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Staying Alive: Dynamic Equivalence Theory and Film Adaptation

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STAYING ALIVE: DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE THEORY AND FILM ADAPTATION

by

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Abstract

Translation is a task that must be done every day in order for the world to function. A perfect translation is impossible, because there is no way to provide exact equivalents of meaning in different languages. However, methods such as dynamic equivalence focus on conveying the message of a text in terms that a new recipient audience can understand. Dynamic equivalence could apply to all textual translations, not just Bible translation. If this is the case, then dynamic equivalence may be applied to adaptations of different types of text, such as book to film adaptations. Film adaptations are popular, largely because the story has already written, making the prospect of adaptation a deceptively simple one. There are plenty of examples of book-to-film adaptations that disappointed viewers. Those familiar with the original text are often disappointed because the movie "did not capture the spirit of the book," and outsiders to the story whose only exposure to it is the film adaptation often miss important details in the story or find themselves annoyed by a poorly-made movie. The film did not have the same impact on its intended audience as the original book, and subsequently failed. In this paper, I propose that film is close enough to language that linguistic theory may apply to certain aspects of filmmaking. This similarity would allow filmmakers attempting to adapt a given text to film in terms of dynamic equivalence, providing a satisfactory adaptation to both fans of the original text and casual moviegoers alike. This theory is put to use analyzing several adaptations of the Sherlock Holmes story "The Final Problem".

Translation and Dynamic Equivalence

Translation is the force that keeps our modern world spinning. Without it, there is no real way for the people of one language group to communicate with the people in another. There can be no exchange of ideas, no understanding, and no cooperation if this vital task is left undone. Today translation is becoming increasingly important, thanks to the ever increasing speed of globalism. Instantaneous communication is possible with people on the other side of the globe, thanks to the World Wide Web. Translators are vital for tourism, diplomacy, international business, and even in the conduction of internal government, as is the case with countries of high language density like Vanuatu, Senegal, or Papua New Guinea. Every language is a lens into the unique culture it represents, making understanding of each language vital because it aids in understanding each culture.

The concept of translation becomes more important and complex the deeper one reads into the subject. George Steiner's seminal text *After Babel*, which was published in 1977 but remains an important work on the study of translation even today, provides a comprehensive view on the breadth and depth of translation as a concept. Steiner even goes so far as to claim that "*inside or between languages, human communication equals translation.* A study of translation is a study of language" (47, emphasis Steiner). For the purposes of Steiner's book, translation is simultaneously the most simple act a human being can perform, because we are constantly translating others' utterances, and the most difficult, because a "'perfect' act of translation would be one of total synonymity" (407). In other words, a flawless translation would have to include the phonetic, grammatical, semantic, and contextual aspects of each language;

both the source text and the translated work would need to be perfect equivalents of each other, with nothing added, explained, or taken away.

A perfect translation is impossible, because there is no way to provide exact equivalents of meaning in different languages. Something must be added to explain the context, some things are taken away because subtleties may be lost in translation, and each language obviously does not sound exactly like any others. In Steiner's eyes, translation is both an unattainable standard and an everyday task. "When we read or hear any language-statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate. Reader, actor, editor are translators out of time" (Steiner 28). Likewise, each person uses language slightly differently, and occasional elucidations or tweaks in meaning are necessary for clear communication. "No two human beings share an identical associative context" (Steiner 170). We translate meaning whenever we use language. It is both an everyday occurrence and a task that requires high levels of skill and training.

Steiner acknowledges the immense difficulty of translating a written text from one language to another, saying that "the 'authentic translation' will never be a perfect copy of the original in a different language, but it will make the strengths of the original abundantly clear" (302). He goes on to state that "ordinary translation" attempts "'to produce the text which the foreign poet would have written had he been working in one's own speech now, or more or less now'" (334). This allowance frees the translator to use the proper writing conventions of the new recipient text when translating from a different language of origin. However, the subtleties of language translation remain a daunting challenge.

Translation may be done any number of ways, although several stand out above the rest. The first method, which may seem intuitive to those who speak one language only, or are not familiar with language study, is that of direct substitution. Each word in the original language would be translated into a corresponding word in the recipient language, with adjustments made for differences in grammatical structure. This method leaves the translation often feeling stiff and forced, and usually does not quite capture the underlying meaning of the original text. Lexical gaps, or words that exist in one language but do not exist in another, are common. Often words used to translate concepts into the recipient language carry different connotations from their rough equivalents in the original language. Idioms, metaphors, and other cultural concepts from the original text do not typically translate well, and cannot be understood in the recipient language. The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies explains in an article written by Eugene Nida that "effective translations are so rarely word-for-word, because literal renderings are often seriously misleading" (24). What is said in one language in straightforward, easy to understand language can be incomprehensible in another, because there are differences in understanding and thought between cultures and language groups. Word-for-word translations, then, are highly problematic and should be avoided.

Dialect variation throws another wrench into the translation process. Often the right way to say something does not apply to all speakers of a language, and may vary between classes or geographic locations. Dialect differences may be minimized by establishing a "composite version" of a language after studying the language itself in depth. Composite texts are risky because "no one actually speaks that way", and may be rejected by speakers of the recipient language (Nida 25).

Often translators dealing with small, infrequently translated languages are Christian missionaries concerned with the translation of the Bible. This raises the stakes of the new translation significantly, forcing the translators to use extra care lest they warp the meaning of Scripture and mislead the Christians for whom they are translating. The translator must understand the original text well enough to effectively write it in a new language, while still maintaining the intents of the original author within the text. The translator must hold a careful balance between the literalness and freedoms used in translating the text. Often traditional views and the translator's own cultural background may provide roadblocks in translation work; these views can stifle the translator's creative take on the original text and making the new text in the recipient language difficult to read or interpret. Further complicating things, the audience might have presupposed ideas about what they need in a translation, and these ideas may clash with the translator's own opinions (Nida 134). It is apparent, then, that translation is a task that requires a great amount of nuance to be done properly.

Eugene Nida developed his own theory of translation as a way to combat stiff, word-for-word Bible translation and to avoid culturally inappropriate translations. Rather than focusing on translating the meaning of every word in a text—a practice known as formal equivalence—Nida proposed the practice of translating the meaning behind the text. His goal was to translate texts in such a way that they had the equivalent impact on the receptor language that they had had on the original recipients in their original language. Nida called his theory functional equivalence or dynamic equivalence; because "dynamic equivalence" is more prevalent, I will simply use that term.

Dynamic equivalence is concerned with giving the new recipients of a translated document the same impact that the original document had on the original recipients. In Nida's own words, dynamic equivalence "consists in the reproduction in the receptor language of the message of the source language in such a way that the receptors of the receptor language may be able to understand adequately how the original receptors in the source language understood the original message" (119). A proper translation, then, is not one that duplicates a text word-for-word in a new language. It is instead a new text in a new language that allows its readers to understand the meaning of the original text in a way that makes sense in their own cultural context.

Although Nida's theory was originally developed for the purpose of Bible translation, it is useful in virtually every type of translation. It helps to elucidate parts of speech that are otherwise difficult to translate. For example, idioms are important sayings unique to their own cultures. They may be clichés, proverbs, or simply an ingrained way of saying something, but in all cases, idioms are notoriously difficult to translate. The meaning simply does not come across to the recipient language, leaving the translated text less meaningful than the original. It is possible to leave footnotes for readers of the translated text explaining the meanings of each idiom, but this practice becomes cumbersome in highly idiomatic or stylized language. It also distracts from the text and may confuse the original meanings or make them difficult to understand.

Nida's theory frees translators from slavish word-for-word translations, enabling them to use idioms in the recipient language's translation and permitting them more freedom to make translated sentences sound more natural in their new texts. Word-for-word translations are

ineffective, because there are no true equivalents between words in different languages. New words from the original text may be borrowed, if there is no way to express a concept in the recipient language. Some languages demand certain forms of politeness to be obeyed, while other languages are more direct. Japanese, for example, demands that its speakers use honorifics when addressing a person or when talking about someone else or even oneself. These honorifics vary depending on age, sex, and social standing, and even the omission of an honorific can have deep implications in conversation. Some languages, such as Mandarin, have no direct way to say yes or no or might find such direct answers to be rude or impertinent. Still others have no single word for concepts such as "love", "gift", or "grace". These difficulties make word-for-word translation impossible, forcing linguists and translators to be creative with their word choices or else borrow new words from other languages. Dynamic equivalence, while not a universal solution, does permit freedom for the translator to find ways to express concepts that are more natural in the recipient language than a clumsy estimate.

Dynamic equivalence adds more steps and checks to the translation process, but the end result—a faithful translation—is worth the time and effort. The theory fosters cultural sensitivity and respect, both for the recipient text and for the original, as failure to understand primary religious vocabulary stems from a lack of understanding of the original cultural context (Nida 117). "One should…never undertake to translate anything without having read the entire text and without having determined its significant themes, the manner in which they are structured, and the ways in which the themes progress and cohere" (Nida 100). This emphasis on the entire text demonstrates Nida's focus on the big picture, rather than the details. Analyzing more than just one word or sentence at a time is important, especially in cases of chiasm or parallelism.

Focusing on the main themes of a text enable the translator to focus on conveying a cohesive

message, rather than a fragmented series of sentences that seem related but may contradict each

other upon closer reading. Dynamic equivalence places the underlying meaning and

interpretation at the forefront of the text, giving the translator freedom to apply the culturally

pertinent features of the receptor language to the newly translated text. The result is an

integrated, cohesive passage that is easier to read than its more literal counterparts.

Care must still be taken to avoid too many freedoms. While formal equivalence can yield

a stiff, lifeless translation, dynamic equivalence may give the text a meaning that the original

author never intended it to have. A balance must be struck between the author's original intent

and the original audience's reception. A good translation illustrates a conversation between the

two, and that while the author's intentions are important, the audience's interpretation and all

subsequent interpretations and translations hold more clout in the long run. A text may be

revisited over and over again as time goes by and the cultural context changes. In Steiner's

words, "each age translates anew…interpretation, except in the first momentary instance, is

always reinterpretation, both of the original and of the intervening body of commentary" (249).

