CHAPTER 4.
STUDIES IN IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY: THE SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES.

A. A STUDY IN SCARLET: -

A Study in Scarlet, the first Sherlock Holmes story, was published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, in November 1887. The story, which Arthur Conan Doyle began to outline on 8 March 1886, was initially titled A Tangled Skin and initially introduced the detective as Sherringford Holmes and his associate, Doctor John H. Watson, M.D., whom the writer created in remembrance of Lecoq's Father Absinthe and Don Quixote's Sancho Panza, as Ormond Sacker (Eyles 11-2). The names "Sherlock Holmes" and "John Watson" later evolved out of the American jurist and medical pioneer Oliver Wendell Holmes, the bishop Thomas Sherlock and his father, William Sherlock, two Nottinghamshire cricketers – Sherwin and Shacklock, the Devon bowler Sherlock, the violinist Alfred Sherlock, and James Elmwood Watson, a member of the Southsea Literary and Scientific Society and a former physician to the British consulate at Newchwung, Manchuria (Eyles 11, and Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 10). This requires mention that in creating Byomkesh Bakshi, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay might have been influenced by the renowned Bengali barrister, industrialist, patriot and politician, Byomkesh Chakroborty (1855-1929). Having practised as a lawyer, Bandyopadhyay was acquainted with the reputation of Chakroborty.

In the first chapter of the novel, Watson narrates the history of his medical education and about his military background. He particularly informs that he had initially been attached to "the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as Assistant Surgeon" (Doyle, *The Complete* 13), and has had served in India. Doyle's obsession with and tendency of maintaining a cautious distance from anything Oriental in general and Indian in particular is, importantly, displayed from the very third line of the novel onwards. He openly identifies south-eastern Asia as "the enemy's country" (13). The degree of readiness that Watson exhibited when he "at once entered [his] new duties" (13) is an indication of his willingness to actively suppress the natives thus perpetuating the English domination over them.

Once the physician, who has had previously been accustomed to the safety provided by England to its primarily-White residents and to the self-assurance emanating from English medical education, leaves the realms of the Occident and enters the Orient, his begins to suffer. In Afghanistan he is struck on the shoulder by "a Jezail bullet, which shatter[s] the bone and graze[s] the sub-clavian artery" (13). Significantly, Watson is saved from the Oriental "murderous Ghazis" not by the natives but by Murray, his identifiably White orderly (13). Even when he is brought to the safe confines of the British camp – "the base hospital at Peshawar" (13), he is not completely safe because members of the base camp, which symbolically becomes the microcosm of the imperial locus of England, are always outnumbered, and are therefore

under constant threat in the Empire. Soon the recuperating surgeon is "struck down by enteric fever" (13), a tropical disease.

The first chapter of A Study in Scarlet is significant in the imperial aspect because, first of all, it establishes the biographical backdrop for its narrator that embodies a singular opposition between heroic British military strength and an oppositional, primitive colonised populace. More importantly, it exhibits Sherlock Holmes as the Orientalist who makes use of his knowledge of the Orient to keep particularly the Oriental colonies in control, and Watson is revealed as an ex-army official who has had the experience of actively suppressing the sub-continental natives. The detective and the physician are thus displayed as the cult representatives of the West who cater to the contemporary British cultural outlook. Moreover, in his being a member of the imperial army, Watson befits the idea of the anti-native Orientalist and conforms to Said's observation, "The cult of the military personality was prominent [in late nineteenth century European colonies], usually because such personalities had managed to bash a few dark heads..." (*Culture* 181).

A representative of the colonisers as Watson is, he considers everything emanating from and related to the Orient in general and India, one of England's larger colonies in 1887, in particular as the legitimate property of England. The *property* includes the *Oriental vices* too, like the "enteric fever" which he describes as "that curse of our Indian progression" (Doyle, *The Complete* 13). Here Doyle seems to imply that with the elimination of such *curses* as the enteric fever, the colony would

become a steady source of resource for the imperial locus. The effect of prolonged association with the colonies on the imperial capital of London is demonstrated when, in the rapidly changing scenario, Doyle identifies the city with a "great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained" (13). Dependence on the wealth of the colonies affected the colonisers by making them lazy, and this posited a danger for the supporters of imperialism because of its potency to inhibit the colonisers' inclination for expanding their empire through continuous and rigorous conquests. A stint at the Indian sub-continent obtrusively affects the imperial representative by emaciating his physique and darkening his complexion – the primary source for his self-identification as being "superior". Stamford describes Watson "as thin as a lath and as brown as a nut" (13).

In Orientalism, Said stresses the role and requirement of science in helping imperialists perpetuate their domination of the natives. In this context it might be pointed out that Sherlock Holmes is "a first-class chemist", and Stanford describes him as "a little too scientific for his taste" (Doyle, *The Complete* 14). His statement is confirmed when Holmes describes details about the old guaiacum test (14), "the microscopic examination for blood corpuscles" (15), and the *Sherlock Holmes test* related to the identification and confirmation of suspicious stains as those caused by dried blood (15). The guaiacum test especially indicates the detective's enriching his subaltern knowledge because Christopher Morley notes in Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson: a Textbook of Friendship that the guaiacum or lignum vitae tree is native to the West Indies and northern South America (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 150). Though "his studies

are very desultory and eccentric", Holmes has "amassed a lot of out-of-the-way knowledge" that he applies not only to improve the realm of forensic sciences but also to identify the precise atmosphere of the colonies and behaviour of the colonised, decide and act accordingly (Doyle, *The Complete* 14). His knowledge of Trichinopoly cigar made from the dark tobacco cultivated near Madras (the old Chennai) is also a part of his Orientalist self-education (22). Watson later applauds him for bringing "detection as near an exact science as it ever will be brought in this world" (23). On being first introduced to his later-life narrator and constant companion, he immediately guesses that the surgeon had "been in Afghanistan" (14) because Watson's skin had become dark during his service at the tropics and only in Afghanistan, an Oriental country, could "an English army doctor...see much hardship" and get "his arm wounded" (18). Samuel F. Howard points out in "More about Maiwand" (published in the January 1957-issue of *The Baker Street Journal*) that the physician could not have visited Afghanistan but South Africa where the British army had lately concluded a colonial war against the Zulus between 1879 and 1880 (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 162).

Holmes's presumptions like "Now we have the Sherlock Holmes test and there will no longer be any difficulty" (Doyle, *The Complete* 15), his confidence that he would infallibly turn out to be a good musician if Watson does not object to the sound of violin (15), and his assertion, "I suppose I am the only one in the world... I'm a consulting detective" (18), are, in fact, attempts to establish himself as a supreme authority in whatever he does. Even his techniques of detection are based on the supposition that "there is nothing new under the sun" (21). His confidence is a part of his

preparing and presenting himself as a compatible coloniser who can always be trusted for his efficiency. Doyle excuses his detective's pride by allowing him an encyclopaedic knowledge revealed in his references to different murder cases and various aspects of crime because of which Stamford calls him "a Walking Calendar of crime" (15). While exhibiting his familiarity with crimes and criminals from different parts of the world, the detective alludes to cities like Frankfort, Bradford, Montpellier and New Orleans (15) that are scattered over at least two continents – Europe and North America. In Watson's list of 'his limits' and as already mentioned, Holmes excels particularly in subjects of science – Botany, Geology, Chemistry and Anatomy (16-7), and this assumes significance in context of Fanon's demonstration in A Dying Colonialism how the Western science and technology is an integral part of the oppressive colonial situation and helps in the imperial military and economic domination over the natives (Wyrick 91). The investigator is also well versed in martial techniques – singlestick playing, boxing and fencing (Doyle, *The Complete* 17) because every coloniser must be capable of self-protection, and H.T.Webster points out in "Observations of Sherlock Holmes as an Athlete and Sportsman" that even canes and hunting crops often become formidable weapons at his hands (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 157). On singlestick, Ralph A. Ashton writes in "The Secret Weapons of 221 B Baker Street", "[It]...is essentially a slashing, whacking, battering, beating and clubbing sort of weapon", thereby becoming an implement for Foucaultian discipline at the hands of the coloniser (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 157). Holmes completes his self-identification as a conforming imperialist in his possession of "a good practical knowledge of British law" which he inevitably applies

against the subaltern individuals like Tonga to obliterate or control them as and when required (Doyle, *The Complete* 17).

