

Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci
Pedagogická fakulta

Ústav cizích jazyků



Bakalářská práce

**Social-pathological phenomena and the crisis
of Victorian society in the works of Sir
Arthur Conan Doyle**

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Prohlášení

Slavnostně prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracoval sám, a to jen za použití zdrojů uvedených v seznamu literatury.

Dále souhlasím, aby byla práce uložena na Univerzitě Palackého v Olomouci a zpřístupněna ke studijním účelům v souladu s příslušnými normami.

V Olomouci dne 12. 4. 2019

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Acknowledgment

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Mgr. Petr Anténe, M.A., Ph.D. for his support and valuable professional advice.

Furthermore, I would also like to thank my girlfriend, my family and my friends for their patience and support in my darkest hours. Special thanks to Damien Dante for all the motivation and encouragement he gave me in the last couple of years.

Abstract

This thesis deals with the topic of social-pathological phenomena of Victorian society, with focus on mid-Victorian and Late Victorian era, and how they are portrayed in the selected works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The first part briefly explains the term “social-pathological phenomena” and then describes the selected phenomena of Victorian era along with historical context.

The second part of the thesis observes the depiction of selected phenomena in the analysed works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and compares their depiction to the historical reality of Victorian era.

Key words: Arthur Conan Doyle, Victorian era, social-pathological phenomena, poverty, crime, prostitution, drugs, alcohol, Sherlock Holmes

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1. Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to explore the social-pathological phenomena of Victorian Britain and then compare objective image of Victorian society with its depiction in the selected works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The first part of the thesis is focused on the social-pathological phenomena, namely poverty, prostitution, drug abuse, alcohol abuse and crime. Using secondary sources, the goal is to describe the reality of mid-Victorian and late Victorian society including the rates of each social-pathological phenomenon, its own specifics and, also, how the contemporary public perceived the aforementioned phenomena and what were their attitudes.

The second part focuses on the analysed works: the first two Sherlock Holmes novels, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and *The Sign of the Four* (1890), and collection of short stories *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1903-1904). These works were selected for the thesis in order to observe changes in the writer's attitudes, as there is a gap of about 14 years between the publication of the second novel and the selected short stories. The main goal of the second part is to point out how A. C. Doyle depicts the social-pathological phenomena and what are his and his characters' attitudes towards them. These are then compared to the findings from the first part of the thesis to conclude to what extent Doyle's works correspond with the objective truth of Victorian society, how much they correspond to the contemporary general public's perception of said phenomena and, eventually, how Doyle's works are tailored to suit his target audience – the middle class.

2. Victorian Era

The Victorian era is a name for the specific time-period in the British history connected to the reign of Queen Victoria which lasted from 20th June, 1837, until her death on 22nd January, 1901. This period is regarded by many historians most of all as a period of change. In only about 63 years the British nation changed dramatically considering society, economy as well as technology and architecture of cities¹.

When Victoria first sat on the throne about 95% of British population lived in rural areas. By the time she died, this percentage became about 50% while the other half of people lived in urban areas – towns and cities. The overall population doubled² and London, the capital city, reached over 6 million inhabitants³. Through its advances in science and technology, Britain became the world's leader in manufacturing and also expanded its colonies so that about 25% of the world's population lived in the British Empire⁴.

While the Victorian society is usually regarded as very strict, with high morale and quite conservative, it is also true that Victorian era became significant for its social-pathological phenomena such as extreme poverty, use of drugs and alcohol, waves of crime that frightened the upper classes of Victorians, as well as Jack the Ripper, Britain's most notorious serial killer⁵.

The moral and immoral aspects of society were not separated from each other but instead, thanks to incredible urbanisation during the 19th century, coexisted side-by-side in rapidly growing urban areas where the members of the upper class, on a daily basis, met members of the lowest class and the blossoming working class. Towns and cities where Victorian gentlemen, factory workers and prostitutes all lived together.

2.1 Social-Pathological Phenomena

What we call social-pathological phenomena or socially pathological phenomena are generally phenomena seen as unfavourable for the society. These are mostly dangerous

¹ SCHOMP, Virginia, *The City: Life in Victorian England*, p. 6.

² STEWART, Gail B., *Victorian England*, p. 13.

³ SCHOMP, Virginia, *The City: Life in Victorian England*, p. 12.

⁴ STEWART, Gail B., *Victorian England*, p. 13.

⁵ SCHOMP, Virginia, *The City: Life in Victorian England*, p. 41.

for the individual or his surroundings from the physical and/or moral perspective. Long-term existence of these phenomena and their influence (both direct and indirect) leads to various disfunctions of both individual and society. Among the social-pathological phenomena we can find, for example, poverty, unemployment, crime, intoxication, prostitution, alcoholism and others⁶.

The following chapters are focused on the various social-pathological phenomena which were typical for the mid-Victorian and late Victorian era with focus on the phenomena of urban areas – towns and cities. Namely, the focus will be drawn upon the problem of poverty, prostitution, both drug abuse and alcohol abuse, and crime. Special focus shall be drawn upon the last, for crime presents the axis of most of the Sherlock Holmes' stories (the analysed works), and various types of crime and their effect on society will be discussed in the appropriate chapter.

2.1.1 Poverty

Industrialization of urban areas led to massive waves of immigration from rural areas to cities – urbanisation. Thousands of people came looking for jobs in the newly built factories, eager to become part of the townsfolk – the bourgeoisie. The cities and towns were, however, not prepared to accommodate so many people. Slums began to appear in every industrial town, providing the working class often with nothing much but a roof to sleep under. Families usually lived in small houses built back-to-back near the factory they worked in⁷. The poorest slept in common lodging houses where people of both sexes stayed overnight jammed in vast open rooms⁸.

The competition for work left many people without job and, therefore, without income. This often led to the blooming of other social-pathological phenomena like prostitution and crime, as desperate ways to obtain some money⁹. The working class was then very keen on alcohol and drugs, as means to forget about the gloomy mundane reality.

Homeless people and beggars could be arrested since the Vagrancy acts of 1824 and 1838 which illegalised begging and sleeping rough. That is why most cities had common

⁶ HEDRICOVÁ, Petra, Jitka SKOPALOVÁ, NEGATIVE SOCIAL PHENOMENA, SOCIALLY PATHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA, PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR, RISK BEHAVIOUR WITH FOCUS ON SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT.

⁷ SCHOMP, Virginia, *The City: Life in Victorian England*, p. 23.

⁸ MITCHELL, Sally, *Daily life in Victorian England*, p. 115.

⁹ SCHOMP, Virginia, *The City: Life in Victorian England*, p. 33.

lodging houses which, however, also became connected with criminality. Beggars and tramps were suspected of petty crime and many beggars used tricks in order to raise more coin¹⁰. The fact that begging and sleeping outside was illegal does not mean that it did not happen, by any means. Actually, each year up to 1914 between five and twelve thousand tramps were prosecuted for sleeping rough; about twice as many beggars were prosecuted¹¹.