Translation, then, is not only the equivalent of one text's message in another language. It is also a

summary of the translations that come before it in time.

Nuance here is key. If a translator strays too far on the side of conveying meaning

without including the original text, then there may be little to no similarity between the original

text and the semantics behind the recipient text. The underlying meaning may still exist, but in

many cases it is difficult or impossible to fully divorce words from the meaning they carry.

Unwanted connotations from the new phrasing may occur in the recipient text, of which the

translator may be ignorant. Ultimately dynamic equivalence is a means for translating meaning

from one language to another, while keeping the text fresh in the minds of the readers.

Dynamic Equivalence and Film Adaptations

Because dynamic equivalence applies to all textual translations, it is possible that

dynamic equivalence may also be applied to adaptations of different types of text, such as book

to film adaptations. Film critic James Monaco, who wrote the book *How to Read a Film,* states

that "the narrative potential of film is so marked that it has developed its strongest bond with the

novel…Whatever can be told in print in a novel can be roughly pictured or told in film" (Monaco

29). The two mediums may be presented in the same language, but the two differ enough in

presentation that allowances must be made for a clear, effective adaptation. Monaco's book is

highly helpful on this front. It provides set of concepts and analytical tools to aid film studies,

critique, and even simply film for enjoyment. While it was published in 1977, it remains just as

relevant today as it was back then. Several of its main points help establish the idea that film

adaptations are close enough to translations that the theory of dynamic equivalence is still

applicable. However, because the book was written nearly forty years ago, some dialogue and

even disagreement with Monaco's ideas is necessary.

Film is just an important kind of text as the written word, although the two take very

different shapes. The two are very similar in that they can tell a story, but their differences extend

down to the methods each uses to convey narrative. Watching a movie is an experience that is

primarily visual and auditory. Reading requires literacy, a trainable set of skills. Meaning is made

by the reader as they process the words on the page. Film allows the viewer to sit passively and watch. The images are supplied for the viewer, and the viewer constructs meaning from the correlation of each image. There are no words intervening between the image on the screen and the image in the viewer's head. This mechanism of conveying information makes abstraction in film a difficult subject to explore without dialogue.

The written work is the relationship between story and storyteller (the author's persona, sometimes communicated through another narrating character), while film is tension between story and "the objective nature of the image" (Monaco 30). The persona of the narrator is weaker in film. If there is to be a distinct narrative voice beyond the camera, it must be through voiceover, which may come across across as hackneyed and awkward. As a result, the words in a film are often only the dialogue, which takes up just a fraction of the words written in the average novel. The novel—and, by extension, the short story—manipulates words far better than film can.

The written word showcases more easily the author's feelings about the subject, and may be more biased than film. The camera can show us a picture of an apple, but the written word describes the apple in such a way that we understand the narrator's attitude towards it. It may be an ordinary apple, but the words the author chooses tell us if the object is desirable, undesirable, beautiful, wormy, and so on. "Film does not completely eliminate the intervention of a third party between the subject and the observer [in art], but it does significantly reduce the distortion the presence of an artist inevitably introduces" (Monaco 7). It appears to be more difficult to lie with an image than it is to lie with words. Point of view is easier to isolate in prose than in film. Film appears omniscient, while prose may be told in the first person, or the narrator may have a

persona distinct from the actual author's personality. Where paragraphs and pages may establish a setting, an establishing shot in film, such as the opening of *Rear Window*, may need only a few seconds to provide the same amount of information. Film is better at communicating concrete detail, while books are more abstract.

Monaco states that novels are more demanding of their audience, while film is more demanding on the filmmaker's side because of technology and technique (Monaco 196). This statement should be more nuanced: once dialogue, score, and even the cultural background of the film are taken into account, film can be just as engaging as a book. Allusions can be made through dialogue and background events, and these might require more searching on the viewer's part.

Books and film vary in other ways, too. Books require imagination, literacy, and some level of cultural awareness to communicate their message. Film depends on the ability to process images and sounds, and tends to be a sensually more immersive experience than books. "The words on the page are always the same, but the image on the screen changes continually as we redirect our attention. Film is, in this way, a much richer experience" (Monaco 30). Reading is the mental processing of letters on a page, while watching a film is the visual processing of images on a screen. Both require the use of vision, but each conveys its message in staggeringly different ways.

Film is more limited than the written page, which does not operate under time constraints. Film might be limited by time, but its ability to convey meaning through pictures far outstrips the novel's. Written stories are limited to the author's viewpoint, while film conveys "more than a director necessarily intends" (Monaco 29). Authors often do not intend to convey everything,

especially symbols and themes, that comes across in their novels, either. Both literature and film

have various conventional ways of telling a story, and they differ quite widely from each other.

They are not languages in and of themselves, but they are enough like languages that dynamic

equivalence theory fits into the way they operate. Monaco explains this well:

> "As a medium, film needs to be considered a phenomenon very much like language. It has no codified grammar, it has no enumerated vocabulary, it doesn't even have very specific rules of usage, so it is very clearly not a language system like written or spoken English, but it nevertheless does perform many of the same communicative functions as language does" (44).

While film does not adhere strictly to a set grammar, it does communicate ideas in a manner

similar to language, allowing us to talk about film with linguistic terminology.

Film adaptations are popular, largely because the story has already been written, making

the prospect of adaptation a deceptively simple one. If the book is the first in a series, especially

a popular one, then there is a possibility that the film distributor may capitalize on a lucrative

merchandise. However, slipshod adaptations alienate audiences from the story, and may in

extreme cases, such as *The Golden Compass* (2007)[1]*,* drive them away from any interest in

reading the original work at all. The art of the adaptation must be as good as the original work. In

part, this explains why *Twilight* became an incredibly successful movie franchise, but *The*

Golden Compass did not. *Twilight*, a young adult novel about a girl who falls in love with a

vampire, remained true to the spirit of the novel it was adapted from. In contrast, the poorly

made film adaptation *The Golden Compass*, which deals with agnosticism and anger with the

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[1] For more information on these films, please see the Internet Movie Database at <u>IMDB.com</u>.

Church, did not successfully convey the complex themes of doubt and coming of age present in the original book.

There are plenty of examples of book to film adaptations that disappointed viewers, both those familiar with the original text and outsiders to the story whose only exposure to it is the film adaptation. Fans of the original text often complain that the film was unable to "capture the spirit of the book." The film did not have the same impact on its intended audience as the original book, making it a failure in terms of dynamic equivalence translations.

Film adaptations of children's stories that did succeed in attracting a fan base include *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010)*, Catching Fire* (2013)*, Twilight* (2008)*, and various *Harry Potter* films, most notable with the latter half of the series. Each of these stories managed to capture the same tone and characters present in the source material in two hours or less. *Game of Thrones* is a critically acclaimed television adaptation of George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* novels; both the source novels and the adaptation are aimed at a more mature audience. Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001-2003) sparked increased public interest in Tolkien's work, although Tolkien's family disowned the films for being too violent and for not being close enough to Tolkien's original intent. This alienation spread to much of the fan base with Jackson's *The Hobbit* trilogy (2012-2014), which bloated Tolkien's popular children's story into a long, heavy-handed action film series that seemed to all but abandon the titular character. Other, more acceptable adaptations include *Life of Pi* (2012) and *Ender's Game* (2013), although the latter lacked the deep emotional impact of the original story.

Adaptations are difficult to make and often fail because the filmmakers do not apply care in properly interpreting the source material. The filmmaker who wishes to adapt a written work

to the screen should take note from translation work. Monaco states that film's greatest weakness is that we are incapable of directly interacting with it (42). Written fiction, on the other hand, requires some imagination and thought, and readers may decide just how intensely they wish to interpret the action taking place. Film adaptation is, in a sense, a slice of the screenwriter's interpretation of the novel, alongside the views and interpretations of the director, the director of photography, the actors, the editor, and everyone else involved in making the movie, a process much like developing a composite dialect in a translation. This composite view is in danger of being rejected outright by audiences if it is too far from some interpretations of the text, or if it is not unified enough to make a solid single narrative.

Modern objections to this argument include YouTube, interactive music videos, viewings of movies like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), and audience influence on movies such as *Snakes on a Plane* (2006). YouTube enables anyone with a free account to upload videos to the web. These videos permit viewers to comment on the material presented through comments or through videos of their own. Interactive music videos, while not as prevalent, take elements such as pictures or map locations from the viewer's computer and place them into the video. Film showings of cult classics like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) or *The Room* (2003) permit the audience to shout dialogue back at the screen, throw objects, heckle the actors, and even get up and act out the story as it plays out on screen. The writers for *Snakes on a Plane* (2006) changed their script based on Internet feedback even before the movie was finished filming. Details such as the amount of money a movie makes can influence whether or not more films like it will be released in the future. Even the original *Star Wars* trilogy was edited to include updated (for the time) special effects. These innovations have been made possible

through the use of inexpensive technology and the rise of the world wide web, and should not be taken lightly. In most cases, a film will not change after it has been released. However, audience engagement with the film may change the message it conveys to the culture, perpetuating dialogue between the text and the meaning we take from it. Interpretations of a story vary based on the wider cultural outlook of the time. This ties in to the views about reception given in Charles Martindale's *Redeeming the Text*, which will be discussed in greater detail later.

The Vocabulary of Film

Although film has no vocabulary or set grammar, it "is very much like a language", in that "highly literate visually" people "see more and hear more than people who seldom go to the movies." Film is a "quasi-language" that varies from culture to culture, making it a text that can be read differently based on viewpoint (Monaco 121). The written word is the closest we can get to spoken language without uttering anything. The similarities between film and language are more difficult to outline, necessitating some sort of training. Any seeing person may watch a film, but it takes a trained person to fully understand the ways in which a film communicates its message.

Because film, symbols, and visuals are so closely intertwined, it would not do to discuss film from a linguistic viewpoint without mentioning semiotics—Saussure's take on linguistic theory, which focuses primarily on symbols and their ability to convey meaning. "Semiotics has presented an intriguing approach to the logical description of the language-like phenomenon of film and other recording arts" (Monaco 44). Signs and codes are essential when talking about film. It is hard to modify and rearrange the signs and signifiers in a fashion similar to language.

