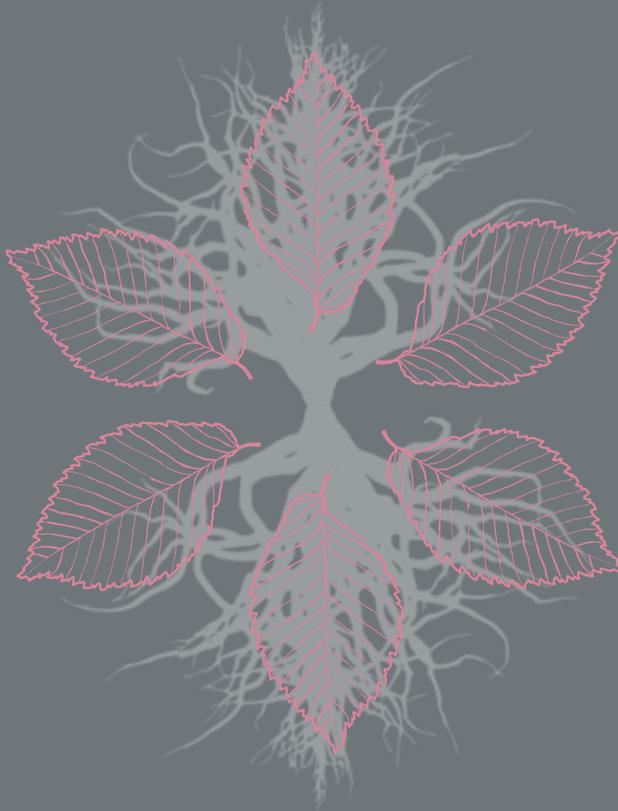


GENRE AND ...

Copenhagen Studies in Genre 2



Ekbatana

Ed. Sune Auken,
Palle Schantz Lauridsen, &
Anders Juhl Rasmussen

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& Anders Juhl Rasmussen

FORLAGET EKBÁTANA

Genre and ...
Copenhagen Studies in Genre 2

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& Anders Juhl Rasmussen

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....vii

APPROACHES THROUGH THEORY

GENRE AND WRITING PEDAGOGY

by Anne Smedegaard.....21

GENRE AND EVERYDAY CONVERSATION

by Frans Gregersen.....56

GENRE AND RHETORIC

by Christel Sunesen.....99

GENRE AND PARATEXT

by Anders Juhl Rasmussen.....125

READING GENRE

GENRE AND INTERPRETATION

by Sune Auken.....154

GENRE AND GENERIC MODULATION

by Palle Schantz Lauridsen.....184

GENRE AND ADAPTATION IN MOTION

by Erik Svendsen.....221

GENRE AND LYRIC POETRY	
by René Rasmussen.....	251
GENRE AND WORKING CLASS FICTION	
by Beata Agrell.....	286
GENRE AND THE COLLECTIVE NOVEL	
by Bo Jørgensen.....	328
GENRE AND THE NOVELISTIC	
by Gorm Larsen.....	355
PERSPECTIVES	
GENRE AND LANGUAGE	
by Nina Møller Andersen.....	391
GENRE AND CATEGORIZATION	
by Ib Ulbæk.....	422
NOTES ON AUTHORS.....	455

READING GENRE

GENRE AND GENERIC MODULATION

Palle Schantz Lauridsen

Audiences [...] turned towards the thrills introduced in detective novels when the Sherlock Holmes literature marched around the world in a genuine triumphal procession at the theater, in the serials of the newspapers and in books [...] Conan Doyle [...] had a large readership at the turn of the century. (Andersen, 1924, p. 79)

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S stories about Sherlock Holmes are among the most widespread fictions of modernity.¹ For over a hundred years, Doyle's fictional British consulting detective has moved across many types of media, though he has always retained a tie to crime genres. Despite their "stock characters" and "typological situations" (Leitch, 2002),² however, crime fictions form a broad field: we find several variations even within Doyle's writings, including examples of "whodunits" and "conspirational thrillers." The former genre is characterized by a detective clearing up

¹ The findings and conclusions of this chapter, together with those of other texts (Lauridsen, 2011a, 2011b), form part of my book *Sherlock Holmes i Danmark* [Sherlock Holmes in Denmark] (Lauridsen, 2014). Though the book was published before this chapter, the chapter was written before the book.

² Leitch distinguishes among three stock characters—"the criminal," "the victim," and "the avenger or detective"—and defines the typological situations of crime films as the ways in which they present formulaic "events, twists, and revelations" (Leitch, 2002, p. 13; 208).

crime that *has been* committed, while in the latter the detective uncovers a crime in the making in order to *prevent* it from being committed.

In this article I wish to examine how the Holmes universe was presented to Danes at the beginning of the 20th century. Starting in the mid-1890s, Holmes stories were published in a variety of formats. In the spring of 1902, Danish theaters were taken by a Holmes craze, and in the years between 1908 and 1911, Nordisk Films-Kompagni [Nordic Film Company] produced 12 short Sherlock Holmes films. The migration of the Holmes characters and universe from popular literature to popular theater, and later to silent film, gave rise to a series of changes that I will use the concept of “generic modulation” to epitomize.

Regardless of the medium—literature, theater, silent film—all of these stories must be considered crime stories. Evidently, however, these different versions are played in different keys, and this is where “modulation,” a concept from musical theory, becomes relevant. Modulation designates “a movement from one key to another ... often conducted gradually to related keys, i.e. to keys deviating from the original key by one or few key signatures (i.e. from C major to G major)” (Store Danske Encyklopædi: 13/360). These gradual changes from one key to another, from one sort of crime story to the next, are the ones I wish to grasp with the concept of “generic modulation.” This concept is intended to catch these gradual changes as they happen, in a historical or diachronic analysis.

In *Kinds of Literature* (1982), Alastair Fowler dedicates a chapter to generic modulation. He starts off by distinguishing between modulation and generic hybrids, in which “two or more complete repertoires are present in such proportions that no one of them dominates” (p. 183). The concept of “repertoire” refers to “the whole range of potential points of resemblance that a genre may exhibit” (p. 55). Whereas in the generic hybrid he considers none of the repertoires of two or more genres to be dominant, in modulation he regards one of the genres as dominant, while the other is nothing but “a modal abstraction with a token repertoire” (p. 191). “Mod-

al” is derived from “mode,” which designates the coloring that a less significant genre adds to the dominating “kind.” A comic novel, then, is first and foremost a *novel* (its “kind”) containing *comic elements* (its “mode”). Fowler describes modes by noting that they “always have an incomplete repertoire, a selection only of the corresponding kind’s features” (p. 107). Whereas I was inspired by musical theory in my description of modulation above, Fowler finds his inspiration in painting: “the proportions of the modal ingredient may vary widely [...], from overall tones to touches of local color” (p. 107). The point, however, is the same—though I wish to underline modulation as a movement, whereas Fowler sees it as a *fait accompli* identifiable within the individual text. In the context of the present article, it is worth noting that Fowler sees in these nuances “one of the principal ways of expressing literary taste” (p. 107). This is interesting because a central thesis of the present article is that the various versions of Holmes—the literary, the theatrical and the cinematic—capture and express the tastes of different users.

My basic thesis in the pages to come is that the generic modulations to which the Holmes stories were subjected were due to two factors. One factor is that different media impose different requirements for the presentation of (for example) a Sherlock Holmes story, thanks to their differing materials of expression and “modes of engagement.”¹ Just to mention one example: this is precisely what is at stake when Doyle’s narrator, Dr. Watson, is absent from the silent films. These films’ silent, performative, and visual mode of engagement complicates the use of a linguistic narrator. The second factor, which is the one in focus here, is that the users of different media have different tastes and different expectations with regard to the experience provided by the given medium. Accordingly, a historical account of the differences between the readerships and spectatorships of

¹ The concept of “modes of engagement” is used by Linda Hutcheon to analyze the various ways in which we “tell, show, or interact with stories” (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 22).

Doyle's stories, plays about Holmes for the popular theater, and early Holmes films, respectively, will demonstrate the plausibility of the claim that generic modulations are also of a contextual or situational nature. In order to make the contexts of the different Holmes modulations intelligible, it will be necessary to present certain facts of media history, such as: When and how was Conan Doyle published in Danish? What was the status of popular theater around 1900? Finally, who went to the movies around 1910? A central part of the article is an account of the significance of a number of very popular, but so far overlooked, theatrical presentations of Holmes to the spreading and modulation of Holmes in Denmark.²

THEATRICAL ROMANCE AND ACTION FILM

At the start of the 20th century, Danish theaters were taken by a regular Holmes fever. The Danish playwright Walter Christmas adapted William Gillette's American play about the British detective, and the resulting play opened at the Copenhagen Folketeatret (The People's Theater) on December 26, 1901. Christmas' play was an unprecedented box-office success, and during the next decade it ran on several stages across the country, along with other plays featuring Doyle's fictional detective. From a chronological-historical perspective, Christmas' *Sherlock Holmes* can be said to have transformed the character, the narrative structure, and the genres associated with Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. From a perspective focused on the popular knowledge of Holmes, however, we must say that Christmas' play *formed* these same elements.