For the people without a job, there was a place called workhouse. It provided with food, clothing and lodging in return for work¹². The workhouses were, however, designed in the way to be as unpleasant as possible, assuring only desperate people in dire need would enter the workhouse. Families in workhouses were split up, drinking and smoking was prohibited and all the workers had to wear coarse uniforms¹³. It was a place of last resort where nobody wanted to and up.

2.1.2 Prostitution

It is without a doubt that prostitution was one of the most wide-spread phenomena in Victorian era. As stated in 1857 in the House of Commons by William Ewart Gladstone, there was no country in the world where prostitution blossomed more than Victorian Britain¹⁴. It is hard to state the exact number of prostitutes there was but for the city of London the estimates vary between 8,000 and 80,000¹⁵. In Liverpool, as another example, according to the local chief constable, in 1867 there were 865 “houses of ill fame” which would mean a population of several thousand prostitutes¹⁶. One of the reasons for the lack of exact numbers considering prostitutes was there were some who would “offer their body” only occasionally – a kind of a part-time prostitutes¹⁷. These were called “dollymops” and used prostitution as a way to compensate for their low income at times of economic crisis¹⁸. Some of these were wives of sailors who turned to prostitution while their husbands were away¹⁹. Most of prostitutes, however, shared the

¹⁰ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 85-87.

¹¹ BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 165.

¹² SCHOMP, Virginia, *The City: Life in Victorian England*, p. 34.

¹³ MITCHELL, Sally, *Daily life in Victorian England*, p. 93.

¹⁴ LEVIN, Aviva, *Prostitution in Nineteenth-century England*.

¹⁵ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 123.

¹⁶ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 183.

¹⁷ BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 167.

¹⁸ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 123.

¹⁹ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 182.

sheer fact that they were driven to prostitution by poverty and lack of other option and prostitution was an absolute necessity for survival²⁰.

While prostitution itself was not illegal, loitering the streets for the purpose of prostitution was an offence²¹. This, of course, led to the creation of many brothels which were generally ignored by the law enforcers and were subjects to police action only if they were complained about by the neighbours²². The first law which regulated brothels was the Common Lodging-house Act in 1851 which made it compulsory for brothels to be registered²³. After 1885, houses of accommodation and even some shops started offering these special services for it became difficult to run a brothel²⁴.

What Victorians feared above all when speaking about prostitutes were contagious diseases. These fears were not unjustified. Even the conservative estimates state that at one time about 7% of men in London were infected by syphilis²⁵. The government's fear of the effect of syphilis on British military force led to the passing of Contagious Disease Acts in the year 1864, 1866 and 1869 which ordered forced medical examinations of women suspected of being a prostitute. This, however, led to several incidents of women being abused by law enforcers or otherwise disgraced and insulted. Women of the era thought of the Acts as violation of respectable women. Eventually, the Acts were suspended in 1883²⁶.

2.1.3 Alcohol

Although alcohol was usually considered by most Victorians as a necessity for their socialization and for the working class even as a method of payment e.g. for attendance at funerals, it was drunkenness that bothered them a great deal²⁷. At the beginning of the 19th century, gin was the most popular of alcohol beverages. The government tried to change this fact with the Beer Act of 1831 which made beer available with next to no limit or tax²⁸.

²⁰ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 123.

²¹ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 125.

²² BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 166.

²³ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 125.

²⁴ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 183.

²⁵ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 124.

²⁶ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 185.

²⁷ SHIMAN, Lilian Lewis, *Crusade against drink in Victorian England*, p. 39.

²⁸ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 10.

Drinking was also indisputably connected to crime. Overall it has been estimated that about 40% of lesser crimes in the year 1876 was connected to alcohol. The most common of these crimes being fights in public houses – pubs – but also violence on women was commonly associated with alcoholic beverages²⁹. Since drunkenness was easy to point at, drinking became the antagonist in most of the society's problems including the economic depression in 1879³⁰.

Many people decided to fight against this phenomenon by founding groups of non-drinking people and encouraging others to join their ranks. Among these groups we can see the movement of so-called teetotallers or the Blue Ribbon Army whose members wore a blue badge as a sign of their abstinence³¹.

Legislation in the second half of the 19th century focused mostly on pubs and beer houses. Since 1869 they had to be licensed and the Licensing Act of 1872 gave the officials further control over the establishments³² as well as introduced persecution for being drunk or disorderly and for being in charge of a gun or a vehicle while under influence. In the 1870s, the number of convictions in relation to alcohol was three times higher than twenty years before that. These high rates began to decline after 1875 along with an overall better economic situation³³.

2.1.4 Drug abuse

The Victorian era, as aforementioned, was most of all an era of change. This also meant a change in the way society perceived drugs and medicaments and we would not be wrong in saying the Victorian era represents an important milestone in the world's view on narcotics.

At the beginning of the 19th century, getting hold of opium was incredibly easy. It was the most widespread drug in the Victorian society and anyone could buy it virtually anywhere. Opium and its derivatives like laudanum, a mixture of opium and wine or water, were used as a cure for all kinds of cough, hiccup, toothache, menstrual cramps, diarrhoea, inflammation of the intestines and many more³⁴, even as a way of quieting down a baby. Until the second half of the century nobody perceived opium and such as a problem. Many

²⁹ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 10, 39, 57.

³⁰ SHIMAN, Lilian Lewis, *Crusade against drink in Victorian England*, p. 94.

³¹ TREVELYAN, George Macaulay and Bedřich ROHAN, *Jak žila Anglie*, p. 705-706.

³² GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 10.

³³ BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 163-164.

³⁴ RUSTON, Sharon, Representations of drugs in 19th-century literature.

artists, including famous writers like Charles Dickens, are known to have used opium. It was also significantly popular among the working class and was mostly used for recreational purposes and escape from their mundane reality³⁵.

The next immensely popular drug was cocaine. Although unlike opium cocaine became widely spread and popular in the mid-Victorian and late Victorian era, it was also used as a medicine for various ailments such as colds, toothache, coughs, as an anaesthetic and for treatment of melancholia and indigestion. The most well-known medicine containing cocaine was Vin Mariani – a beverage made of coca leaves invented by French chemist Angelo Mariani – which was supposedly used even by Queen Victoria herself³⁶.

In the second half of the century people slowly started realizing the effects of opium on their bodies although they were not yet speaking of addiction. Many people, though, saw opium as a threat comparable to alcohol. These people started forming groups demanding action from the government. The first great legislative act controlling drugs was the Poisons and Pharmacy Act of 1868. Drugs such as opium were marked as poisons and they became harder to obtain. In the last decades of the century the focus shifted from the drugs to its users and addiction. In the 1890 Lunacy Act drug addiction became grounds for guardianship³⁷.

There were also other drugs used by the Victorians such as morphine and heroin³⁸. None of these, however, reached the popularity of opium which began to lose its renown not sooner than in the last decades of Victorian era to be replaced by cocaine which held on to its popularity well until the 20th century and to a certain extent until today.

2.1.5 Crime

The stereotypical image of Victorian towns and cities always includes crime-infested alleyways, neighbourhoods full of robbers, rapists and murderers. However, the question remains of how much this image differs from the truth.

