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When Sherlock Goes to LA: The Literary “Case” of Joe Ide’s *IQ* (2016)

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- 1 A novel published in 2016, *IQ* is (yet) another rewriting of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories, or story, since the novel is openly based on Conan Doyle’s 1902 *Hound of the Baskervilles*. *IQ* centres on a black sleuth called Isaiah Quintabe (nicknamed “IQ”), unmistakably reminiscent of Doyle’s character, hired to solve a series of crimes involving canine menace in twenty-first century Los Angeles. Generically speaking, *IQ* is a patchwork version of many forms of detective trends, mingling the Victorian detective tradition, American Noir old and new, with a dash of Hollywood pop culture—unsurprisingly, since Joe Ide has long been a screenwriter for the movie industry. This essay intends to show how the use of parody and comic crime fiction makes such generic blending possible, bridging the gap between American and British detective fiction, between Ide and Doyle, to produce a highly entertaining detective novel. We shall first try to fathom the generic genealogy of *IQ* through British and American detective fiction, and then see the importance of (tainted) lineage and heritage, both on a literary and on a literal level. Overall, the value given to the past and “the authentic” represent key elements in *IQ*, elements of considerable importance in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* too. To consider the mythical potential of Sherlock Holmes also entails a paradox: a space for imagination to reinterpret and vivify a literary figure of the past, the myth also means clichéd or even fabricated characteristics, oversimplification, and the merchandizing of what has become a “brand”. We shall see how Ide uses both facets of the Holmesian myth in *IQ*, integrating visual and popular culture in an “irreverent” literary homage to Conan Doyle.

British and American detective fiction: *IQ*'s generic genealogy, a focus on ethnicity and the city

- 2 *IQ* is based on the traditional figure of the detective as created by Conan Doyle, who stands as a moral safeguard against the savagery of the world, whether it be the outside world (the Ku Klux Klan in *Five Orange Pips* or India in *The Sign of Four*) or the alien, the supernatural (the formidable dog in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*) lurking in a seemingly familiar, conventional, and well-established environment. Such features are shared by later British detective figures, such as G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown or Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, all relying on the famous Holmesian "science of deduction"—a science which will mutate into the more radical shape of forensics, starting from the mid-twentieth century to the present day.
- 3 Naturally, *IQ*'s main quality is—just like Sherlock Holmes—¹ his power of observation and deduction: "[Isaiah] couldn't help seeing what he saw. Things different or things not right or out of place or in place when they shouldn't be or not in sync with the words that came with them." (*IQ* 9)—and, also like Sherlock Holmes, his exceptional intelligence or "IQ":

I have a kind of intuition that way. Now and again a case turns up which is a little more complex. Then I have to bustle about and see things with my own eyes. You see I have a lot of special knowledge which I apply to the problem, and which facilitates matters wonderfully. Those rules of deduction laid down in that article which aroused your scorn, are invaluable to me in practical work. Observation with me is second nature. (Doyle 1887, 19-20)
- 4 If Sherlock Holmes deals with deduction, Isaiah indulges in "inductive reasoning", which also comes from the use of a certain knowledge. So his maths teacher taught him with much humour and cynicism:

"Inductive reasoning. It's what those so-called detectives on *CSI*, *SVU*, *LMNOP*, and all the rest of them call *deductive* reasoning, which is wrong and they should know better. It's *inductive* reasoning, a tool you will use frequently in geometry as well as calculus and trigonometry, assuming you get that far and that certainly won't be you, Jacquon. Stop messing with that girl's hair and pay attention. Your grade on that last test was so low I had to write it on the bottom of my shoe." Mrs Washington glared at Jacquon until his face melted. She began again: "Inductive reasoning is reasoning to the most likely explanation. It begins with one or more observations, and from those observations we come to a conclusion that seems to make sense. All right. An example: Jacquon was walking home from school and somebody hit him on the head with a brick twenty-five times. Mrs Washington and her husband, Wendell, are the suspects. Mrs Washington is five feet three, a hundred and ten pounds, and teaches school. Wendell is six-two, two-fifty, and works at a warehouse. So who would you say is the more likely culprit?" (*IQ* 126)
- 5 Isaiah helps his local community mostly for free, the Good Samaritan of Long Beach. Yet, his criminal past, during which he used his intelligence in criminal activities in order to make money to survive, guarantees a certain dose of guilt which helps him right the wrongs and help the weak and defenceless without expecting money in return. Still, the haze in which the reader is left as to the motivations of *IQ*'s "occupation" reminds him or her of the quasi absence of explanation for Sherlock's choice of working as a consulting detective. Other typical Sherlockian characteristics remain, especially to draw a character which lives in the margin of the society, an amateur PI without a licence ("Unlicensed and Underground" [*IQ* 7]), who comes when

the police cannot cope anymore: "His priority was local cases where the police could not or would not get involved" (*IQ* 10), the same way Sherlock works: "I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection. When Gregson, or Lestrade, or Athelney Jones are out of their depths—which, by the way, is their normal state—the matter is laid before me" (Doyle 1890, 2).