While language can be picked apart, pulled together, and used back and forth between participants, a film can only be presented from the source to the subject. It is a one-way medium, with the recipients interacting with it in their own heads, or taking away a message and conversing with other recipients about the film, but cinema is never a personal one-on-one exchange between director and viewer.

In film, as opposed to a true language, both "the signifier and signified are almost identical: the sign of cinema is a short-circuit sign" (Monaco 127). The "trichotomy" of signs—Icon, Index, and Symbol—from S.C. Peirce, Peter Wollen, in *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (1969) is important. The Icon is a sign in which the signifier represents the signified mainly by its similarity to it; that is, its likeness. The Index measures a quality not because it is identical to it but because it has an inherent relationship with it. The Symbol is an arbitrary sign in which the signifier has neither a direct nor an indexical relationship to the signified, but rather represents it through convention. These are not mutually exclusive (Monaco 132-133).

It is the Index that cinema seems to fall into most thoroughly, as it is neither an exact sign of the thing it represents, nor is it a strictly arbitrary symbol. "Cinema is an art and medium of extensions and indexes," says Monaco. "Much of its meaning comes not from what we see (or hear) but from what we don't see or, more accurately, from an ongoing process of comparison of what we see with what we don't see" (136). The camera does not lie, but it—and the screenwriter as well—is biased, and in this way film tells a story from a certain viewpoint.

Fully understanding a film requires a kind of visual literacy. "Anyone can see a film," says Monaco, "but some people have learned to comprehend visual images—physiologically, ethnographically, and psychologically—with far more sophistication than have others" (125).

This understanding comes from a basic grasp of the process of film making and the ability to pick up visual shorthand. Chapter 3 of Monaco's book, "The Language of Film: Signs and Syntax", is highly important. Here I will outline the big picture of film as communication comparable to language; any deeper study would require a reading of Monaco's book.

Monaco holds up the ideas of Christian Metz as vital to the study of film-as-language. "Christian Metz identifies five channels of information in film: (1) the visual image, (2) print and other graphics, (3) speech, (4) music, and (5) noise (sound effects)" (Monaco 180-181). This could be overwhelming compared to the single channel of information afforded by books, but it actually proves easier to grasp because it does not require imagination as does reading. Most of these "channels" rely on the processing of sound, rather than visuals. Sound is very pervasive. It helps set the mood and provides a way to track time and space, yet it is the channel to which we pay the least conscious attention (Monaco 181). Even the so-called silent films of the early 20th century had live music, filling the silence and conveying a mood, to accompany them.

Film is also like a language in that it has a specific grammar. While film does not have a strict syntax, it does adhere to several rules in order to make it a coherent way to tell a story. "Since film is not a language, strictly linguistic concepts are misleading." However, language and linguistic theory are close enough to film that, despite the lack of direct correlation, the two are mutually intelligible. Through semiology—the study of signs—the real study of film as a language could proceed (Monaco 126).

Film differs from language in one important way. Spoken language relies on the use of a set of arbitrary sounds, called phonemes, which differ from language to language. When combined in various ways, phonemes create groups of sounds that convey meaning called

morphemes. A word may be a single morpheme, or it may be made up of several morphemes. Speakers create these sounds to create the vocal message they wish to convey, and a listener interprets the sounds to make meaning. Likewise, a writer writes down the symbols that represent sound, and a reader interprets the symbols to create meaning. Monaco points out that "a film, unlike written or spoken language, is not composed of units, as such, but is rather a continuum of meaning" (129). This continuum of meaning is not made from the combination and re-combination of a series of sounds or packets of meaning, but rather arises from a series of pictures which the viewer then interprets to make meaning. The observer actively pulls meaning from the film; together the observer and the film make their own meaning. "The observer is not simply a consumer, but an active—or potentially active—participant in the process" (Monaco 125). A true film connoisseur does not passively watch a movie, but instead actively searches for images and symbols that help convey the underlying message.

While there is no direct correlation between parts of grammar and components of a film, it could be said that a single shot roughly correlates to a sentence (Monaco 128). As with language, a film's syntax is not a set of prescribed rules, but instead a description of patterns arising from all preceding films (Monaco 142-143). If so, a scene is anywhere on the scale from a paragraph to a chapter, making the whole movie a "book" or a "short story". In the case of television adaptations, an episode could a chapter in the book, or it could be an installment in a serial. Film editing is the task of putting together shots into a film. Context and relationship are just as important in film as they are in language. Rather than being communicated by linguistic patterns, films must use the more overt imagery of pictures strung together or, alternatively, cut away to leave a bare minimum.

Monaco's book makes the claim that film is almost, but not quite, like language. "What makes film distinctly separate from other languages is its short-circuit sign, in which signifier and signified are nearly the same…what you see is what you get" (Monaco 327). However, what we see often holds much deeper meaning than the simple image, just as the sounds we hear are more than just sound, but symbols of objects, ideas, and actions. We can understand complex ideas if we only know where to look for the symbols in film. If these symbols are commonly used, they may be codified into tropes, or "figures of speech". A trope is a code or sign used to tell a story in film (Monaco 45). Film is made up of codes, or signifiers of meaning. Codes are a kind of film shorthand, and can be signified by differences in lighting, lighting, cuts, framing, montage, or other tools of the trade (Monaco 328-329). "Film theory is… a never-ending set of codes and sub-codes that raises fundamental questions about the relationship of life and art, reality and language" (Monaco 331-332). Code goes beyond simply being an image, and becomes the primary way in which a filmmaker conveys their message to the rest of the world.

The "punctuation" of film is highly important. The simplest kind is the basic "unmarked cut", with one image beginning and another ending. A "fade" draws attention to either a beginning or an ending. Freeze frame calls attention to a single image. These terms all count as periods or full stops. Fades may suggest relationship between shots, but do not provide direct links. The dissolve, however, does create links, and counts as the "comma" of film. It mixes images in transition (Monaco 192).

Inflection in film image is done by variety of subjects, by angle, lighting, composition. "Film does not suggest, in this context: it states" (Monaco 128). Here, an image is vastly important, both by itself and paired with the images surrounding it. These are the blocks by

which the filmmaker conveys the message he wishes to tell. "Two aspects of the framed image

are important: the limitations that the frame imposes, and the composition of the image within

the frame" (Monaco 151). This talk about frame and image might seem too technical for this

subject, but it is helpful in knowing what to look for when watching a film.

Monaco's views of television are helpful, but outdated. He says:

> "The basic unit of television is not the show, but the series, which gives
> television an advantage in developing character over every other narrative
> except perhaps the novel saga…it is also conversely poorly equipped to
> succeed with other basic dramatic elements. Because it is much less
> intense than cinema, action and spectacle come off more poorly than in the
> movie theater…" (375).

Monaco's observation comes from a time when the word "pregnant" could not be used on

broadcast TV, so earlier American television is much less intense than today's shows. There are

plenty of examples of shows that convey extreme emotion and action today. Perhaps the

miniseries is the ideal format for shorter stories, but too truncated for more ambitious projects

like *A Song of Ice and Fire*, which is an ongoing series of novels currently being adapted into a

TV series called *Game of Thrones* by HBO; each novel is long enough that the story is adapted

into a ten-episode season per novel.

Monaco's views about British television ring true for today's American television as well.

"The British dramatic series differs from the American series in several notable respects: First,

and most important, it is close-ended; characters are allowed to grow, change, even die; there is

no pressure to keep a series going after it has outlived its dramatic potential; time is allowed to

pass…" there is more focus on the ensemble cast, and there are "similarities between the close-

ended television series and the nineteenth-century novel saga, and recycled them in the new

medium" (Monaco 382). American TV has, in more recent years, embraced the narrative form over the character study. Whether this is a good or bad change from the original stories depends on the way the narrative is handled and how each viewer sees the issue.

Television relies heavily on already existing tropes to outline a character or cast of characters. While modern-day television does excel in telling a story with an overarching narrative, television's true strength is in the character study, which relies on the adherence to or subversion of already existing character tropes. Each new television series refers back to the shows that came before it. This is strikingly similar to the thesis of Charles Martindale's *Redeeming the Text*, which states that every translation of a work hearkens back to previous translations as well as the original text (12). Thus, there are no "pure" translations other than the first one.

Redeeming the Text

Translation is a conversation between original text, translated text, translators, and all recipients of all versions. "Each time we use words we affirm, or contest, or (re)negotiate their meaning in the new context…[meaning] that language is and is not translatable, always and forever" (Martindale 88-89). It seems that everything is being translated nowadays — translation is cheaper than ever at the rate of $3 an hour (Ewald, personal communication). Noteworthy translations are distinguished from forgettable or bad ones by their level of quality; the amount of time spent on the translation is evident, and a slipshod translation shows clearly. Good translations withstand the test of time, while forgettable translations disappear from the public consciousness.

Charles Martindale, who was influenced by Steiner's book *After Babel*, writes about the

pervasiveness of translation in today's society. Meaning is created and re-created throughout

continuous translation or adaptation. While Martindale's book was written about Latin poetry, it

is certainly still applicable in today's contexts, and especially in adaptations of modern-day

stories. Every translation, according to Martindale, is influenced by the translations that came

before. They are held up to the standards of the preceding translations, are compared to them,

and constantly update or improve on them. He posits that

> "Our current interpretations of ancient texts, whether or not we are aware
> of it, are, in complex ways, constructed by a chain of receptions through
> which their continued readability has been effected. As a result we cannot
> get back to any original meaning wholly free of subsequent
> accretions" (7).

If this is the case, then it is impossible to approach an adapted story in the same way that the

original audiences did, which is why modern film adaptations often have references to the older

stories in throw-away lines of dialogue.

If the viewer has read the original story, then seeing the same narrative played out on

screen can be distracting or even boring. Slight changes to the narrative help keep the story fresh,

although this freshness can only be maintained if the motivations and underlying traits of the

character remain the same as they were in the original stories. Theme is more prevalent than

narrative in the world of film adaptation, although narrative is certainly important.

