are equal in their lack of authority under the landscape's agency. In one of Watson's first encounters with the Grimpen Mire, he witnesses it drown a pony, and this brutal scene continues to haunt Watson's notes throughout the novel. Stapleton tells Watson, "there is another of those miserable ponies" as "something brown was rolling and tossing among the green sedges. Then a long, agonized, writhing neck shot upwards and a dreadful cry echoed over the moor" (*Hound* 68). As Stapleton tells Watson, this is the second pony he has seen be drowned by the mire in two days and there are probably many more, as the ponies get used to its more hospitable hardness in the dry season, not knowing the difference in the wet season. It is impossible to know how many ponies the bog

swallows, because their bodies do not leave traces. Rather, the mire's agentive and bodily behavior denies their ability to leave impressions, to leave behind their linguistic signifiers.

Finally, breaking with canon tradition, Holmes does not catch his culprit. Though Holmes and Watson agree that the culprit, Stapleton, has most likely drowned in the moor like the unfortunate ponies, there is a lingering and potentially unsatisfactory ambiguity. After he flees, Holmes and Watson follow Stapleton's footsteps to the edge of the mire, noting as they approach it, how "grim and purposeful was the clutch in which [the bog] held us" (*Hound* 154). Stapleton has previously been the only character to successfully navigate and pass over this clutching mire, having exhibited this skill to Watson as he earlier danced across it in pursuit of a moth. However, in the confusion of the night's fog, it seems unlikely to Holmes that Stapleton was able to reach the safe island in the center of the mire. Holmes fails to be able to count upon his reading of prints, as "there was no chance of finding footsteps in the mire, for the rising mud oozed swiftly in upon them" (*Hound* 154). Unlike "The Priory School," there is no clever navigation Holmes can enact to discover the man's prints. The land, acting agentively as it has throughout the novel, exercises a decisive power over Holmes, taking away his final and most consistent method of obtaining information–and thus making impossible the most central aspect of Holmes' crime-scape analysis. Due to the lack of prints, neither Holmes, nor the reader, may succeed in the detective game here; only the mire knows for certain the fate of Stapleton.

In a tense moment during this search, Holmes himself is almost swallowed by the moor. This iconoclast of social order and scientific reason is no less vulnerable than the ponies, or Mortimer's spaniel, in the face of organic wildness. For a moment, the canon's constant hero is almost subsumed as equally as any other animal, *without a trace*. Man and animal become equals

in their vulnerability to the impassibility of nature's agency. For this moment of peril to occur after the denouement of the mystery, after Holmes has solved the case and killed the hound, is even further indicative. The mire's power, mystique, and danger begin to even press against the genre's regular landmarks of narrative progression, as well as Holmes' trademark detective strategy. The novel's tension thus lies in part in its nature's agentive ability to subvert the analysis of prints which Holmes's success so consistently relies upon. Whereas in "The Priory School" and other stories, the question of a print's readability is often a concern and danger–for *The Hound*, this danger is realized, and Holmes' ability to read and enter into communication with non-speaking characters is taken out of his hands. When Holmes' ability to read his crime scene is taken away, he fails to leave the novel's readers with a certain conclusion. To have Stapleton's prints erased by the landscape thus presents an impenetrable obstacle, which Holmes fails to deduce around. Like the uncertain number of drowned ponies, without prints narrative ambiguity looms.

A surprising subversion of power occurs, where the canon's hero is for once outmatched, with the wildness, unknowability, and agency of nature ultimately reigning over the case. Where no human can win against Holmes, nature itself succeeds, and the centrality of prints to Holmes' process is again confirmed in their absence. As an inverse to Holmes, the land erases rather than reads. While Holmes generally reads humans and non-humans' prints equally, the mire captures both animals and humans equally, allowing neither the capacity for that final physical communication which prints and marks offer. Rather, land assumes an authority over impressions, denying the dialogue which Holmes' detective process relies upon and stripping with impartiality his ability to enter into the textual dialogue of the crime scene. Without prints,

Holmes cannot identify the 'filler element' upon which his analysis of the textual crime-scene hinges. Land itself enforces the dream-like crime scene's layer of secondary revision, obscuring ultimate meaning.