The actual crime rates are hard to tell for we must distinguish between detected and undetected crime. The percentage of detected crime was also rising during the Victorian era. Also, even if crime was detected it was not necessarily reported as crime; for

³⁵ DINIEJKO, Andrzej, Victorian Drug Use.

³⁶ DINIEJKO, Andrzej, Victorian Drug Use.

³⁷ BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 172-173.

³⁸ CRANE, Louise, Drugs in Victorian Britain.

example, stolen property was commonly reported as “lost property”³⁹. Despite that, it is true that the crime rates were perceived as very high by Victorians⁴⁰. This has several reasons.

The first one being the increase in population, especially in towns and cities. Urbanisation which began in the 18th century further continued in the 19th century. The greatest waves of people moving from the countryside into towns occurred after the depressions in agriculture in the 70s and 80s of the 19th century⁴¹. Overall, between years 1851 and 1901 the percentage of population living in urban areas increased from 54% to 78%⁴². It goes without saying that increase in population meant also increase in the number of crimes. However, this connection was sometimes overlooked by Victorians. In the year 1847 in Salisbury it was stated by Mr Justice Colledge “the increase of crime in late years is fearful and appalling”, even though according to the Parliamentary Blue Books covering the period the actual increase in crime had only been 11.3% while the population had increased by 12.5%⁴³.

Another reason for the increase of crime rates was that, because of changes in legislation during the Victorian period, some behaviour which was previously perfectly normal suddenly became criminal. In the mid-Victorian period this considered acts like betting, which became illegal in 1853, or prosecution of parents who refused to have their children vaccinated after vaccination against smallpox became compulsory in 1853, and much more were added in the late-Victorian period such as prosecution for not attending school after 1881 and more ranges of offences were introduced in the Burgh Police Act of 1892⁴⁴.

The final reason for the seeming rise of criminal activities was the enhancement of means of detection. Police force became compulsory thanks to the County and Borough Police Act of 1856⁴⁵ and new devices were put in use such as electric telegraph, which enhanced the cooperation between police forces all over the country, or better scientific ways of detection of poisoning⁴⁶.

³⁹ EMSLEY, Clive, *Crime and the Victorians*.

⁴⁰ NIJHAR, Preeti, *Law and Imperialism: Criminality and Constitution in Colonial India and Victorian England*, p. 44.

⁴¹ TREVILYAN, George Macaulay and Bedřich ROHAN, *Jak žila Anglie*, p. 687-688.

⁴² WOODS, Robert, *The demography of Victorian England and Wales*, p. 362.

⁴³ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 12.

⁴⁴ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 8-11.

⁴⁵ Creating the nation's police force, *Parliament.uk*.

⁴⁶ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 12-17.

That being said, while the percentage of detected crime was increasing throughout the Victorian era, historians nowadays generally agree that during 19th century crime was decreasing along with improvement in other social areas – overall better social-economic situation⁴⁷.

2.1.5.1 Murder

In the Victorian Era murder was, of course, a capital offence. For that very reason, however, juries would not often convict a man or a woman if there was any doubt about their guilt⁴⁸.

The most “iconic” type of murder in the Victorian era was poisoning. This is, however, typical for the early Victorian era and especially the 1840s when arsenic, a poison very easy to obtain as it was used to eradicate rats, was very popular among murderers – so much so it led to the execution of the Arsenic Regulation Act in 1851 which made arsenic more difficult to buy. From that point on there was a notable decline in poisonings – in the period 1859-1880 poison was used in less than 5% of murders⁴⁹.

While statistics suggest that twice as many women as men were convicted of murder in the years 1855-1874⁵⁰, in the late Victorian era these numbers decrease especially when it comes to women killing their husbands, which was quite common in the earlier years. In contrast, the number of men killing their wives remains generally high; “of the fifteen execution in 1899 only one was for the murder of a man”⁵¹.

Late Victorian Britain also gave birth to the first serial killer. In the year 1888 a series of brutal murders of prostitutes shook the Victorian society. The killer called himself Jack the Ripper and remains the most famous serial killer in the human history⁵².

There is one more specific as for the murder in Victorian era. Murder of a child – infanticide – was unnaturally common. The Daily Telegraph even stated at one point that infanticide had become the “absolute custom among English society of the present day”⁵³. Reason for some of these murders was the existence of burial clubs which provided money to pay for a funeral and thus murder of a child became a way how to make

⁴⁷ MITCHELL, Sally, *Daily life in Victorian England*, p. 96.

⁴⁸ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 22.

⁴⁹ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 23-28.

⁵⁰ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 67.

⁵¹ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 41.

⁵² SCHOMP, Virginia, *The City: Life in Victorian England*, p. 41.

⁵³ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 103.

relatively easy money⁵⁴. While exact numbers are unknown, according to the Registrar General murders of infants form about 63% of all murders in the period 1863-1887⁵⁵.

As well as other forms of crime, murder in the second half of the 19th century shows signs of decline: while in the year 1871 there was 1,5 trials dealing with homicide (both murders and manslaughters) per 100,000 people in England, in the year 1911 this number was only 0,6⁵⁶. Thus the homicide rate fell by 60% in 40 years. When we take a look at London in the 1890s we discover that there were only about 20 murders a year. Taking into account its population of five million, it is easy to see homicide, although it usually caught the public's attention, became quite rare⁵⁷.

2.1.5.2 Manslaughter

Manslaughter represents the other side of the coin of homicide, the first one being murder. Unlike murder, manslaughter was not a capital offence and, therefore, did not carry a death sentence⁵⁸. That is the reason manslaughters were much more common than murders. Since juries were reluctant to send a man to his death, it was more likely manslaughter charges would be pressed instead of murder charges and even if murder charges were pressed, they could be reduced to manslaughter. This situation was the same in England as in Ireland and Scotland, although Scottish law did not recognize manslaughter and instead recognized culpable homicide which, however, does not considerably differ from manslaughter. To put the perspective into numbers, in the period between 1867 and 1892 out of the 780 convictions of homicide in Ireland only 62 was for murder. In Scotland in the same period murder represented only 39 out of the 356 homicide convictions⁵⁹.

Manslaughter was a commonly used sentence in cases in which there was not an apparent clear intent to kill the victim. This included killing in defence with the use of excessive force⁶⁰, killing in a drunken row and, also, causing death through ignorance and carelessness⁶¹.

⁵⁴ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 34.

⁵⁵ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 191.

⁵⁶ BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 150.

⁵⁷ MITCHELL, Sally, *Daily life in Victorian England*, p. 96.

⁵⁸ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 55.

⁵⁹ CONLEY, Carolyn A., *Homicide in Late-Victorian Ireland and Scotland*.

⁶⁰ LEIGH, L. H., *Manslaughter and the Limits of Self-Defence*.

⁶¹ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 56.