Texts' meanings may change according to the time period in which they are read.

According to Martindale, they "have a capacity for reinventing themselves within new contexts,

and this remaining readable" (16). Martindale proposes that "instead of treating texts as having

more or less fixed meanings located firmly within partly recoverable backgrounds… we could

negotiate the possible connections which can be constructed between texts" (16). So long as the

underlying meaning exists, and can be understood by the reader or the viewer, the outward

appearance of a text or a film may appear drastically different.

   This hearkens back to Steiner's observation that original texts are "a moving

target" (Steiner 249). When we translate a work from a previous time, we translate it into our

own context in our own time. Because languages and even cultural norms change, a translation

from fifty years ago may appear oddly outdated at best and grossly inaccurate at worst. "When

we shift from translating a concept into one word to translating it into another, it is not always a

previous misunderstanding of the original tongue that necessitates the change, but rather a shift

in understanding or outlook in our own culture" (Martindale 87). Martindale also argues that

meaning, rather than being conveyed by the speaker, is understood by the receiver. It is "realized

at the point of reception" (3) and must therefore change as the cultural outlook changes over

time. He goes on to note that:

> "The signs—and even these change their shape—have to be read, and *every* reading, even that (or those) of the author is, on this view, an act of translation. So we have no final [definitive] 'text', but rather an ever-widening fan of 'translations', which can always be supplemented by another translation… the conversation will never stand still, so long as there are people to participate in it" (Martindale 100).

It is not that texts are growing irrelevant as society evolves. Rather, society translates texts from

the past in ways that fit the current culture.

Sherlock Holmes and Adaptation

Sherlock Holmes seems an appropriate subject for this study. The Guinness Book of World Records lists him as the most portrayed literary human in film and TV (Guinnessworldrecords.com)[2]. There are many examples of films based on the character throughout the last century, and each one has a different view on his traits. Holmes is fascinating because he is a super-man, capable of learning seemingly impossible facts based on the appearances of the people around him and their surroundings. Holmes solves problems for the thrill of the chase. He has a distinct personality, at once warm and polite and cold and cruel. He is human, capable of making mistakes, both on the case and in his own private life. At the same time, he is alien, a case-cracking machine who laughs at the concepts of romance and emotion. He would be almost inaccessible if it were not for the character of Watson, who remains Holmes's longtime companion and helper in solving crime. We see Holmes through Watson's eyes, and we are interested in Holmes's cases not because we enjoy reading a good mystery, but because we like learning about the enigma of a man who solves supposedly unsolvable crimes. Holmes and his relationship with Watson are the main focus of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, and they are the true reason why Holmes adaptations are so prevalent.

"The Final Problem", published in 1893, tells the story of Sherlock Holmes's battle of wits with his arch nemesis Professor Moriarty and ends with the deaths of both characters. Doyle

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[2] For the purposes of simplicity, I will focus on a single Sherlock Holmes short story and four of its film adaptations. A synopsis for each may be found in the appendices.

wished to free himself from the confines of the character and try new things, which he felt were overshadowed by the detective. However, it should be noted that "a writer can never control the reception of his or her work, with respect either to the character of the readership or to any use which is made of that work." (Martindale 4). Doyle never intended for Holmes to be as popular as he is. His favorite work was a historical novel named *The White Company*, and once he finished it, he stated that he would never be able to write a better story (Biography 7).

Although he had been a medical surgeon, Doyle's real passion and talent lay in writing. He also volunteered as a surgeon in the British Army during the Boer War, and even ran for office in his native Edinburgh. He enjoyed playing golf, driving, body-building, and even played key roles in acquitting men wrongly accused of committing crimes (Biography 10). The man was a visionary who foresaw World War I and many of the technologies that came to play a large factor in it. He also came to believe firmly in Spiritualism and the occult, leading to several unpopular tours. After losing a lot of money, he was compelled to pick up the pen again, leading him to write more Holmes stories to the delight of the detective's fans.

Upon the publication of "The Final Problem" in 1893, fans of Sherlock Holmes went into mourning, even wearing black for the "deceased" detective. *Sherlock Holmes Online* states that once the controversial story was printed, a staggering "twenty thousand readers cancelled their subscriptions to *The Strand* Magazine." Sir Arthur Conan Doyle knew that he was making a risky move killing off his detective, but he wished to return to writing of a more literary nature, even at the risk of losing the money that his detective was earning him. Unfortunately for Doyle, he was unable to make money without writing about Holmes. Doyle eventually published *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), and later resurrected Holmes in the short story "The Adventure

of the Empty House" (1903). Holmes was back for good, but it is fair to say that "The Final Problem" (1893) helped escalate the detective to the legendary status he holds today. This story feels very sudden, jarring us out of our contentment in reading Watson's admiring descriptions of the detective on the case. We are left wondering how Watson will get on without Holmes, and we wish that Holmes had not met such a tragic end.

On an important note, Doyle's attitude towards the character extended to adaptations of his stories. When the American William Gillette wrote a play about the detective, Doyle gave him permission to "marry him, murder him, or do anything you like to him" (Sherlock Holmes Online). Gillette's play retained little of the happenings of the original stories, but Doyle remarked that it was "good to see the old chap again." So much for authorial permission. It seems that Doyle's liberal attitudes extended to his sense of ownership in his work, and although he might have preferred to be remembered for his other exploits, he might have enjoyed the many different stories his character has appeared in throughout the past century.

For the purposes of studying adaptation, I have chosen to look at different versions of "The Final Problem" throughout the last hundred and twenty years. The original short story is important as a benchmark by which to judge the following adaptations. *The Woman in Green* (1945) features Basil Rathbone, one of the most famous actors to portray Holmes. The filmmakers chose to update the setting and much of the plot, to varying degree of success. "The Final Problem" (1988) features Jeremy Brett, another famous Holmes, and returns to the original Victorian period, albeit with updated language and sensibilities. *A Game of Shadows* (2011) features an American, Robert Downey Jr., and an anachronistic blend of modern ideas and steampunk technology in an attempt to reach a specific visual aesthetic. "The Reichenbach

Fall" (2012) is a modern-day BBC adaptation featuring Benedict Cumberbatch. It abandons all

pretense at making a historically accurate Holmes show, and instead asks the question, "What if

Sherlock Holmes had grown up in modern-day London?"

Despite the vast differences laid out in Monaco's book, television should be treated

roughly the same as film, as it is a primarily visual medium. However, there should be a clear

understanding that television is supported by advertising and is given in serial format. This

format is much like the original presentation of the Holmes stories in the *Strand.*

Most of the similarities between *The Woman in Green* (1945) and the original story lie in

Holmes' character. Watson is a bumbling fool and a sidekick rather than a capable helper, and

Moriarty seems to be more interested in causing havoc than in profiting from his crimes.

Moriarty is a Peter Lorre figure, small and oily. The entire movie has a *film noir* feel to it,

punctuated by still shots and dark lighting. It might have been well received when it was first

made, but it has not stood the test of time, and now it just falls flat. The story feels thrown

together, not carefully crafted, and the cinematography and effects are limited by the technology

of the times. All of the scenes take place indoors, and the cameras do not pan or zoom. The only

truly memorable scene is the confrontation between Holmes and Moriarty in 221B, as the rest

feels grafted on.

"The Final Problem" (1988), in contrast, remains very close to the spirit of the original,

although it feels stiff at points. The ending fight scene feels somewhat clumsy, thanks to the

limitations of special effects at the time. Jeremy Brett, however, is a fantastic Holmes. The only

real difference between him and the original character is a much more guarded persona,

especially as he and Watson make their way across the Swiss countryside. This episode is faithful

to the original story without being too slavish, and it serves as an accurate portrayal of the

general mood and times of the original story. The setting is pure Victorian-era, and the only

changes serve to clarify the original text for viewers—saying "special train" rather than just

"special", for example, or supplying a heist of the *Mona Lisa* as a way to explain Holmes's

absence from London in the beginning of the story. It can be said that the story is different

because it takes place on screen rather than on paper. The viewer is provided with context

through setting and slightly modernized language, which the reader might not have access to. If

this episode has had a very wide effect on pop culture, I would say that it is the pinnacle of the

Holmes adaptations. Unfortunately, it is uncertain how well known this episode is outside of

more devoted circles dedicated to Holmes stories.

    A Game of Shadows (2011) is heavily influenced by the director Guy Ritchie's previous

movies about gangsters and is probably best characterized by a heavy steampunk feel. Holmes's

use of disguises and ability to think ahead are emphasized here. This movie utilizes slow-motion

and stylized action sequences paired with a voiceover by Holmes to illustrate his thought

process…but only when he is planning out how to fight a thug. This is meant to impress the

audience, but instead plays out in exactly the same way every time, and grows old quickly.

    In several scenes throughout the film, the viewer is allowed to see Holmes's thought

process as a series of pictures, such as wax being dripped on the floor to produce a mark. Other

times, Holmes simply blurts out a seeming *non sequitur*, which is explained either by Holmes's

later actions or other events. The series of pictures is helpful to the viewer, as they immerse the

viewers in Holmes's cognitive processes. Viewers feel included in Holmes's thoughts, enabling

them to see the way he solves his cases directly. However, the infrequent use of this device

makes the film frustrating to watch. The viewpoint here is semi-omniscient, and the viewer grows exhausted having to second-guess Holmes on some occasions and on others be spoon-fed an answer. There is no mystery here, only irritation.

This film is very contrary to the spirit of the originals. Holmes is brash, thoughtless, and given to entering fights rather than avoiding them. The Holmes of the original stories tends to look down on social convention, but he is not adverse to it unless he has legitimate reasons. Rather than taking place as a quiet yet urgent game of wits, *A Game of Shadows* (2011) is a frenetic, overdrawn sequence of explosions and chase scenes. Modern film tropes such as the cat-and-mouse love affair between Holmes and Irene Adler, the immediate explanation of most aspects of the mystery rather than allowing the story to organically develop, and the threat of the destruction of many countries in Europe are all meant to appeal to today's audiences, but they only served to alienate all but fans of simplistic action movies.

