Avoiding the Scooby Doo Effect:
Technological Updates of *Sherlock Holmes*

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Keywords: investigation technique, visual culture, scientific evidence, surveillance

Introduction: Parodic *Sherlock* and the call for technological renewal

In an episode of *The New Scooby and Scrappy Doo Show* entitled *Hound of the Scoobyvilles*, Scooby Doo's nephew, Scrappy Doo, investigates the case of a monstrous hound haunting Barkerville. At some point in the episode, Scooby has disappeared. With the expected deerstalker on his head, Scrappy sets out to look for his uncle. He thus embodies an image often attached to Sherlock, the "hound on a scent" (Baggett 9), armed with Holmes's traditional attribute, the magnifying glass, which epitomises the detective's dependency on barely visible clues from which to start his investigation. Looking down through his instrument as he walks forward, Scrappy soon locates a gigantic paw. He then exclaims, "Here he is, I found him," before looking up from his magnifier to realize the paw does not belong to Scooby, but to the humanoid dog.

The Scooby Doo effect

As an obvious parody of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1901-02), the 1983 cartoon elicits a dead end in the tradition of Sherlock Holmes movies. Because he uses Sherlock's iconic investigation instrument, the magnifying glass, Scrappy mistakes a paw for another. Following as he does the rules of Holmesian investigation, the comedy sleuth scans the ground for indices of presence, but comes across a paw the size of a horse's hoof, which is consequently perceptible without his lens. The tool has become counter-productive: it selects from reality and magnifies it, preventing Scrappy from seeing what is obvious. The cartoon thus draws from parody's status as "one of the major forms of self-reflexivity" (Hutcheon 2) to bring out the relative pointlessness of a magnifier in the search for evidence. The spoof implicitly underlines that some of the plot elements in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, mainly the ones where optical technology intervenes, call for an adjustment. Additionally, it suggests that clues found with a magnifier have become irrelevant because their evidence value has diminished, making Sherlock's archetypal instrument useless. This obsolescence demands new equipment enabling detectives to gather other types of clues, supposedly more helpful in solving cases.

In the 21st century, this transformation into parody for lack of a technology fitted to the nature of the clues lies in wait for all types of Sherlockian films or series. This is what I propose to call the "Scooby Doo effect." The first reason for this situation is that the solution to the riddle facing the investigator may appear unrealistic, because too obvious—except for those who, like Scrappy, still blindly trust the revelatory power of the magnifying glass. In *Hound of the Scoobyvilles*, the hound is a butler dressed up as a monstrous dog. The final exposure of disguise is a cliché of Scooby Doo episodes, which makes this conclusion predictable. Similarly, straight adaptations of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, where the culprit, Dr Stapleton, covers a regular dog in phosphorescent paint to make it frightful (Doyle *Baskervilles* 189), offer an anticlimactic key to the riddle. Alternatively, such films as the 1939 version with Basil Rathbone, in which the hound is just a huge dog, or the 1959 version with Peter Cushing, in which it is a dog that wears a mask, dispense with the luminous paint. In those cases, removing the trick that makes the dog monstrous, or replacing it with one that lacks verisimilitude, entails that the ending becomes disappointing for 21st century spectators. Widespread technological knowledge, in the field of basic chemistry here, has rendered the remake necessary.

This suggests the Sherlock films of the last decades may benefit from a new version. Determining what type of new version requires terminological and conceptual clarification at the outset, due to the necessity of "extending the definition of the remake to include a variety of other intertextual types" (Horton and Macdougal 4). When dealing with a popular series character who has undeniably reached mythical status, the term "remake" is more appropriate than "re-adaptation." Each Sherlock Holmes movie is its own version of the myth before it is a literary adaptation, and each new version is an evolution from the previous ones. Besides, when so many works of audiovisual fiction adapt the same canonical literature, one can reasonably think that watching one version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is enough to direct another, and that reading the book is not a prerequisite.