A couple of examples will illuminate the character of this (trans-)formation. As is well known, Doyle's Holmes lives at 221B Baker Street.

² Thus, for example, the plays are mentioned by neither Nielsen (1997) nor Bødker (2005), even though both authors' theme is Holmes in Denmark at the beginning of the 20th century. It seems to have gone unnoticed that Christmas' manuscript (1901b) can be found in the collections of The Royal Library, Copenhagen.

In Christmas' play, however, he lives elsewhere. Even though the play allegedly takes place in London "10 years ago" (1901, p. 1), Holmes is said to live in Alexandragade, Alexandra Street! This small and peculiar change indicates that the Holmes universe was not thought to be deeply rooted in Danish audiences. A rather more significant change is found in the play's finale, where Holmes has lost his orientation—not toward the crime that he has just prevented from being committed, but in terms of his life. In a melancholy and intensely high-flown way, Holmes sees himself as "a ship between dangerous rocks—the man at the rudder does not stick to his course. If it continues in this way, the ship will soon become a wreck" (p. 115). This sort of problem can be managed, however. Just before the curtain fall, the following conversation takes place between Holmes and the female lead character, Miss Alice Faulkner:

Alice: "Is there nothing that might lead the ship out of those dangerous waters?"

Holmes: "Yes, if the lighthouse were lit!"

Alice: "I shall try to wake up the lighthouse keeper. By all means, sail on safely, Sherlock Holmes."

Holmes (kissing her hand): "Thank you, Alice—thank you!" (p. 114)

A *romantic* scene including Holmes is unimaginable in Doyle's stories. As Holmes' friend, assistant, and chronicler Dr. Watson notes at the start of "A Scandal in Bohemia": "As a lover he would have placed himself in a false position" (Doyle, 1981, p. 161)!

The theatrical Holmes fever had hardly worn off when another fever broke out, this time in the new media of film. During the years 1908-1911, Nordisk Films-Kompagni [Nordic Film Company], which had been founded in 1906, produced 12 Sherlock Holmes films. Nordisk Film also had a most creative take on Holmes: while just a few of the storylines were borrowed from Conan Doyle, basically none of the films was based on the

literary stories, and Dr. Watson was conspicuous by his absence. Only one of these films has survived, *Sherlock Holmes i Bondefangerklør* [A Confidence Trick],³ but it provides an example that will suffice to illustrate Nordisk's modulations of Holmes. Near the end of the film, Holmes sets off in pursuit of the henchmen. In Doyle, Holmes rides through London in horse cabs, while his trips to the countryside are by train. But here—in Nordisk's modern, up-to-date version—he calls a motorized taxicab, leading up to what is probably the first car chase in Danish film history, complete with an exchange of shots. Hard-boiled *action*, then, in the year 1910. These changes probably would not have pleased Conan Doyle who, writing about some silent French Holmes films, criticized their use of “telephones, motor cars and other luxuries of which the Victorian Holmes never dreamed” (Doyle, 1989, p. 106).

CONAN DOYLE IN DANISH

Arthur Conan Doyle published his first Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, in 1887. The next novel, *The Sign of Four*, came out three years later, but it was not until 1891 that he began publishing the short stories in *The Strand Magazine* that made Holmes popular both in his “native country” and internationally. The first Danish translation seems to have appeared as a newspaper serial in 1891,⁴ and translations in book format were published by Jydsk Forlags-Forretning starting in 1893. These included the two previous novels plus the two collections of short stories that Doyle had written so far, namely, *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*. The translations were then republished during the years 1898-1902, now with the addition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which

³ A copy with German intertitles can be seen online at the homepage of the Danish Film Institute: <http://www.dfi.dk/faktaomfilm/nationalfilmografien/nffilm.aspx?id=21224>.

⁴ *A Study in Scarlet* was serialised as *Det mystiske Tegn* in Aarhus Stiftstidende during the summer of 1891.

had originally been serialized in *The Strand* between August 1901 and April 1902. As was normal practice during this period, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was also serialized in Danish newspapers, in at least ten local papers across the country. In 1905, the publishing house Gyldendal, which had acquired Jydsk Forlags-Forretning a few years earlier, reissued the whole series in booklets of 32 pages sold at a subscription price: 92 booklets in all at the price of 0.1 crowns each (Lauridsen, 2014). This is how crime fiction started to make its way into the Danish market. The first Danish crime novel, *Hvad Skovsøen gemte* [Secret of the Forest Lake] by Palle Rosenkrantz (Rosenkrantz, 2012), was published in 1903, followed in 1906 by a Holmes pastiche by journalist Carl Muusmann: *Sherlock Holmes på Marienlyst* [Sherlock Holmes in Elsinore] (Muusmann, 2005).

HOLMES ON STAGE

Mr. Charles, the narrator in Muusmann's novel, informs his readers that he has been to London to negotiate the rights for adapting *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for the stage. Others before him had produced Holmes for the theater (Schuttler, 1982). In the mid-1890s, Doyle had himself written a play that was never performed, but which formed the basis for the play written by the American William Gillette in 1899 (Gillette, 1977). Gillette had Doyle's permission, and the play became a great success. Allegedly, Doyle had given Gillette a free hand. In his autobiography, *Memories & Adventures* (Doyle, 1989), he writes that Gillette sent him a cable asking: "May I marry Holmes?" Doyle answered: "You may marry or murder or do what you like with him" (p. 102).

Gillette's play opened in New York in 1899. The playwright himself played Holmes, and went on to do so more than 1300 times over a 30 year period.⁵ Gillette also took the play to England, and Conan Doyle attended

⁵ Gillette played the part in a lost 1916 Essanay movie. In 1922 it was brought to the big screen, with John Barrymore as the star.

a performance in London. Judging by his comments in *Memoirs & Adventures* more than 20 years later, he “was charmed, both with the play, the acting, and the pecuniary result” (Doyle, 1989, p. 102).

Gillette’s play is a central source for Walter Christmas’ *Sherlock Holmes*, which opened at the Copenhagen *Folketeatret* on December 26, 1901. Swedish Holmes expert Mattias Boström tells the following story:

Christmas had seen Gillette’s play in New York, and contacted Charles Frohman to buy the rights for a Danish production. He thought that Frohman’s price was too high, however, and instead attended a couple of performances, during which he wrote down the lines on his shirt cuffs ... After that he wrote his own version of the play in Danish, based on his notes and a good share of fantasy. (2006, p. 212)⁶

If the story rings true, Christmas apparently did not pay a dime for the rights, and Gillette’s name is mentioned neither on posters nor in newspaper articles about the play at Folketeatret. There are so many basic similarities between the two plays—and, on the other hand, so many smaller differences—that it must be considered a fact that Christmas’ play is an (unauthorized) adaptation, and not a translation, of Gillette’s play. Christmas got away with sponging off of Gillette probably because Denmark had

⁶ In response to questions about the validity of his claims, Mattias Boström wrote the following in an e-mail dated April 4, 2010:

In 1986 Ragnar Gustafson published two booklets titled *Anteckningar om Malmö Teater 1809-1938* [Notes on Malmö Theater 1809-1938]. In the first booklet (*Introduction and Inventory*) he has written, page 96, about the play *Sherlock Holmes* in Walter Christmas’ adaptation: “Note: adaptation 1902 almost a pirated copy, written down on the shirt cuffs and based on memory”.

When Ted Bergman [a Swedish Holmes expert, PSL] has mentioned the adaptation he usually writes that Christmas “according to legend” is said to have written down the script on his cuffs.

not yet signed the Berne Convention for the protection of literary and artistic works. Denmark did not sign that convention until 1903.⁷

SHERLOCK HOLMES IN COPENHAGEN

Sherlock Holmes opened at *Folketeatret* in Copenhagen on December 26 1901. Eventually it became one of the theater's all-time successes, and was performed in four "rounds" until 30 December 1909. The significance of theater for the popularization of Holmes in Denmark has been forgotten, but newspaper criticism, articles and advertisements, theater programs and posters, along with other archival material, bear witness to a national Holmes wave, particularly in the spring of 1902, before the Danish publication of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which marked Holmes' literary breakthrough in Denmark.