BBC's *Sherlock* miniseries, which features "The Reichenbach Fall" (2012), is a difficult example to discuss in terms of adaptation. Closeness to the spirit of the original is difficult to navigate because this series is set in the modern day, but the impact on today's culture is undeniable. Its wild popularity is partly due to the availability of the series and partly to the ability to talk about it via the internet. The show makes use of clever cuts and cinematography to keep the action on screen interesting. Scenes are structured in the same way as they would be in a written story or a more conventionally filmed show, with introductions, expository shots, and shots of each character as they speak, but the syntax of the cinematography is completely different from any other Holmes adaptations.

Instead of simple cuts from scene to scene, doors open to new scenes. Intimate

conversations take place in extreme close-up, while action shots of Holmes working on a case in

the lab are filmed through beakers rather than around them, emphasizing his alienness. Text

messages and websites are shown as white text hovering in the air, rather than as cuts to a cell

phone or computer screen: a dynamic translation of messages that would have been simply

written on the page in a print medium. Some of Holmes's thoughts take this form as well, such as

a glycerol molecule diagram in St. Bart's, or the deductions he makes about the people he looks

at. This technique seems novel at first, but soon becomes routine and is no longer distracting by

the time a third of the show is up, so it should not be classified as a gimmick.

Also important in any Holmes adaptation is the characterization of John Watson. Both of

the films in this case study gloss over or completely excise Watson's identity as a former army

doctor. In *The Woman in Green* (1945) there is no mention of it, and the bumbling, foolish

Watson is difficult to picture as having been in the army at all. *A Game of Shadows* (2011)

ignores this fact, although Watson is clearly a fighter. "The Final Problem" (1988) features a

Watson who does not mention his identity in this specific episode, but the characterization and

events are so close to the book that it is difficult to imagine this version of Watson not being an

Army doctor. In "The Reichenbach Fall" (2012), the role of the army doctor is a large part of

Watson's character and bearing, and helps establish Watson as the straight everyman to Holmes's

manic genius.

Ultimately, this specific Sherlock Holmes story is less about the case being solved than it

is about the relationship between Holmes and Watson. It is closer than anything else to a

travelogue and a chess game. While it is true that the short stories that first appeared in the

Strand were often exercises in problem solving, the only constant is the close friendship between the doctor and the detective. *The Woman in Green* (1945) deals primarily with Holmes' incredible intellect, and draws a contrast between him and a bumbling, comic Watson. "The Final Problem" (1988) is largely about the friendship between Holmes and Watson, although this is sometimes lost in the battle of wits between Holmes and Moriarty, another important relationship in the story. *A Game of Shadows* (2011) is concerned with action, first and foremost, and both main characters are perfectly capable of dishing out blows and taking them in turn. Also of note is the homoerotic subtext, which is played for laughs and serves to demonstrate that while Watson may be Holmes's physical better, the detective has him wrapped around his little finger. While some readers of the original story may claim that the two are in a domestic partnership, there is no definitive evidence for or against this claim in the original canon. Any adaptation that promotes this theory demonstrates bias in the adaptor, and indeed must be a flawed translation of the original. Adaptations that completely dismiss this theory may also be flawed, but it is difficult to know for certain whether or not Doyle intended his two main characters to be romantically involved.

"The Reichenbach Fall" (2012) is concerned with the story arc of two characters, and not merely about Holmes with Watson orbiting him. In this episode, Holmes is arrogant while Watson is humble, and the two are perfect foils for each other. Moriarty, too, is an excellent foil for Holmes: dark versus light, bad versus good, crime versus the law. Ultimately, "The Reichenbach Fall" (2012) is the version that cares the most about each character, and not just the titular detective.

The problem of translation here is the question of what exactly is being translated. If the chief goal is to establish the rivalry between Holmes and Moriarty, and to present a story line that locks the two in a battle of wits until they both meet their demise, then each of these adaptations is adequate to a degree. Each of them features a confrontation between the two masterminds, in which Moriarty threatens to make an end of Holmes. Each features a friendship between Holmes and Watson that serves to illustrate Holmes's superior intellect and Watson's extreme loyalty. They all conclude with a scene in which Moriarty dies and at least one of the two arch-enemies takes a great fall.

This is not enough to convey the emotional depth of the original story. There must be a level of faithfulness to the original text and the motivations of the original characters that is not present in all of these adaptations. Moriarty must appear to be in pursuit of Holmes, and must indeed have the upper hand at the very end. Holmes himself must appear to die, and Watson must believe it, and be crushed by it. If they do not distract from the adaptation, or do not seem as plausible on screen as they do on paper, then changes are permissible. The themes of the original text must be present, and must be apparent to the casual viewer.

Martindale's concept of translation as conversation works well with film. Each of these adaptations have references to the ones that came before—especially "The Reichenbach Fall" (2012), which is filled with small details referencing previous Holmes stories as well as other portrayals of the character. In one memorable scene, Holmes plays the violin as Moriarty ascends the stairs to his flat. When Holmes hears Moriarty on the staircase, he pauses playing. Moriarty stops for a moment as well. Holmes, demonstrating a lack of fear, resumes playing, and shortly afterward Moriarty finishes the climb to 221B. This scene, filmed in color with several

cuts, calls back to a nearly identical scene filmed black and white in a single shot in *The Woman in Green* (1945). It beautifully illustrates the rich history behind each successive Holmes adaptation as well as the eagerness of many screenwriters to continue in the Holmes tradition by acknowledging what came before.

Also of note is the deerstalker hat, a symbol not found in most of the original stories that has come to represent the character. Although it was not present in the vast majority of the original short stories, most people think of Holmes as traipsing around London wearing a deerstalker and holding a magnifying glass up to his face while stooped over some clue. This association rises from illustrations of the detective in more famous stories such as *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902)*,* a story that takes place in the countryside. Such a hat would be appropriate attire in the country, but not in the city, but the prevalence of pictures featuring the cap is such that most people today cannot think of Holmes without it. The Holmes in *The Woman in Green* (1945) wears a deerstalker about London, despite the fact that the hat was considered country clothing during the Victorian era and not at all appropriate for city wear. Holmes in "The Final Problem" (1988) wears a deerstalker once he and Watson have escaped to the continent, and Holmes in "The Reichenbach Fall" (2012) is gifted a deerstalker—which he loathes—in thanks for hunting down Interpol's most wanted criminal.

It is possible that *A Game of Shadows* (2011) and "The Reichenbach Fall" (2012) are in conversation through the use of clever film editing, but if there is any relation, it is through contrast, not comparison. *A Game of Shadows* (2011) emphasizes grittiness and action over anything else, giving an exaggerated, one-sided bent to Holmes' deductive powers and using

jittery camera work and stylized steampunk[3] motifs to do so. "The Reichenbach Fall" (2012) emphasizes the character's arrogance, quick thinking, and separation from society as a result of his gifts—and possible Asperger's Syndrome.

While all of these adaptations have elements of a good translation, they are not created equal. Some have been crafted with care, while others were made quickly to appeal to a large number of people. All except "The Final Problem" (1988) take liberties with the source material, to the point that the plots are wildly different. Finally, several adaptations are better known than others. Part of the importance behind a dynamic translation is the impact it leaves on a new audience, and a film adaptation is no different. No matter how well the story has been adapted, if it is not well known, it cannot leave a mark for future adaptations to look back on.

The Woman in Green (1945), however iconic, is not a particularly stellar adaptation, as the entire character of Watson is changed along with the original happenings of the story. The only constant here is Holmes and his rivalry with Moriarty, who has been reduced to parlor tricks in an attempt to disgrace Holmes. *A Game of Shadows* (2011) is evocative of a very specific feeling — a trendy steampunk motif, but this adaptation plays too fast and too loose with both the specifics of Holmes's character, world, and the events surrounding his cases. Historical license is made freely, and the scope of the story is blown wildly out of proportion. In attempting to be significant and appealing, *A Game of Shadows* (2011) becomes the most insignificant adaptation covered in this paper.

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[3] Defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "A genre of science fiction that typically features steam-powered machinery rather than advanced technology."

This leaves the viewer with the two television adaptations of Sherlock Holmes.

Television is ideal for adapting Holmes, which was always more about the character than the

mysteries. There are many famous cases, such as "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892),

The Hound of the Baskervilles (1902), *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), or "The Final Problem" (1893),

but often the details of these cases are glossed over because the atmosphere and attitude of the

characters is so much more important. Part of the appeal of TV is character study, which must be

consistent from episode to episode at the risk of alienating the audience, but which also allows

for greater, more natural character development than the short span of film.

"The Reichenbach Fall" (2012) portrayals Holmes's intelligence and coldness almost to

the point of his being inhuman. Because this adaptation dwells in the present and not in the late

Victorian period, there are many differences in values and narrative. Mention is made in passing

of romantic couples living together, for example. Moriarty also makes use of international terror

rings rather than London street thugs. Most of these changes are necessary, as they play better on

modern sensibilities than the original short story does. This leads to a vastly different narrative in

this episode from the canon, making this translation dynamic to a fault. Utmost care is taken to

call back almost every event and observation to something in Doyle's canon, but the plot points

tend to fall out of order, or even be references to previous adaptations and cultural viewpoints on

the character.

This is not a pure adaptation, but it is a rich one, especially for viewers who are well

steeped in Holmes lore. However, the adaptation does change the narrative and, in some scenes,

the themes enough that Cumberbatch's Sherlock is more supposal than adaptation—this story

asks "What would a modern-day Holmes be like?" rather than giving us another adaptation of

Holmes in his usual time and place. Because it does not adhere very closely to the original

narrative, it narrowly misses the mark as an accurate dynamic translation and instead lands itself

in the category of "imitation" (Martindale 77). However, in terms of impact on the general public

and pop culture, this adaptation is undeniably important.