The second element likely to trigger the Scooby-Doo effect calls for a specific variety of remake. It concerns Sherlock's investigative routine. In our technology-bound civilization, can the sleuth be credible if he relies on a magnifier? The ubiquity of visual prostheses in contemporary societies makes the magnifier obsolescent. At the same time, it makes direct visual contact seem outdated. This affects the process of looking for ocular proof of a crime, as well as the nature of the evidence a modern investigator may gather. The impact of reality-capturing and display technology on our everyday life, in a word, calls for a technological update of the figure of the arch investigator, Sherlock Holmes. Indeed, as various studies have shown, the update is a subcategory of the remake that offers a "more modernist interpretation of an earlier source text," (Uba Adamu 292) and its approach is "revisionary and transformational" (Verevis 12). As opposed to other forms of remakes, the update revises the original story to adapt it to "a new context" (Hatchuel 166).

For *Sherlock*, this context is the omnipresence of audiovisual technology, which threatens the detective's method with seeming archaic if unchanged. This necessity calls for audiovisual fiction that includes enhanced technology, as opposed to technologically-enhanced versions—which is usually what the phrase "technological remake" designates. In fact, as Sommerfeld has shown, "series characters [like Sherlock Holmes] . . . undergo transmedial proliferation" and therefore "lend themselves to media self-scrutinizing" (Sommerfeld 46). This is because, as Loock and Verevis explain in their introduction to the volume in which Sommerfeld's article features, "the medium's capacity of repetition and innovation can be measured against earlier renditions" (Loock and Verevis 4). This line of analysis has for a

premise that the repetition/innovation ratio depends on the medium used to turn a filmic structure into something new. According to this usual reading, technology is intrinsic to the practice of remaking films, because it endows directors with new representational tools. As, for instance, supernatural creatures become more and more realistic thanks to CGI, one can no longer watch older versions with the same suspension of disbelief, because their effects have worn out. In this paper, I wish to focus on a companion phenomenon. Rather than studying how technological evolution calls for new treatments of one same plot, I propose to analyse its impact on the diegesis. My aim is to demonstrate that technology forces such a stable figure as Sherlock to remake himself because it impacts the nature of visual evidence, and therefore the essence of the myth: Holmes's investigation technique.

To this effect, I will examine how two contemporary versions, the BBC series *Sherlock* and the CBS series *Elementary*, deal with the Scooby Doo effect. My goal in investigating contemporary versions of Holmes's cases is not only to assess the relevance of technological improvements on the original stories, but also to determine *why* such changes have become necessary.

1. *The Hounds of Baskerville* (*Sherlock*, BBC): Losing the hound in a haze to find Bluebell the rabbit

The *Sherlock* BBC series has received great critical acclaim. Surprisingly, however, the episode entitled *The Hounds of Baskerville*[1] puts the detective in a position that is not so different from Scrappy Doo's. Before he visits the hound's haunting place, Sherlock meets inhabitants of Grimpen Village, in which the beast has become a tourist's attraction. The place bathes in a Loch-Ness-monster atmosphere, which a young man named Fletcher exploits by selling guided tours of the surrounding moor. To prove his preconceived idea that Fletcher has not seen the beast—and thus win a £50 wager with Watson—Sherlock asks Fletcher if has "got any proof." To counter Sherlock's suspicion of forgery, Fletcher shows him a photograph of the so-called beast on his smartphone, which Sherlock dismisses with a snigger: "Is that it? It's not exactly proof, is it? Sorry, John. I win."

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[1] A full transcript of the episode's dialogues is available at: http://arianedevere.livejournal.com/28352.html

"Not exactly proof, is it?"

Sherlock's sarcasm makes sense on many grounds. Indeed, the photograph is too vague to carry any evidence the beast exists. It shows an animal shape lost in surrounding vegetation. The shooting distance makes it impossible to see what kind of animal it is, and the vegetation gives no sense of scale to help determine its size. In addition, the nature of the exhibit makes it doubtful. The mobile phone snapshot could show a decoy rather than the beast, it could have been taken in Africa and sent to Fletcher as an attachment, or cropped out from a movie still then produced as the capture of something real rather than fictional, or taken 30 years before with an analogical camera, then scanned, then photoshopped, then transmitted to Fletcher's cell phone, etc. Countless dematerialising operations may have intervened between "reality" and Fletcher's picture. Since he built his argument on this widespread awareness that a still picture gives no proof of existence (Niney 230-52), it seems clear that Sherlock has won his bet. Nevertheless, Fletcher, refusing to admit defeat, produces the huge print of a dog's paw cast in concrete. Sherlock immediately reaches into his pocket to give Watson the bet money.