Folketeatret had approximately 1200 seats, indicating that 230.000 tickets were on sale for Holmes over its 10-year run. 230.000 is equivalent to half of the Copenhagen area's population at the time. It is unlikely that all of these shows were sold out, but the large number of shows immediately after the opening, and the numerous restagings, indicate unmistakably that audiences flocked to watch *Sherlock Holmes*.

Holmes and Watson both had parts in the play, which took place, in the vein of Doyle, in early 1890s London. The play runs in five acts and unfolds during two days; it tells the story of Miss Alice Faulkner, who possesses some documents that—if presented to the right people—would scandalize a nobleman and his family. This part of the story is an adaptation of Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia." It is noteworthy, however, that Christmas changes the female lead character's name from Irene Adler to Alice Faulkner, and her character and function are somewhat altered as well. Irene Adler is a woman of action, whereas Alice Faulkner is more of a melodramatic victim. Together with her mother, Alice is held captive by

⁷ <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=47221>.

Mr. and Mrs. Larrabee, who use threats and violence to try to persuade her to hand over the documents so that they can blackmail the noble family. The noble family in turn hires Holmes in order to get hold of the documents; and when the Larrabees realize that he is on their trail, they decide to ask Professor Moriarty, the King of Crime, for assistance. Moriarty, eager to kill Holmes, promises to help them. After a series of dramatic events, the play ends with Holmes handcuffing Moriarty. Holmes himself joins in the bonds of matrimony.

Doyle depicts the confrontation between Holmes and Moriarty in “The Final Problem.” This means that Christmas’ play, like Gillette’s, is basically a merger of two Doyle stories, though other stories are quoted as well. The discussion between Holmes and Watson, from *The Sign of Four*, about the former’s use of cocaine—a seven percent solution—is closely paraphrased by Christmas; the same is the case with a scene from “A Scandal in Bohemia,” in which Holmes, who has not seen Watson for quite a while, deduces that the Doctor’s wife is away, that he has a “most clumsy and careless servant girl”, and that he has again “become an active member of the medical profession” (Doyle, 1981, p. 162). What is more: several of Holmes’ staged tricks from “A Scandal in Bohemia,” the arrest of Enoch Drebber from *The Sign of Four*, and a small motif from “The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter” all find their way into Christmas’ play, along with the heroine’s first name, Alice, which is also the name of a young woman similarly held captive in “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches.” Nevertheless, the overall merging of the stories, the general plot line, and the narrative element are all borrowed from Gillette. Christmas’ own contribution—apart from changing the language to Danish—consists for the most part in his coloring of the characters.⁸

⁸ Further comparison of the two plays is interesting, but lies outside the scope of the present article.

Act 1 takes place at the blackmailers' house. Here they call themselves Larrabee, but their real names are James and Lissy Snapper. They have summoned an old friend from the world of crime in order to have him open the safe in which they (wrongly) believe the documents to be hidden. Later on, Holmes too pays them a visit, and by arranging a fake cry of "fire!" he tricks Alice into revealing the documents' whereabouts. Holmes leaves it up to her to decide what to do with them; but then Mr. Larrabee tries to get hold of the documents at gunpoint. Holmes, however, disarms him, and informs the Larrabees that they will answer for Miss Faulkner's well-being with their lives. At the end of the act, the Larrabees decide to request the assistance of Professor Moriarty.

Act 2 unfolds in Moriarty's office the following morning. In a significant addition to Doyle, who never described Moriarty's residence, Christmas displays Moriarty in his office, which—along with the gasworks that uses to make his enemies disappear—is underground, and so connects him to the earthly regions of Hell. With his murderous methods, his modern technology, his up-to-date intelligence, and his gang of colorful henchmen, with names such as Igen [The Leech], Haltefanden [The Devil on Two Sticks] and Kvæleren [The Strangler], Moriarty rules over London's underworld. It annoys him that Holmes has lately been interfering with his affairs, and so when the Larrabees tell him about the documents and their meeting with Holmes, Moriarty decides to deal with both cases at once. He personally hopes to shoot Holmes that same evening; and in case he fails, his henchmen will deal with Holmes in a shuttered gasworks at midnight.

In the evening, Act 3 takes us to Holmes' dwelling at Alexandragade. Dr. Watson pays him a visit, and after a few deductions and a discussion of Holmes' use of cocaine, Holmes presents the story of Moriarty to his friend. The Larrabee's French maid then arrives, informing Holmes in a comical accent about problems in the Larrabee house. Finally, in a highly dramatized staging of the similar scene from "The Final Problem," Moriarty now appears. In Doyle's story, Moriarty simply threatens Holmes to

get him off his tail; but in the play, Moriarty is determined to shoot his opponent. The atmosphere gets so intense that—according to one newspaper report—a member of the Copenhagen audience shouted at Holmes: “Look out, Holmes, look out! The Professor has taken the revolver and wants to shoot you!” (*Aarhus Stiftstidende*, February 16, 1902). After a brief duel in which no shots are actually fired, the antagonists part, assuring one another that their battle has not yet come to an end.

Act 4 finds Moriarty’s henchmen gathered in the cellar below London’s old central gasworks at around midnight. They are waiting to finish off Holmes, who has been tricked into coming there by Mr. Larrabee, under the pretense of wanting to discuss the matter of the documents with him. The Larrabees then arrive, followed by Miss Faulkner; she intercedes on Holmes’ behalf, promising to hand over the documents if no harm is done to him. As Holmes approaches, the henchmen lock up Alice, and then try in vain put Holmes to death. Holmes liberates Alice, however, and makes a clever and dramatic escape.

The fifth and last act takes place the following evening at Dr. Watson’s combined surgery and home. Watson is visited by a number of patients who turn out to be accomplices of Moriarty. Holmes next turns up in disguise, followed by Moriarty himself, who is disguised as a cab driver. After cleverly handcuffing Moriarty, Holmes resolves that he needs rest: “And what other rest than Death may I expect?”. As Mrs. Watson is heard playing “Home, Sweet Home” on the piano from the living room, Watson tries to convince Holmes to choose the rest of “marriage, of quiet, happy family life” instead (Christmas, 1901b, p. 107). Their discussion is interrupted, however, as the nobleman steps in and is handed the documents by Alice. Finally, alone with Alice, Holmes realizes that his salvation lies with her and her love.

Apart from a few explanatory mentions of the past, especially in Act 1, the story unfolds chronologically. Just as he is depicted by Doyle, but even

more so, Holmes is the life-weary cocaine user who only feels alive when he is on a case. At the same time, there are far more thrilling and (melo-) dramatic elements in Christmas' play than anywhere in Doyle. Both Holmes and Alice Faulkner fall into the criminals' clutches several times during the play, and threats of mutilation and death fill the air. Such thrills were mentioned by several of the play's contemporary critics: for example, the daily *Politiken* wrote that members of the audience "followed each and every encounter between the hero and his enemies with breathless apprehension" (*Politiken*, December 27, 1901).

Christmas' play thus differs from the typical Doyle story, with its focus on puzzle solving. In Acts 1, 2 and 4, we actually attend the criminals' scheming, and follow the encounters between heroes and villains *as* they happen and not—as is common in Doyle—in Watson's accounts of them *after* they take place. The play depicts "present danger rather than reflecting on, or investigating, past action", as John Scaggs puts it (2005, p. 107) it when defining the *crime thriller*. Scaggs continues:

Furthermore, in order to create this danger in the present the protagonist of the crime thriller must be threatened, or believe him- or herself to be threatened, by powerful external forces of some form of the other. (p. 107)

Generically speaking, then, the focus is transferred from the classical crime story, with its highly intellectual problem-solving, to the more emotionally engaging *crime thriller*.

The thrilling experience of Christmas' play was due to more than the changes in narrative structure. The change of medium contributed as well. Both the manuscript and reviews show that the play had musical accompaniment, not only during the intermission, but also during the performance proper; a fact supported by the musical score (Hansen, 1901). That the music, along with the stage lighting, intensified the audience's thrills was

emphasized by Danish theater historian Robert Neiendam, who wrote, 40 years after having seen the play as a young man:

Presumably none of the now elderly theatergoers has forgotten the scene in the gasworks cellar with the burning cigar in the dark. Or the subdued music filling the uncanny pauses announcing the entrance of Sherlock? (1945, p. 152)

A radical change in Holmes' character can be seen in his relation to the female lead character, Alice Faulkner. In "A Scandal in Bohemia," it is debatable whether Holmes falls in love with Irene Adler—this woman who foresees his moves, and turns out to be very noble-minded—but Watson, at any rate, is convinced that he does not love her, but deeply respects her instead. In the course of the story, Irene Adler marries; whereas Christmas' play has Alice fall in love with Holmes, and in its "Marzipan ending" (*Politiken*, December 27, 1901) they even seem on the brink of marriage. This means that the play has a romantic turn.