2.1.5.3 Rape

Although we can say rape was a common offence, at the same time we must mention the number of cases of rape that appeared before trial was very low. This was caused by a couple of reasons. First of all, there was a public shaming the victims of rape were afraid of. Only just reporting the rape meant there would be people who knew the victim's virtue has been stolen and their purity lost. This was a turning point for many of the victims of sexual assaults no matter the social class they belonged to⁶².

Another reason was that rape was extremely hard to prove. If a man was to be found guilty of rape, the victim had to prove her intact virtue up to the point of alleged rape. Otherwise there was no virtue to be lost. And after that there also had to be evidence saying the victim had not given her consent at any point of the assault. Hard evidence was required and generally anything short of proven heavy physical struggle was ineffective⁶³.

Even if the victims were prepared to discuss their private matters and details of the assaults before public and even if they were able to prove the beforementioned points, it still did not mean the case would make its way before trial. Many cases of rape were dismissed by the magistrate or grand juries instead of sent before trial⁶⁴ and even if they made their way before trial they were often assessed as only attempted rape or "indecent assault". This was possible because the definitions of rape, attempted rape and indecent assault were quite vague⁶⁵.

Even though the number of rape cases remained low for the duration of Victorian era, there is an increase in the second half of the 19th century. The explanation could be that more women took the courage to take their cases before court⁶⁶ or possibly there was an increase in the number of rapes, after all, after 1841 rape was no longer a capital offence⁶⁷.

Although the legislation protecting women was usually seen as inefficient, we must mention one more thing. The age of consent changed twice during the Victorian era. First it was in 1875 from 12 to 13 years and then 10 years later in the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 it was raised again from 13 to 16⁶⁸.

⁶² BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 154-155.

⁶³ EMSLEY, Clive, *Crime and society in England, 1750-1900*, p. 106.

⁶⁴ EMSLEY, Clive, *Crime and society in England, 1750-1900*, p. 105.

⁶⁵ CONLEY, Carolyn A., Rape and Justice in Victorian England.

⁶⁶ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 170.

⁶⁷ EMSLEY, Clive, *Crime and society in England, 1750-1900*, p. 105.

⁶⁸ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 168-169.

2.1.5.4 Crimes of property

Crimes against property were regarded as very serious in the Victorian era. More serious, actually, than crimes against a person. Out of the various types of property crime, those connected with violence were generally regarded as more serious than those which were not, although the exception were crimes against the currency⁶⁹ and against the Royal Mail which were taken almost as seriously as crimes against the state⁷⁰.

The most common type of crime in general was petty theft⁷¹. It blossomed in crowded city streets and various gangs of thieves were known to be operating at railway stations and marketplaces⁷². Many children were involved in small scale thefts – in 1880 more than six thousand children under 16 were in prison, most of them for theft⁷³.

Burglary was also regarded as quite serious since it involved breaking into a person's house and those convicted of burgling usually received long sentences which is why burglary became a rather desperate act⁷⁴.

Pickpocketing was another common street-crime but the most feared criminal of the era was most likely the “garrotter” – a criminal depending on disabling his victim, usually from behind, and then stealing whatever valuables the victim was carrying⁷⁵. The term becomes important especially in the 1850's and 1860's in the times of “garrotting panics”⁷⁶ – public's fear of garrotting which, although influential, was largely unfounded⁷⁷. After the 1860's the usage of this term became rather rare which does not necessarily mean the crime itself disappeared but it never achieved its high rates of 1850's – 1860's⁷⁸.

At last, shoplifting was also popular; it usually consisted of distracting the shop assistant, getting out of the shop with stolen goods and as quickly as possible passing them to someone who had not been to the shop⁷⁹.

⁶⁹ BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 103.

⁷⁰ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 61.

⁷¹ EMSLEY, Clive, *Crime and society in England, 1750-1900*, p. 32.

⁷² GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 67.

⁷³ BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 199.

⁷⁴ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 62.

⁷⁵ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 72.

⁷⁶ EMSLEY, Clive, *Crime and society in England, 1750-1900*, p. 41.

⁷⁷ BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 210.

⁷⁸ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 74.

⁷⁹ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 76.

It is no wonder crimes of property and especially minor thefts were usually connected with the members of the lower social classes⁸⁰ which undoubtedly did not help the image of the poor in the eyes of the middle and upper class. As the living conditions were getting better in the second half of the century, we can see a gradual decline in the rates of crime against property with the exception of burglary stayed at the approximately same level⁸¹.

⁸⁰ BRIGGS, John H. Y., *Crime and punishment in England: an introductory history*, p. 108.

⁸¹ EMSLEY, Clive, *Crime and society in England, 1750-1900*, p. 32.

3. Social-pathological phenomena in the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

3.1 Poverty and social class

In the stories of Arthur Conan Doyle, unlike other Victorian authors, poverty does not play a very important part. Despite that, there are still traces and suggestions regarding the state of the poor in Victorian cities.

Throughout the stories we can see mentions of poor neighbourhoods and bad parts of London. This is primarily the case of novels as most of the short stories take place outside of the British capital. The first mention of the poor parts of London can be traced in *A Study in Scarlet* (1887). It is, however, only a mention of Sherlock Holmes going out on walks which take him to these parts of the city⁸².

The first proper look we get on these parts of the city is in the second novel, *The Sign of the Four*, when the adventure takes both Sherlock and Watson to South London. In his description Watson speaks of “lines of dull brick houses” with pubs at the corners of the streets and overall speaks of a “questionable and forbidding neighbourhood”⁸³. This is quite unique as we do not get a description such as this any other time in the analysed works and was it not for this mere glimpse of South London we would not get any reflection of the rough and poor neighbourhoods of London at all.

That does not, of course, mean Doyle would not further acknowledge the city’s problem with poverty. In *A Study in Scarlet*, for example, is clearly suggested that poverty is a problem that could happen to anyone as we are presented with the image of a woman who loses her husband, her son joins the navy and she is very much forced to accept two strangers of questionable character as boarders in her house simply because it has been a “slack season” and she cannot say no to the money they are offering⁸⁴. It resembles the story of some of the women in Victorian England who turned to prostitution when their husband went away, only this time it is the son and not the husband who is in the navy and the woman is a widow who is, luckily for her, not that desperate yet to start selling her body.

⁸² DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 10.

⁸³ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 124-125.

⁸⁴ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 44.

Furthermore, there is a subtle mention of charity work in *The Sign of the Four* (1890) when Sherlock speaks of a philanthropist who “has spent nearly quarter of a million upon the London poor”⁸⁵.

The best image of the poor we get are the homeless children which, especially in the two analysed novels, play important parts in the stories. The street-Arabs, as the homeless children were often called for they were freely roaming the street Arab-like with no home⁸⁶, in Sherlock Holmes stories play the irreplaceable part of Holmes’ street investigators. Holmes refers to them as “Baker Street irregulars” and pays them to collect intelligence on the street as they are able to “go everywhere and hear everything”. As Watson in both analysed novels, *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of the Four*, gives us the same description of the street-Arabs being very dirty and ragged with bare feet⁸⁷, it is suggested the sight of such homeless children was nothing unusual for the streets of the Victorian metropolis. By saying they can “go everywhere and hear everything”, it is suggested nobody pays too much attention to them and nobody is suspicious in their presence.