The Holmes of "The Final Problem" (1988) is exquisite: the character is eccentric

without flamboyance, intelligent without improbability. The events of the story in the TV episode

are almost identical to the events in the original short story. No time is lost in acquainting

viewers with the various characters, as the run of previous episodes has already done that. The

addition of the theft of the *Mona Lisa*, at first viewing, seems somewhat improbable, but it serves

to demonstrate Moriarty's reach with criminals without making him a high profile character. It is

also based on an actual historical event, further weaving the story of Holmes into the public

consciousness. This Moriarty lurks in the shadows and sneers threats, then makes good on them

without attempting to make a show of his power or control. There is occasional stiffness in the

adaptation, such as the fight between Holmes and Moriarty at the waterfall, but this may be

attributed less to the screenwriter's translation and more to the special effects available at the

time. This Holmes is an excellent translation from page to screen—nearly word for word, while

providing elucidation on the text where necessary and skipping over the details that would

distract on screen. Even the editing and the camera work feel natural, with no gimmicks to

distract from the story and no unnecessary cuts. The spirit of the story is present alongside the

faithfulness to the original words and intent of the author. John Watson's pain over the loss of his

friend is real, and it can be felt by the audience as he closes the episode with his eulogy for his

best friend.

Conclusion

Dynamic equivalence theory, although more prevalent in the field of translation, could be put to great use in the world of film adaptation. It is not concerned with condensing a story down to its most salient plot points, then retelling them exactly as they occurred in the source material. Rather, it is concerned with telling the same story as the original in a way that is most meaningful in the new medium. A dynamically equivalent film adaptation of any written material would take into consideration the plot, the overarching themes, and the relationships between the characters in the original, then reconstruct the same story in a way that is best conveyed on screen. Such a method of adaptation would be more time consuming than simply reformatting a novel into a screenplay, but the result would be vastly rewarding. Readers would no longer leave the theater frustrated by a poorly adapted version of their favorite book. Instead, film and book connoisseurs alike would be able to share experiences, leaving behind poorly written adaptations for films and television series that pay respect to their source material while telling new versions of favorite stories.

Appendix A
"The Final Problem" (1893)

"The Final Problem" is the original short story that appeared in *The Strand* in 1893.

Watson is very "heavy-hearted" in his final dispatch concerning Holmes, in which he sets out to

write about "what really took place between Professor Moriarty and Mister Sherlock

Holmes" (Doyle 737). It seems that Moriarty's associates have been slandering Holmes after his

death.

This story begins with a flashback. Watson is sitting in his study when Holmes climbs in

through the window. The two have not worked together for some time, as Watson has been

married and has his own private practice, and Holmes has been employed by the French

government on some matter of national importance. Holmes appears nervous and thin, and fears

pursuit. He tells Watson about a power behind the criminal underworld in London, a

mathematics professor named Moriarty. Holmes calls him the "Napoleon of crime" and "the

spider at the center of a web" (740).

Holmes has recently had an encounter with Moriarty, who had appeared in 221B Baker

Street to threaten Holmes should he dare cross Moriarty again. Holmes has become a nuisance in

Moriarty's eyes by solving the crimes Moriarty has attempted to commit. The professor is a

wonderfully malevolent character who can match Sherlock's own powers of observation, and the

two can read each other well enough to understand the other's intentions. "Everything I am about

to say has already crossed your mind," snarls Moriarty, and Holmes responds coolly, "then no

doubt my answer has crossed yours" (742). Moriarty despises Holmes and wants him out of his

way, while Holmes admits that "my horror at his crimes was lost in my admiration at his skill…

[should Moriarty be caught, it would be] the greatest criminal trial of the century" (740).

We return to Watson's study. Holmes has been pursued by Moriarty's henchmen all day,

and there have already been three attempts on Holmes's life. Holmes leaves so as not to endanger

Watson, but not before outlining a complex plot to get the two to the continent safely, where they

can be out of Moriarty's reach while Scotland Yard makes its move on the professor's network.

Holmes and Watson leave London, pursued by Moriarty and helped by Holmes's brother

Mycroft. The chase becomes a game of wits in which Holmes and Moriarty second and third

guess each other. It is clear that Moriarty has been disgraced and wishes to revenge himself on

Holmes, who makes his way with Watson from France to Switzerland. As they travel, Holmes

and Watson decide to detour to Reichenbach, on the advice of an innkeeper. While on their way

to the falls, Watson is called back to the inn to help ease an English woman dying of

tuberculosis, but Holmes walks on alone.

Upon arriving at the inn, Watson learns from the innkeeper that there was no such

woman. He realizes, too late, that the note must have been a ruse by Moriarty to separate him

from Holmes. Watson rushes back to the waterfall, but he is much too late. There is nothing left

but Holmes's walking stick and a note, informing Watson that the detective had known the dying

woman was a ruse all along. Holmes gives Watson his best regards and tells him where to find

the criminal file on Moriarty at his house in Baker Street. The rest of the story is left to Watson to

discern from his surroundings. He concludes that there had been a scuffle on the path between

the two men, and that they had both fallen into the cauldron beneath the Reichenbach Falls.

Watson is left brokenhearted, concluding in his dispatch that Holmes was "the best and the

wisest man I ever knew, and that no one could convince me otherwise" (755).

Appendix B
The Woman in Green (1945)

This brief film and Doyle's short story are so different that it would probably be easiest to talk about the areas where the two stories are similar, rather than where the stories diverge. The setting is London in the mid-1940s, and the overall tone of the movie is taken from film noir mysteries. The camera does not move at all, and every scene is shot inside.

Scotland Yard has a mystery on its hands. A series of murders points to a single serial killer who targets young women and takes the ring finger from each of his victims. An Inspector Gregson comes to Holmes for help, meeting him at a bar to discuss the case, where Holmes happens to notice a couple eating—a man named Sir George and a woman in green, whose name is Lydia. Sir George and Lydia leave to have a nightcap at her house, but not before he takes a book of matches from the bar.

The next morning, Sir George wakes up in a strange motel room, disoriented and unsure of the events of the night before; he only remembers sitting on Lydia's couch and the lights being dimmed. He hears a boy on the street selling papers with a headline about another victim in the string of murders. Sir George returns to Lydia's house, worried that he might have done something terrible. A stranger joins them, with evidence in a small box that Sir George might have committed the murder. Sir George asks the stranger if he is a detective, and the stranger assures him that he is "quite the opposite". It is implied, but not outright stated, that the stranger is Moriarty.

Meanwhile, Holmes and Watson receive a distressed young woman in their study. She is the daughter of Sir George, and she is worried about her father's behavior, suspecting that he

might be the serial killer. The night before, he had buried the small box from the previous scene

in his garden. When Sir George's daughter opened it, the box held a ring finger. Holmes and

Watson accompany the young woman back home, where they discover Sir George dead in his

study. Holmes deduces that the man had been blackmailed, and that there is a sort of organization

behind the murders. He suspects "the most dangerous criminal mind the world has ever

known"—Moriarty. The dialogue establishes that Moriarty is presumed dead by the general

public, having been hanged some months before. Holmes doubts the truth of this statement.

After returning to their flat at 221B, Watson receives a call to help someone with a

medical case. He rushes out, leaving Holmes to play his violin. A shadowy figure enters the

house and begins to ascend the staircase. When one of the steps squeaks, Holmes breaks off the

piece he is playing, and the figure pauses on the stairs. Holmes begins to play again, as if to say

that he knows the intruder is there and that he is not worried about it; in response, the intruder

continues up the steps and confronts Holmes.

The intruder reveals himself as Moriarty, and takes responsibility for the blackmail and

death of Sir George. The dialogue is similar, but not word accurate, to the original confrontation

in the book. Moriarty reveals that he has kidnapped Watson, and urges Holmes to drop Sir

George's case. Holmes informs Moriarty that the two of them "shall walk through the gates of

eternity hand in hand"—he will continue his work in foiling the criminal underground, no matter

what the consequences.

After some posturing on both sides, Moriarty leaves and Watson returns, only to be sent

by Holmes across the street to investigate an open window in an empty house. He is followed by

a rifleman who shoots at a profile in Holmes's window. Watson assumes Holmes is dead, until

the detective springs from the shadows and disarms the sniper, a man named Colonel Williams, who behaves stiffly and has been hypnotized to kill him by Lydia, the same woman whom Holmes had seen at the bar in the beginning of the film. Holmes explains that in each case of the young women who had been killed, some man had been hypnotized and provided with evidence that they had done the deed, then blackmailed by Moriarty. The sniper is then killed by one of Moriarty's henchmen, presumably because he has given away valuable information to Holmes.

Moriarty and Lydia conspire to bring Holmes to an unsavory demise. They lure Holmes and Watson to the Mesmer Club, which is devoted to the study of hypnotism. Watson is placed under hypnotism for comedic effect. While Watson is under the influence, Lydia appears, denouncing the members of the Mesmer Club for cheapening the art of hypnotism, then inviting Holmes back to her house so that she can demonstrate the "true art".

Holmes accompanies Lydia back to her house, where she drugs him with marijuana and places him in a hypnotic state. Moriarty appears from the shadows. After satisfying himself that Holmes has truly been hypnotized, he instructs Holmes to write a suicide letter, then has him walk the length of the terrace on the second story of the house. He intends to have Holmes jump off it to his death. Watson bursts into the room just in time with Inspector Gregson and other officers from Scotland Yard, and Holmes reveals that he has not been hypnotized at all. Instead, he has used a drug of his devising that enabled him to feel no pain, allowing him to pass Moriarty's test. The rest has all been acting and stalling, in the hopes that Watson and the police would arrive before Moriarty instructed him to do anything destructive.

Holmes gets off the terrace and Inspector Gregson arrests Moriarty and Lydia, but before they can leave the scene of the crime, Moriarty attempts to escape and falls to his death. Holmes and Watson walk away into the shadows, and the film ends.

Appendix C
"The Final Problem" (1988)

"The Final Problem" is a very accurate adaptation, down to the landmarks and architecture that would have been present in Victorian England. Camera work is minimal, but this is a presentation of the original story, not a reimagined battle of wits between Holmes and Moriarty. The special effects showing Holmes and Moriarty falling into the cauldron at the base of the Reichenbach Falls are appropriate for a TV series filmed in the late 1980s, and although the fall is a sickening one, it is possible to see the wire suspending the actors.