One last central modulation has to do with the play's humor, which distinguishes it from Doyle's seriousness, though not from later adaptations. In the 14 films shot between 1939 and 1946 starring Basil Rathbone as Holmes and Nigel Bruce as Watson, the latter, depicted as Holmes' full-bottomed and unintelligent partner, functions as the comic character; similarly, in the latest adaptations—Guy Ritchie's films *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *A Game of Shadows* (2011), and BBC's 2010-2014 nine part television series *Sherlock*—humor is at the center. In Christmas' play, on the other hand, there is no comedy in relation to the central characters, though some of the subordinate characters do function as comic sidekicks. When the Larrabee's French maidservant whispers "Monsieur 'Omes—You love mademoiselle? You do?" and continues "She You! She sleep-talks your name—'Omes!' 'Omes!'" (p. 54), it may have caused laughter, but Moriarty's assistants seem particularly to have functioned as the play's

comic relief. In one very critical piece in *Højskolebladet*, Johannes Vedel noted that:

when for instance one of the bandits “launched” a truly cracking oath—which of course was part of the conversation in that company—it caused laughter and cheers from many among the male part of the audience, and when one of the nosy parkers reported on something he had found out and then could stutter and stammer it out in a comical fashion it caused wild excitement in a large part of the audience. (Vedel, 1902, p. 185)

The safe-breaker Mikkel Shark excels in imaginative homespun oaths, such as “Oh! You gilded crocodile tail!” (Christmas, 1901b, p. 12). And the stuttering Bob “The Strangler” McLuh has lines such as “Do not strike ma-ma-matches here—there’s ga-ga-gas in the room” (p. 67). These types of wisecracks are probably what made “G. H.”, of the Copenhagen newspaper *Dagbladet*, write that audiences had fun “when the scoundrels acted farcically jolly” (*Dagbladet*, December 27, 1901), and led the critic at the newspaper *Politiken* to emphasize that the criminals acted like “Copenhagen harbor thugs” (*Politiken*, December 27, 1901), rather than opponents worthy of Holmes.

In Walter Christmas’ *Sherlock Holmes* at Folketeatret, Copenhagen audiences of the period 1901–1909 encountered a show containing a crime story that was basically a compilation of two Doyle stories. Though Christmas’ Holmes definitely does showcase examples of his puzzle-solving “science of deduction,” the play must basically be regarded as a crime thriller that is colored with elements from genres not familiar to Doyle’s Holmes: melodrama, romance, and comedy.

SHERLOCK HOLMES IN THE PROVINCES

Sherlock Holmes was not merely performed in Copenhagen, the capital. While the red lights were on at Folketeatret, the whole country seemed to be hit by genuine Holmes fever during the first months of 1902. *Sherlock Holmes* was performed by competing theater troupes “racing” it around the provinces (*Horsens Folkeblad*, January 27, 1902). Christmas’ version was performed by at least four different troupes,⁹ all while other adaptations of Doyle stories hit the theaters of the Danish provinces. This happened during a period when a local newspaper critic felt obliged to explain that a detective is “a private investigating officer” (*Vejle Amts Folkeblad*, January 24, 1902).

The nationwide popularity that was *Sherlock Holmes*’ lot at the beginning of the 20th century can be illustrated by pointing out the central developments in this new stage hero’s performing history.

Only two days after its Copenhagen opening, Walter Christmas sold the right to perform his play in the provinces to Mr. Jens Walther, the director of the *Cortes-Waltherske Teaterselskab* [Cortes-Waltherian Theater Company]. Apart from buying the rights to stage the play, Walther also bought the rights to resell the play for other performances in the provinces.¹⁰ Jens Walther then resold these rights to Mr Odgeir Stephensen, who, like Walther himself, had a government license for operating a touring theater.

⁹ Walter Christmas even sold the rights for Sweden, which was equally taken by the Holmes fever during the spring of 1902. In the month of April, no fewer than three Stockholm theaters had Holmes on the repertoire! Two of these played Christmas’ version, and the third one Gillette’s. The play also toured intensively in the rest of Sweden (Boström, 2004).

¹⁰ Cf. the handwritten contract between Christmas and Walther of December 28, 1901 (Christmas, 1901a).

From January through May 1902, Christmas' "popular play in five acts" was staged by at least four different troupes. Jens Walther's production starring himself as Sherlock Holmes ran in at least Vejle, Kolding, Varde, Horsens, Kalundborg, and Holbæk. Only 12 days after having bought the rights, Stephensen produced the play in Kerteminde, and when it ran for two weeks in February in Aarhus Theater, it was yet another production. The last evening the play ran in Aarhus, it also opened in Aalborg in a fourth production by the travelling troupe of Mr. Povl Friis, who had probably also bought the rights from Walther.

Thus Christmas' play was produced by at least four different companies in the early spring of 1902. In October of the same year, Walther even opened the "pre-season" at Odense Theater by playing "the box office success of Folketeatret" for some two weeks. The parts were played by the same actors who had worked for him earlier that year.

There was still more to the Holmes fever. The troupe of a certain Mr. Carl Thomsen toured with a Holmes play as well. During January and February 1902, for example, Thomsen played in Esbjerg and Horsens. But his production was not based on Christmas' version—a fact that Thomsen tried to conceal. In *Esbjerg Avis*, he advertised his two shows as "The Sherlock Holmes Tour," that is, using the definite article; he also referred to his play as "the worldwide success, the greatest box office success of the season," which could have easily evoked the production at Folketeatret (*Esbjerg Avis*, January 25-30, 1901). Using the same phrases as Folke-teatret, Thomsen called his play "A popular play in five acts / Freely based on Conan Doyle."

At the beginning of February 1902, just days before Thomsen's troupe was to perform in Horsens, a small announcement could be read in the local newspapers. It had been inserted by Jens Walther, who understandably felt the urge to distinguish between his own play and Thomsen's:

Having learned that actors' troupes advertise and perform a play called *Sherlock Holmes*, I take the liberty of informing audiences that such a play—apart from its title—has nothing whatsoever in common with the major success of Folketheatret, Captain Walter Christmas' five act popular play "Sherlock Holmes," for which I have bought exclusive rights for Denmark's provincial towns, and which I intend to stage at Horsens Theater in March this year. (*Horsens Folkeblad*, January 27, 1902)

In a review of Thomsen's play, the critic of *Horsens Folkeblad* mentions the fact that several adaptations were on the road at once: "Theater managers are rushing around the country racing to be the first with the revolver comedy, of which each of them of course has the real and genuine version" (*Horsens Folkeblad*, February 3, 1902). Judging by reports from the local newspapers, there are large differences between the two versions. Carl Thomsen's play is obviously neither a Danish translation of Gillette's play nor a stolen version of Christmas'. Both of those plays focus on the battle between Holmes and Moriarty, and in both a scene takes place in the criminals' headquarters. Thomsen's play, by contrast, is summarized in *Horsens Folkeblad* as follows:

In the first act we see how the leader of the feared gang of criminals, Professor Moriarty, has spread his net in Holmes' very office; in the second act a bank robbery is prevented; in the third act a murder case is to be solved; in the fourth act we are taken down into the criminals' den under the Thames, where the finer and more rude elements report on their day's work, and where Sherlock Holmes sneaks in in disguise; finally, in the fifth act, we witness Sherlock Holmes' final victory over his opponent. (*Horsens Folkeblad*, February 3, 1902)

When Odense Folketeater produced *Sherlock Holmes* in the beginning of May, it was—judging from the list of characters printed in a local newspa-

per on the day prior to the opening (*Fyens Stiftstidende*, May 3, 1902)—in yet another version. In this play, the criminal mastermind is not Professor Moriarty, but a certain James Hope. The *dramatis personae* also contains a character by the name of Enoch Drepper, and the combination of the two names indicates that the play was an adaptation of Doyle's first novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, which includes characters by the names of (Jefferson) Hope and Enoch Drepper.

Judging from the combination of reviews and news reports, audiences all over the country were thrilled with the Holmes play they saw—no matter the version. In Odense, the play was even interrupted when Walther's Sherlock Holmes entered the stage: "No sooner had he appeared on stage for the first time than he could say 'I came, I saw, I conquered.' Half a score of large bouquets and a huge laurel wreath were thrown at the feet of the victor" (*Fyns Social-demokrat*, October 13, 1902).