Here, an index of existence compensates for the unreliability of pictures. This ontological twist symbolises the series' ambiguous perspective on technology. On the one hand, *Sherlock* shows that sleuths must adapt to the new nature of ocular proof, which empties the snapshot of the "dog" from evidence value. On the other hand, Sherlock's methodical doubt about captures of the real leads him to approve a cast-in-stone trace of the beast's actuality. By sardonically discarding the photograph as "not evidence of anything," Sherlock takes the aesthetic high ground, to restore eyesight as a reliable witness to the real. He thus contradicts one of the major pre-1960s film theories, according to which cameras have a revelatory power (Turvey 3-

4), and ranks himself among the Baudrillardians. This stance, however, leads him to the same position as Scrappy Doo, only without the magnifying glass: he fails to see the paw does not necessarily belong to its supposed owner.

Back to square one

The episode thus focuses on the fallibility of direct eyesight, which causes even Sherlock to err. The key to the riddle given in its ending strengthens this Cartesian warning. In fact, as in Doyle's novel, it finally appears the dog was not monstrous but only made to look so. The dog in the BBC version, however, does not become scary thanks to phosphorescent paint. Instead, the characters inhale a hallucinogen that distorts their perception to turn a regular dog into a hound of hell. This plot ingredient is displaced from another Holmes adventure, *The Devil's Foot*, to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The change leads Sherlock to investigate visual perception rather than traditional clues.

This plot innovation sounds relevant for two reasons. First, the hallucinogen is a reference to Sherlock's thorough knowledge of chemistry (Doyle *Study in Scarlet*, 12-13). Second, the drug metaphorically stands for our suspension of disbelief in front of fiction. In fact, in the episode, the hound looks real, but it also *sounds* real thanks to tales of DNA manipulation at Dartmoor. Those rumours suggest it is possible to explain the hound scientifically. The gas, which comes in addition to this base layer of fact, is the fictional ingredient in the fabrication. It is holy smoke symbolising our willingness to believe in the thrilling power of Holmes's adventures, which we want to love even if they have suffered a DNA mutation.

Sherlock's role is thus to tell fact from fiction by gauging the belief generated by stories about the hound, which he starts doing at the beginning of the episode. In the

opening, the cold-turkeyed detective craves for a case to feed his addiction, but gets nothing to chew on except Bluebell, a rabbit that turned luminous one day and was missing the next morning. Sherlock dismisses the case with a laugh: finding a glow-in-the-dark rabbit is too easy to be worthy of his talent. Indirectly, his lack of interest applies to the original Baskerville hound, whose phosphorescent paint seems too bright not to glare in the detective's face. Fortunately, a client rings, bringing in the updated, paint-free version of the hound. The client's name is Henry Knight. He reports seeing the beast as a nine-year-old boy. Yet instead of narrating his traumatic experience directly to Sherlock and Watson, he shows them a TV documentary about the hound of Dartmoor, which features his interview as a witness. The embedded narrative usually contained in Doyle's stories, which, as Thomas Sebeok has shown, the larger framing narrative underpins (Sebeok 59), thus takes into account a change in the nature of testimonies, from the purely verbal to the audiovisual. This alteration in narrative methods, as the episode shows, directly affects elements in the plot, since the burden of proof now falls upon visual reports. Their growing availability diminishes the conviction power of verbal attestations, as "more conclusive proof than speech is wanted" (Nichols 128).

Interestingly, the video spurs Sherlock's curiosity more than the case buried in it. Indeed, the documentary uses the triggers of objectivity commonly associated to the form to create a credible hound. The report starts with a voice-over presentation of Dartmoor, "a place of myth and legend," and sets up its atmosphere by showing pictures of the eerie landscape of the heath. A "Keep out" sign then appears, before the presenter declares the government holds "secret operations" in Dartmoor. The two items of information ("out" and "secret"), as well as similar ones in the shots that follow ("Authorised personnel only," "Restricted area") exploit the connection between trespassing borders and revealing the truth. As François Niney has shown, this is a trick documentary makers often use to harness the spectators' confidence, based on the notion that "a thing is all the truer as it has been concealed from us" (Niney 304, my translation). After taking the viewers beyond the forbidden walls of Dartmoor in this way, the documentary mentions genetic experiments, the results of which *may* have got loose. Henry's testimony then appears, to make it clear they *have* indeed. As Henry narrates his sighting of the hound, the TV program gives visual presence to the beast thanks to a close-up on a drawing of the monstrous dog he made at age 9.