Thus, the Holmes' fixation on animal prints is even more crucial to the canon when contextualized within the emergent scientific study of fingerprinting, a historical past of animal involvement within criminal trials, psychoanalytic theory, and contemporary animal studies theory. Psychoanalytic theory poses a suggestive parallel between the crime scene and dream, and the canon's animal prints' linguistic signifying is deepened by the similarity in analytic approaches. I argue that Doyle's portrayal of Holmes' treatment of prints becomes indicative of a consistent desire to allow animals as equally into cases as human witnesses, and to allow them to communicate. Holmes' analysis and recreation of animal prints recall that of a study of a language, with prints serving as physical marks embedded with information. Holmes' dialogue with these prints thus allows him to uncover the true meaning beneath the crime scene's secondary revision of deceit. Further, his close attention and holistic analysis of prints create a textual, or dialogic crime scene, where detective becomes reader. This attention is dependent on Holmes' detachment from his conceptual human frameworks, and his attempt to understand the conscious experiences of the living animal embedded within their static impressions. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* offers a complication of the centrality of prints within the canon, wherein nature presupposes Holmes' abilities–and the removal of the dialogic space of a print severely hinders his detective process. Further, nature's control of the right to leave a trace brings together the animal and the human even closer–joining them in their vulnerability to nature's capacity of denying them the universal language of print.

CHAPTER IV: "Dogs Don't Make Mistakes": Dogs and The Ecology of the Crime Scene

Always there was this feeling of an unseen force, a fine net drawn round us with infinite skill and delicacy, holding us so lightly that it was only at some supreme moment that one realized that one was indeed entangled in its meshes.

–Doyle, *Hound of the Baskervilles*

Dogs and references to dogs proliferate within the canon. Certainly, dogs and sleuthhounds are a frequently recurring motif within detective fiction broadly.[63] The bloodhound's appearance in Victorian criminal investigations cements this association.[64] Emma Mason's work on Holmes and Watson's dog-like relationship in her article "Dogs, Detectives, and the Famous Sherlock Holmes," focuses on Holmes' sleuth-hound-like qualities, both within his detective work and within his identity.[65] While Mason's work helpfully observes Holmes' canine-qualities, I would like to call attention further to the thematic centrality of dogs, and specifically, the implications of their involvement on the canon's narrative framework.

Perhaps one of the most well-quoted lines from the Holmes canon comes from "The Adventure of Silver Blaze," where Holmes notes the absence of a dog's barking as a key indicator of the true culprit:

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[63] Wilkie Collin's *My Lady's Money (1877), Agatha Christie's Dumb Witness (1937) and her short story, "The Nemean Lion" (1939) are a few key detective fiction texts featuring dogs.*

[64] Pemberton, Neil. "Bloodhounds as Detectives: Dogs, Slum Stench and Late-Victorian Murder Investigation." *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 10, no. 1, March 2013, pp. 69–91, https://doi.org/10.2752/147800413X13515292098197.

[65] Mason, Emma. "Dogs, Detectives and the Famous Sherlock Holmes." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2008, pp. 289–300, https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877908092586.

"Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the nighttime."

"The dog did nothing in the night-time."

"That was the curious incident," remarked Sherlock Holmes. (*Memoirs* 27)

Scholarship remarking the theoretical implications of such an observation is helpful to understand the genre's narrative concerns. Again, in Zizek's *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*, Zizek looks to this specific instance's display of the detective's concern with signifiers as a "bundle of differences," wherein the detective's work is to understand not only the meaning of a clue, but the differences between this clue, or signifier, and others.[66] The point drawing attention is the one which diverges from its coinciding details. In the hypothesized narrative that Silver Blaze has been stolen in the night by a strange visitor, the absence of a dog's mark is inconsistent–here is the clue that does not slot in, here is the filler element. As Zizek notes, the very absence of a detail contains meaning, with the absence of the dog's barking indicating that the culprit who snuck about in the night was a familiar figure. In pressing Locard's principle of exchange further, Zizek states that "the very absence of a trace" is itself a trace.[67] The bizarre and the irregular are the points to which Holmes must hold on to and press further, as they often provide the most suggestive clues. Holmes confirms this, stating in

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[66] Žižek, Slavoj. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*. The MIT Press, 1991, p.57. EBSCOhost, research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=380bdd24-27fe-309c-98ef-6082a4ce2fb5.

[67] Žižek, Slavoj. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*. The MIT Press, 1991, p.57. EBSCOhost, research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=380bdd24-27fe-309c-98ef-6082a4ce2fb5.

“The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place,” that it is the cases which possess "curiously mixed effects” which are most promising, whereas the “colourless, uneventful case…is helpless” (*Case-Book* 263). A distinct event or clue often indicates a purposeful addition of deceit and thus presents an ideal point for meaning-making. Here, what is distinct, or irregular, is the absence of typical canine behavior. Holmes’ demonstrated familiarity with canine behavior thus allows him to note irregularity within the very lack of behavior, and thus further derive meaning from this lack. The filler element hidden beneath the crime scene’s ‘secondary revision,’ as posited in the previous chapter, is identifiable through attention to the dog’s behavior.