In sum, audiences in the capital, as well as in the provinces, clearly enjoyed the modulated Holmes that Christmas and others set on display.

NORDISK FILMS-COMPAGNI'S SHERLOCK HOLMES' FILMS

Sherlock Holmes was thus an established success in Denmark at the beginning of last century—in the worlds of literature and theater alike. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the British private detective also found his way into the repertoire of Nordisk Films-Compagni [the Nordic Film Company, henceforth "Nordisk"]. This company had been founded in 1906, and initially produced small documentaries; but in the autumn of 1906 small fictional episodes—"dramatic films," as they were called—started hitting the screens.

The company's first Sherlock Holmes film, *Sherlock Holmes in Livsfare* [Sherlock Holmes in Mortal Danger] opened on November 20, 1908 in Olsen's own theater, *Biograftheateret*, in central Copenhagen. There were 199 seats in this small theater, and at a length of 348 meters,

the film was somewhat longer than other dramatic films that Nordisk had previously produced. The films were normally 100-250 meters long, and so the Holmes film was something special. A hundred meters of film was normally projected in five minutes; consequently, the Holmes film lasted around seventeen minutes. Nevertheless, it and the series' eleven succeeding films were only so long as to be held in one reel, as was the standard of the period.

None of these films was an adaptation of a Doyle original. Though only one still exists, our knowledge of the remaining eleven films is nonetheless rather thorough, since their titles, lengths, a few still photos, texts from trade magazines, and programs do exist (Nielsen, 1997). Though the programs seem to convey each individual film's story, on the one hand they tell more than the films they describe, and on the other hand they tell less. The programs' text was written by the production company and was simply printed as such by the theaters. They provided background to the story, sometimes explained incidents in the film that were difficult to understand, and never "spoiled" the dramatic ending (Sandberg, 2001).

The first of these films was sold in 103 copies with Danish, German, English, French and Italian intertitles, respectively, and was mentioned in American trade magazines—both factors indicating an international distribution.

From the point of view of media history, one interesting element in both the first and second film—the second bearing the title *Raffles Flugt fra Fængslet* [Raffles' Escape from Prison]—is the addition of the gentleman thief A.J. Raffles. Raffles was the central character of twenty-six short stories and one novel published by author Ernest William Hornung during the years 1899-1909.

These stories are narrated by Raffles' friend and helper Bunny. Bunny does not, however, play a large part in the stories' many burglaries, which are generally planned and committed by Raffles. Like Holmes, Raffles does not reveal much about the concrete execution of his plans. As part-

ners, Raffles and Bunny are quite similar to Holmes and Watson; Hornung even dedicated the first collection of Raffles stories to his brother-in-law, Conan Doyle, who not without a reason considered Raffles “a kind of inversion of Sherlock Holmes, Bunny playing Watson” (Doyle, 1989, p. 25). The Raffles stories were published in Danish during the years 1904 through 1907, and the use of the character by Nordisk bears witness that a hundred years ago, popular cultural enterprises like the emerging film industry had no scruples about bringing together characters from separate fictional worlds.

But what were the films about, and how did they tell their story? As previously mentioned, only one of the films still exists, namely, the seventh: *Sherlock Holmes i Bondefangerklør* [A Confidence Trick], produced in 1910.

This film’s first scene takes place on a gangway. Two “gentlemen” receive a third man, and soon they are at a pub, where drinks are poured. The newly arrived third man soon falls asleep at the table, and the others, who have been joined by two women, steal his wallet and disappear. When the gentleman wakes up and finds out what has happened, he accuses the waiter of being the culprit, knocks him out, and summons Sherlock Holmes, who later calls the police. Holmes speculates about the crime, questions the victim—and then a police officer leads both waiter and victim out. Alone in the room, Holmes sedately smokes his pipe, sniffs at the victim’s glass of the victim and finds what appears to be a small bottle (though this is difficult to discern), which presumably contained a sleeping draught that had been poured into the victim’s glass. A cut then takes us to a flat where the henchmen and the women are celebrating. Holmes locates the apartment, but the thieves see him through the window and hide; they then manage to overpower, bind, and gag him before they leave. By smashing a window, Holmes luckily draws the attention of the police. Two officers locate him, now passed out, in the apartment, but soon he is able to

chase the thieves. Down in the street, they thieves jump on to a cab; Holmes chases them in a taxicab. The thieves arrive at a ballroom, but when they notice Holmes they escape through a window—after a scuffle. They then threaten a taxi driver, demanding that he take them away, but Holmes and the officer are at their heels in yet another motorized vehicle. During the ensuing car chase, gunshots are fired, and the thieves are arrested. The last scene of this short film takes place at a police station, where the victim identifies the villains and the two women. Holmes is not present in this scene.

It is relevant to ask whether there is much Sherlock Holmes left in the film. The change in media from literature to silent film probably accounts for the absence of Dr. Watson, the Doylian narrator. Nordisk's so-called "Title Books" show that there were four similar intertitles in all five versions of the film (Danish, German, French, Italian and Spanish). In the existing German version, there are indeed four titles. The focus is very much on visual narrative elements: parties, fights, chases. The moments of contemplation and deduction at 221B Baker Street are absent, and the story never includes Holmes' rooms. In particular, the case is not—unlike what is standard in Conan Doyle—presented to him in the rooms at Baker Street; rather, Holmes is summoned directly to the scene of the crime. *The Saga* (the nickname Sherlockians give to Doyle's Holmes *œuvre*) includes neither scenes in which Holmes gets into fights with criminals, nor any incident in which they temporarily neutralize him. Nor is the chase—here in the form of probably the first car chase in Danish film history—any part of the Doyle standard, though a boat chase on the Thames does mark the dramatic climax of his first Holmes novel, *The Sign of Four*. To a degree even greater than that of the theatrical adaptation, then, the puzzle-solving of the Holmes stories is foregrounded by elements from the crime thriller genre.

The character of Holmes himself is quite different from the Sherlock of Doyle's stories and novels. In the Nordisk films, Holmes is dressed in a

brightly colored suit with a peaked cap, which corresponds neither to his outfit in Doyle nor to the deerstalker popularized by Gillette. In Holmes' first scene, his phlegmatic talent for deduction is depicted: he acts very calmly, smokes his pipe (not the curved calabash also popularized by Gillette) continuously, and wanders around at the scene of the crime slowly, stopping every now and then to think. Obviously the unknown director of the film was thereby attempting to convey Holmes' moments of deduction. The way in which Holmes localizes the criminals is not accounted for; but once he has found them, he is transformed from a man of deduction to a man of action. Holmes fights the criminals three times: the first time they get the upper hand, the second time they escape, but the third time he emerges the victor. Following their arrest, Holmes disappears from the narrative, which reaches its conclusion without him being present.

The film tells its story chronologically, from the meeting between the victim and the villains through the commission of the crime to the elimination of the problem. For a few brief moments, the audience knows more than Holmes: we watch the crime being committed, and—in the criminals' apartment—we know that they are there, hiding from Holmes. The story's focus and narrative structure are thus very different from what they would be in Conan Doyle. The film accordingly represents a generic modulation, which is caused by the change in media and the differences between Doyle's readership and the spectatorship of the film.

CONAN DOYLE'S SHERLOCK HOLMES

I now wish to take a closer look at the first of the short stories that Arthur Conan Doyle published in *The Strand Magazine*, "A Scandal in Bohemia," which provides some of the background for the plays by Gillette and Christmas.

"A Scandal in Bohemia," published in 1891, has Watson as its narrator. It commences: "To Sherlock Holmes she was always *the* woman" (Doyle, 1981, p. 160). Taking off from there, Watson lets the reader in on

some considerations about Holmes' relationship to women, his way of life, and his character. Only after this epilogue does Watson (retrospectively) tell the story of what happened when, on one evening of 1888, he passed by Baker Street and took the opportunity to call on his former roommate. Watson's narrative opens with Holmes giving him examples of his "science of deduction," and introducing a new case that he has been asked to take. Soon his new employer rushes in, disguised in a "black vizard mask" (p. 164). Holmes reveals the identity of the "secret" employer, The King of Bohemia, who then chooses not to remain incognito. The king is about to be married to a daughter of the king of Scandinavia (!). His problem is that a former mistress, the singer Irene Adler, has threatened to send a photograph of the former lovers to the in-laws to be of the king, thereby preventing the wedding from taking place. The king wishes to avoid scandal, and so he hires Holmes to get hold of the photograph.