Even though Watson is a representative of the imperial military forces, in the novel he is constantly made to self-efface in order to project the detective as being superior not only to the colonised populace but also to himself by constantly referring to him in superlatives like "his reasoning was close and intense", "his conclusions were as infallible as so many propositions of Euclid", and "so startling would his results appear to the uninitiated that until they learned the processes by which he had arrived at them they might well consider him as a necromancer" (17). To fortify the perceived intellectual superiority of the detective, the physician confesses that having harboured a suspicion about Holmes's deductions regarding "a stalwart, plainly-dressed individual...walking slowly down the other side of the street" as being a "retired sergeant of Marines", he was forced to admit his own error when the man, on being enquired, said, "A sergeant, sir, Royal Marine Light Infantry, sir..." (19). Later, when Watson and Holmes visit the scene of Enoch J. Drebber's murder, the former fails to detect any evidence that might lead to the identification of the murderer, but he "[has]...such extraordinary evidence of the quickness of his (Holmes's) perceptive faculties that...[he has]...no doubt...that [Holmes] could see a great deal which ...[is]...hidden from [himself] (20). The identifiably British detective is always confident about his own excellence and investigative skills and gives expression to his perception of his own superiority by intermittently referring to his perceptively unique "intuition", by distancing himself from the official police detectives and the privately employed

investigators, and by lampooning Dupin and Lecoq as "a very inferior fellow" and "a miserable bungler", respectively (18).

Holmes's satiric comments about Dupin and Lecoq not only reveal Doyle's attempt to grant unchallengeable omnipotence and excellence to his own detective but also highlight the author's attempts at lambasting representatives of other imperial countries, both Lecoq and Dupin being French detectives, and France being an imperial opponent of Britain. Doyle, however, appears to imply that Dupin and Lecoq are *real* characters in order to grant realism to his own fictional detective (18). Significantly, Edgar Allan Poe, the American creator of Dupin, and Gaboriau, the French introducer of Lecoq, belong respectively to one of the former colonies of England that had emerged as a formidable force against its own coloniser, and France.

From the very first Holmes narrative onwards , Doyle has had been cautious about imparting to his detective an insularity from the general governmental police forces and their official investigators to give him a separate and independent identity. Working under the orders of the British government, the police detectives could not take independent decisions where as Holmes does not wait for an order from the British administrators to wage investigation. Stressing on his own intellect and efficiency, Sherlock Holmes negates the excellence and participation if not the existence of every other imperial detective lest he or she come to share an Empire and readership which would otherwise have been his own. During his discussion with Watson regarding his trade, he says,

> "Well, I have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the world. I'm a consulting detective, if you can understand what that is. Here in London we have lots of Government detectives and lots of private ones. When these fellows are at fault, they come to me, and I am generally able, by the help of my knowledge of the history of crime, to set them straight..." (18).

In the above quoted speech the detective supposes that Watson as well as the general readers would not be able to understand and appreciate the paraphernalia of his investigative techniques, and thus chances that they would objectively view the validly of and thereafter challenge his investigative modus operandi are minimised.

In A Study in Scarlet, Holmes not only patronises the two representatives of the government detectives, Lestrade and Gregson, but also does he point out the polemic relationship between them, and implies, in turn, that the mutual rivalry might be the primary cause for their inefficiency:

> "Gregson is the smartest of the Scotland Yarders...he and Lestrade are the pick of a bad lot. They are both quick and energetic, but conventional – shockingly so. They have their knives into one another, too. They are as jealous as a pair of professional beauties..." (19).

The imperial military and police forces could not afford mutual rivalry and differences if they are to maintain their control over the colonies.

Holmes attests his own superiority when he points out that apart from his own perception, Gregson also "knows that [Holmes is]... his superior, and acknowledges it to...[him]" (19), while simultaneously depicting the hypocrisy of the governmental forces by saying, "but he (Gregson) would cut his tongue out before he would own...[that Holmes is intellectually his superior]...to any third person" (19-20).

In the first Holmes narrative, Doyle deals with the problem of the colony, former or contemporary, by focussing on three Americans – Jefferson Hope, Enoch J. Drebber and Joseph Stangerson. The arrival of these formerly colonised individuals at the imperial locus of London disturbs the British society and results in chaos and death. The newspaper reports Watson reads following Drebber's death reflect a subtle xenophobia and the general mistrust among the British citizens of the new settlers and members of Britain's former and contemporary colonies. While the *Daily Telegraph* advocates "a closer watch over foreigners in England" (27), the *Daily News* describes the migrating people as being *driven* (italics mine) to England's shores: "a number of men who might have made excellent citizens were they not soured by the recollection of all they had undergone" (28), thus referring to their polemic relationship with their former colonisers and underscoring the impossibility of a harmonious mixing and peaceful cohabitation of the coloniser and the colonised.

It is important that Doyle, writing in an imperial perspective, presents the Americans as being physically distorted, and somewhat different from the general appearance of the British. While Drebber with his "curling black hair...low forehead, blunt nose, and prognathus jaw" is implied resemble an ape and an Oriental because of his black hair (21), Hope is described to possess a "dazed, savage face" (33) which negates his own appearance from the perceptively sober countenance of the British colonisers. Allen Eyles observes, "Americans feature prominently in many... [Sherlock Holmes]...stories, although if this was intended to enhance the appeal of the cases in the United States, it is surprising how many of them are unsavoury villains" (Eyles 24).

In the second part of the novel, ironically subtitled "The Country of the Saints", Doyle has, according to Eyles, presented a "stodgy, dispensable, and controversial" history of the American state of Utah and a distorted description of one of America's religious sects, the Mormons (Eyles 14). Everything about Utah is "arid and repulsive" (Doyle, *The Complete* 35), and the second part of the novel symbolically opens with a dreary scene of desert and death on "the Great Alkali Plain" (34-7), which indicates the dangers, aridity and sterility lurking in regions of one of Britain's former colonies. The novel also contains a lengthy and biased depiction of the perceived debilitations in the society of the Mormons in context of which the author satirises the American region he describes as "the Country of the Saints" and suggests that the total religious sect and its followers are bound to be annihilated in near future. Doyle appears

to imply that the distinct religious sect of the Mormons is a 'standard' American religion, and in this light writes at length to refer to the different malevolent and socially debilitating practices prevalent in one of Britain's former colonies:

> "...To express an unorthodox opinion was a dangerous matter in those days in the Land of the Saints...so dangerous that even the most saintly dared only whisper their religious opinion with bated breath, lest something which fell from their lips might be misconstrued, and bring down a swift retribution upon them. The victims of persecution had now turned persecutors on their own account and persecutors of the most terrible description. Not the Inquisition of Seville, nor the German Vehmgericht, nor the Secret Societies of Italy, were ever able to put a more formidable machinery in motion than that which cast a cloud over the State of Utah.
>
> Its invisibility, and the mystery which was attached to it, made this organisation doubly terrible. It appeared to be omniscient and omnipotent, and yet was neither seen nor heard. The man who held out against the Church vanished away, and none knew whither he had gone or what had befallen him. His wife and his children awaited him at home, but no father ever returned to tell them how he had fared at the hands of his secret judges. A rash word or a hasty act was followed by annihilation, and yet none knew what the nature might be of this terrible power, which was suspended over them. No wonder that men went about

in fear and trembling, and that even in the heart of the wilderness they dared not whisper the doubts, which oppressed them.

At first this vague and terrible power was exercised only upon the recalcitrants who, having embraced the Mormon faith, wished afterwards to pervert or to abandon it. Soon, however, it took a wider range. The supply of adult women was running short, and polygamy without a female population on which to draw was a barren doctrine indeed. Strange rumours began to be bandied about – rumours of murdered immigrants and rifled camps in regions where Indians had never been seen. Fresh women appeared in the harems of the Elders – women who pined and wept, and bore upon their faces the traces of an unextinguishable horror. Belated wanderers upon the mountains spoke of gangs of armed men, masked, stealthy, and noiseless, who flitted by them in the darkness. These tales and rumours took substance and shape, and were corroborated and recorroborated, until they resolved themselves into a definite name. To this day, in the lonely ranches of the West, the name of the Danite Band, or the Avenging Angels, is a sinister and an ill-omened one.

Fuller knowledge of the organisation which produced such terrible results, served to increase rather than to lessen the horror which it inspired in the minds of men. None knew who belonged to

> this ruthless society. The names of the participators in the deeds of blood and violence done under the name of religion were kept profoundly secret. The very friend to whom you communicated your misgivings as to the Prophet and his mission might be one of those who would come forth at night with fire and sword to exact a terrible reparation. Hence every man feared his neighbour, and none spoke of the things which were nearest his heart..." (40).

In its reversing the Christian doctrine of "love thy neighbour", the society of the Mormons appears as a Manichean opposite to Christianity that is perceptively the principal imperial religion, while the society itself has been given an ironic and brutalised portrayal by the Christian author. Doyle also points out that the colonised individuals, when imparted with the power to rule, would definitely fail to construct an efficient government.