- 6 The fiction of detection reinvented in the 1920s by American novelists represents a clear and historical breach of the British pattern, a generic turn which transformed the figure of the detective. Still mainly white, male, middle-class and urban, the hard-boiled detective—the spawn of pulp fiction—became a paragon which inspired generations of writers. Such generic genealogy also had a strong impact on the creation of *IQ*: the introduction of characters belonging to so-called minorities into "hard-boiled" detective fiction created the opportunity for non-white characters to take the lead in detective stories, mainly in the US, with Chester Himes's "Harlem Cycle" in the 1950s, James Sallis in New Orleans or Mosley in LA, precisely where *IQ* takes place. Walter Mosley's Ezekiel² ("Easy") Rawlins is also of paramount importance in the genesis of *IQ*. Ezekiel ("Easy") Rawlins is a black private eye living in the LA neighbourhood of Watts (an area in South Central LA) where *IQ* takes place. As far as ethnicity is concerned, the main feature defining *IQ*'s difference within his local community lies not so much in his skin colour as in his brains. His deductive powers, his cultural and practical knowledge, his years at Harvard (so we are made to guess), and his complete lack of interest in TV and mass media culture, in video games, or even in consumption in general, make him a loner, which is exactly what also makes him so close to distant, aloof Sherlock. Isaiah might represent another evolution of the African American PI, the latest step in detective fiction writing, a paradoxical invocation of the whitest, "malest" detective figure the better to inscribe the African American sleuth into the tradition of mainstream detective fiction in an unquestionable literary plea. Yet, the character of *IQ* is not systematically brought back to racial politics, contrary to Rawlins, who constantly has to acknowledge the predominance of white discourse. We could still consider that *IQ*'s role does take racial undertones since he often acts when order cannot be restored by the official instances, and when the peripheral zones such as South Central escape the white community. Proving once more the transcultural filiation of the type he represents, *IQ* takes a role similar to Easy Rawlins's in Mosley's black detective fiction: "Somewhere along the line I had slipped into the role of a confidential agent who represented people when the law broke down. And the law broke down often enough to keep me busy" (Mosley 1993, 17).
- 7 The general filiation of *IQ* with Victorian detective fiction strongly hinges around the motif of the city, an essential parameter in the genesis of the genre, which, contrary to the Sensation Novel—which dwells on the domestic—is representative of the redefinition of a Victorian identity in an increasingly urban-centred environment. The topography of *IQ* goes from South Central Los Angeles down to Long Beach, and is the land of the gangs, the poor and debased minorities in the American metropolis. The same way London confers a radical topographical identity to Conan Doyle's stories, South Central LA and Long Beach are indispensable to the frame of *IQ*. It might appear as an odd feature for the Conan Doyle connoisseur, it nonetheless seems quite compatible with what the literary myth of the British sleuth entails in terms of place and time, as explained by Denis Mellier:

Si Sherlock Holmes est si communément porté à la dimension du mythe, c'est parce que son personnage permet de jouer de manière radicale avec les limites

imaginaires de la fiction, de les étendre au point de reconfigurer les temps et les lieux, de tramer les savoirs et des fictions en un tissu romanesque séduisant, de confondre les signes du monde et de l'Histoire avec ceux des récits et des aventures. (Mellier 1999, 10)