The plot for this television episode is very close to the original short story, to the point that most of the dialogue is quoted word for word. There are very few differences, although the biggest is the revelation of the nature of the case that Holmes is working on for the French government. He is attempting to solve the theft of the *Mona Lisa*, a plot point taken from a real life art heist that made the painting even more famous than it already was. This plot feels grafted into the rest of the story, but serves well to illustrate Moriarty's long reach in the criminal world. Moriarty intends to have an artist make copies of the painting, then sell them to various private art collectors. This implies that Moriarty is active outside of London, which he does not appear to be in the original stories, making the danger of being pursued by him through Europe all the more real. After Holmes recovers the original painting and foils Moriarty's plans, the master criminal resolves to remove Holmes from the picture.

The other differences between this adaptation and the source are minimal; they serve to make the story more accessible to casual TV watchers. The three attempts on Holmes's life are shown, rather than told, in the very beginning of the episode. Watson does not seem to be

married, and Holmes fills him in at 221B rather than in Watson's study. Moriarty implies in his

speech in the Baker Street confrontation that he has been behind many other cases. This is not as

direct as the short story, although such a conclusion is logical. There are one or two updated

speech choices as well. As Holmes and Watson make for the continent, Holmes talks about

Moriarty engaging a "special train", rather than just a "special" as it was called in the original

story. Audiences in the 1980s would have understood the latter to mean a kind of gun, rather than

a chartered locomotive.

Also of note is the addition of a sniper as an added danger to Holmes and Watson's

travels through the Swiss countryside. While Holmes is almost carefree in the original story, he is

shown to be more nervous in this adaptation. Whether Watson notices that Holmes is on edge is

left unclear, but it is obvious to the audience that Holmes is well aware of the danger he is in.

Holmes wears his deerstalker cap while camping, a reference to past pictures of the

character, especially the illustration *Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty at the Reichenbach

Falls* by Sidney Paget.

The final letter from Holmes to Watson is abridged. The fight scene between Holmes and

Moriarty feels awkward and prolonged, although two middle-aged scholars fighting is hardly the

stuff of action film sequences. The end of the episode is marked with direct speech eulogizing

Holmes by Watson into the camera, as though he is writing a direct address to the audience.

Appendix D
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (2011)

Where the 1988 adaptation is faithful to the original plot, this adaptation is completely

different. The scope and story are expanded, engulfing all of Europe. The main plot line eschews

the impending arrest and demise of Moriarty's gang for ongoing bombings between Germany

and France and the impending reality of a world war. While important in Doyle's views in

historical hindsight, these views are not intrinsic to the character of Holmes and in fact violate

the smaller scope of the short stories. Cinematography makes use of jittery camera work and

sweeping shots. The music in the film is performed on a slightly out of tune piano, evoking a

gritty feeling. Special effects are used liberally.

Because this is a longer film and not an episode in a television show, the plot is much

more elaborate. It opens with a voiceover by Watson, who explains the precarious situation that

the world is in. Bombings are shown in a sensationalistic manner, which might play on the

thoughts and feelings of those who are worried about terrorism today.

Irene Adler, a character present in the short story "A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891), shares

a tempestuous and flirtatious relationship with Sherlock Holmes. He follows her around the

London underworld, trying to intercept a package she carries for Moriarty. She succeeds in

delivering it, although Holmes manages to disable the bomb inside. Moriarty kills Irene with a

fast-acting form of tuberculosis; he tells her as she dies that he cannot trust her because she has

feelings toward Holmes as well as an inability to complete the missions given to her.

Watson is set to be married to Mary Morstan, and it is plain that although Holmes is his

best man, Holmes is jealous. As they bicker over the impending wedding, Holmes mentions

Moriarty to Watson; Moriarty is shown to be a famous, influential, and well known and liked

professor of mathematics…whom Holmes suspects of having a criminal web all over the world.

Holmes's reasoning is not shown. The only evidence given is a web of threads on Holmes's wall

connecting articles about crime all over the world to one point: a picture of Moriarty.

Holmes is shown to be a mad genius who invents and experiments. Much of the dialogue

between him and Watson takes the shape of Holmes badgering Watson and Watson tolerating his

whims. Mycroft, who favors largely in this story, is introduced early on. He is just as reticent as

his canonical self, and he lets slip that he must attend a peace summit in Reichenbach,

Switzerland, in a piece of clumsy foreshadowing.

Holmes takes Watson out on stag night. Watson, disgusted with Holmes's behavior,

leaves Holmes to gamble. Holmes, in turn, uses the evening to scout for information about the

unrest in London. He meets with Madame Simza, a Romani ("gypsy") woman who reads Tarot.

Holmes tells Simza that "Rene has found his purpose in life". The two are then surprised by an

assassin who has been sent to kill Simza. Holmes and the assassin fight throughout the

gentlemen's club, accompanied by jaunty violin music and wild acrobatic and intercut with a

very drunk Watson gambling. The sequence continues until Watson loses his winnings and the

assassin is thrown into the Thames River.

Holmes manages to drive Watson to his wedding the next morning in time, although both

are disheveled and hung over. Colonel Sebastian Moran appears during the celebrations

afterward and quietly threatens Holmes, then asks him to meet Moriarty at the college.

In a rough analogue to the Baker Street confrontation, Moriarty threatens the well-being

of the newlyweds, and gives Holmes Irene's handkerchief as proof of her demise. He hopes that

threats will persuade Holmes to drop the case. Holmes responds that he will "cheerfully" accept demise by Moriarty, so long as the two are undone by each other.

Watson and Mary set off by train for their honeymoon, but are interrupted by soldiers who wish to kill them. Holmes, disguised as a woman, joins the fray, and the soldiers fire their guns throughout the train until Mary is pushed off the train into a river, and the last car in the train is uncoupled from the first. Holmes wreaks havoc with devised implements.

Holmes and Watson go on to Paris, where they see Moriarty signing books and Simza encamped with her people. Colonel Moran skulks about in the shadows.

Mary, who has been rescued from the river, is safe at Mycroft's house. Mycroft walks about the house naked, and his senile butler is the butt of a throwaway joke. Meanwhile, Holmes and Watson carouse with Simza's people, then continue on their quest to discredit Moriarty.

Holmes, Simza, and Watson go in search of Rene, Simza's brother, and instead find a bomb maker working for Moriarty. There is a confrontation that leads to more shooting and several slow motion effects. There is also a bombing, which is used as a cover for the murder of a gunmaker. Holmes somehow deduces that Moriarty is going to Berlin via the gunmaker's factory. Instead of being pursued across Europe by Moriarty, it is Watson and Holmes who are doing the pursuing. Moriarty seems to think the pair are dead, and does not concern himself outwardly with the doings of the detective.

The pursuit to the factory leads to more skulking around in shadows, this time by Holmes and Watson. The factory is ominous and populated with hundreds of warheads. Holmes admits that his "horror at [Moriarty's] crimes were matched by [his] admiration" for Moriarty's ability

to manipulate world events. Watson sends a wire back to England, but the contents of the

message are not disclosed to the viewers.

In an unpleasant scene, Holmes is caught and hung by his shoulder from a large hook,

then pushed around the room by Moriarty as a Schubert song plays. It is revealed that Moriarty

wishes to profit from a world war. Watson is pinned down by Moran, but manages to escape by

firing a massive cannon at the colonel.

The escape from the arms factory is a long string of machine guns, explosions, running,

and slow-motion effects. Guns fire and trees explode as shrapnel flies everywhere. One

memorable shot uses slow motion to illustrate Moran breathing deeply before sniping, but

otherwise this sequence is full of loud noise and fire. After running in slow motion for nearly a

full ten minutes, Holmes, Watson, and their companions escape on a train. Watson stitches up the

party and there is a somewhat quiet scene in which he and Holmes bicker. Only then does

Holmes apologize for interrupting Watson's honeymoon.

After patching up their party, Holmes, Watson, and Simza make their way to a peace

summit at Reichenbach, which has been reimagined as a castle-city on top of an enormous

waterfall. They meet with Mycroft, who informs them that Moriarty is an advisor at the summit.

They are also given information that Simza's brother Rene is an assassin bent on killing one of

the dignitaries, and is the "one thing" linking Moriarty to the coming war.

This peace summit turns out to be a soiree in which Mycroft and Holmes can publicly

discuss the fact that Moriarty will have certain ambassadors assassinated. Holmes uses the dance

at the opening gala as a way to observe the room and discover that, somehow, the assassin's face

has been altered by plastic surgery and glass lenses to disguise his eye color.

Holmes leaves the gala to meet Moriarty on top of a balcony over the waterfall, where the two engage in a five-minute chess game. Their dialogue covers the events in the ballroom, where Simza recognizes her brother the assassin. Rene is killed by Moran, intercut with Moriarty boasting that Holmes "is not fighting me, but the human condition." Moriarty intends to profit from a war, as he controls both governments and arms manufacturers.

Holmes then mentions a notebook stolen from Moriarty, never before shown in the film, as a vital plot point that allows Scotland Yard to raid Moriarty's assets in London and donate his money to the Widows and Orphans of War Fund. Moriarty is truly undone, and grows enraged. He and Holmes fight each other in slow motion, predicting each other's movements through voiceover. Holmes faces certain defeat because of the injury to his shoulder and Moriarty's college pastime as a boxer. Desperate, Holmes grabs Moriarty and rolls over the balcony, taking his nemesis down the waterfall with him. Watson sees the two men disappear over the side of the balcony.

A large funeral is held for Holmes in London, and Watson quotes the original story, saying that "I shall ever regard him as the best and the wisest man I have ever known." He types "the end" at the bottom of his manuscript, then opens a package for him containing evidence that Holmes survived his fall. Watson leaves, apparently excited and thoroughly unconvinced that Holmes is dead, while Holmes emerges from a disguise in Watson's study to type a question mark after "the end".