The established ‘secondary revision’ of the crime scene created by the culprit’s film of deception thus leaves behind signifiers which may be present details, or lacks. Holmes must not only enter into what I have established as the crime’s dialogic space, deciphering the animal’s encoded language of meaning and signifying, but must further focus on the lack and presence of animal behavior as data. Just as I have established Holmes adheres to the exchange principle in his dialogic consideration of the physical traces left by animals, I argue he assimilates the principle further, viewing present and missing canine behaviors as concrete traces in themselves. Animal behavior, and especially dog behavior, thus becomes synonymous with empirical evidence.

This chapter thus demonstrates that Holmes consistently relies on dogs to collect empirical data, with their behavior becoming indisputable truth. In returning to the psychoanalytical approach to detective fiction, I use the animal to ground this discourse in the Holmes canon. Further, in drawing from ecocritical ideas, I posit the crime scene becomes an ecosystem, with the multiplicity of clues’ significances as the interwebbing natural phenomena

into which Holmes must enmesh himself. Dogs, in their established inhabiting of multiple spheres (the domestic and the animal), possess a liberty of intelligence inaccessible to the human. The dream, or the ecosystem, of the initially unintelligible crime scene is again made meaningful through the animals' lens–and it is up to the environmentally conscious detective to look through this lens, to again move closer to the animal's subjective experience.

Holmes will often become absent from the narrative, with no one, at times not even Watson, being able to identify him from his environment and other humans. In his disguises, as in "A Scandal in Bohemia," or *The Sign of the Four* among others, the detective Holmes disappears entirely, replaced by a drunken groom or an old sailor. His disguises not only undermine his own subjective identity, but also as Audrey Jaffe argues in "Detecting the Beggar: Arthur Conan Doyle, Henry Mayhew, and 'The Man with the Twisted Lip,'" undermining fixed social identities (Holmes, bourgeois male, becoming indistinguishable from a blue-collar worker in "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax"). Thus, Holmes demonstrates a capacity for stepping outside of his subjective identity, fluidly inhabiting other perspectives as a means of detection.

When he is not disappearing through disguise, he may physically disappear. For instance, in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Holmes is eerily absent for the majority of the narrative. After the initial, formulaic beginning, where Watson and Holmes are sought out in 221B by a figure with a bizarre mystery, the narrative breaks tradition, becoming part-epistolary, composed of transcribed journal entries and letters to Holmes. Watson believes Holmes to be in London, working on an important blackmailing case. However, after following what he thinks are the tracks of the escaped convict on the moor, Watson discovers that Holmes has indeed been

present the entire time–spectral like the hound's disembodied howling, hidden away in one of the stone huts and living as an equal to the savage convict, Selden. Before this discovery, Watson has the strange sense that a stranger is "dogging him," a sense simultaneously synonymous with the gloomy, penetrating atmosphere of the environment, or the ghostly howling on the moor, or even the "fine net" of mystery which tightens around the narrative (*Hound* 100, 119). Once, he sees a glimpse of this stranger in the distance, standing atop a "jagged pinnacle of a granite tor," with his legs outspread, arms folded, and head bowed–as if contemplating that "enormous wilderness of peat and granite which lay behind him" (*Hound* 97). This brooding, Byronic figure "might have been the very spirit of that terrible place" (*Hound* 97). Looking back, the man is gone. Enmeshed entirely with his environment, the detective has disappeared and has become the very 'spirit' of his non-human surroundings. Holmes has been observing the characters in this novel as a non-corporeal observer, from the perspective of the myth haunting the Baskervilles. In order to step into the perspective of the spectral hound haunting the narrative, Holmes has become him. This removal of the self thus becomes the ideal method of collecting un-biased, un-narrativized, and objective evidence. In being present, Watson falls prey to Stapleton's established film of deception. In his absence and in his embodying the moor and the hound, Holmes becomes, like them, not subject to man-made and man-intended deceit.