When we look at the question of social class, we will see that Doyle does not very much deal with the problems between social classes. Most of the characters belong to the middle class, which is also Doyle’s target audience⁸⁸. The working class is only barely present in the stories and there are more characters from the upper class than the working class. Despite the lack of apparent images regarding rivalry between social classes, there is at least one phenomenon present which was quite common for the Victorian society and that is the connection of crime and the poor.

Though there is no question about the fact that high percentage of crime was committed by members of the working class, as we established earlier (the most common crime being petty theft which was sometimes merely means to survival), this point of view created a certain stereotype among the Victorian society thanks to which the working class would be usually accused when there was no apparent culprit of a crime. This, together with the widespread believe that no serious crime could have been done by a local, is represented in the short stories. In “The Priory School” (1904) there is a case of abduction of a noble man’s son and as soon as the police find out there are gypsies

⁸⁵ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 119.

⁸⁶ Street Arab, *Collins Dictionary*.

⁸⁷ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 40-41, 161.

⁸⁸ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. XII.

nearby and that they have the boy's cap (which they happened to find on the moors) there is no way they would accuse someone else from the kidnapping⁸⁹. In a different short story, "The Norwood Builder" (1903), Sherlock himself uses this phenomenon to create a scenario of a crime that would help his client who has been charged with the crime. The scenario to the murder case consists of a passing tramp committing the crime. Although Sherlock is not successful in freeing his client straight away, he manages to plant the seed of doubt into the mind of the police inspector Lestrade by presenting him with a scenario which seems appealing and very likely as it is based on a common stereotype⁹⁰.

3.2 Prostitution

Even though prostitution presented a very serious moral threat to the Victorian society and there were many campaigns against it, such as Charles Dickens' effort to help prostitutes out of their poverty⁹¹, the phenomenon is not represented nor mentioned in any of the selected and analysed works of Arthur Conan Doyle.

There are two explanations for this. The first states that, as we established earlier, the economic situation of late Victorian England was better than the situation of early and mid-Victorian England, thus it is safe to assume prostitution did not represent such a threat to society. Therefore, Doyle did not feel the need to reflect the problem in his works. The other possible explanation is that Doyle deliberately chose not to include prostitutes in his works because of his target audience which laid mostly among the middle class⁹² and we may assume most of his target audience were male because of the overall theme of detective story. This focus on the middle class could theoretically result in the unwillingness to give importance to characters from the working class, let alone female characters from the working class. The only truly strong female character which appears in the Sherlock Holmes stories is Irene Adler who by no means belongs to the working class and even though she is portrayed as a dominatrix in the newest adaptation by BBC (2012)⁹³ who perhaps is paid for her services, she is no such thing in the A. C. Doyle stories. She appears, however, only in the short story "Scandal in Bohemia"⁹⁴

⁸⁹ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 121.

⁹⁰ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 37.

⁹¹ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 118.

⁹² DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. XII.

⁹³ A Scandal in Belgravia, *IMBd*.

⁹⁴ CREGAN-REID, Vybarr, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

(1891) which is not part of the analysed works of the thesis. One way or another, further research on this topic is required to come to a defining conclusion.

3.3 Alcohol

Unlike the use of narcotics, there is a plenty of mentions of the use of alcohol in the analysed works. The attitudes towards alcohol as depicted are also, of course, very different from those towards drugs. First of all, when speaking of alcohol in the Sherlock Holmes' stories, there is an important distinction to be made.

When we read about alcohol in the analysed works, it is usually in one of two different ways. The first one is drinking on occasion or social drinking. There are numerous moments throughout the analysed works in which the characters offer or are offered a drink. We can observe this very often when during the first scenes of the stories in which Holmes' clients arrive at Sherlock's flat and, being exhausted and sometimes quite shaken, are usually offered a glass of brandy, to name at least one example in the short story "The Priory School"⁹⁵. Offering a drink appears as a social gesture as well as a way to help someone relax their nerves. The unusual example of the latter can furthermore be found in the short story "The Abbey Grange" (1904), in which the seeming victim tells a story of burglars drinking wine to recollect themselves after killing a man⁹⁶; a story which turns out to be completely fabricated but still worth mentioning. When it comes to this portrayal of alcohol, there are no attitudes against it, no mentions of its negative effects. Occasional drinking is depicted as completely acceptable and very much standard for the society.

In contrast, the second depiction portrays alcohol in its darker colours. There are plenty of characters described as drunkards, one of them even being Watson's own brother⁹⁷. When speaking of characters who drink excessively, Doyle uses nothing but negative comments towards their habit of drinking and drunk behaviour. In the case of Watson's brother, drinking was the last stage of his downfall before he died. In the case of most drunkards in Doyle's stories, however, drinking is tightly connected with violence. We can see prime examples of these in the characters of Peter Carey, in the short story "Black Peter" (1904), and Sir Eustace Brackenstall, in the short story "The

⁹⁵ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 107.

⁹⁶ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 292.

⁹⁷ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 114.

Abbey Grange". Both of these share their affection towards violence when under the influence of alcohol. Also, in both cases, said violence is aimed against their families – wives and in Peter's case his daughter as well. In addition, for both of these, their drinking is the main reason for their death. While Peter gets drunk and assaults his soon-to-become killer⁹⁸, Lord Eustace is killed not only because he attacks the killer but indirectly because he beats his wife, thus making the killer, his wife's wooer, so angry he does not stop at merely hurting Lord Eustace but smashes his head in with a poker⁹⁹. After their deaths, their families show no mourning for them and the leading police officials show no sympathies toward the dead either. "Black" Peter is described as a "perfect fiend" and unbearable to deal with when he has been drinking¹⁰⁰ just as Lord Eustace is said not to be trusted when under influence. What is remarkable is the fact that because Peter saves all his violence for his family, there is nothing the police could do about it as neither drinking nor domestic violence were criminal in this time period, per se. In contrast, when the detective of Scotland Yard, Stanley Hopkins, speaks about Lord Eustace, he claims that he "very nearly came our way once or twice" suggesting Lord Eustace was showing signs of behaviour which could be labelled as criminal and which nearly got him into trouble with the police despite his title and wealth¹⁰¹.

That being said, we may observe that purely drinking was not at all prosecuted since the very first Holmes' story, *A Study in Scarlet*, in which the killer while returning to the crime scene pretends to be a drunkard after he walks into a police officer. As the police officer cares little about a mere drunkard, we are suggested drunkards roaming the night streets was nothing unusual for late Victorian London and a perfect camouflage for a criminal not to arouse suspicion as to why he is on that particular street at that particular time¹⁰².

In conclusion, it is very important for Doyle's stories to distinguish the line between social and occasional drinking, which is completely acceptable and generally considered standard, and exuberant drinking, which is generally contemptible even though it is not criminal per se. The characters' attitudes correspond with the general ones as there is no character in the analysed works who would stand against all forms of drinking and

⁹⁸ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 165.

⁹⁹ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 310.

¹⁰⁰ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 147.