Evidence of sighting?

The picture links the dog's monstrosity to its psychological impact on the child. Yet suddenly, the testimony stops. Sherlock has hit the pause button, and now asks: "What did you see?" As Henry, pointing to the TV, replies he was just about to say, Sherlock retorts: "Yes, in a TV interview. I prefer to do my own editing."

This sequence summarises how the BBC series tackles the new essence of visual evidence. Sherlock uses the same no-nonsense approach to pictures of reality here as he will later use with Fletcher's photographic proof. He embodies an understanding he is likely to share with most spectators: that it is easy, and consequently usual, to tamper with images of reality, for instance by editing them into lies (see Nacache). Sherlock's distrust, however, is somehow mechanical, and brings in a whiff of conspiracy theory, as if edited pictures were always deceitful. This suspicion regarding simulacra and embrace of the Bazinian ethics of "montage interdit" accounts for his insistence on doing "his own editing." By this motto, he means seeing with his own eyes to gather data he will then reorganise to construct a supposedly more accurate version of what happened. The episode, however, proves Sherlock to lack this form of insight. First, he laughs at Fletcher's cell phone picture of the hound to place his faith in the casting of a paw moments after. Second, he later has to realise that his eyes failed him when he "saw" the hound when under the influence of the drug. Third, the episode explains another mystery than the hound, when Bluebell the rabbit incidentally reappears during a conversation between Sherlock and one Dr Stapleton, who works at Dartmoor, but who is not the culprit in this version.

The dialogue reveals that Dr Stapleton used Bluebell as a guinea pig. The rabbit turned luminescent, constituting evidence of genetic manipulation. Dr Stapleton

consequently made the rabbit disappear, causing her daughter Kirsty to bring the case to Sherlock. The anecdote, obviously designed as another allusion to the phosphorescent dog in the original story, confirms the failure of eyesight. If genetic engineering creates actual monsters like Bluebell, while the chemical distortion of eyesight merely creates monstrous figments, how can one tell what is from what is not? The episode started with a warning about technologically-modified versions of reality, to remind the spectators that they carry no evidence value. It ends with the observation that one cannot trust direct vision either. Even though the detective claims to have adapted his eyesight to a world of images, the BBC *Sherlock* hazily explains the mystery with a chemical *deus ex-machina* that is unsuited to the hero's legendary perceptual skills.

As Rachel Michaels has noted, in the BBC version, "modern technology aids Sherlock's deductions by providing data, but they alone do not solve the crimes" (Michaels 290). Nevertheless, the Baskerville episode suggests that one needs to take the new nature of the collected data into account to solve the crime. Unfortunately, it finally refrains from adapting the detective's skills accordingly, and only manages to be a "thematic" technological remake. Indeed, *Sherlock* features technology more as an illustration of its omnipresence in contemporary societies than as an agent transforming the plots, and renewing them to adapt them to a new ontological context.

2. Investigating technological interference: *Elementary*, CBS

Although it also focuses on the new nature of ocular evidence, the CBS series *Elementary* exploits ubiquitous technology in a different way. In the 18th episode in the 1st season,[2] technology's influence on visual perception becomes the key element in the updating process. The stories revisited by *Elementary*, however, disappear as texts and plots, to keep the essence of Sherlock's adventures and adapt them to a different context. Episode 18, which is entitled "Déjà vu all over again," is a good instance of the efficiency of such a radical choice. There is no beastly hound in the mystery facing Sherlock here. Nevertheless, the episode offers

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[2] A full transcript of the episode's dialogues is available at
http://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/view_episode_scripts.php?tv-show=elementary&episode=s01e18

an innovative way of dealing with the well-known case of the murder presented as a natural disappearance, of which *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is an instance. The title also announces reflexive awareness of the innovation. It indicates that the episode will deal with remaking déjà vu videos besides posing as a Sherlock remake itself, and will also provide a synthetic perspective on why technology calls for remakes.

Seeing through prisms

At the beginning of the episode, *Elementary* alludes to the way it will counter the Scooby Doo effect. Sherlock's father asked him to visit Philip Armistead, the CEO of an important company. Upon entering the reception room at the top of the company building, Sherlock, looking down through the window, exclaims: "Impressive!" As Joan Watson approves by saying she could look at the view all day, he corrects her misunderstanding, replying he was looking at the "six-inch glass-clad polycarbonate" of the window, rather than at the scenic landscape.