In the second part of A Study in Scarlet, Doyle exposes a patriarchal society that considers women as "heifers" to public censure and ridicule (40). The idea of pagan prophets, here Joseph Smith (1805-1844) and Brigham Young (1801-1877), has not only been lampooned, the author also has separately mentioned in a footnote on the fortieth page, "Herber C. Kemball, in one of his sermons, alludes to his hundred wives under ...[the] endearing epithet [of heifer]", in order to underscore that the Mormon Prophet and the Elders are polygamous, morally lax, and therefore, lack the legitimacy to rule. In In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes (London: Cassell and

Company Limited, 1958), Michael Harrison asserts that the British reading public of 1887 was quite willing to believe these slanders on the Mormons. Quoting Harrison, William S. Baring-Gould points out that mid-Victorian England was convinced about the Mormons' stealing English servant-girls to spirit them out of the country and to make them White slaves in Mormon harems, and there were riots over this religious sect especially when the girls compared their lot below-stairs with the prospects offered of life in a state which has never known unemployment (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 208). By choosing an individual with twenty seven wives to be a commander, Doyle ironically judges the west-ward migration of the Mormons in 1846-7 against the journey of the Israelites towards the chosen land and exposes the formers' inherent contradictions and perceptively evil psychological construction.

The scene of John Ferrier's verbal confrontation with Brigham Young might be viewed symbolically as that between Christianity and Mormonism presented in accordance with Doyle's Christian ethnocentric perspective (Doyle, *The Complete* 49). Young resents Lucy Ferrier's marriage with Jefferson Hope because the latter is a "Gentile" or Christian (40). Importantly, John Ferrier has continued to support if not obtrusively practise his own religion, identifiably Christianity, even after his being saved from the Great Alkali Plain by the Mormons. Doyle poignantly depicts the persecution of the Christians by the pagan Mormon believers: John Ferrier is murdered (46), Lucy Ferrier is abducted, forcibly married to Drebber – a pagan – because of which she "pine[s] away to die" (46), and Hope is made to suffer from the strains of an arduous journey to help the Ferriers escape "the Country of the Saints"(41-7), from the

agony of losing his beloved Lucy Ferrier (47), and from aortic aneurism (48). In a rather Apocalyptic conclusion to the novel, the villainous pagan Americans – Drebber and Stangerson – are annihilated , significantly by a fellow American, and Jefferson Hope, the upholder of Christian interests and symbolic crusader, is not sentenced but is allowed to die naturally out of an aneurism-burst "with a placid smile upon his face" (52). Doyle overwhelmingly and obtrusively sympathises with Hope, and all throughout the second section of A Study in Scarlet, he continues to satirise the Mormon faith and customs not only because they are non-Christian and intimidating the spread of a predominantly imperial religion, but also because the non-Christian individuals belong to one of Britain's former colonies that has had become superior to the imperialist. The novel might therefore be identified as the first of the several imperially compatible narratives of the Sherlock Holmes canon.

CHAPTER 4. B.

THE SIGN OF FOUR: -

Arthur Conan Doyle's second Sherlock Holmes narrative, The Sign of Four, was first published as "The Sign of the Four" in the February 1890-issue of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* from both Britain and the United States of America. The novel was written at a time when the writer had undertaken to write Micah Clarke to challenge the hegemony of the Scottish litterateur Walter Scott in the realm of historical novels. Like A Study in Scarlet, The Sign of Four also contains different references to Doyle's colonial ideology.

The second novel of the Sherlock Holmes canon begins with a reference to the detective's addiction to seven percent solution of cocaine (Doyle, *The Complete* 54). However, the primordial supposition that the coloniser cannot be ideologically erroneous and the fact that the consumption of cocaine was not illegal in the 1890s, allows Doyle the scope to excuse Holmes and he expects readers to comply (Eyles 16). The investigator says,

> "My mind...rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram, or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense them with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. This is why I have chosen my own particular profession, or

rather created it, for I am the only one in the world" (Doyle, *The Complete* 54).

Thus Holmes's addiction is depicted as a mean to continue his intellectual exercises which would, in turn, allow him to device ways for safeguarding England's internal security and for the imperialists to perpetuate their domination of the primarily Eastern subaltern.

It is in The Sign of Four that Watson first explicitly introduces himself as the chronicler of Holmes's adventures when he quotes Holmes as contemptuously referring to "a small brochure with the somewhat fantastic title of *A Study in Scarlet*" written by him (54). Doyle tries to downplay Holmes's pride and egotism, so much the characteristic features of the colonisers, displayed in the statement, "I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection" , by making Watson detect only "a *small* vanity" (italics mine) underlying the detective's "quiet and didactic manner" (54-5). Moreover, the detective expresses undisguised satisfaction with the fact that Francois le Villard, a French detective and a representative of another imperial power, has "ardently admired" him: the letter of gratitude that the French detective has sent to him is written as if "he speaks as a pupil to his master" (55). The above observations point out to two aspects of the detective's demeanour. First, the British coloniser and detective is at the risk of being decried by readers for being insolently proud of himself and his intellectual abilities, and second, the imperial representative is not ready to withstand any challenge

to the supremacy of his nation and himself, and exhibits a determination to perpetually remain at the top of all the other imperial powers and their citizens.

Holmes's confidence about the infallibility of his deductive methodology stems from Doyle's own comfiture with introducing new processes of investigation which his sleuth uses to identify, control and obliterate the predominantly subaltern criminals. Manindra Dutta points out that Doyle invented and employed such physical and forensic examinations as the usage of *plaster of Paris* to preserve evidences of criminals' footprints and fingerprints, scrutiny of the dresses of suspects for dust, analyses of ashes of cigars produced by different tobacco companies, and of the *Science of Deduction*, including the famous Holmesian maxim, "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth"(Doyle, *The Complete* 66), with such a degree of accuracy that the Holmes narratives continue to be read as text books at the Egyptian and Chinese police training academies (Dutta vii-viii). When Holmes discusses with Watson his monographs on the types of ashes of "hundred and forty forms of cigar, cigarette and pipe-tobacco", "the uses of plaster of paris as a preserver of impresses", and "the influence of a trade upon the form of the hand", the author actually depicts a detective who is not only the first in his trade, but also unique in his scientific techniques and expertise that make him an efficient representative of the colonisers and a dependable protector of the imperial interests (Doyle, *The Complete* 55).

Through Doyle's gradual unravelling of Holmes's character, the detective is revealed as an anti-feminist. The imperial requirement of constantly focusing on the causes of the Empire requires that a colonial representative should not be distracted by such sources as, according to Holmes, women. The detective guides himself by rationality and displays a stern and unromantic attitude when he chastises Watson for introducing fantastic and distractive elements in his treatise, *A Study in Scarlet*, because "detection...should be treated in the...cold and unemotional manner" (54). It is also the reason why he does not exhibit any sign of sympathy and attraction for Mary Morstan but adopts a "brisk, business-like tone" as she begins narrating details about her predicament even as her physical beauty readily captivates Watson. Even when Morstan falters in describing her father's disappearance, the detective offers no sympathy but queries about the exact date when he went missing (57). Eyles notes that Holmes is "later complimentary towards her, but only as a budding detective" (16). According to Holmes's maxim, "Women are never to be entirely trusted – not the best of them" (Doyle, *The Complete* 76). He treats love as "an emotional thing", and maintains that "whatever is emotional is opposed to that true cold reason which...[he places]...above all things" (92). When Watson decries the detective as "an automaton – a calculating machine" (58), he opines that one should not allow his "judgement to be biased by personal qualities" (58), and asserts that he "should never marry" himself lest he biases his judgement (92). Though the former army surgeon becomes engaged to Morstan towards the end of the novel (92), Holmes avoids women all throughout the canon.

Three unpalatable events that occurred in Doyle's personal life might have instigated him to deny important roles to women characters in the Holmes narratives. First of all, Mary Foley Doyle, on whom the adolescent author was emotionally dependent , had an affair with Dr. Brian Waller, six year Arthur's senior, when he became one of the borders the time she started taking in paying guests after Charles Altamont Doyle's institutionalisation for alcoholism in 1876. Although Arthur was influenced by the physician, followed him into medicine, and even attended the same university as Waller, he expressed his resentment in Memories and Adventures at his mother's behaviour by stating that her taking boarders "may have eased her in some ways, but was disastrous in others"[1]. On the other hand, Doyle was proud of his father in spite of his alcoholism. The 1888-special edition of A Study in Scarlet was brought out with Charles Altamont Doyle's illustrations. In 1891 Arthur Conan Doyle decorated his new office as a full-time writer with his father's paintings, and in 1924 organised an exhibition of his father's works. In his autobiography, Doyle has laments that his father's life "was full of the tragedy of unfulfilled powers and of underdeveloped gifts"[2]. Holmes might therefore have been depicted as a patriarchal figure who resents control or manoeuvring by women. Second, Doyle married Louise Hawkins in 1885 and enjoyed a brief happy period of conjugal bliss until 1893 when his wife was diagnosed with tuberculosis, a disease that continued to torture her physically and her husband mentally until her death in 1906. Finally, Doyle fell in love with Jean Leckie on 15 March 1897, and he could neither marry her nor could make their relationship public for the next nine years, until Hawkins died following which he married her in 1907. The mental torture he

suffered attending an ailing wife and suffering from an unfulfilled love might have also led him to make his detective averse toward women.