¹⁰¹ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 295.

¹⁰² DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 100.

alcohol, however, attitudes towards drunkards are as negative as can be and Doyle's characters often use expressions containing emotive words like "fiend" or "devil".

3.4 Drug Abuse

Although there are but few mentions of narcotics in the selected and analysed works, it does not mean there are no conclusions to be made. All of the mentions of narcotics are connected to the main character of brilliant detective and we get an accurate depiction of not only his and Dr. Watson's attitudes towards narcotics but also a description how the use of drugs affects Sherlock's both physical and mental state. There are no other characters in the selected works known to use drugs but there are some conclusions to be made even from this lack of mentions.

The first mention of Sherlock Holmes' drug abuse problem can be found in the second novel, *The Sign of the Four*. It is, however, possibly suggested by Doyle even in the first novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, in its second chapter. When Dr. Watson is describing Holmes' face expression, he talks about his eyes as seeming "dreamy and vacant" and claims he "might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic had not the temperance and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion"¹⁰³.

In the second novel, Doyle is not merely suggesting anymore. The very first scene of *The Sign of the Four* portrays Sherlock while injecting a 7% solution of cocaine into his arm. His forearm is, furthermore, described as "scarred with innumerable puncture marks" and Dr. Watson speaks of Holmes' drug habit as very serious – Sherlock would be taking narcotics three times a day for numerous months, said narcotics being either cocaine or morphine¹⁰⁴. This corresponds with the tendencies of the late Victorian era as the evils of usage of opium had been profoundly exposed in the 1860's and, at this point, cocaine was the most popular among drug abusers, as described above.

The main characters' attitudes towards the use of narcotics are rather interesting to observe. Sherlock Holmes, on one hand, acknowledges the bad influence drugs have on the user's body. On the other hand, though, he praises the narcotics for their ability to clarify and stimulate his mind. The only reason for Sherlock to use drugs is lack of cases he could work upon, as mentioned whenever his drug abuse problem is discussed in the

¹⁰³ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 109-110.

novel and later in the short story “The Missing Three-Quarter” (1904)¹⁰⁵. Neither any of the characters nor the third person omniscient narrator speak of any form of addiction, however. The brilliant detective, despite being man of great intelligence, does not recognise physical addiction to drugs and, the way he sees it, he has no need for artificial stimulation when he has problems/cases to solve.

In contrast, Dr. Watson in *The Sign of the Four* shows great concern for his friend’s habit. Being a physician, he speaks of tissue-changes and the possibility of permanent effect the drugs may have on Sherlock’s brain, even expresses fear of the possible loss of Holmes’ intellectual abilities, the great power he has been gifted with¹⁰⁶.

It seems most likely Arthur Conan Doyle decided to give his main character the drug habit to make him more human for the readers. To make him more relatable and three-dimensional by giving him a serious weakness. The author’s attitudes towards drugs seem, however, rather negative as they are voiced by Dr. Watson. It remains debatable to determine to what extent the character of Watson corresponds with the author himself and it is, by no means, goal of this thesis. The truth is, however, that Watson often serves as a narrator in the Holmes’ stories and, also, shares medical background with Doyle¹⁰⁷. We might then assume much of Watson’s concern for the physical effects of narcotics are also the concerns of the author himself.

In the aforementioned short story, “The Missing Three-Quarter”, we can observe a slightly different attitude towards drugs. The first scene of the short story resembles the one from *The Sign of the Four* in the sense that we find Watson and Holmes in their apartment in the time of boredom due to lack of cases Sherlock could work upon. We see Watson contemplating his friend’s drug habit, stating he “gradually managed to wean (Sherlock) from that drug mania” in the course of several years. Despite the fact Sherlock no longer seeks stimulation in the form of drugs, Dr. Watson recognizes the habit of drug abuse is “not dead but sleeping”¹⁰⁸. This suggests the author’s recognition of the state of serious addiction. Unlike in the *The Sign of the Four*, it is clear now Sherlock was not able to stop using narcotics at once but had to be “gradually weaned” off drugs by Watson. The awareness that the habit is merely “sleeping” further suggests understanding of how easily one can step back into addiction. This shows Doyle’s greater understanding of the

¹⁰⁵ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 261-262.

¹⁰⁶ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁷ WILSON, Philip, Arthur Conan Doyle.

¹⁰⁸ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 261-262.

problem of drug addiction which again corresponds with the era. As stated in the relevant chapter above, in the last decade of the 19th century, there was high focus on the drug addicts and drug addiction was generally recognised as a serious health condition. The short story shows even more negative attitude towards drugs as Watson first calls the drug habit a “fiend” and Sherlock then calls hypodermic syringe an “instrument of evil”, not mentioning the positive aspects of drugs whatsoever.

As the novel, *The Sign of the Four*, was first published in the year 1890 and the short story, “The Missing Three-Quarter”, in 1904¹⁰⁹, with 14 years of time-difference it is clear there must be, also, a difference in the attitudes towards drugs, both by the characters and by the author himself. This attitude seems to be growing more negative and Doyle shows greater understanding of drug addiction than he did in 1890. As Doyle’s works appealed to the general public and the attitudes towards drugs as expressed in his works can hardly be called ground-breaking, we may assume there was greater understanding of drug abuse among the whole society of late Victorian and early Edwardian England. As for the lack of any mentions of drug users save Sherlock himself, it does not mean, by any chance, there were none. The reason they are not mentioned is very simple: just like Holmes, users of narcotics of late Victorian period preferred to indulge in their habit in the privacy of their homes, unlike the infamous opium dens of 1860’s which actually appear in one of Doyle’s short stories, “The Man with the Twisted Lip” (1891)¹¹⁰, which, however, is not part of the analysed works.

3.5 Crime

When we look at crime, we can see some of the characteristics of Victorian society displayed in the works of A. C. Doyle. One of these characteristics is the belief in phrenology – the belief that ugly physical features were associated with crime – which was quite popular in the Victorian era¹¹¹. Doyle via Watson spends a lot of time describing the physical features of the characters, mainly the clients and the culprits. When describing the latter, he usually remarks there is violence or something unpleasant behind one’s features. A prime example of which we could find in the short story “The Six Napoleons” (1904). When describing the features of a criminal on a photograph, Watson

¹⁰⁹ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: Complete Works, *The Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia*.

¹¹⁰ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: Complete Works, *The Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia*.

¹¹¹ GRAY, Adrian, *Crime and criminals of Victorian England*, p. 7-8.

speaks of his face as looking like a “muzzle of a baboon”¹¹². Another person later claims he has “seldom seen an uglier”¹¹³. In a different story, “The Golden Pince-Nez” (1904), the antagonist, although in this case not a criminal per se, is described as having an “aquiline face” with “dark piercing eyes lurking in deep hollows”¹¹⁴. In *A Study in Scarlet* one of the antagonists, who also becomes a victim of murder, is described as having features of the “most malignant type”¹¹⁵.