"No, I was looking at the glass here"

On the verge of introducing the case, the episode highlights Sherlock's ability to consider the window as a filter through which he perceives reality instead of just seeing through it like anyone else. Consequently, this Sherlock is the exact opposite of Scrappy Doo, who neglected to include the distortion of and selection from reality operated by his magnifying glass in the analysis of what he saw. Here, Sherlock considers the importance of the window as a visual filter, instead of just looking through it.

The character's puzzling behaviour is a metaphor for his constant attention paid to the means through which information emerges, which, in technological societies, has become a necessary premise to analysing data. His scientific genius thus turns into an aesthetic one, as understanding how fact is represented becomes crucial to finding out how it can be accessed. If all reality is a representation, which entails, at least partly, that it has turned into a work of art, Sherlock can only approach the truth by treating all he sees as a depiction. His way to the solution starts with facts, and Sherlock now has to begin his investigation by checking that the facts facing him actually exist. His main problem, however, is that, as a mythical figure that travels through time, he has to cope with the constant evolution of "the means used to evoke what is seen" (Jarvie 146-47). Additionally, he has to deal with the "different sets of conventions [that] enable different kinds of information to be conveyed" (Jarvie 146-47). This is a way of considering that "the representations of people in Egyptian paintings are no less truthful than those of Rembrandt" (Jarvie 146), but that each carried a level of existence in its own time that later underwent change. With this shift from the scientific to the aesthetic, Sherlock's problem in front of evidence becomes the same problem as the one faced by directors seeking to adapt *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The monstrosity of a dog covered in phosphorescent paint may have been a convincing scientific explanation for the mystery in Doyle's time. Surely, it is not anymore in our days, because most people would probably instantly notice the luminescent paint on the dog. Similarly, this visual effect, which is not special anymore, is doomed to fall flat on screen: keeping it would even amplify its lack of verisimilitude, by showing characters who believe that the dog is supernatural, rather than just covered in paint. Consequently, directors need to remake Sherlock both diegetically and extradiegetically, to acknowledge that what used to be credible may no longer be. A plot element such as the hound suffers from this revolution as much as the way it is represented.

Sherlock's rear windows

In *Elementary*, this ability to treat perspectives on reality as clues is Sherlock's most important skill, the updated version of what Susan Gillman describes as his ocular power (Gillman 87). He even trains this capacity every day. In the pilot episode, Sherlock first appears to the spectators standing in a room in front of seven

or eight screens broadcasting different programs, which he all absorbs at the same time despite their heterogeneity.

Sherlock's screens: absorbing mediated versions of the real

The shot expresses Sherlock's adaptation to a society where information comes as a constant flux. It illustrates that *Elementary* responds differently to this context than such a film as Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), where "digital technology mirrors human modes of perception" (Sommerfeld 59). *Elementary*'s Sherlock adjusts to information societies in the opposite way. In the series, the character's vision mirrors digital modes of perception, which he centralises like a machine, to show that vision must adapt to the omnipresence of screens. As the screens are hardly distinguishable from the window frames, the shot also expresses the resemblance between unmediated captures of reality and mediated ones. The character thus stands out for his awareness that reality now consists of data we more or less willingly catch from the surrounding mass of pictures and sounds. Accordingly, he practices imbibing as much information as possible, on the assumption he will consequently achieve a fuller view of reality. *Elementary* thus translates Holmes's extraordinary perspicacity into the ability to miss less than normal people do from the flow of images that now constitutes the real. He also proves "information literate," a phrase Rhonda Harris Taylor applies to the BBC hero, yet which seems more suited to his CBS avatar (Harris Taylor 128). Sherlock thus becomes a postmodern figure, because his investigation technique tackles a reality that does not exist without its image. As a sleuth, he overrides the possible ambiguity of the notion of the postmodern, which may mean "the indistinguishability between the real and its image or the state in which there is no reality outside representation" (Gaines 3). Collecting

evidence to analyse during the investigation involves reality-capturing and reality-rendering technology as the prime material for the detective's deductions. The food for Sherlock's thoughts has thus changed. It now includes images of the real that are at once more easily accessible and more numerous than concrete clues, which enables the detective to scan large portions of reality at a single glance. Yet even though visual clues of the mediated type may be at hand in numbers, Sherlock does not take their evidence value for granted. Because he uses images of reality as the basis for his investigation, he needs to add at least one more skill to his toolbox: media analysis.