It is in this practice of removing himself where I argue Holmes again anticipates Derrida's theory in *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, as proposed within the previous chapter. On successfully apprehending the perspective of another being, Derrida suggests that "to relate to the thing such as it is in itself–supposing that were possible–means apprehending it such as it is,

such as it would be even if [the self] weren't there."[68] Holmes' literal removal of himself from the narrative, in hiding among the moor, enmeshing himself into organic nature, and embodying the "the very spirit of the terrible place," is an enactment of this apprehension of something or someone, through an absenting of the self (*Hound* 97). To fully step into the individual consciousnesses of the hound and of Stapleton, Holmes must leave himself out of the process. Thus, to fulfill his role of "*le sujet suppose savoir*," to see past the false appearance of Stapleton, and derive true meaning from the dream-scape of unified, unintelligible clues, Holmes must become something neither entirely himself, nor entirely human.[69] The animal lens is thus one which he finds himself repeatedly turning to.

The animal lens, and primarily the dog's, becomes a crucial facet in interpreting the crime-puzzle, with the dog's behaviors and lack of behaviors evoking meanings which cannot be eschewed by man-made deception. As Umberto Eco insists, in his *Postscript to the Name of the Rose*, 'the crime novel represents a kind of conjecture, pure and simple ... Every story of investigation and conjecture tells us something that we have always been close to knowing."[70] This 'something close to knowing,' then, beyond the culprit and beyond the crime, becomes to Holmes, dogs. Especially as domestic fixtures, they are always quietly present, backgrounded in a manner that allots them unique knowledge beyond that of the humans. It becomes Holmes'

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[68] Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Translated by David Wills, Fordham University Press, 2008, p.160.
[69] Žižek, Slavoj. "Two Ways to Avoid the Real of Desire." *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture.* The MIT Press, 1991, p.57. EBSCOhost, research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=380bdd24-27fe-309c-98ef-6082a4ce2fb5.
[70] Eco, Umberto. *Postscript to the Name of the Rose*. Translated by William Weaver, Harcourt Brace, 1984, p.54.

responsibility to get close to knowing them, to understand their points of view and attempt to observe his closed fictional world through that view. As minor characters, domestic données, dogs are consistently overlooked, giving them unobstructed views into cases. Therefore, it is the human, with all of his ratiocination and verbal communication, who presents a danger to the criminal, and who must be kept away from the truth of crimes, held at a distance beyond the film of deception. The dog thus possesses a unique liberty as a witness, moving freely between puzzle's dimensions of truth and deception. The animal moves again beyond his strictly regulated reality within late Victorian (and post-Victorian) human spheres. In Doyle's detective fiction, as my research demonstrates, dogs and animals gain a rare entrance to the criminal and detective spheres, equal to, and often beyond, that of his fellow human witnesses and victims. In crime, the animal becomes nearly omniscient through its backgrounded observation of criminals, quietly possessing the keys to solutions. Holmes must therefore be attuned to the dog's behavior in order to uncover the culprit's 'secondary revision' of deception.

Often in the place of physical clues, the animal's behavior becomes indicative of meaning. Looking once again to Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I am*, it is through the experience of the seeing animal, the animal that sees us (and our crimes unfolding), that the detective is able to establish meaning in the seemingly incongruous, and heterogenous crime scene dream-scape. As I established in chapter one, Darwin's contributions helped provoke an interrogation of the concept of a human. I would like to return to this in further connecting Doyle's theoretical approach to animality with Derridean and ecocritical concepts–with a

specific attention to Timothy Morton's idea of the mesh.[71] The question of Darwin's conceptual human becomes also a question of what specifically constitutes a solely human framework. Dogs' positions as both domestic pets, coexisting with humans, while simultaneously being undeniably animal is not a new concept. Ivan Krielkamp's book, *Minor Creatures*, is again useful in understanding the complex duality of the domestic dog, as well as Harriet Ritvo's *The Animal Estat*e. As my own research in chapter one demonstrates, the domestic pet, in entering into the home, permeates the animal/human boundary. The dog then straddles two spheres–that of the domestic human and of the animal–and offers Doyle an ideal figure to explore the conceptual human through. The following two stories demonstrate how Holmes' reliance on dog behavior requires Holmes to disavow his human conceptual frameworks, observing animal behavior to see beneath the culprit's constructed deception. In thinking beyond his human frameworks, Holmes enters into what I will argue is the ecosystem of the crime scene.

The crime scene's clues, as Pierre Bayard asserts in *Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?* posit a key tension belonging to detective fiction–the tension created by what Bayard calls the two movements of the narrative structure. The first's aim is to "multiply leads and solutions."[72] It is in this movement that a single clue has the potential of containing multiple meanings. The second movement, Bayard writes, is where meaning is foreclosed, where suddenly there is only one meaning. As Bran Nicols writes in his chapter, "Holmes and Literary Theory," in the *Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes*, the two movements create a crucial tension which

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[71] Morton, Timothy. *Being Ecological*. The MIT Press, 2018, pp. 65-75.
[72] Bayard, Pierre. *Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?* Translated by Carol Cosman, The New Press, 2000, pp. 67.

the writer asks the reader to accept: that of the clue possessing multiple interpretations, and simultaneously only one. While for Bayard, the coherence of the detective narrative is threatened by this contradiction, I propose that in the context of Holmes and the animal, the tension serves to heighten a reading of Holmes as an ecological thinker.