In contrast with that, in *The Sign of the Four* Sherlock Holmes contradicts the idea of phrenology claiming the prettiest woman he ever knew poisoned three kids and the ugliest man he knew was a philanthropist helping the London poor, further claiming judgment should never be “biased by personal qualities”¹¹⁶.

The amount of crime in Victorian cities is another matter. The point of view of the characters in Doyle’s works generally differs. While Holmes can sometimes be found lamenting about the small amount of crime, more specifically crime he would find interesting, Watson is contradicting with the statement that most of the society would not agree with Holmes on that¹¹⁷, suggesting the crime rates were perceived as rather high by the general public. The public’s fear of crime is furthermore suggested by a subtle yet remarkable mention of bartitsu. Bartitsu, misspelled by Doyle as “baritsu”, is a mixed martial art created by Edward William Barton-Wright in 1899 which was taught to the Victorian public as a means of self-defence¹¹⁸. The need for a self-defence martial art indicates the Victorians’ fear of robbery or assault. As for Sherlock Holmes, the knowledge of bartitsu enabled him to overcome his nemesis, professor Moriarty, and saved his life¹¹⁹.

In the novel *A Study in Scarlet*, we can observe some of the elements which helped the greater detection of crime which could shape the public’s awareness of crime. We learn about the existence of Scotland Yard¹²⁰ as well as about the presence of a great deal of both government and private detectives¹²¹. Furthermore, the existence of new scientific

¹¹² DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 194.

¹¹³ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 201.

¹¹⁴ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 248.

¹¹⁵ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 33.

¹¹⁶ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 119.

¹¹⁷ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 26.

¹¹⁸ About the Bartitsu Society, *Bartitsu.org*.

¹¹⁹ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 8.

¹²⁰ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 17.

¹²¹ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 15.

methods helping solving crimes is suggested in the very first chapter as Sherlock himself develops a method of testing for traces of blood¹²².

Some could be said about the connection of the working class and crime but this has been handled in one of the previous chapters (viz 3.1 Poverty and social class).

Generally, when speaking of crime, Doyle comments on the tendencies and points of view held by the general public of Victorian era. While he does not necessarily stay true to the objective reality of Victorian crime, he embraces the perception of reality held by the public, by his readers, with a few very interesting mentions concerning bartitsu and phrenology. This proves valuable when weighing up the views of Victorian public.

3.5.1 Murder and manslaughter

Despite the rarity of murder and manslaughter as we established in previous chapters, homicides play an indisputably important role in the stories of A. C. Doyle. Out of the fifteen stories included in the analysed works (2 novels and 13 short stories), murder, attempted murder or manslaughter is the main focus in 12 of them. And even though we do not get any suggestion as to the total number of murders happening in a year, for example, we know that Sherlock Holmes had to deal with fifty murderers during his career, as stated in the short story “Charles Augustus Milverton” (1904)¹²³. The high percentage of homicide cases present in the analysed works has a simple explanation. We know that Victorians were fascinated by murders¹²⁴ so it seems only logical to choose murder/homicide as a primary focus while writing a detective story.

Observing poisonings, the icon of Victorian murder, we may see that poison plays an important role in both novels being the murder weapon. The importance of poisons in both novels is further highlighted by mentions of Holmes’ immense knowledge of various types of poisons¹²⁵ and his regular experiments with them¹²⁶. In contrast, in the short stories the importance of poison is not nearly as high. Yes, there are few mentions of poisoners Sherlock had to deal with in the past¹²⁷ but only actual use of poison appears in the short story “The Golden Pince-Nez” as it is used by the culprit to commit suicide¹²⁸. The apparent decline in importance of poisons corresponds with the decline of poisonings

¹²² DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 7.

¹²³ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 169.

¹²⁴ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 66-67.

¹²⁵ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 12.

¹²⁶ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 8.

¹²⁷ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 22.

¹²⁸ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 259.

in late Victorian era. As there is about 14 years between the publication of the novels and the short stories, we may observe the changing of tendencies both in writing detective stories and in actual crime.

There is also an interesting nod to the phenomenon of infanticide in *The Sign of the Four*. When discussing phrenology, Sherlock speaks of a beautiful woman who was executed for the poisoning of her three children. The reason for her crime being insurance money¹²⁹, the motive resembles the abuse of burial clubs by cruel parents, as discussed in the corresponding chapter above.

The last issue I want to point out is the difference between murder and manslaughter which gains importance in some of the short stories. Since most of the culprits of Sherlock Holmes' stories usually confess once they are caught and tell the whole story, we may observe some of the tendencies of their confessions. One of them is the willingness to tell the whole truth in order not to be charged with murder. In the short story "The Black Peter"¹³⁰ as well as in the story "The Abbey Grange"¹³¹ it is important for the killers to present the fact truthfully to state that they had no choice, that it was either their life or the victims'. As in both stories the victims are violent drunkards, the charge of manslaughter for their killers gives the reader a sense of good morale as the killers will not receive capital punishment for their doings. In a different short story, "The Dancing Men" (1903), we can see the example of murder charges being pushed but then changed considering the circumstances and death penalty changed into penal servitude¹³².

3.5.2 Rape

Violence against women has been already mentioned in the chapter focused on alcohol. When it comes to assault with sexual subtext though, there are but few mentions to draw from in the analysed works as it appears motives connected to sex were rarely used by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The only example of sexual assault or sexual harassment at least can be found in the short story "The Solitary Cyclist" (1903) in which Holmes' client is harassed by her employer's friend with clear sexual subtext. The harassment escalates as she is later violently forced to marry the man harassing her. Although the situation never comes to

¹²⁹ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 119.

¹³⁰ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 164.

¹³¹ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 310.

¹³² DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 83.

rape, the great concern surrounding this topic held by the Victorians is still reflected in the person of the woman's employer who comes to rescue her. In the fear of her losing her purity and innocence, he states it is "the worst fate that can befall a woman"¹³³. We may assume the use of the word "befall" is somewhat symbolic as in Victorian era women who were living immoral lives, who were lacking the purity they had been born with were sometimes referred to as "fallen angels". This term was for example commonly used when speaking of prostitutes¹³⁴.

There is, however, not another mention of any kind of sexual assault in the analysed works and drawing any kind of conclusion solely based on one mention would be rather unwise. Although, we could be questioning the cases of husbands assaulting their wives, asking to what extent could rape be included. Since we know there was little legal protection for women from their husbands, it is not hard to imagine rape was a likely addition to drunk violence. However, as it is not discussed in the analysed works, further research is required in order to draw specific conclusions.

3.5.3 Crimes of property

Crimes of property were the cause of many fears among the public in Victorian era. It is, therefore, no wonder they should be represented in the works of Arthur Conan Doyle.

Throughout the analysed works there are many mentions of various crimes of property. The one mentioned the most is burglary which plays an important role in three of the selected short stories, "Charles Augustus Milverton", "The Six Napoleons", and "The Golden Pince-Nez". In all three of these, however, the burglary culminates in an act of homicide. The Victorians' fear of burglary is further reflected in *The Sign of the Four* in the description of the architecture of a wealthy owner's house as it is said to be surrounded by high walls "topped with broken glass"¹³⁵. This is clearly to prevent any intruder from climbing over the wall so the concern for the owner's property connected with fear of criminals is nicely depicted here.