"Déjà vu, all over again": The technological remake within the remake

In episode 18, suspicion of foul play comes to Sherlock in the shape of two videos. Unlike the BBC Sherlock, the CBS detective immediately identifies video, as a form, to be *the* major clue to interpret. Indeed, Sherlock and Watson expose a murderer who committed a second murder to cover another one he committed before. To do so, the killer used reality-capturing technology to turn this second murder into an alibi, by using CCTV cameras to remake extant video footage of a crime.

The video with which the case starts intervenes shortly after Sherlock and Watson talk about the bullet-proof window. Armistead's assistant Rebecca, whose sister Callie is missing, produces it as a starting point to the investigation. The video is a modern version of the "Dear John" letter, in which Callie talks to the camera to address her husband Drew, announcing she is leaving him. Importantly, she mentions a recent news report about a woman who got pushed under the wheels of a subway train for no apparent reason. She says the tragic event played a part in her decision by reminding her that "life is too short to stay with someone who doesn't make you happy."

Rebecca thinks Callie's husband, Drew, killed her as retaliation for the breakup. Unlike his BBC counterpart, the CBS Sherlock does not discard the video for its lack of truthfulness. On the contrary, he reads Callie's body language in the sequence as a sure sign she is speaking the truth. It is thus clear that Callie did break up with Drew, which entails that she did not vanish or get murdered, but simply left. Nevertheless, at the end of the episode, it appears that Drew did kill Callie, but managed to cover his tracks by performing another murder, apparently unrelated to that of his wife. The episode shows this other murder in its opening sequence, then,

by replaying the surveillance tape of the pushing several times, gradually connects it to the main plot of Callie's disappearance. At the beginning of the episode, a hooded man gives a woman roses in a subway station, leaves, then comes back a few minutes later to push the woman, Vivian Tully, under the wheels of the incoming train. Thanks to a more usual clue, a patch on the pusher's jacket later seen again by Watson on one of Drew's jackets, the pair of detectives conclude that Drew is the subway pusher.

The hitch, however, is that exposing Drew as the pusher does not entail he killed his wife. Trying to find the link between the two murders takes several steps, all of which involve video analysis. In the first one, Sherlock watches CCTV footage of the pushing, to notice the hooded man carefully keeps his face "angled away from the platform's security cameras."

Surveillance-wise behaviour

To Sherlock, this "speaks to premeditation:" the man studied the layout of the tube station and spotted the CCTV cameras, and then made sure his features did not fall under their gaze. This suggests the pusher staged his murder. Where old-fashioned sleuths would use their magnifier to look for clues, Sherlock mainly notices the influence of surveillance cameras on the criminal's behaviour. That a CCTV system caught the murder, therefore, changes the investigator's interpretation of the act.

The second video analysis session leads Sherlock to rule out a possible culprit. Assisted by Captain Gregson, Sherlock, now in a NYPD interrogation room, confronts a suspect in the pusher case with the video of his supposed crime. Sherlock spotted the suspect, Mr Samuels, after watching surveillance footage from the days preceding the crime, based on his conviction that the pusher had come to the

platform before the murder to study the place. To draw a confession from Samuels, Sherlock shows him one of the videos he dug out, in which Samuels films Vivian Tully with his cell phone. He tells him the video was shot 10 days before the crime, and reminds him that he was formerly charged for stalking. Samuels then admits he was there on the day of the murder, but continues to claim he did not kill Vivian, explaining he was "there, but not in the frame." He subsequently proves his innocence by providing a video of the pushing he shot with his mobile phone.

"There, but not in the frame"

Samuels relies on the filmic logic that he cannot have captured the murder with his hand-held phone and performed it at the same time a few feet away from the device. Sherlock humbly admits that video evidence is only a lead to the truth until someone brings contradictory video evidence into the case, like Samuels does here. This treatment of CCTV footage has a lot to do with Sherlock's migration to the United States, where some fictional programmes set out to comfort the spectators by showing them how efficient technology is in locating and capturing lurking terrorists. As Gary Weaver and Adam Mendelson have shown, the trauma of 9/11 created doubt in security systems (Weaver and Mendelson 201). The (fictional) ability of the sleuth to defeat enemies who are media and surveillance-wise, such as terrorists, is a signal that superheroes are not a prerequisite for protection—a slightly more than natural human being is enough. Yet of course, that the police should fail to see what Sherlock realizes at last mitigates this soothing effect.