According to Mary Morstan's account, Captain Arthur Morstan, an officer of an Indian regiment, disappears from his hotel room on 3 December 1878 and leaves behind "a considerable amount of curiosities from the Andaman Island" (Doyle, *The Complete* 57). Almost from the very beginning of Morstan's narrative, Doyle tries to associate the Orient to mystery and suffering. Captain Morstan and Major Sholto, "in command of the troops of the Andaman Islands" are representatives of the British colonial army that is assigned the task of dominating the natives through the usage of violence and physical force (59).

On their way to Thaddeus Sholto's residence, Holmes and Watson are immediately suspicious of the Hindu servant "clad in a yellow turban, white, loose fitting clothes, and a yellow sash" because he is an Oriental native and because "there…[is]…something incongruous in this oriental figure framed in the commonplace doorway of a third-rate suburban dwelling-house" at the middle of the imperial locus of London (60). Doyle's sentences seem to imply that an Oriental native is *incongruous* in White Britain and can only be employed in a "third-rate" British "dwelling house". The Hindu servant leads them "down a sordid and common passage, ill lit and worse-furnished" (60), and objects and places with Oriental associations have thus been identified with sordidness and mystery. Naturally Sholto's room, decorated in an Oriental

style "look[s] as out-of-place as a diamond of first water in a setting of brass" (60) or as incongruous a miniature Orient would appear in an Occidental macrocosm:

> "The richest and glossiest of curtains and tapestries draped the walls, looped back here and there to expose some richly mounted painting or Oriental vase. The carpet was of amber and black, so soft and so thick that the foot sank pleasantly into it, as into a bed of moss. Two great tiger skins thrown athwart it increased the suggestion of Eastern luxury, as did a huge hookah which stood upon a mat in the corner. A lamp in the fashion of a silver dove was hung from an almost invisible golden wire in the centre of the room. As it burned if filled the air with a subtle and aromatic odour" (60).

It is significant that though Homes and Watson are "astonished" at the sight of the microcosmic representation of the Orient, they are not pleased and does not show any emotion at the richness (60). Having had been already possessed by the imperial Crown, the Oriental objects have lost their identity, mystery and the power to attract.

It should be noted that the Hindu servant addresses Thaddeus Sholto as "sahib" and is, in turn, addressed as "khidmutgar" (60). Baring-Gould explains "khidmutgar" as a "Hindu [term] for butler or man servant" (*Annotated I* 624) and this reasserts the author's latent Orientalism – the concept based on an

unchanging, immutable polarity between East and West, with the West the superior force. Said defines "latent Orientalism" as,

> "...Along with all other peoples variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilised, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analysed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined – as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory – taken over" (*Culture* 207).

In The Sign of Four the latent Orientalism of Doyle is expressed through the metonymic function of untranslated words like "sahib", "khidmutgar", "nullah" (85), "bhang" (86) "Feringhee" (87), and "chokey" (91). As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out,

> "The uses of language as untranslated words do have an important function in inscribing difference. They signify a certain cultural experience, which they cannot hope to reproduce but whose difference is validated by the new situation. In this sense, they are directly metonymic of that cultural difference, which is imported by the linguistic variation. In

> fact they are a specific form of metonymic figure: the synecdoche" (*The Empire* 53).

On Doyle's Orientalism as revealed in his second novel, Nicholas Stewart notes,

> "In the context of Doyle's text, and in the imperially conditioned mind of its contemporary reader, *Khidmutgar* signifies the presence and *alien* status of the Indian figure and culture in relation to British society. Openly and covertly The Sign of Four makes itself acceptable to the imperialist ideology in late Victorian culture and its attendant literary canon" [3].

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have also identified the use of untranslated words, like those already mentioned as a mean of 'replacing language':

> "The technique of selective lexical fidelity which leaves some words translated in the text is a more widely used device for conveying the sense of cultural distinctiveness. Such a device not only acts to signify the difference between cultures, but also illustrates the importance of discourse in interpreting cultural concepts" (*The Empire* 64).

With the inversion of this concept Doyle's usage of untranslated words becomes a process of reaffirming the polarity between the British and Oriental cultures which caters to the imperial ideology of the contemporary European readers.

Thaddeus Sholto, who is addicted to "the balsamic odour of the Eastern tobacco", is the son of Major John Sholto, a military personality, "once of the Indian Army" (Doyle, *The Complete* 61). On the information that Morstan and Sholto formerly belonged to the "34th Bombay Infantry" (57), a wing of the British colonial army to control the Indian natives, Crighton Stellers opines in her "Doctor Watson and the British Army" that Doyle has created a fictional regiment with an Indian name to put his reprehensible characters (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 617). That John Sholto had prospered in India, and had brought back with him a considerable sum of money, a large collection of valuable curiosities, and a staff of native servants to the imperial centre, serves to highlight the issue of the colonies serving as resources to boost and sustain the economy of the imperial centre (Doyle, *The Complete* 61). Like Grimesby Roylott of "The Adventure of the Speckled Band", John Sholto tries to perpetuate the memories of his association with the Orient by getting "Pondicherry Lodge" built in Upper Norwood (61). Significantly, the south Indian province of Pondicherry had been under the French influence and control since the earliest Western settlement in 1673 until November 1954. Sholto's naming his residence after the French dominion might be interpreted as expressive of his and, in turn, the entire British colonisers' desire to possess a region belonging to another imperial power. John Sholto's Oriental obsession costs him his life after the arrival of a letter from India (61), but before his death he passes the ownership of one of his Oriental possessions and a part of the Agra Treasure – a "chaplet tipped with pearls" (61) – to his sons Bartholomew and Thaddeus, and not to any Oriental to whom the box rightfully belongs. By placing the box of pearls beside a bottle of quinine,

the medicine for the tropical disease of malaria, in his narrative, Doyle strategically balances Oriental treasures against lethal diseases which have traditionally been identified by the Westerners as germinating in the East (61). It is, therefore, unusual that an experienced representative of the colonisers would repose his faith in "old Lal Chowdar" and would trust him with the secret of Arthur Morstan's death (62).

Doyle's view of the colonies as being exclusive properties of the imperial Britain is asserted at different sections of The Sign of Four. According to Thaddeus Sholto, the box of Indian treasure brought to Britain by John Sholto is the rightful property of Mary Morstan. Immediately upon hearing of the treasure, and that "the value of the jewels...[is]...not less than half a million sterling", Watson conceives of it through the filter of British economy (63). Like Sholto, the former military surgeon also ignores the box's status as being a part of the Indian heritage, and sanctions its ownership Mary Morstan. Without verifying the real ownership of the treasure, he prepares her for transforming herself from "a needy governess to the richest heiress in England" (63). Once the control of the treasure has passed from the natives to the imperialists and deposited at the house of Bartholomew Sholto, the presence of the Orientals is minimised. In spite of having "a great picture in Indian tapestry" at his house, Bartholomew Sholto employs only White individuals – McMurdo and Mrs. Berstone for performing internal errands at his residence (63-4).

Having judged the paper used by Arthur Morstan to write his final letter as one "of Indian manufacture", Holmes continues to reveal himself as an

Orientalist – the Westerner who utilises European study of the Orient with the result of revealing and outwitting the criminally linked Other – when he uses Western scientific and anthropological writings on the East to identify the thorn on Bartholomew Sholto's scalp as belonging 'not to England but to an Indian islander' (67) and to analyse the sizes the Hindus' and Muslims' feet (75). Thus he not only justifies Watson's suppression of the Orientals but also validates a biased Orientalist research as a mean to understand, control and remain superior to the predominantly Eastern subaltern.