In chapter 2, which takes place the following day, Watson waits by mutual agreement for Holmes to return to Baker Street in the late afternoon. When he returns in disguise, Holmes explains that during the morning he had learned a great deal about Irene Adler, and had even been a witness at her wedding. Without further explanation, Holmes then asks Watson to accompany him to Adler's residence. After a certain amount of drama, they are able to leave the premises knowing the whereabouts of the photograph. As they enter their home in Baker Street, a voice from the crowd wishes Holmes goodnight.

Chapter 3 takes place the next morning. Together with Watson and the king, Holmes pays a visit to Irene Adler in order to claim the photograph. Her female servant informs them that her mistress has left the country, leaving an explanatory note behind: she had seen through Holmes' wiles the night before, and admits to being the one who wished him goodnight. She has, however, decided not to use the photograph against the king, for "I love and am loved by a better man than he". The king is enthused by the letter and expresses his admiration for Irene Adler: "Would

she not have made an admirable queen? Is it not a pity that she was not on my level?" Holmes replies ironically: "From what I have seen of the lady she seems indeed to be on a very different level to your Majesty". Holmes rejects the valuable ring that the king wishes to give him in return for his services; he wants only a photograph that Irene Adler has left for the king. The story ends with Watson returning to the narrative present, declaring that when Holmes "speaks of Irene Adler, or when he refers to her photograph, it is always under the honorable title of the woman" (p. 175).

The story evidently has a relatively complex temporal structure, along with a total of five narrators: the central narrator, Watson, and four assisting narrators (the king, Holmes, the servant girl, and Irene Adler), each of whom gives his or her own first-person account, orally or in writing, of events that lie beyond Watson's experience or understanding. These assisting narratives either reveal the basis of the story or retrospectively explain the actions of Holmes and Irene Adler.

From the narrative present, which can be thought equivalent to the story's year of publication (1891), Watson looks back on events that happened or were revealed to him during three days in 1888, March 20th, 21st and 22nd. Watson recounts these events in the order in which they came to his knowledge, and not in their chronological order. The relationship between narrators and temporal structure in the story can be visualized as follows:

	1883	March 1888								1891
		Before 20 March	20 March	21 March				22 March		
			Evening	Mor- ning	After- noon	Eve- ning I	Eve- ning II	Mor- ning I	Mor- ning II	
WA			2/6		7		9/11		12	1/15
SH		3		8		10				
KB	4	5								
FS								13		
IA							14			

Figure 1: Narrators and temporal structure in “A Scandal in Bohemia.” WA: Dr. Watson; SH: Sherlock Holmes; KB: the King of Bohemia; FS: Female servant; IA: Irene Adler

In order to make Figure 1 intelligible, let it suffice to revisit a few of the story’s first elements: Watson opens with some general reflections on Holmes (1), and then tells about the evening of March 20, 1888, when he paid Holmes a visit at Baker Street (2). Holmes next informs Watson (3) of a letter that he has received. When the King of Bohemia appears, he tells the story (4) of his relationship to Irene Adler, which had unfolded some five years earlier. Reading the figure in relation to the sketch of the plot above should make the remainder self-explanatory.

Generically speaking, “A Scandal in Bohemia” is an anti-conspirational thriller with a twist. Prejudice, rather than analysis, might lead us to assume that the very first of Doyle’s Holmes stories is a whodunit, as many other early examples of crime fiction are. But no crime is committed in “A Scandal in Bohemia”! Of course, Irene Adler is blackmailing the king; but she has not delivered the photograph. Holmes’ as-

signment therefore is not to establish who committed a certain crime, but to prevent a crime from being committed. Adler conspires against the King of Bohemia, but unlike the villains in genuine anti-conspirational thrillers, such as the James Bond books and films, she is neither part of a large organization nor driven by a criminal mind. Though Watson, but not Holmes, considers her a woman “of dubious and questionable memory” (p. 161), Irene Adler is a woman whose lover broke up their relationship, choosing convention over love. Now, however, she has found “a better man than he” (Doyle, 1981, p. 175) and calls off her plot. In the beginning the king is the victim of blackmail, but it turns out that he is actually the villain, having sacrificed Irene Adler on the altar of convention as a consequence of his aristocratic behavior. Holmes admires Adler’s moral integrity: he finds her to be on “a very different level” than the king. He even accepts being defeated by her.

GENRE, ADAPTATION AND RECEPTION

It is important to consider the variety of media in which Danes encountered Sherlock Holmes in the years prior to World War One in order to understand the differences that arise from the preceding immanent analyses of the Holmes stories, plays, and films. The media at issue—print, theater, and film—had and still have separate means of expression, narrative potential and modes of engagement. What is more: they also had separate audiences.

Doyle’s stories were first published by one of the new media of the time, the monthly *Strand Magazine*, which—in the words of John Scaggs—was “aimed at the commuting white collar market” (Scaggs, 2005, p. 25). Peter Larsen finds that Doyle and *The Strand* present a new and modern conception of the audience:

Modern urban audiences now enter the stage. The new “professionals” of London buy the magazines at the newsstands of the railway stations

and read them in order to pass the time while commuting between City and Suburbia. (Larsen, 1999, p. 47)

While a culture of commuters did not exist in Denmark around the turn of the century, one may assume that the Holmes stories were read there by a similar modern audience, who appreciated Holmes' intellectual, positivistic approach to problem solving. This goes, at least, for the published *books*. Doyle's stories, on the other hand, were serialized in newspapers all over the country, indicating a broader readership.

Doyle's stories were published in Denmark in several editions and formats. It is not possible to say anything about the number of books and newspapers printed (or read); but the number of platforms publishing Doyle from 1902 onward indicate extensive popularity among reading audiences all over the country. The first translations were published in Aarhus and—just to mention one example—the serialization of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in 1902 was printed in local newspapers such as *Vendsyssel Tidende*, *Randers Amtstidende*, *Vordingborg Avis* and *Aalborg Amtstidende*.¹¹ The enormous interest in Holmes was the central reason for the popularization of translations of other popular British novels, which started to gain significant market shares around 1900 (Kristensen, 1974, p. 168).

Christmas' play and other stage adaptations of Doyle similarly reached large parts of the country: from the opening and giant success in Copenhagen to larger and smaller market towns, from Aarhus with 50.000 inhabitants to Kerteminde with 2500.¹² The films too seem to have been screened all over the country (Nielsen, 1997, p. 53).

¹¹ This piece of information was collected at random, and not through any systematic scrutiny of the hundreds of local newspapers published in Denmark at the time.

¹² <http://dendigitalebyport.byhistorie.dk>.

Folketeatret in Copenhagen had been founded in 1853 by a royal concession determining that the theater should “perform popular comedies, vaudeville, light comedy, operettas and pantomime” (Neiendam 1945, 57). Apart from having to produce certain types of plays, it was prohibited for Folketeatret to produce plays from “the repertoire of The Royal Theater” (Neiendam, 1945, p. 57). Writing the history of Folketeatret, Rask notes that “the key audience was the family audience” (1993, p. 45), and she adds that there was a “certain diversity in the attitude of the audience and the audience at the galleries reacted audibly and most spontaneously to the shows” (p. 44). The fact that—after the initial success following the opening—it was performed often at half price at Folketeatret, as well as some 25 times as a Sunday matinee, indicates that it also drew audiences with small incomes, perhaps even including children.

In the provinces, audiences for the shows of the touring troupes consisted of “the craft- and tradesmen, teachers and lower middle classes”. Farmers from the surrounding areas seldom went to the theater, while the provincial upper classes considered these troupes provincial, and preferred waiting for the tours provided by ... the Royal Theater (Wiingaard, 1992, p. 63). These accounts do not take into consideration the vast differences between larger stages in actual theaters and the smaller ones set up for the occasion at hotels or the like, but they do indicate the general composition of the provincial audience.