A clue's multitude of possible meanings functions similarly to the multitude of natural phenomena simultaneously occurring and connecting within one ecosystem. As Timothy Morton writes in his book *Being Ecological*, living ecologically necessitates a de-anthropocentrized worldview, where one becomes aware of the complex ways in which we are enmeshed with our ecosystems and their sprawling interrelations. For the detective, in addition to its dialogic nature, I argue the crime scene becomes his environment, his ecosystem. Solving a case thus necessitates this same enmeshment with entangling ecological phenomena–specifically, the entangling possible significances of each clue. Each detail and clue's possible meanings, in the narrative's first movement, enact a sprawling mesh of interrelations. Our ecocritical detective must look beyond his own narrativizing, human lens, and cease to attempt to fit the clues into his existing human conceptual frameworks. Especially when these clues and details come from animals, Morton's non-conceptual awareness is crucial. The animal's behavior cannot be fitted within a human's social framework. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, in "The Priory School," removing the conceptual human lens allowed Holmes to realize the absence of cows, seeing also the un-cow-like nature of their prints. Thus, I posit that beyond the alignment of the crime with the dream, and the detective with the psychoanalyst, Holmes' crime scenes are simultaneously ecosystems, and Holmes an ecologically-conscious thinker. A kind of mycelial system emerges underneath the surface of the crime scene–each clue connected to one another, and to their own

webbing multiplicity of possible truths. The refrain across the canon of mystery as a 'net,' evokes the image of a mycelial root system, its 'tightening' becoming an organic pulse drumming beneath the narrative tension. To comb through these possibilities and unearth the true, latent meaning, the detective must enmesh himself in this mycelial net–both literally, as Holmes interacts bodily with the scene (think of his standing atop the moor in *The Hound*, or crawling on the ground in "The Boscombe Valley Mystery"), but also theoretically, as I demonstrate, with his willingness to think beyond his subjective framework, and into the animal's inner life.

Leaving the Victorian period behind, the two following stories belong to the final collection of Holmes cases, *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* (1927). The canine involvement in these stories is thus an evolution of Doyle's Victorian-grounded interrogation of the animal, providing a culmination of Doyle's animal-centric thinking which I argue embodies a heightened philosophical and ontological intervention. When Holmes tells Watson in "The Adventure of the Creeping Man" (1923), that he is considering writing a monograph on the uses of dogs in detective work, Watson assumes this concerns the established appearance of bloodhounds and ssleuthhoundsin the field. However, Holmes instead states that his observations have led the correlation further, where dogs become literally representative of their families' lives. He asks, "whoever saw a frisky dog in a gloomy family, or a sad dog in a happy one? Snarling people have snarling dogs, dangerous people have dangerous ones. And their passing moods may reflect the passing moods of others" (*Case-Book* 187). Revisiting my observations from chapter one, wherein I posited that Doyle collapses victim/culprit divides to simultaneously collapse human/animal ones–here he blatantly notes the correlation between humans and their animal

companions. As I asserted that the snake and its owner in "The Speckled Band" posit a deeply 'co-constitutive' relationship, here Holmes himself points to the 'co-constitutive' nature of the domestic dog's relationship specifically. Dogs, he argues, are informed by the behaviors and moods of their families, with their positions as domestic *witnesses* allowing for a total observation and absorption of behavioral information. It is this behavioral information which the detective can then read from the animal, deriving meaning which signifies human action.

This observation, and Holmes' continual involvement of dogs throughout the canon is not historically unfounded. My research in chapter one indicated a link between physiognomy and pet-ownership. In addition, instances of dogs contributing to criminal cases can be found in late and post-Victorian crime news pieces. An 1876 issue of *The Illustrated London Clipper*, entitled "Shocking Discovery of the Dead Body of a Child by a Dog" details a grisly incident in which a dog discovers the body of a child inside a parcel at Parcombe station, along the London and Brighton railway.[73] Dogs were also later utilized by Scotland Yard alongside detectives, as Watson alludes to in "The Creeping Man," and as Neil Pemberton establishes in his article "Bloodhounds as Detectives: Dogs, Slum Stench and Late-Victorian Murder Investigation."[74] We may even look to Toby, a dog who appears in *The Sign of the Four*, physically guiding Holmes and Watson through the human-domain of the city. In this moment in time, the dog

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[73] "Shocking Discovery of the Dead Body of a Child by a Dog." *Illustrated London Clipper*, 16 Sept. 1876, p. 2. Crime, Punishment, and Popular Culture, 1790-1920, link-gale-com.utk.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/ZKXWYK937737548/CPPC?u=knox61277&sid=bookmark-CPPC&pg=3&xid=7e48900e.