Sherlock and Watson, then, have to reconstruct meaning by drawing connections between diverse types of videos, some of which contain investigative red herrings. This trait parallels Doyle's narrative technique, thanks to which he tries "*to deceive*

his readers about what's really going on, until Holmes reveals the solution to the mystery" (Fallis 163). In *Elementary*, the deceptive paths are visual rather than verbal. Solving the case depends on Sherlock and Watson's ability to provide scattered bits of video footage with their own editing, an investigative method the BBC Sherlock had only tentatively introduced. As the investigation makes headways, the spectators face their own inability to find anything consistent in the audiovisual sequences the detectives watch. The series thus adapts the canon's usual mise en abyme pattern. There is no mystery, only unreliable narrative and reader manipulation, which means that Sherlock's elucidation parallels our own realisation that this is fiction after all. In *Elementary*, the essence of the manipulation evolves from the verbal to the visual, and naturally involves cinematic deception. In accordance with the reflexive nature of Doyle's stories, the interference of subjectivity in supposedly objective pictures is at once the key to the riddle and the trick used to prevent the spectators from guessing the solution too soon.

Yet even though they get closer to the truth by heaping up video analyses, the detectives still lack a logical link between the pushing and Drew's supposed murder of his wife. To finally relate the "Dear John" video to the CCTV footage of the pushing, Watson defies traditional logic. She suggests that maybe murder A (the pushing) did not lead to murder B (Drew's murder of Callie), but the other way round. In "Déjà vu, all over again," however, the denouement does not bring time travel into the Sherlock franchise, which would have evinced little care of the Sherlock trademark according to which all mysteries have a sensible explanation. Rather, it demonstrates that it is now possible to counter the irrevocability of time thanks to audiovisual technology, and that the technological affects our notion of the logical. This is the latest stage in a trend that began with photography, which modified vision by creating a "loop in time," and generated a dislocation of time (Lury 220) by introducing the possibility of freezing its passage (Doane 143).

The key, indeed, is that Drew used the cameras monitoring the subway platform to shoot a remake of a former murder that replaced the original one. He is in fact the subway pusher, and he committed someone else's gratuitous murder again to create a recent referent for the pushing Callie mentions in her breakup video. The news item she has in mind when she talks to the camera, however, is a similar one that happened a year before. Drew just reproduced the circumstances of a former pushing to make Callie's breakup video sound recent, and justify her disappearance

by her intention of leaving him, while she had in fact expressed this desire a year before. The solution, therefore, is not in the pushing itself, but in the fact its video capture ascribes a specific time and place to the event. Watson's brainwave is that the murderer used CCTV cameras to "remake" the pushing on video. He thus transferred the temporal landmark contained in the new footage to the "Dear John" video, making it seem the breakup had just happened while it was in fact a year old.

Watson's reasoning uses one of the literary Holmes's most efficient methods, abduction. Abduction "is about crafting hypotheses and fertile possibilities on the basis of clues," and "is used when we look for possible explanations for somehow surprising events" (Pavola and Järvilehto 47). The problem here is that abduction, which is supposedly "weaker than induction" and "more speculative than deduction" (Pavola and Järvilehto 47) proves stronger than both of these archetypal Sherlockian techniques, and even contradicts them. Deduction, which "clarif[ies] logical necessities" (Paavola and Järvilehto 47), is useless here, as the criminal managed to put chronology upside down. Induction—"reasoning on the basis of what 'actually is'" to make generalisations (Paavola and Järvilehto 47)—does not help much either, as the notion of "what 'actually is'" leaves room for doubt. In the case under investigation, for instance, the pushing allegedly existed as a single event. Eventually, it proves to have happened twice, which means it was in fact a remake. Induction, therefore, may only help if one makes the right generalisations, not about "what 'actually is,'" but about what it means to actually be. Based on the awareness that "the subordination of the natural world to technologies of knowledge and vision is experienced as the increasing impossibility of seeing things 'as they are'" (Cubitt 31), encompassing technological interference in the concept of being is the necessary first step to making logic work again.