Ania Loomba, in Colonialism/Postcolonialism, informs that the scientific study used by Orientalists like Sherlock Holmes was "far from being an objective, ideologically free domain...[and]...was deeply implicated in the construction of racist ways of thinking about human beings and the differences between them..." (61). Holmes's biased knowledge has resulted in the reduction of Tonga, the Andaman native and Jonathan Small's associate, into a mere stereotype by focussing especially on his primitive and perceptively uncivilised qualities. Loomba defines *stereotype* as "a reduction of images to a simple and manageable form [with the effect of] perpetuat[ing]...an artificial sense of difference between 'self' [that is, the British imperial centre] and 'other' [the Indian native]" (59-60). T.S.Blakeney has questioned the reliability of the 'gazetteer' Holmes consults in the seventy fifth and seventy sixth pages for a distorted depiction of the Andamanese. He denies that the Andaman natives are cannibals and terms their treatment by the British Government in India as "tragic" (6-8). In the July 1904-issue of *Quarterly Review*, Andrew Lang had similarly challenged Doyle's representation of the Andaman islanders. He refuted their cannibalism, their

having heads like mops, their 'below four-foot' height, and even their throwing poisoned darts from blowpipes (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 655).

The ex-convict Jonathan Small's claim to the Agra Treasure is taken into consideration by Doyle only because he is a White man. On the other hand, Small's Indian associate, Tonga, is never considered to be a candidate worthy of being offered a share. Importantly, Tonga never expresses his desire for the treasure: the author might have denied him the very sensation of the value of the Agra Treasure. Holmes deduces that Small *is* White, because John Sholto "guards himself against a ...White man...[and] he mistakes a White tradesman for him and fires a pistol at him" (Doyle, *The Complete* 71). In his attempt to assault a representative of the White colonisers Sholto has had committed a crime serious enough in Holmes's perspective to attract a careful investigation for his real motive.

In further exhibitions of Doyle's latent Orientalism, Jonathan Small's long service at India has been referred to have reduced him to the stature of a "brown, monkey-faced chap" (73). Small describes his life in the Eastern country as "twenty long years in...[a]...fever-ridden swamp, all day at work under the mangrove tree, all night chained up in the filthy convict huts, bitten by mosquitoes, racked with ague, bullied by every cursed black-faced policeman who loved to take it out of a White man" (85). The sufferings of the White man in the eastern colony culminate in a crocodile's nipping his right leg "as clean as a surgeon could have done it" while he swims in the Ganges (85). The Ganges, a holy river to the Indians, has also been shown

to harbour malignant elements. Doyle's depiction of Small's attitude towards the East subsumes even a British ex-convict in collective White prejudice against the coloured colonised people.

Almost every White character in The Sign of Four is prejudiced against the Orient. Cecil Forrester likens the situation of crime and the criminals described by Watson to "a romance...an injured lady, half-a-million in treasure, a black cannibal, and a wooden legged ruffian. They take the place of the conventional dragon or wicked earl" (76). Incidentally, dragon is in itself an imaginary, middle-eastern and therefore Oriental creature, and is associated with paganism in Christianity (*Britannica III* 183). Forrester is agreed upon by Mary Morstan who christens the imperial figures of Holmes and Watson dominating the natives as the very European "knights-errant" (Doyle, *The Complete* 76).

It is also in this narrative that Doyle details on the European lifestyle of Holmes to give him a more complete imperial Eurocentric identity. The detective smokes an "old briar-root pipe" (55) and has "oysters[,]...a brace of grouse...and port" for dinner (79), and is well-conversant with the usage of telephone (79), which, as E. Ennalls Berl points out, was very rarely used between 1879 and 1891 (Berl 197-210). Holmes's encyclopaedic knowledge stretches from "miracle plays" to "warships of the future", including medieval pottery, Stradivarius violins, and the Buddhism of Ceylon (79). A. Carson Simpson, in Sherlock Holmes's Wanderjahre , opines that Holmes's tenure in Tibet between 1891 and 1893 had been the period when

he assumed an Orientalist familiarity with the Ceylonese Buddhism (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 662).

By referring to the members of the *Baker Street Irregulars* as "street Arabs" Watson once again identifies Orient with disorderliness (Doyle, *The Complete* 75). Significantly, it is through these perceptively chaotic young children that Holmes tracks down *Aurora* (81) and has his first and last physical encounter with Tonga. The eradication of the lethal dart-throwing Oriental islander is so important to Doyle that he has had subtitled the tenth chapter of The Sign of Four as "The End of the Islander". When Holmes and Watson first see Tonga, he looks like a "dark mass...like a Newfoundland dog" (81). The author's re-description of Tonga's hideous physique betrays his disgust with the Oriental natives for their physical 'deformities' which he judges against the general physical stature and complexion of the White Western colonisers:

> "...A little black man – the smallest I have ever seen – with a great, misshapen head and a shock of tangled, dishevelled hair...this savage distorted creature...was wrapped in some sort of a dark Ulster or blanket, which left only his face exposed; but that face was enough to give a man a sleepless night. Never have I seen features so deeply marked with all bestiality and cruelty. His small eyes glowed and burned with a sombre light, and his thick lips were writhed back from his teeth, which grinned and clattered at us with half-animal fury." (82).

As soon as Tonga tries to use his blow-dart, a primitive weapon, against the pursuing colonisers, their sophisticated weapons – the revolvers – kill him (82). It is significant that even after killing a human being in the presence of Athelney Jones and two other police inspectors, Holmes and Watson are not booked for homicide because in the White colonial perspective Tonga is a mere savage: a malignant power that has to be annihilated. In the narrative Doyle treats the distinction between the East and the West as an objective fact. In A Study in Scarlet Watson dominates the Orientals away from Britain; in The Sign of Four he eradicates the criminally-linked Oriental Other in his own country.

On being apprehended Small expresses that "it was an evil day" for him when he first "clapped eyes upon the merchant Achmet and had to do with the Agra Treasure...[,]...[a symbol of the Oriental affluence]...[,]...which never brought anything but a curse yet upon the...[White]...man who owned it" (83), thus identifying the East as the place where white Europeans like him and Watson *must* suffer.

Jonathan Small is forced to leave India because he has had "got into a mess over a girl" (85): the sexual assaults on subaltern women being common during colonial domination. Even after losing his right leg to a crocodile, Small is employed by an indigo-planter with a telltale name – *Abel* (or able?) *White* (suggestive of his imperial character) – to "to keep an eye on [the Indian coolies] as they worked, and to

report the idlers" (85). Indigo plantations had become an important section of the British colonial trade in India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Small's life in India is disturbed by "the great mutiny" (85) of 1857 the causes of which have been analysed by McLeod Innes in The Sepoy Revolt (1897). Patrick Brantlinger notes that mid to late Victorian English fiction contained an immense amount of writing about the Indian Sepoy Mutiny (205). Doyle intersects with these texts the perceived treacherous nature of the colonised populace in the eighty ninth page when he mentions the Indian mutineer Nana Sahib, who became a widely used paradigm in English fictions of the time.

Brantlinger further observes, "After the Mutiny Indian is portrayed as mired in changeless pattern of superstition and violence which can be dominated but not necessarily altered for the better..." (200). He also links Said's concept of Orientalism as being comprised of "both the study of the East by the West, and any ideological outlook held and expressed by the West which serves to create and affirm ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and the Occident" (*Orientalism* 2-3) with the history of literature because according to him, "Victorian writing about the Mutiny expresses in concentrated form the racist ideology that Edward Said calls Orientalism" (*The Rule* 199).

Small gives a holocaustic description of the Indian Sepoy Mutiny: "There were two hundred thousand black devils let loose and the country

was a perfect hell" (Doyle, *The Complete* 85). He does not spare even the Indian animals and includes them as parties to chaos and the resultant destruction of the European settlers in India when he refers to "Dawson's wife...half eaten by jackals and native dogs" (85). On the other hand, the British officer Dawson is given a heroic stature because even at his death, with the "empty revolver in his hand", he has had managed to kill four Indian Sepoys (86). Doyle refers to the Sepoys – the Indians serving as soldiers in the British army – as "black fiends, with their red coats [that is, the uniform of the Indian soldiers of British India] still on their backs" (86).

Doyle expresses his disgust and anger with the mutineers primarily because the colonisers had been far outnumbered by the colonised individuals and because the Sepoys, after acquiring the knowledge of the martial techniques and weapons from the imperialists, had turned the same knowledge against them. Small says, "The cruellest part of... [the Mutiny]...was that these men that we fought against foot, horse, and gunners, were our own picked troops, whom we had taught and trained handling our own weapons and blowing our own bugle-calls" (86).

Doyle maintains a distinction of the East and the West even when he describes the Old Fort of Agra. While the modern part of the fort where the Europeans have had been stationed is described as habitable and "with plenty of room over" (86), the old part has been identified as exclusively housing the Orientals, and therefore "given over to the scorpion and the centipedes" and "full of great, deserted halls, and winding passages, and long corridors twisting in and out" (86).