[74] Pemberton, Neil. "Bloodhounds as Detectives: Dogs, Slum Stench and Late-Victorian Murder Investigation." *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 10, no. 1, March 2013, pp. 69–91, https://doi.org/10.2752/147800413X13515292098197.

straddles two spheres–that of the human, and the other. In existing within the two, it possesses the ability to enter where the human detective cannot.

As a true culmination of Doyle's grappling with the human/animal binary, "The Creeping Man" presents a complex interrogation of human animality that deserves its own dedicated exploration. Professor Presbury essentially begins what Dan Andriacco in "Gothic Holmes: Dark Shadows in the Canon" calls an "atavistic transformation," exhibiting monkey-like behaviors, such as creeping along his hallway on all fours, and undergoing odd, explosive, emotional outbursts.[75] Holmes discovers the cause to be a serum the professor is taking, which is infused with Langur, a monkey from the Himalayas. Langur, Holmes states, is one of the biggest and "most human" of the climbing monkeys (*Case-Book* 210). Thus, this story's interrogation of the concreteness of the division between man and animal is immensely evocative in this transformation, and in the implications of Presbury's literally bodily absorption of a monkey's biological material.

However, for this project's specific purposes, I would like to focus on the dog within the story. Holmes begins the narrative with his established note about a future monograph, and dogs continue to be curiously wound up in the narrative's unfolding. A peculiar feature of the case lies in Presbury's dog attacking his owner. These attacks occur on seemingly particular occasions, Holmes notes, as the dog has only twice attacked Presbury. Further, he has not attacked anyone else; the violence is thus not born from an illness or chronic condition. The dog's behavior in

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[75] Andriacco, Dan. "Gothic Holmes: Dark Shadows in the Canon." *The Baker Street Journal*, vol. 67, no. 1, Spring, 2017, p.14. ProQuest, https://utk.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/gothic-holmes-dark-shadows-canon/docview/2303179288/se-2.

these attacks presents both behavior and lack–that of the irregular violence, and that of the lack of violent response on other occasions. Both behavior and lack indicate meaning to Holmes, who eventually asserts that the dog has sensed and attacked the monkey within the human when the professor's transformations were at their height. Holmes notes this awareness of the dog's occurred "far more quickly" than Mr. Bennett, the professor's assistant, had noticed, due to its sensing of the professor's scent (*Case-Book* 211*)*. For the dog to have attacked indicates an unfamiliarity to Holmes, and for the dog to have not attacked, indicates normalcy. The two coinciding facts must thus indicate a changing state. Through centering his deductions on the dog, rather than the human subject, Holmes successfully breaks through the seemingly heterogeneous array of bizarre details, fitting the dog's behaviors into two contradicting, homogeneous clues–both together signifying the truth of Presbury's changing states. Holmes must leave behind the conceptual frameworks suggested to him, that of the dog's illness or irrelevance, and instead turn to the ecosystem of the crime–puzzling though their multitude of possible meanings to establish in what manner these two behavioral phenomena can interrelate. Their interrelation then indicates the one true meaning. The two clues of the dog's behavior are inextricable from one another in significance, despite their contradictory nature. This contradiction is a further instance of animal behavior as the key filler element. Thus, to understand the crime puzzle, Holmes must understand its ecological interconnections.

In "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place" (1927), a dog is once central. At Shoscombe Old Place, where the famous Shoscombe stud and training quarters are housed, odd events have begun occurring. Lady Beatrice Falder will no longer visit the horse (Shoscombe Prince) that she formerly doted on, and her brother, Sir Robert Norberton (with whom she lives)

has given away her prized spaniel. John Mason, the head trainer at Shoscombe, appeals to Holmes under the belief that Sir Robert has gone mad, and more specifically that "Shoscombe Prince and the Derby have turned his brain" (*Case-Book* 255). In addition to this odd behavior of his sister's, Sir Robert has become entirely consumed by the upcoming derby upon which his debts rely. He and his sister appear to have quarrelled, and John Mason reports that Sir Robert has been seen visiting the haunted crypt at night with a stranger. A very old skeleton appears in the crypt, apparently dug up, and charred bones are found in the furnace. Crucially, in a scenario which begins to sound familiar to readers of "Silver Blaze" and "The Creeping Man," the spaniel is given away after it was howling outside of the well-house–enraging Sir Robert, who gives the dog to the owner of the local inn, claiming to never wish to see it again. Again, the dog's behavior must initially be believed to contain a sprawl of possible meanings. Perhaps it is unwell, or irrelevant, as Sir Robert wishes it to be supposed. Again, Holmes must step outside of his anthropocentric framework and the frameworks of deceit imposed by the culprit to understand the dog's intersubjective experience and thus establish the clue's singular true meaning.