We may also observe some of the tendencies of Victorian criminals. For example, in "The Empty House" (1903) is a mention of a garrotter¹³⁶, a person assaulting people from behind on the street and then robbing them. Although at the time of the publishing of the

¹³³ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 99.

¹³⁴ WARD, Ian, *Sex, crime and literature in Victorian England*, p. 118.

¹³⁵ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet & The Sign of the Four*, p. 133.

¹³⁶ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 14.

short story this phenomenon was scarcely present, since it became a rarity at the end of the 19th century as we established earlier, it was nevertheless very familiar to the Victorian public who still remembered the garrotting panic of the 1860's.

Furthermore, we see the depiction of professional criminals, criminals who did not commit crime because of some occasional temptation but to whom crime was a way to earn their whole living¹³⁷. In the short story "Charles Augustus Milverton" we get to see a burglar kit used by professional burglars containing "nickel-plated jemmy, diamond-tipped glass cutter, adaptable keys" and many other improvements using the newest technologies¹³⁸. Although the existence of professional burglars is not, strictly speaking, anything specific for the Victorian era, it is still worth mentioning as it gives us more depth to the view of Doyle's Victorian criminal world.

Along with that, we see the existence of criminal gangs which were quite common when it came to crimes of property. As we said earlier, many crimes of property, especially petty thefts and pickpocketing, required fast passing of the stolen property as far from the scene of crime as possible. This was naturally easier if more people were involved which led to the creation of gangs of thieves, pickpockets and other criminals. In the short story "The Abbey Grange" it is a gang of burglars which plays an important part for the plot¹³⁹. Doyle goes even further as we learn the Lewisham gang which appears here consists of father with his two sons. This reflects crime on a social-pathological level which we scarcely see in Doyle's other works. He indirectly suggests the problem of crime often strikes whole families and when a child is born into a family of criminals, the child often ends up becoming a criminal as well.

In summary, although the depiction of crimes of property by A. C. Doyle seems sometimes quite shallow, it reflects many of the tendencies common in Victorian era or in the criminal underworld in general. Also, in the reflection of crime families we see a deeper level to crime suggesting the pathological impact of crime on a wider society.

¹³⁷ EMSLEY, Clive, *Crime and society in England, 1750-1900*, p. 72.

¹³⁸ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 177.

¹³⁹ DOYLE, Arthur Conan, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, p. 288.

4. Conclusion

In the analysed works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, we may find most of the important social-pathological phenomena of the Victorian society reflected with high credibility. Although some of them require more research, such as the phenomenon of prostitution or the crime of rape, we observe many important contemporary tendencies are depicted.

Doyle reflects the existence of poor and rough neighbourhoods as well as suggests the image of beggars and the homeless roaming Victorian streets was nothing uncommon. That being said, he avoids the general stereotype of blaming the working class for unsolved crime, nevertheless, he reflects the existence of said stereotype within the society.

His attitudes towards narcotics and alcohol reflect the ones held by the majority of Victorian society. As the usage of alcohol is clearly divided into two spheres – the social occasional drinking and exuberant drinking – he treats these with completely different attitudes, seeing the first as totally normal and the latter as condemnable. As for drugs, with the close connection to the main character, Doyle speaks about narcotics in great detail and we may also observe the change of attitudes toward narcotics within the time frame of the analysed works which can be explained given the greater understanding of Victorian society and new tendencies, regarding drug addiction, which changed the view of addicts in the 1890's.

Since crime presents the core of most of the Sherlock Holmes stories, many tendencies concerning Victorian crime are present in the analysed works. Doyle comments on phrenology, depicts the Victorians' fear of crime with an interesting nod towards the Victorian martial art bartitsu, and furthermore presents us with the tendencies of gang creation and professionalization. Furthermore, we see the work of regular police officers, usage of new technologies and methods which originated in Victorian England and shaped the world of crime in the 19th century.

In conclusion, Doyle reflects the objective reality of Victorian society in great detail and provides the reader with credible images of Victorian social-pathological phenomena and, even though the stories may seem slightly modified to suit the target audience – the middle class, it is without a doubt that Doyle's stories provide us with greater understanding of Victorian reality and the way of thinking of Victorian people.

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Resumé

Práce se zabývala socio-patologickými jevy viktoriánské společnosti a jejich vyobrazením ve vybraných dílech Arthura Conana Doylea. První část pojednává o viktoriánské společnosti vrcholného a pozdního viktoriánského období a rozebírá jednotlivé socio-patologické jevy společně s tím, jak byly vnímány společností. Druhá část pak pozoruje vyobrazení těchto jevů ve vybraných dílech Arthura Conana Doylea a sleduje autorovy tendence vyobrazení jednotlivých jevů, jak se tyto tendence mění s časem a celkově autorovo vyobrazení daných jevů srovnává s historickou realitou a s cítěním viktoriánské společnosti. Hlavním cíle práce bylo zjistit, jak přesně jsou jednotlivé jevy autorem vyobrazeny a jak můžeme autorovo dílo využít při poznávání reality viktoriánského období a jak nám přibližují myšlení viktoriánské společnosti.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Vojtěch Hlubek
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Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Petr Anténe, M.A., Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2019

Název práce:	Socio-patologické jevy a krize viktoriánské společnosti v díle Sira Arthura Conana Doylea
Název práce v angličtině:	Social-pathological phenomena and the crisis of Victorian society in the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Anotace práce:	Práce se zabývá srovnáním historické skutečnosti socio-patologických jevů viktoriánské společnosti s jejich vyobrazením v díle A. C. Doylea. První část vysvětluje pojem „socio-patologické jevy“ a dále tyto jevy jednotlivě rozebírá a popisuje. Druhá část sleduje tendence A. C. Doylea při vyobrazování jednotlivých jevů. Je zde porovnáno knižní vyobrazení se skutečností a pozorovány tendence autora a jejich změna v časovém horizontu vybraných děl. Zmíněny jsou autorovy tendence přizpůsobení díla cílové skupině čtenářů.
Klíčová slova:	A. C. Doyle, viktoriánské období, zločin, chudoba, prostituce, alkohol, drogy, Sherlock Holmes, socio-patologické jevy, detektivní příběhy
Anotace v angličtině:	This thesis deals with the comparison of historical reality of social-pathological phenomena of the Victorian era with their depiction in the works of A. C. Doyle. The first part explains the term “social-pathological phenomena” and then individually describes these. The second part observes the depiction of said phenomena in the works of A. C. Doyle. The depiction is compared to the historical reality and there is an observation as to how Doyle’s tendencies of depiction certain phenomena change over time. The author’s tendencies to write his stories to suit his target audience are mentioned here.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	A. C. Doyle, Victorian era, crime, poverty, prostitution, alcohol, drugs, Sherlock Holmes, social-pathological phenomena, detective stories
Rozsah práce:	37 stran (cca 56 500 znaků)
Přílohy:	CD s bakalářskou prací