Having had already suffered from a sense of alienation from the Punjabees, Mahomet Singh and Abdullah Khan, because of the difference in languages, Small is further tortured he is overpowered by them (86-7). Doyle presents the polemic relationship among the Indians to reason why the Sepoy Mutiny failed, and thereby to justify the domination of the natives. Ironically, Abdullah Khan finds it more feasible to repose trust in the European "Feringhee"-s than in the "Hindoos…with all the gods in their false temples" (87), and because "the Sikh knows the Englishman, and the Englishman knows the Sikh" (87). Doyle uses the Indian native to lambaste the Hindu faith from the viewpoint of a Christian believer while simultaneously avoiding being indicted for communalism because he makes an *Indian* to say so. Abdullah Khan's identification as a collaborating native has also been reinforced. In his depiction of the "rajah in the northern provinces" who, during the Mutiny, "would be friends both with the lion and the tiger – with the Sepoy and with the Company's Raj" (87), the writer depicts the perceived treacherous nature of the Orientals – their "chameleon-like quality" (Said, *Orientalism* 119). This behavioural trait is once again displayed when Dost Akbar, Achmet's Sikh guard who is entrusted to protect him, turns against him and kills him (Doyle, *The Complete* 88).

In the concluding chapter of his second Holmes narrative Doyle gives a detailed account of the different Oriental gemstones that Small, an imperialist, has had "read and thought about" when he was "a little lad of Pershore" (89). The box of the Agra Treasure that Small, Singh, Khan and Dost Akbar recover after

murdering Achmet contains one hundred forty three diamonds "of first water", ninety seven emeralds, one hundred seventy rubies, forty carbuncles, two hundred ten sapphires, sixty one agates, "a great quantity of beryls, onyxes, cats'-eyes, turquoises, and other stones", and three hundred pearls "twelve of which were set in a gold coronet" (89). Said, in his *Introduction* to Orientalism, has outlined one of the major perspectives in the European conception of the *fabulously rich world of the Orient*: "The Orient...had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experience." (1). Doyle's description betrays the age-old Occidental fantasy of possessing the Oriental riches.

Even when he has been sent to the Blair Island in the Andamans – a "dreary, fever-stricken place" with wild "cannibal natives" in possession of the primitive "poison darts" – Small finds himself "a sort of privileged person" because of his White complexion (Doyle, *The Complete* 89). When he narrates the details about the Agra Treasure to John Sholto, the army officer immediately identifies the gemstones as legally belonging to "the British government" and excludes its Indian ownership (90).

When Tonga, a little Andaman islander "sick to death" is "picked up by a convict gang in the woods" (91), Small takes him in his possession though he (Tonga) is "as venomous as a young snake" (91). Apart from performing a humanitarian act, Jonathan Small uses the native for satisfying his commercial and personal needs as soon as he is acquainted with him. He escapes from

the island of his captivity with the help of Tonga's canoe (91). Back at the imperial centre, the White fugitive begins to earn his living by "exhibiting poor Tonga at fairs and other such places as the black cannibal" who would "eat raw meat and dance his war-dance" significantly without any resentment on part of the Easterner (92). This conformity on part of the islander might be interpreted as an exhibition of how Small's power of physical domination has left the Andaman-dweller bereft of any strength and courage to protest.

Though Tonga, to Small, is "staunch and true...no man ever had a more faithful mate" (91), Nicholas Stewart notes that "Small is highly distrustful of Tonga, viewing him in the eighty second page through a Christian ethnocentric perspective as a 'hell hound'[4]. The native Indian in Doyle's text is directly subsumed in the English criminality though the writer gives him a status below that of his white owner. In a reference to the common colonial practice, Small has no qualms about welting "the little devil with the slack end of the rope" (82), and he takes the responsibility of having murdered "a vile Pathan [a member of the colonised populace] who had never missed a chance of insulting and injuring" him, upon himself (91) with identifiable pride. Importantly, while Holmes and Watson eradicate the native, they deal with the White criminal, Jonathan Small, with obtrusive kindness and sympathy. Even Small's sentence has not been referred to.

NOTES:

1. "Arthur Conan Doyle: Mother". 1 February 2003. <http://www.siracd.com/life_mother.shtml >
2. Ibid.
3. Stewart, Nicholas. "A Postcolonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle's Holmes Narratives". 3 February 2003. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imprial/india/conan_doyle.htm >
4. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4.C.

"THE ADVENTURE OF THE SPECKLED BAND":-

"The Adventure of the Speckled Band", which Nicholas Stewart considers as another of Arthur Conan Doyle's more imperially compatible narratives, was first published in the February 1892-edition of *The Strand Magazine*[1].

The short story commences with the arrival of Helen Stoner at 221 B, Baker Street, and from the very beginning Doyle builds up the a British society that has a distinct and perceptively superior cultural identity. Stoner's appearance shocks Sherlock Holmes in context of the Victorian social conventions that forbade the "young...[British]...ladies" against "wander[ing]...about the Metropolis at...[times as early as quarter past seven in]...the morning" (Doyle, *The Complete* 194). Her being "heavily veiled" and gloved also reflect the standard codes for women's dresses in the patriarchal Victorian Britain (194-5). On the other hand, James Edward Holroyd suggests that the detective's "masterly modesty" might have prevented him from readily appearing before Stoner because he was "so scantily dressed" (13).

The narrative, however, exposes the predicament of British women under the patriarchal societal norms of contemporary Britain. Confessing her inability to readily pay Holmes his fees for investigating the cause for Julia Stoner's death, Helen Stoner says, "At present it is out of my power to reward you

for your services, but in a month or six weeks I shall be married, with the control of my own income, and then at least you shall not find me ungrateful" (Doyle, *The Complete* 195). She thus refers to the anti-feminist social custom of disallowing any female member of a family to directly inherit and utilise any wealth that rightfully belonged to her.

In this narrative Watson once again indulges into hero-worship and highlights the powerful investigative faculties of Sherlock Holmes by effacing himself. This reveals Doyle's attempt to grant supremacy to the principal imperial representative at the exclusion of any other character that might challenge his supremacy or downplay his achievements by declaring himself or herself as being a party to the detective's exploits. Watson says,

> "I had no keener pleasure than in following Holmes in his professional investigations, and in admiring the rapid deduction, as swift as intuitions, and yet always founded on a logical basis, with which he unravelled the problems which were submitted to him" (194).

It is important that though Helen Stoner is mentally tortured by her stepfather, she takes pride in introducing him as "the last survivor of one of the oldest Saxon families in England, the Roylotts of Stoke Moran, on the Western borders of Surrey" (196). Here Doyle asserts his own attraction for British heraldry, and the nation's imperial heritage, tradition and nobility. Stoner's narrative about the gradual

destruction of the family of the Roylotts that was "at one time among the richest in England" and whose "estates extended over the borders into Berkshire in the north, and Hampshire in the west" imparts her family with a feudal identity and with a sense of possession of land that might be extended as an indication of its imperial interests (196). Dr. Grimesby Roylott's attempt to evade the drudgery of a flagging familial economy by obtaining "an advance from a relative, which enable[s] him to take a medical degree, and...[go]... out to Calcutta...[,]...[the imperial capital of British India until 1911]...[,]... where, by his professional skill and his force of character, he establish[es] a large practise" is an instance where the colony has been portrayed as a resource to boost and sustain the economy of the imperial centre (196).

It is significant that Roylott on his return to Britain from India is not publicly humiliated or socially ostracised for homicide because he has beaten "his native butler to death": a task not openly supported but never vociferously admonished by the White colonisers (196). Moreover, his return to Britain has also been on account of "some robberies which had been perpetrated in the house" perceptively by the Indian natives which somewhat mitigates and acts as an excuse for his "violence of temper" which leads to "a series of disgraceful brawls" and culminates into his hurling "the local blacksmith over a parapet into a stream" (196). While this section testifies to Doyle's biased attitude towards the Easterners' perceived "intricate and evil mentality" (Said, *Orientalism* 44), it also confirms Frantz Fanon's assertion that "the colonising doctor adopts the attitude of his group towards the...[colonised]...people" (*A Dying* 133). According to Fanon, the White doctor's medical practice, similar to one Roylott sets up

in India, is saturated with racism and profiteering: he not only treats his non-European patients with condescension and contempt, he also overcharges them and concocts fictitious or expensive treatments (Wyrick 90).