When Holmes and Watson visit Shoscombe to conduct their investigation, Holmes begins, in concurrence with the trend I have posited, with the spaniel. Formulaically, Holmes lists their concrete data, highlighting the dog as their most important hint. He states, "He gives away her favourite dog. Her dog, Watson! Does that suggest nothing to you?" (*Case-Book* 263). Watson is unable to see the significance of the dog in this case, despite what we as readers have traced as a repetitive correlation of irregular dog behavior to irregular human behavior. Once again, Holmes exercises his unique perceptivity of animal experience to collect data. Holmes and

Watson then borrow the dog from the inn owner, hiding outside of Shoscombe Old Place's gates where Lady Beatrice's carriage is known to pause on her daily drive. When Holmes releases the Spaniel, it is initially "joyous," running to the carriage and alighting onto its step (*Case-Book* 266). However, its mood quickly changes and it is suddenly enraged, barking at the skirt of the female passenger. This, to Holmes, is the only proof he needs to confirm his suspicions and plans for further action. Trusting to the dog's intuition entirely, Holmes knows this is not Lady Beatrice, but a stranger–and Lady Beatrice must be dead, the cause of Sir Robert's suspicious activity in the crypt. There is no room for contesting this evidence, as after all, he says, "dogs don't make mistakes" (*Case-Book* 266). The behavior of dogs becomes synonymous with empirical data, as Holmes again looks through the canine's subjective lens. In doing so, Holmes sees through the rhizome-like multitude of possible significances within the crime-space, establishing true meaning.

Here we see a culmination of Holmes' observations on canine contributions to detection, where he again uses the dog's behavior as an investigative tool. The dog's behavior provides just as insightful data as his other tools of meaning-making: collecting testimonies, analyzing crime scenes, etc. The dog thus becomes a physical manifestation of the animal's theoretical centrality in the canon. Doyle again chooses to move the animal to the forefront of the detective narrative's very framework–the crime scene, either as ecosystem or dream-space, is made intelligible through animal behavior. Holmes' contact with the animal becomes a means of making contact with the latent meanings of the crime. The canine, like its function as a domestic intermediary between human and animal spheres–becomes an intermediary for the detective and the crime-space. To connect with this intermediary, however, demands an ecocritical abandonment of

human social frameworks, of a Derridean interrogation of the ontological misrepresentation of what is human, and what is animal. What is human, the domain of reason, of deduction, must be abandoned as solely-human, and must be ceded to the canine. Cartesian reason is no longer a property of man but belongs to the animal–the line between canine intuition and empirical evidence grows thin for Holmes, as the former often contains the latter.

It is especially notable that "Shoscombe Old Place" was the last Sherlock Holmes case to be published. The Holmes canon thus concludes with a culmination of canine detective thematics which have lingered in both the forefront, as in the *Hound of the Baskervilles*, and background, as the fleeting Toby in *The Sign of Four*. This story makes concrete the centrality of dogs on both a narrative, and theoretical level. Further, the story was originally titled "the Adventure of the Black Spaniel," though the name was changed before publication.[76] The question evidently puzzled over by Doyle was which best represented the story: place, or animal? Crime scene or perpetual signifier of meaning? In the contention of this story's name, it appears that to Doyle, both are equally crucial.

Therefore, I argue that there is an organicism inherent to the very narrative framework of the detective genre–where a wide, rich mycelial network of clues and possible truths thread beneath the overstory of the crime-space. Largely un-recognized in ecocriticism, detective fiction's potential for contributing to current environmental discourse abounds. Further, dogs' insights into their crime scene ecosystems are entirely unique to the dogs of Doyle's narratives, with their inhabiting of both human and animal spheres valuable, rather than a marker of their

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[76] Redmond, Christopher. *Sherlock Holmes Handbook*. 2nd edition, Dundurn, 2009, p. 37.

otherness. In order to be a successful detective, Holmes must abandon his anthropocentric and subjective conceptual frameworks, stepping into the animal's lens, into the natural, allowing himself to be entangled in the mesh of mystery.