Appendix E
"The Reichenbach Fall" (2012)

This episode, set in modern-day London, begins with a cold open in which Watson meets

his therapist for the first time in eighteen months. Watson struggles through stating that his best

friend, Sherlock Holmes, is dead, and the opening credits roll.

There is a flashback to three months before and a string of successes for Holmes based on

short stories published by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The stories nod to the deerstalker hat, a gift

which Holmes hates, as well as a reference to the Turner painting *The Falls of the Reichenbach*,

which Holmes recovers after it has been stolen. Holmes does not seem to care much for the

publicity his success is earning him, although Watson is worried that "the press will turn" on

Holmes and eventually give him a bad reputation.

Moriarty poses as a tourist at the Tower of London. Notably the Baker Street standoff, in

which Moriarty and Holmes meet face to face for the first time and threaten to continue pursuing

each other has already occurred by this point. Moriarty has threatened to "burn" Sherlock, and

has been behind several cases solved in previous episodes, but the audience has seen him do

nothing yet. Moriarty stages a three-way heist by activating three apps on his phone. One allows

him to break in and steal the crown jewels from the Tower of London, the next opens Pentonville

Prison, and the third opens the vault at the Bank of England. When the police arrive at the Tower,

Moriarty is seated on the throne and wearing the crown jewels. "No rush," he tells the police,

then allows himself to be arrested.

The trial, six week later, is considered to be the "trial of the century" by the press.

Sherlock has an encounter in the bathroom that alienates him from one journalist and symbolizes

his alienation from the press as a whole. "You repel me," he tells the reporter, as he clearly does

not approve of her ruthless wish to climb to the top by getting an inside scoop on Holmes.

During the trial, Holmes refers to Moriarty as a "spider at the center of a web" and a

"consulting criminal", further establishing the parallels between their two characters. Holmes is

someone people go to to solve crimes; Moriarty is someone people go to in order to commit

crime. Moriarty is not a professor. The suits he wears imply that he might be in business, but

there is no mention of an occupation beyond "criminal".

While giving evidence in the trial, Holmes is thrown out of the court for contempt. His

arrogant remarks illustrate the pride that will later become, quite literally, his downfall. Moriarty

pleads not guilty and offers no evidence in his defense. The judge recommends that the jury find

him guilty, but the jury finds him not guilty and he walks free.

Moriarty pays Holmes a visit just after the trial. As Holmes plays the violin, a shadow

crosses the threshold and ascends the staircase. When one of the steps squeaks, Holmes breaks

off the piece he is playing, and Moriarty pauses. Holmes resumes playing; in response, Moriarty

enters 221B. Holmes offers him tea and the two sit down for passive-aggressive sparring and

conversation. Moriarty states that he knows exactly what he is, saying that "every fairy tale

needs a good old fashioned villain." He renews his promise to "burn" Sherlock by saying "I owe

you a fall", and plants the idea of a computer code that can eliminate secrets. "I own secrecy. In a

world of locked rooms, the man with the key is king, and honey, you should see me in a crown."

This certainly plays on modern sensibility, and is especially scary given the scandals about

wiretapping and the NSA today. It is nothing like the vague idea of crime mentioned in Doyle's

stories, but it is a potent idea, proving that the stakes are high for everyone in this story, not just

Holmes. This scene is especially notable for its brilliant dialogue.

Meanwhile, Mycroft brings Watson to the Diogenes Club, mentioning an exposé on

Holmes by Kitty Riley—the journalist from the bathroom encounter. Mycroft informs Watson

that a handful of assassins have taken up residence around 221B. He also asks Watson to keep an

eye on Holmes for him, as Mycroft and Holmes have a strained relationship and often refuse to

talk to each other.

Upon his return home, Watson finds an envelope full of breadcrumbs on the doorstep.

Detective Inspector Lestrade and several other policemen are in the living room; they have a case

for Holmes. The children of the ambassador to the US have been kidnapped. Several clues at the

children's school appear linked to Grimm's fairy tales. Holmes demonstrates arrogance and

disdain for the police, serving to alienate him further from Scotland Yard. After collecting

evidence from the kidnapper's tracks, Holmes and Watson pay a visit to St. Bartholomew's

Hospital, where Sherlock's assistant Molly (an original character and not part of the original

stories) helps him run several chemical tests. Molly, who has had an unrequited crush on

Holmes, notes that Sherlock looks sad, and offers to help him. She knows that she "doesn't

count" in Holmes's mind, which is why she can tell that Holmes is upset whenever Watson isn't

looking.

The evidence found at the school leads Holmes and the police to the kidnapped children,

but suspicion falls on Holmes when the little girl begins screaming as soon as she sees him. At

the same time, the letters IOU begin following Holmes around the city in the form of graffiti,

although it is unclear whether or not this is real or in Holmes's head. Several members of

Scotland Yard take their concerns about Holmes to the chief commissioner, who orders them to

bring him in. This scene is intercut with a clip of Moriarty telling a children's story—"The Story

of Sir Boast-A-Lot"—on the television in the cab Holmes is riding alone in. After watching the

clip, Holmes panics and leaves the cab, which he discovers afterward Moriarty himself is

driving. As Holmes stands confused in the street, a strange man pushes Holmes out of the way of

an oncoming car. The stranger is then shot by a sniper. Watson arrives and identifies the man as

one of the assassins living near 221B.

Lestrade comes to 221B to bring in Holmes, who knows that this is all a ruse by Moriarty

to discredit him with the public. "It is a game, Lestrade, and not one I am willing to play."

Watson is worried that the world will think Holmes is a fraud, but Holmes does not understand

this worry. When the chief superintendent of Scotland Yard insults Holmes, Watson hits him and

is promptly arrested as well. The two run, encountering another one of the assassins, who asks

them for "the computer key code" that Moriarty left in 221B. Holmes realizes that the code is

another method of smearing his name on top of the Kitty Riley stories. He and Watson go to pay

the journalist a visit.

Riley's source and apparent boyfriend is a man named Richard Brook, an alias of

Moriarty. Kitty Riley believes Richard Brook is an actor, a man hired by Holmes to play

Moriarty and to allow Holmes to show off his intellect. She has printed this story in the

newspaper. Moriarty escapes once again, and Holmes realizes that now that London thinks of

Holmes as a fraud, the only thing left for Moriarty to do is to kill him. Holmes goes to Molly for

help, and finally admits that he cannot defeat Moriarty on his own. Watson finds Mycroft and

realizes that Mycroft leaked information on Holmes to Moriarty in return for information on the criminal underworld of London. Mycroft is penitent, but Watson leaves angry.

Watson and Holmes meet briefly at St. Bart's Hospital, but Watson soon receives a call that Mrs. Hudson, their landlady, has been shot. He rushes back to Baker Street, leaving Holmes to send a text message to Moriarty, asking him to meet on the roof of the hospital.

Moriarty reveals that he thinks the "final problem" is "staying alive", referring to the pop song and Moriarty's ringtone, due to the boredom from dealing with "ordinary people". The two discuss how Moriarty managed to pull off his heists, and Moriarty reveals that he has no computer key code able to open anything, simply the help of "willing participants." He also states that he "loves newspapers. Fairy tales. And pretty grim ones too." He then attempts to persuade Holmes to kill himself by jumping off the roof of the hospital, and tells Holmes that Watson, Mrs. Hudson, and Lestrade will all be killed if he does not.

Holmes, shaken, asks for "a moment of privacy", then begins to laugh. He realizes that Moriarty has the ability to call off his friends' potential killers. "If you want to shake hands with me in hell, I will not disappoint you," he says. Moriarty realizes Holmes can somehow get Moriarty to call off the assassins if Moriarty remains alive. Moriarty shakes Holmes's hand, then kills himself, leaving Holmes to stand on the rooftop alone, with assassins still bent on killing Watson, Lestrade, and Mrs. Hudson.

Holmes stands on the edge of the roof and calls Watson, who is by now rushing back to the hospital, having found Mrs. Hudson unharmed. Holmes tells Watson that "this phone call is my note," then "confesses" to being a fraud. Watson can see Holmes standing on the roof while

the two talk, but Watson cannot reach him in time. Holmes jumps from the roof and is carted away by nurses and bystanders, very clearly dead… or at least Watson believes him to be.

Moriarty's assassins, satisfied that Holmes is gone, leave Watson, Lestrade, and Mrs. Hudson unharmed. The papers proclaim "Suicide of Fake Genius". Watson visits his therapist in a return to the scene from the opening. He then goes to the cemetery with Mrs. Hudson.

Watson speaks to Sherlock's grave, saying, "You were the best man and the most human human being that I've ever known, and no one will convince me that you told me a lie." He expresses sadness and anger about the detective's death, then regains his soldier's bearing and walks away. The camera pans to follow Watson's path across the cemetery to Sherlock Holmes, who is clearly alive and watching his friend. The detective then turns and walks away in silence, leaving the audience to wonder how Holmes survived his fall and how long he will allow Watson to believe he is dead.

Faith Statement

The theory of dynamic equivalence was originally formulated for the purpose of Bible translation. Other scholars have taken this theory for use in secular translation work; I have taken it from its original context and placed it in a position to be used in film study rather than linguistics. This change is not meant to cheapen the theory or detract from its original purpose. On the contrary, I have intended to use dynamic equivalence to enrich the world of film adaptation. I do not believe that my work is the final word in film adaptation, but it is my hope that it provides clarity and insight into a difficult task. Moreover, it is my hope that guidelines drawn from dynamic equivalence would be used to create worthwhile films that engage the audience. Film, when crafted well, may be used to entertain, enlighten, and ask difficult questions that help hone the viewer's worldview.

I believe that humanity was created with a desire to explore the world, to ask questions, and to create powerful stories that help explain the world around them. I believe that God is glorified by these acts of little creation, and doubly so when the stories created are well crafted and tell the truth. Tolkien outlines this idea far better than I could in his essay "On Fairy-Stories". I believe that by engaging the stories that came before, we can adapt the past to help us make sense of the present. By this means we may reflect facets of God's character through the stories we tell, enabling us to better understand Him and follow Him.

To God be the glory.

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