Even though he retains a passion for the Orient, Roylott's marrying "Mrs. Stoner, the young widow of Major General Stoner of the Bengal Artillery", a regiment of the imperial British military force in India used to control and obliterate the natives, might be interpreted as his attempt to return back to the original group of the British imperialists (Doyle, *The Complete* 196). Viewed in the colonial perspective, his problems arise particularly because he fails to maintain an insularity from the Orientals and become subsumed within the Eastern culture. The result of his immersion in an alien culture is madness and chaos, and what Nicholas Stewart refers to as "inverted colonialism within the grounds of the ancestral home of the Stoner family"[2]. When Stoner states that her stepfather's "violence of temper approaching mania" has had been "intensified by his long residence in the tropics", she implies that no sane individual would leave the rationally ordered imperial centre for the chaos of the Orient while simultaneously exhibiting the typical Orientalist attitude of relating the East to suffering and malignancy (196). Stewart writes, "Roylott's insanity infers that the Orient...is unbalanced and by moving back to England, [he] turns the grounds of his estate into a chaotic inverted colony where the irrational world of the Orient, as perceived by Doyle, commands" [3].

Significantly, Roylott's stint at the East has distorted him physically and morally. Holmes describes him as "a clever and ruthless man...[having]... an Eastern training" (Doyle, *The Complete* 209), who possesses "a large face, seared with a thousand wrinkles, burned yellow with the sun, and marked with every evil passion [,]...deep set... [and]...bile shot eyes [,] and...high thin fleshless nose" (200). Having had failed to avoid the perceptively fatal influence of the Orient, the physician tries to construct a microcosm of the East in his estate and lets animals like cheetah and baboon "wander freely over his grounds (197). Baring-Gould points out that both the cheetah and the black baboon came either from Africa or from Arabia, a part of the Orient (*Annotated I* 247). Roylott's chaotic house is attached to a "heavily-timbered park" insulated from the rest of the village (Doyle, *The Complete* 201). Disorder being an important part of the Orient in the Orientalist perspective, wings of Roylott's building are dishevelled and dilapidated (202). He further signifies his Eastern connections by befriending no one else other than "the wandering gypsies" (196), by maintaining and training venomous tropical snakes like the swamp adder (208), and by using Oriental objects like "red heelless Turkish slippers" (207) and "strong Indian cigars" (197) for daily life. Moreover, he exhibits an Oriental barbarism in his treatment of his stepdaughter Helen Stoner (Said, *Orientalism* 59). Holmes's reaction at "the five little livid spots, the marks of four fingers and a thumb imprinted upon the white wrists" of Helen Stoner indicates Doyle's implication that lack of chivalry towards women is alien to the Western etiquette (*The Complete* 199). By his attempts to prevent the marriage of Julia Stoner to Percy Armitage, a "half-pay Major of the Marines", Roylott not only tries to perpetuate his possession of his stepdaughter's inheritance, but also to intimidate

Britain's normal societal order perpetuated by the intra-racial marriages of White Westerners (197). Significantly, Helen Stoner, the only other surviving member of the Roylott family after Julia Stoner's death, does not share Grimesby Roylott's Oriental obsession. She rather displays her animosity to the Easterners by indicting the "wretched gipsies in the plantation" for rousing Julia from sleep (197).

The existence of a microcosm of the Orient within the territory of imperial Britain starts a chain of events in Roylott's estate that ultimately culminates in chaos and results firstly in the death of Julia Stoner and thereafter of the physician himself. In his depiction of disorderliness at Stoke Moran, Doyle seems to underscore the Western observation perpetuated particularly by Rudyard Kipling that there can be no congruent harmony between the Occident and the Orient. Stewart detects in the story the author's "stern fear of the consequences of studying the culture of the colonies from a position which is not anchored to the ideology of the imperial centre" [4].

At Stoke Moran Sherlock Holmes utilises his scientific and Orientalist knowledge to thwart an attack against a European/British citizen, Helen Stoner, by a "swamp adder...the deadliest snake in India", a lethal representative of the Orient, by lashing savagely at the reptile (Doyle, *The Complete* 207-8). This requires mention that whips and canes are two implements most commonly used by the colonisers to punish the errant colonised individuals. Wounded, the snake returns back from Helen Stoner's bedroom to Roylott and bites him, fatally poisoning him in the process (207-8). Stewart comments,

> "There can be no greater crime against the imperial centre, in its agents' estimations, than turning its knowledge against it: by attempting to kill his stepdaughters, Doyle presents Roylott as insanely pursuing the goal of eradicating the English presence within England, while accentuating the authority of Oriental cultures in its place"[5].

In "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" Holmes displays an inclination for maintaining his self-identity as a "private investigator" and aversion towards the regular police force, similar to what he does in the eighteenth page of A Study in Scarlet, when he says after Roylott's threatens him, "Fancy his having the insolence to confound me with the official detective force..." (Doyle, *The Complete* 201). Unlike the regular police and detective officials who act only under the instruction of the higher authority, the detective seeks to act independently to control and discipline primarily the colonised populace.

Roylott's insanity and obsession with the Orient are rendered even more lethal to his British acquaintances and Holmes because he is a physician: one of the privileged intellectuals with an immense scientific knowledge at disposal. Holmes's asserts, "When a doctor goes wrong he is the first of criminals" (206). In this context, Baring-Gould cites the instances of the errant doctors – William Palmer and Edward William Pritchard, executed respectively in 1856 and 1865 (*The Annotated I* 257). During their encounter with Roylott, the detective and his associate ensures the

correct irradiation of the *Other* because in the Orientalist perspective a sane intermingling of the Western and Eastern cultures is impossibility. It is necessary that a representative or champion of the Orientals and their culture must be distorted and eradicated in the imperially-compatible Holmes canon.

Baring-Gould opines that judged in context of the characteristic features of the adder mentioned in the narrative, the reptile would have to be "a sinister combination of the Mexican Gila Monster...and the speckled or Indian cobra", and, therefore, cannot be a reality (*The Annotated I* 266). Nicholas Stewart finds in the figure of the 'swamp adder' a distorted stereotype used by the author to symbolise the Orient [6]. On such stereotypic objects as the swamp adder, Said observes, "Some distinctive objects are made by the mind, and...these objects, while appearing to exist objectively, have only a fictional reality" (*Culture* 54). In this Holmes narrative the creature has been used to symbolise the perceived polarity between the Western colonisers and the Eastern colonised individuals which concludes with the ultimate triumph of the Occidentals exhibited in instances like Holmes's successful trapping of the snake (Doyle, *The Complete* 208). Here Doyle not only expresses his own Orientalist views but also attempts to provide an acceptable text to the imperial British readers. This assumes significance in the context of Said's observation that it was the unwritten rule for the imperial litterateurs to write texts that would conform to the authority of that culture; and the very authority, according to him, "places emphasis not so much on how to read, but [on] what is read and where is written about and represented" (*Culture* 70).

The scene of Roylott's death is a symbolic representation of the momentary triumph of the adder, an unpredictable representative of the Orient, over a Westerner who is callously reposes trust in it. In his upright, sitting position Roylott has "the short stock with the long lash", an implement for controlling, punishing and disciplining members of the Orient, lying uselessly "across his lap", while the adder encircling his head looks more like a lethal crown that might be compared to the olive crown worn by the Roman emperors (Doyle, *The Complete* 207). Likewise, Roylott might have symbolically become an emperor of an Oriental microcosm, but his failure to precisely comprehend all the intricacies of the Orientals, including the snake, results in his own annihilation. He becomes a symbolic monarch only at the time of his death. The snake's positioning itself on Roylott's head denotes the momentary prominence of the Orient and its success in destroying the colonial domination and patronisation:

> "Round his brow he had a peculiar yellow band, with brownish speckles, which seemed to be bound tightly round his head...In an instant his strange headgear began to move, and there reared itself from among his hair the squat diamond-shaped head and puffed neck of a loathsome serpent..." (207-8).

Importantly, Holmes, Watson and Helen Stoner feel secured only when the lethal representative of the Orient is "thrust ...back into...[the] den": after its complete physical domination is accomplished by the colonisers (208).

NOTES:

1. Stewart, Nicholas. "A Postcolonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle's Holmes Narratives". 3 February 2003. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imperial/india/conan_doyle.htm>
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4.D.

"THE ADVENTURE OF THE THREE STUDENTS": -

In "The Adventure of the Three Students", first published in *The Strand Magazine* in June 1904, Arthur Conan Doyle directly deals with an Indian and shifts the locale of *Sherlock Holmes's investigation which is usually the imperial metropolis of London to* "one of...[Britain's]...great university towns": a centre of the imperial education (*The Complete* 659). T.S.Blakeney's suggestion that the university referred to is Oxford (14) is agreed upon by Christopher Morley in Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson: a Textbook of Friendship .On the other hand, W.S. Bristowe infers that Doyle has written about Cambridge University (75-6). Baring-Gould further confirms that in 1895 Oxford was a city while Cambridge was a town (*Annotated II* 368). Both Oxford and Cambridge assume colonial connotation because knowledge derived from the British system of education was used by the English imperialists to perpetuate their dominance of the primarily Afro-Asian colonised populace. Being either illiterate or poorly educated, and the Orientals were technologically less sophisticated and therefore were rendered vulnerable to the developed science and technology of the Westerners. Understandably, in absence of his "scrap books...[and]...chemicals" symbolising his Orientalist empirical approach, Sherlock Holmes is "an uncomfortable man" (Doyle, *The Complete* 659). Importantly, he does not neglect theoretical education achieved from the different newspaper cuttings pasted in his reference books for the practical one based on his

different biochemical experiments, examples of which can be found in A Study in Scarlet (14-5).