CONCLUSION

The Poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;

–Keats, "On the Grasshopper and Cricket"

Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes canon emerges as a poetry of the animal, of the earth. Physically grounded in a specific place, in a specific environment–the crime scene encompasses not only the enclosed narrative space of the detective genre, but the fine roots of meaning threading beneath the ecosystem of a mystery. An encapsulation of the primal urge for meaning, for knowledge, the detective's investigation becomes synonymous with what it means to read, to think critically, to theorize and to question. In reading detection fiction, we thus become detectives ourselves, analysts of not only crimes, but of the very mechanisms of human behavior at play. Holmes shows us that to understand human behavior, though, is not enough–rather, to be successful theorists we must also attempt to understand that which is not human. We must understand the animal, and we must understand our own fundamental animalism.

In tracing the animal throughout Doyle's Holmes canon, I hope to underscore the centrality of the animal to both our thematic and theoretical readings of Holmes' oeuvre, as well as to argue for a continued investigation of animals within the canon, and within the wider scope of detective fiction. The canon's political and social commentaries have attracted much scholarship, but animals remain under-represented in discourse. Thus, if we continue to view detective fiction as a time capsule-like embodiment of a given period's sociocultural concerns, we must press further into the sociocultural implications evoked by the canon's animals.

Scientific progress, philosophical discourse, natural history, etc.–all of these late Victorian concerns can be traced within the Holmes canon, in its treatment and interactions with animals. However, a focus on animals is not limited to a historicist approach; as I have established, it is helpful to the theoretical investigation of detective fiction's generic mechanisms. As a foundational canon, without which contemporary detective fiction would be much altered, the complex ways in which animals complicate and support Holmes' own theories of analysis, as well as Doyle's narrative maneuvers, are important, and rich for further consideration.

Doyle's reflexive reaching towards the animal, towards the natural, evokes an arching atmosphere of organicism–an organicism at times juxtaposed with the urbanity of London. I close in pointing towards Holmes' retirement far from the city, isolated on the Sussex Downs, as a final indication of the importance of the animal within the canon. Susan Rice's "Mr. Holmes and the Busy Bee" discusses Holmes' seemingly peculiar choice of retirement: bee-keeping on the Downs. However, I suggest this retirement is not peculiar at all, but that the progression of the canon–in its devolvement into the animal from the predominantly human-inflicted crimes (born of expressly artificial human motives: wealth, property, marriage, etc.) to the final collection's focus on cases which resemble less crimes, but rather instances of peculiar behavior, complex relationships, concealment, and accident, and which simultaneously consider the human/animal binary as an abstract, arbitrary thing which is entirely collapsible. Conan Doyle's own waning interest in violent crime and his dissolution of belief in the novelty of his formulaic framework, grow increasingly evident here–with his interest in the structures of human social relationships, and the philosophical and phenomenological relation of the animal to the human (as expressly evident across his autobiography) finally and fully taking the forefront.

I suggest that from the earliest appearance of Holmes in *A Study In Scarlet*, the trajectory of his theoretical approach has been one increasingly unfettered to crime, increasingly concerned with an analysis of organic relationships and behaviors. Animals, as I have expressed, become reflective of human behaviors, tendencies, and relations within the canon. In his retirement, Holmes is thus not merely studying bees but continuing the work he has been doing all along: analyzing the social frameworks of a contained ecosystem. The bee's closed environment replicates the social systems and frameworks which inform human behavior–and vice versa. The crime scene is representative of both. Beekeeping becomes a mirror of his crime scene analysis, with an even more explicit focus on the animal; it is a culmination of his animal interest which, as I have demonstrated, ripples beneath the surface of the canon, occasionally coming to the forefront in striking, immediate flashes. It is no coincidence that Heidegger chose the worker bee as a case study in his discussion of the phenomenological differences between man and animal.[77] With their systematic, organized social networks, bees present a semaphoric mirror by which to hold up human networks of interaction, relating, and experiencing. The study of bees' *attunement* becomes no different to Holmes than the study of the human *attunement* within London, or within a rural English town. In what we might consider as Holmes' final case, his study of bee culture, the animal and the human once again dissolve into one another–the complex web of organic being becoming the ultimate, universal phenomenon to be studied. Just as

[77] Heidegger, Martin. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*. Indiana University Press, 1985.

Doyle's life closes in the collapse of human and animal identity through his illustration of his life as a horse, his creation closes his detective career in a collapse of human and animal *being*.

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