Judging solely from general descriptions of the audiences at Folke-teatret and the touring troupes, *Sherlock Holmes* appears to have been popular among relatively broad audiences *not* belonging to the cultural elite and thus, in Bourdieu’s terms (Bourdieu, 1985), having neither a significant amount of cultural capital nor the defining power as to what was and what was not in good taste. And in that sense *Sherlock Holmes* was not in good taste—a fact that becomes evident when reading the newspaper reviews of the time. The critic of the conservative newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* puts his finger on the distinction between good and bad taste when

he remarks that the show had “fair chances of pleasing a broader audience, somewhat less of pleasing a more particular one” (*Berlingske Tidende*, December 27, 1901). *Folkets Avis* wrote that “when bringing the suitable children’s mind one might easily be amused by the happenings of Sherlock Holmes” (*Folkets Avis*, December 27, 1901). The same point is made by the critic at *Politiken*, who predicted that the play “will be sought by young people who seek thrills and elderly people who want to feel rejuvenated” (*Politiken*, December 27, 1901). Moreover, the same critic wrote acidly about the play’s “Marzipan ending” (December 27, 1901), which was similarly characterized as an “embarrassing finale” by another newspaper (*Dagens Nyheder*, December 27, 1901). When Jens Walther presented the play in Odense in the spring of 1902, a local newspaper wrote critically: “the way people are at the beginning of the comedy is the way they remain until the end. Absolutely nobody develops in any direction, which goes to say that it is all external and superficial” (*Odense Tidende*, October 13, 1902).

Several Copenhagen critics considered the play old-fashioned. The critic at *Socialdemokraten* was reminded of *Nøddebo Præstegaard*, a popular Danish *singspiel* that had frequently been produced since its opening in 1888, and which is set during Christmas. He considered it “somewhat unstylish” that Holmes becomes engaged to “the young lady whose noble protector he had been,” but concluded, overbearingly: “well, one accepts even that during Christmas” (*Socialdemokraten*, December 27, 1901). *København* characterised the play as “not just naïve, but old-fashioned” (*København*, December 27, 1901).

However childish, superficial, or old-fashioned critics found the play, they agreed that audiences were enthusiastic about it: “The audience that followed the wrestling between the hero and his enemies with breathless apprehension regularly had to get air in enthusiastic applause when virtue triumphed,” one critic wrote somewhat ironically (*Politiken*, December 27, 1901). Another noted that “the audience is very pleased by the well-made

horrors of the play” (*Socialdemokraten*, December 27, 1901). In general, the Copenhagen critics testified to roaring rounds of applause and numerous curtain calls. As quoted previously, when Jens Walther performed the title role in Odense, the play was even interrupted: “No sooner had he appeared on stage for the first time than he could say ‘I came, I saw, I conquered.’ Half a score of large bouquets and a huge laurel wreath were thrown at the feet of the victor” (*Fyns Social-demokrat*, October 13, 1902). The newspaper further reports that “after the third as well as the fourth act, and after the ending of the play, there were several curtain calls which did not stop until Mr Malberg [Moriarty] and Mr Walther stepped forward, greeted by wild, Cimbrian roars of excitement” (October 13, 1902).

But how about movie audiences at the time when the early Danish Sherlock Holmes films premiered? In that period, film was far from being considered worthy of cultural debate, and newspapers had not yet taken up writing about films on a regular basis. To review a film was out of the question, and so descriptions of early Danish film audiences are sparse.

The first film screenings in Denmark took place in the summer of 1896, but the first theater dedicated to showing films only did not open until 1904. Until then, films were shown in combination with other forms of entertainment, e.g., at marketplaces or in variety theaters (Lauridsen, 1998). The Holmes films were produced between 1908 and 1911, when the movie theater business was new, and film had in no way made its way into the Parnassus of culture.

Broad audiences were attracted by stage presentations of *Sherlock Holmes*, but the audience for the movies was even broader, as it were. Folketeatret seated 1200 persons, and was marked by a certain splendor and its state-of-the-art theatrical technology. By contrast, the movie theaters of 1910 were small and poorly equipped. Between 75 and 200 people sat on wooden benches in “theaters” constructed in closed down shops or storage rooms. Tickets for Folketeatret cost between 0.25 and 2 crowns, whereas a

ticket for the movies was 0.1 crowns. It could be rather posh to go to Folkeatret, though it was hardly as fashionable as the Royal Theater. Going to the movies, on the other hand, was neither posh nor fashionable. Gunnar Sandfeld, a historian of both Danish silent cinema and provincial theater, has offered the following description of the difference between going to the theater and going to the movies in the period around 1910:

It was no wonder that movie theaters became a major popular form of entertainment. They were cheap and undemanding. As opposed to what was the case in the “real” theater, no exclusive respectability was demanded, no prolonged preparations, no fancy dressing up, no gloved distinction. Without further ado, anybody could walk in from the street anytime he wanted to, and the distance to the nearest movie theater was rarely long. (1966, p. 152)

In an official report dated 1924, one H. Andersen stated that movie theater audiences in the years around 1910 “almost exclusively consisted of the broad strata of society” (p. 28), and “in large part consisted of children and young people” (p. 81). He further noted that films had to “become influenced by the taste of this average audience” (p. 81). Sandfeld, meanwhile, describes movie audience as follows:

From the very beginning it was very different from the audience seen at theaters. It was children of the “lower classes” [...]. And it was female servants—a very abundant class at the time—and their partners, apprentices, shop assistants, skilled workers and soldiers on leave, and sober-minded workers with their families, common people without contact with theater and art as a whole and with no cultivated taste. (1966, p. 152)

What emerges is a picture of very different audiences for the three Holmes versions: literary, theatrical and cinematic. These are audiences with different preferences and competences; audiences with greater or lesser contact with “art as a whole,” and with differing amounts of “cultivated taste.” The point is that, in explaining the difference between these versions, it is necessary to look at the relevant audiences and the cultural institutions they used.

CONCLUSIONS

Historical study of the ways in which the Holmes character and the Holmes universe meandered through Danish popular culture in the years around 1900 is interesting for several reasons. From a Sherlockian point of view, the history of the importance of the play is new in a Danish context. From a media history point of view, it is interesting to uncover—by examining concrete empirical material—how different media, at a rather early period in the age of industrialized media culture, utilized the same material in very different ways. Finally, from the point of view of genre studies, it is interesting to see how genres modulate according to context.

It goes without saying that, even more than a hundred years ago, media products were supposed to make a profit. In his brief commentary on the London production of Gillette’s play, Conan Doyle remarked that he was pleased with its “pecuniary result” (Doyle, 1989, p. 102). Folke-teatret’s version was often referred to as a “box office success,” and Nordisk Film sold its Holmes productions to several European countries as well as the USA. In these ways, the different “keys” in which Holmes was played were used to target the tastes of the audiences “listening” to them. Accordingly, the generic modulations of the Holmes material must be understood in relation to the producers’ ideas of what their specific audiences wanted. The Holmes universe presented material that could be modulated in various keys of the crime genre, and added elements from romance, comedy, or action genres according to the preferences of different audi-

ences. The reasons for these generic modulations must therefore be sought not only in the “internal” features of particular media, but also in the characteristics of their audiences.

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- Sherlock* (2010-2014). BBC & Hartswood Film. Various directors.
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ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

- Images, flyers, etc., from Den Gamle By (Aarhus), Aarhus Teater, Teatermuseet, Odense Teater, and Holbæk Museum.
- Intertitles (Archive of Nordisk Films Kompagni, Cinemateket, Copenhagen).
- Reviews, articles, and advertisements from Danish newspapers:
Berlingske Tidende (December 27, 1901), *Dagbladet* (December 27, 1901), *Dagens Nyheder* (December 27, 1901), *Esbjerg Avis* (January 25-30, 1902), *Folkets Avis* (December 27, 1901), *Fyens Stiftstidende* (May 3, 1902), *Fyns Socialdemokrat* (October 13, 1901), *Horsens Folkeblad* (January 27, 1902; February 3, 1902), *København* (December 27, 1901), *Odense Tidende* (October 13, 1902), *Politiken* (December 27, 1901), *Socialdemokraten* (December 27, 1901), *Aarhus Stiftstidende* (February 16, 1902).

NOTES ON AUTHORS

Beata Agrell, b. 1944, Professor Emerita of Comparative Literature at the Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, Gothenburg University, Sweden. Selected publications: (1982) *Frihet och fakticitet. Om oordning och ordning i Sven Delblancs roman Prästkappan* (Freedom and Facticity: On Order and Disorder i Sven Delblanc's Novel The Clergyman's Gown), (1993) *Romanen som forskningsresa/ Forskningsresan som roman* (The Novel as Expedition/The Expedition as Novel), (2003, editor with Ingela Nilsson) *Genrer och genre-problem: teoretiska och historiska perspektiv* (Genres and Their Problems: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives), (2011) "Aesthetic Experience as Offence in Early Swedish Working-Class Narrative", in: Ed. S. Wenerscheid, *Sentimentalitet und Grausamkeit. Emotion und ästhetische Erfahrung in der skandinavischen und deutschen Literatur der Moderne*, (2014) "Criminality or Class Struggle. An issue of Early Swedish Working-Class Prose" in: Eds. I. Orehovs et al., *Literatūra un likums/ Literature and Law. Papers from the 29th Study Conference of the IASS (The International Association for Scandinavian Studies)*, in Riga and Daugavpils.