From A Study in Scarlet onwards, Holmes and Watson exhibit an Orientalist prejudice against the Asians and Africans, associating everything Oriental with strangeness, seediness and malignancy. The protagonist of this narrative is "Mr. Hilton Soames, tutor and lecturer at the college of St.Luke's", a White Westerner as far as reproductions of Sidney Paget's illustrations are concerned. Soames is an examiner for Greek – a pagan tongue included under "the Fortesque Scholarship" – and the question paper for the scholarship examination includes "an exercise...[that]...consists of half a chapter of Thucydides" (659). By associating himself with a non-European, pagan language and culture, Soames violates the Orientalist norm for maintaining distance from the Easterners and the non-Christians and suffers in accordance with Doyle's imperial ideology. Significantly, the trouble "potent enough to ensue a hideous scandal, which will throw a cloud not only on the college, but on the University", the supreme centre for British education, does not occur with any other traditionally European subjects like English, French, German and Spanish (661).

It is important that when Holmes interrogates Soames, in context of the leakage of question papers, about the visitors who entered his room "after the papers [had] come" to him, the first name that the lecturer utters is of "young Daulat Ras, an Indian student..." (661). Being an Indian and therefore an Oriental, Daulat Ras becomes the primary suspect to Soames, and to Holmes and Watson both of whom are

primarily and instantaneously attracted to the restless movements of the Indian student when the detective goes to cross examine Gilchrist, Ras and Miles McLaren on the intrusion into Soames's room:

> "Three yellow squares of light shone above us in the gathering gloom.
> 'Your three birds are all in their nests', said Holmes, looking up. 'Halloa! What's that? One of them seems restless enough.'
> It was the Indian, whose dark silhouette appeared suddenly upon his blind. He was pacing swiftly up and down his room" (664).

Even after taking the cue from Soames, Holmes refuses to readily identify the Indian as a criminal not only because he avoids presupposition but also because he does not consider it possible for Ras, a representative of the perceptively unintelligent Eastern subaltern, to possess the sufficient intellect for recognising the rolls of manuscript on Soames's table as being the proofs. He says to the lecturer, "Then it amounts to this, Mr. Soames, that unless the Indian student recognised the roll as being proofs, the man who tampered with them came upon them accidentally without knowing that they were there" (661). Later, while narrating details of his assumptions about Gilchrist's misdemeanour, the detective once again dismisses the Indian student as lacking in intellectual prowess: "...The Indian I ...thought nothing of. If the proofs were in roll he could not possibly know what they were..." (668). The statement might be extended to imply that if the visitor were a Westerner, he would have readily recognised the proof.

Significantly, while Soames introduces Gilchrist and McLaren in absentia to Holmes, he openly exhibits an affection and affinity for the two White students and describes them in superlatives but maintains a total silence about the physical and intellectual capabilities of the Indian. Even as he hails from a controversial family, Gilchrist is "a fine scholar and athlete; plays in the Rugby team and the cricket team for the college, and…[have]…got his Blue for the hurdles and the long jump" (663). In spite of his poverty, his imperial tutor attests his industry and expresses a surety about his "do[ing]…well" (663). His White Western identity makes him "a fine, manly fellow" in contrast with Ras who is "quiet, inscrutable…as most of the Indians [according to the Orientalist conception] are" (663). Frederic Dorr Steele's illustration for the 24 September 1904-edition of *Collier's* shows Gilchrist and McLaren as tall and handsome while Daulat Ras is identifiably short and dull-looking (Baring-Gould, *Annotated II* 374). Ras's "steady and methodical" approach might as well be applied for describing his capability to undertake antisocial projects. Miles McLaren, once again, is "brilliant…one of the brightest intellects of the University…" (Doyle, *The Complete* 663).

While describing the college building Doyle stresses on its advanced age and Gothic architectural pattern to impart the centre of imperial learning with a traditional and glamorous Eurocentric identity:

> "The sitting-room of our client opened by a long, low, latticed window on to the ancient lichen-tinted court of the old college. A Gothic arched door

led to a worn stone staircase. On the ground floor was the tutor's room. Above were three students, one on each story..." (661).

Such architectural patterns had been revived in the late Victorian Age.

When Holmes, Watson and Soames visit the students, they initially come across the "dark silhouette" of Daulat Ras, an Indian (664). It is significant that while one of the two White students, Gilchrist, is encountered in ample light and the other, McLaren, is not met at all, the Indian student's "dark silhouette" might symbolically suggests his perceptively ambiguous and evil nature while simultaneously imparting him with *Otherness* and sublimity because of his being half visible in the silhouetted form (665).

When Holmes and Watson visit the room of the Indian student he does not create a good impression on them. Because of the physical, cultural, economic and political differences existing between the Western and the Eastern nations, Ras is as suspicious about the detective and his friend as the latter are about the former. Doyle's description of Daulat Ras, narrated in context of Holmes's deliberately breaking the tip of Ras's pencil during his investigation, betrays his Orientalist conception of the Indian:

> "The same curious accident happened to him in the room of the Indian – a silent, little, hook-nosed fellow, who eyed us askance and was obviously glad when Holmes's architectural studies had come to an end" (665).

Notably, Gilchrist does not feel problematic about Holmes' and Watson's watching the "pieces of mediaeval domestic architecture" kept inside his room because the Gothic pieces of architecture form an integral part of his own Eurocentric tradition (665). On the other hand, Ras, to whom the European mementoes are foreign elements without having any link to his own Oriental heritage, is uncomfortable with the intrusion of European visitors appreciating Gothic art (665).

Doyle's Orientalist prejudice is further illustrated when Holmes and Watson return from the quadrangle after interrogating the students. An Orientalist as Holmes is – a Westerner who utilises the European study of the Orient with the result of revealing and outwitting the criminally linked Other – he ceases to suspect the Indian because he has completed successfully judging him against the framework of his knowledge about the Orient during which he has found him guiltless (666). On the other hand, Watson, who readily suspects Ras, does not harbour the least suspicion about Bannister because he is a White Westerner:

> " 'Well, Watson, what do you think of it?' Holmes asked, as we came out into the main street. 'Quite a little parlour game – sort of three-card trick,

is it not? There are your three men. It must be one of them. You take your choice. Which is yours?'

'The foul-mouthed fellow at the top. He is the one with the worst record. And yet that Indian was a sly fellow also. Why should he be pacing his room all the time?'

'There is nothing in that. Many men do it when they are trying to learn anything by heart.'

'He looked at us in a queer way.'

'So would you if a flock of strangers came in on you when you were preparing for an examination next day, and every moment was of value. No, I see nothing in that. Pencils, too, and knife – all was satisfactory. But that fellow *does* puzzle me.'

'Who?'

'Why, Bannister, the servant. What's his game in the matter?'

'He impressed me as being a perfectly honest man…' (666).

Even though Gilchrist has taken "the unpardonable liberty of examining" Soames's question papers (660), Doyle does not predict him as "a callous criminal" (668). Not only does Gilchrist confess and repent for his own sin, he proposes to make penance by accepting the offer of "a commission in the Rhodesian Police" and thereafter, "going out to South Africa at once" to control and discipline the natives of the British colony as a in his capacity as an imperial police official (668-9). Understandably his proposal is applauded to by Holmes, Doyle's imperial and Orientalist spokesperson, who assures the

student of "a bright future...[awaiting him]...in Rhodes", thereby implying that the colonisers' success is directly proportional to their success at dominating the natives (669). While Gilchrist's copying from Soames's question paper has been sympathetically described as an instance of his "falling low" (669), his impending imperialistic ventures have been hailed as a mean to "take...him[self]...at a height" in glamour and personality which would ultimately result in his becoming an imperially-compatible British citizen. During Holmes's final speech with Bannister at the conclusion of the narrative, he says:

> " 'No, indeed...Well, Soames, I think we have cleared your little problem up, and our breakfast awaits us at home. Come, Watson! As to you, sir, I trust that a bright future awaits you in Rhodesia. For once you have fallen low. Let us see in the future how high you can rise'" (669).