Technological remakes and visual culture

According to Baber, the "ability to draw correct conclusions from visual evidence is one of the hallmarks of Holmes's powers" (Baber 132). Yet at a time when technology makes collecting fact easy and fast for anyone who is not computer illiterate, the exceptional character of Sherlock's skills needs to dwell in another aspect of the investigation process: the ability to analyse data with regard to their mediated nature. In *Elementary*, Sherlock's genius—which extends to Watson in this version—results from adapting vision to the constant interference of audiovisual

technology with our perception of time and space. This alteration reminds the spectators how much computerisation has affected our conception of reality, for instance by making "the conventions of timekeeping . . . virtually immaterial" (Helfland 38). As "the posthuman view sees informational patterns as more important than material instantiation . . . and not tied to any particular instantiation, instead free to travel across time and space" (Macnamara 119), it becomes necessary to adapt our senses. The challenge is to shape a "new and unprecedented universe" made up from "portable media, transient journeys, movable boundaries" (Helfland 39). Human beings must also learn to live with the "flattening of temporalities to the instant" that is one of the features of electronic time (Reading 148). Sherlock's inclusion of those new principles makes him a top-of-the-food-chain product of technological progress rather than a naturally gifted individual. He consequently invites the spectators to similarly fit their perception to the mediated ways in which reality transpires.

Elementary thus remakes Sherlock films to show the impact of technology on ontology. Technological evolution makes it impossible for the detective to go on being his old self, a situation which, the series shows, applies to all that is. Indeed, the question now facing the present, as Damian Sutton, Susan Brind and Ray McKenzie have shown in the introduction to their recent book *The State of the Real*, is not what technological developments could appear next. The true issue is "rather to identify what phenomenological changes they will bring with them and which will in turn force us to redefine 'what we see as reality'" (Sutton, Brind and McKenzie, 2). Where the BBC *Sherlock* embodies "the commonsense view . . . that technology is a neutral instrument that we can use for all sorts of different goals" (Nusselder 221) thanks to a protagonist who generally uses his mobile phone to get easier access to information, *Elementary* expresses the opposite vision. This antithetical perspective is the substantialist view of technology, which "holds that technology has a transformative effect on our perception and awareness, on politics and society, and on our culture as a whole. It is a strong 'mediator' that transforms our perception of being" (Nusselder 221). The way *Elementary*'s pair investigate cases relies on thorough understanding of our technological culture, rather than on the deft manipulation of artefacts. Consequently, the way Sherlock sees the world becomes once again attuned to the way we see him, be it on our TV screen, computer monitor, mobile phone, pad, or whatnot.

In turn, the technological dimension of contemporary visual culture explains why it is currently more necessary than ever to remake films adapted from a story that has been adapted many times before. To simplify a complex issue for the sake of clarity, an adaptation transcribes a story from one medium to another, while a remake offers a different version of the story in a similar medium. While adaptation is most often motivated by an aesthetic or commercial decision, the case of Sherlock shows that, even if the same is usually true for remakes, they may be necessary for one different, specific reason. This reason is that the medium itself mutates. As visual culture evolves under the pressure of technology, the filmic mediation of fictional events becomes an unstable product. Audiovisual productions may not change as artworks, but change anyway as people can no longer see them as they used to a few years before. In that case, the filmic product needs to be remade to remain itself, to take into consideration that, even within the limits of the filmic medium, mediation undergoes constant evolution.

Conclusion

As a technological update, *Elementary* is a reflexive remake, and stands out among other remakes for that reason. *Elementary*'s reflexive elements fall into two categories. First, the series accounts for changes to the original stories by demonstrating that current technology destroys their foundations, and therefore calls for renewal. This is the traditional reflexivity of the remake, which provokes thought about the new version compared to the original. Second, and more innovatively, the program induces us to realise the impact of audiovisual technology on our perception of reality. The remake is necessary because technology has updated our vision, hence our perception of the original. *Elementary* underlines that, as screens interfere (Lipovetsky and Serroy xvi-xvii) and "the computer is our connection to the world" (Helfland 35), technology affects our perception of the real. The series also draws a self-reflexive conclusion from this observation, to show that technology equally affects our perception of audiovisual fiction, making it necessary to remake both its form and its contents.

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