Nina Møller Andersen, b. 1951, Associate Professor, Ph.D. in Danish language and linguistics, at the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics, University of Copenhagen. Selected publications: (2003) "Fra marxisme til pragmatisme: grundrids af den danske Bachtin-reception" (From Marxism to Pragmatism: an Outline of the Danish Bakhtin Reception), in: *Smuthuller* (Loopholes), ed. N.M. Andersen & J. Lundquist, (2007) "Bachtin og det polyfone" (Bakhtin and Polyphony), in: *Sproglig Polyfoni. Tekster om Bachtin og ScaPoLine* (Linguistic Polyphony. Texts on Bakhtin and ScaPoLine), ed. R. Therkelsen, N.M. Andersen & H. Nølke, (2009) annotated translation (from Russian into Danish, w. A. Fryszman) of Bakhtin's Speech Genres in: *Genre* (ed. J.D. Johansen & M.L. Klujeff), (2013) "Jeg har din bog": Noget om

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Sune Auken, b. 1970, Dr. habil., Head of PhD School, University of Copenhagen. Selected publications: (2005) *Sagas spejl. Mytologi, historie og kristendom hos N.F.S. Grundtvig* (Saga's Mirror. Mythology, History, and Christianity in N.F.S. Grundtvig), (2011) “Not Another Adult Movie. Some Platitudes on Genericity and the Use of Literary Studies”, (2014) “Genre as Fictional Action”, (2015) “Utterance and Function in Genre Studies. A Literary Perspective” in: J. Andersen (Ed.), *Genre Theory in Information Studies*.

Frans Gregersen, b. 1949, Professor of Danish language, dr. phil., and Director of the Danish National Research Foundation’s LANCHART Centre, University of Copenhagen 2005-2015. He has contributed to the study of sociolinguistic variation in Danish by editing volume 41 of the journal *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* in 2009, including a presentation of the data and design of the LANCHART study, and is currently working on the history of Danish linguistics concentrating on the early periods of the 19th century, cf.: Gregersen 2013 (introduction to the new edition of Niels Ege’s translation of Rasmus Rask’s prize essay “On the Origin of the Old Norse or Icelandic Language 1814”), and Gregersen 2014 (on the first professor of Nordic N.M. Petersen (in Danish)).

Bo Jørgensen, b. 1966, MA, External Lecturer, the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics, University of Copenhagen. Selected publications: (2013) “Skyggens sprog—sprogets skygge. Om sprogbrugere og

sprogbrug i H.C. Andersens eventyr” (The Language of the Shadow—the Shadow of Language. On Language Users and the Use of Language in The Fairy Tales of H.C. Andersen), in: D. Duncker et al. (ed.) *Betydning og forståelse* (Meaning and Understanding), (2014) “At jonglere med sand. Dekonstruktion” (Juggling with Sand. Deconstruction) in: G. Larsen & R. Rasmussen (ed.) *Blink. Litterær analyse og metode* (Wink. Literary Analysis and Method).

Gorm Larsen, b. 1963, Ph.D, Associate Professor at Department of Communication, Aalborg University Copenhagen. He has for years studied and written on narratology and especially the act of narration in fiction in light of Bakhtin. Recently he has co-edited (2014) *Blink. Litterær analyse og metode* (Wink. Literary Analysis and Method). Currently he is doing research into shame and guilt in media and literature from a philosophical and social psychological point of view.

Palle Schantz Lauridsen, b. 1955, Ph.D., Associate Professor in Media Studies at the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics, University of Copenhagen. Selected publications: (2014) *Sherlock Holmes i Danmark* (Sherlock Holmes in Denmark), (2013) “Verdens største show: Farver, formater og forstæder” (The World’s Greatest Show: Colour, Format, and Suburbia), in: A. Halskov et al. (ed.) *Guldfeber* (Gold fever), (2011) “Welcome to fucking Deadwood—fortælling, sprog og krop i verdens vildeste western” (Narrative, Language, and Body in the World’s Wildest Western), in: A. Halskov et al. (ed.) *Fjernsyn for viderekomne* (Advanced Viewers’ Television).

Anders Juhl Rasmussen, b. 1979, Postdoc, Ph.D., in Danish literature at the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics, University of Copenhagen. Selected publications: (2010) “Arenamodernisme. Udvidelser af romanens genrefelt” (Arena-modernism. Transformations of

the Novel), in: *Kritik 196* (Critique), (2012) Ph.D. thesis, *Arena-modernisme. En position i dansk litteratur* (Arena-modernism. A Position in Danish Literature), (2013) “Den produktive modsætning. Friedrich Nietzsche som opdrager for Peter Seeberg” (The Productive Contradiction. Friedrich Nietzsche as Educator of Peter Seeberg), in: *Edda 2*.

René Rasmussen, b. 1954, Associate Professor, Ph.D., in Danish literature at the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics, University of Copenhagen. Selected publications: (2000) *Bjelke lige i øjet—om Henrik Bjelkes forfatterskab* (Bjelke Bull’s-eye—on the Authorship of Henrik Bjelke), (2004) *Litteratur og repræsentation* (Literature and Representation), (2004), *Kognition—en liberalistisk ideologi* (Cognition—A Liberalistic Ideology), (2007) *Moderne litteraturteori 1-2* (Modern Theory of Literature 1-2), (2009) *Lacan, sprog og seksualitet* (Lacan, Language and Sexuality), (2010) *Psykoanalyse—et videnskabsteoretisk perspektiv* (Psychoanalysis—An Epistemological Perspective), (2012) *Angst hos Lacan og Kierkegaard og i kognitiv terapi* (Anxiety in Lacan and Kierkegaard and in Cognitive Therapy).

Anne Smedegaard, b. 1977, MA in Danish and Philosophy, Ph.D. fellow at the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics University of Copenhagen. Selected publications: (2013) “Hvem sagde hvorfor? Skolelærers situationelle og kognitive forankring” (Who Said Why? Situated and Cognitive Embedded School Genres), in: *Viden om læsning 13* (Knowledge on Reading). (In progress) “Student and Teacher Constructions of the ‘Generic Contract’ in Upper Secondary School Essays”.

Christel Sunesen, b. 1981, BA in Rhetoric, MA in Danish at the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics, University of Copenhagen. Selected publications: (2008) “Fortalens retorik—fra Arrebo til Oehlen-

schläger” (The Rhetoric of the Preface—from Arrebo to Oehlenschläger), in: *Danske Studier* (Danish Studies), (2014, editor) *OEHL #1—Antologi for ny dansk litteratur* (OEHL #1—Anthology of New Danish Literature), (2014) “Grundtvig og rimbrevet” (Grundtvig and the Verse Epistle) in: *Ved lejlighed. Grundtvig og genrerne* (co-editor with Sune Auken).

Erik Svendsen, b. 1954, Associate Professor at the Department of Culture and Identity, Roskilde University (RUC). Selected publications: (1996) *Kieslowskis kunst* (The Art of Kieslowski), (1998) *Det Nye. Sonderinger i dansk litterær modernisme* (The New. Exploring Danish Literary Modernism), (1999, editor) *Detaljen. Tekstanalysen og dens grænser* (The Detail. Textual Analysis and its Limits), (2000, editor) *Ud af det moderne. Den kritiske tanke anno 2000* (Beyond of the Modern. Critical Thinking Around the Year 2000), (2007) contribution to *Dansk Litteraturs Historie. 1960-2000* (Danish Literary History. 1960-2000), (2011, editor) *Litterære livliner. Kanon, klassiker, litteraturbrug* (Literary Lifelines. Canon, Classic, and the Use of Literature), (2015) *Kampe om virkeligheden. Tendenser i dansk prosa 1990-2010* (Fights on Reality. Tendencies in Danish Prose 1990-2010), (2015, co-editor) *Radioverdener* (Radio Worlds).

Ib Ulbæk, b. 1955, Associate Professor, Ph.D., in Danish language at the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics, University of Copenhagen. Selected publications: (1989) Ph.D. thesis, *Evolution, sprog og kognition* (Evolution, Language, and Cognition), (2001) “Pipelines and Pipelining: a Theoretical Discussion of a Concept to Explain Coherence Between Paragraphs”, in: L. Degand (ed.) *Multidisciplinary Approaches to Discourse*, (2005) *Sproglig tekstanalyse: Introduktion til pragmatisk tekstanalyse* (Linguistic Text Analysis: An Introduction to Pragmatic Text Analysis).

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