- 8 Indeed, the representation of the city in the nineteenth century as a “cesspool” (Doyle 1887, 4), or a sewer, finds interesting echoes in the treatment of the decrepit twenty-first century hood by Ide, a place where projects, parking lots, and “weedy empty lots” (*IQ* 18) allow no “sedimentation” for the sometimes ghost-like characters. Similarly, we find traces of the blurring of the lines between good and evil within a metamorphosed Victorian society in suburban LA, where criminals do have a heart (Dodson) and detectives have a criminal past (Isaiah). The tight link between the city and degeneration in the Holmes stories is also echoed in *IQ* in the characters’ (Cal, Deronda, Skip) lack of genuine heritage and lineage, as we shall further study later: most of them are mediocre beings, without roots or principles. South Central LA becomes London’s topographical echo, “that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the empire are irreversibly drained” (Doyle 1887, 4), with drug dealers, members of gangs, the unemployed or the marginal replacing Victorian criminals and “idlers”. The fact that Los Angeles in Joe Ide’s *IQ* is not the LA characteristic of the Southern Californian Dream which we find in most fictions or films intensifies the notion of marginality previously mentioned. Indeed, *IQ*’s plot unfolds far away from Beverly Hills or Hollywood, and when the novel explores more central and wealthier areas, it is the better to reinforce economic and geographical contrast with poorer suburbs.³
- 9 Recent adaptations of Sherlock Holmes show that the twenty-first century seems tired of pure, exact repetitions of the canon, and *IQ* is yet another proof of that trend. The focus is on discontinuity and actualization: changing centuries—*IQ* in twenty-first century LA, BBC’s *Sherlock* in contemporary London—,⁴ using dislocation—choosing a setting exotic enough and leaving London—or changing (race-lifting)⁵ the expected characterization—casting a Chinese-American woman for the role of Watson in CBS’s *Elementary*, choosing an African American Sherlock in *IQ*. Those infringements on the traditional Sherlockian pattern offer a diversification which revives both Conan Doyle’s fiction and the genre itself, exploiting the margins of hackneyed literary *topoi* and extending it to a topography never explored before and yet to be invested. It also produces a new discourse on either the past text or the recent hypertext. It is worth noticing that if *Elementary* did take Sherlock to contemporary America, *IQ* is, to the best of our knowledge, the first time that a Sherlock actually is of American nationality, which entails slightly different dialectics and excludes the issue of Englishness confronted to an American environment. The American literary space is “only” penetrated in *IQ* by the British intertext, and not by a copied/pasted characterization, or by incongruous situations involving often comical cultural gaps. More conspicuously, a certain kind of nostalgia is present, but oddly enough, a nostalgia concentrated on a literary figure which does not belong to the alleged cultural background of the American author.

Echoes of contemporary popular and mass media culture: an American actualization and a reflection on heritage and lineage

- 10 *IQ* is also inspired by contemporary popular culture: albeit with small touches, the multiple synecdochal props belonging to the universe of Sherlock Holmes, the Sherlockiana fuelled by popular mythology, occasionally spring up in Ide's fictional universe. Some relate to and at the same time escape the character defined by Doyle, as they belong not to a Doylean heritage but to the recuperation of the myth of Sherlock, in a familiar rush of nostalgia concentrating on non-literary, popular by-products of the original literary creation, subsequently reinjected into literature. The deerstalker belonging to the collective representation of Sherlock ("materialized" in Paget's illustrations for *The Adventure of the Silver Blaze*) without having precise grounds in Conan Doyle's writing, here becomes a baseball cap, quite common enough in an American setting, but most of all a sap cap (a weaponized baseball cap) [*IQ* 33]). Locks (an item very much present in *Elementary* or even in the movie *Sherlock Holmes* directed by Guy Ritchie in 2009, itself probably originally inspired by the locked-room mystery *The Speckled Band*) have some importance in *IQ*, since Isaiah uses "a pick proof, bump-proof, drill-proof Medeco Double Cylinder High security Maxum Deadbolt" (*IQ* 7) to barricade his house, and is well-known for his mastering lock-picking in the burglaries he commits as a youngster (*IQ* 94). Moreover, the cane which some avatars of Sherlock display, an accessory probably reminiscent of the cane held by Jeremy Brett in Granada TV series adaptation (1984-1995) and an ostensible part of British paraphernalia, is no longer a cane in *IQ*, but a...collapsible baton (*IQ* 7), which might also echo the stick used in the martial art mastered by Sherlock,⁶ but is not an essential trait of the original character and the product of visual culture and the visual representation of Sherlock. All in all, those props and habits are the Americanised version of elements familiar to the Sherlock fan. Significantly enough, we can notice that the props in particular, contrary to their original model, serve as weapons. But weaponized accessories in hostile LA do make sense. Moreover, the systematic possibility of a secondary reference to a more popular culture-related intertext, often based on visual sources, TV adaptations or films, add yet another layer to the palimpsestic construction of the novel. The references to pop culture draw the reader in an in-between zone separating the canon and the final text, a comfort(ing) zone giving free rein to a looser, more flexible interpretation of the literary myth which embraces both popular culture and high-brow literature. This type recognition for a literary work of art relies on aesthetic principles, through characterization and plot, but also on the powerful absorption of iconic, cult artefacts which are not actually part of the original version but are probably better assimilated than other specifics of Doyle's work.
- 11 *IQ*'s aim, let us be clear, is not to duplicate or merely recycle the plot and structure of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, nor to represent a didactic literary milestone in contemporary Sherlockiana. The ties to *The Hound* story are loose, the intertextual echoes episodic, and the novel actually lacks the tongue-in-cheek self-consciousness sometimes apparent in other Sherlockiana. Although *IQ* is not a scholarly adaptation, the nature of the dialogue with the canon (and with the Canon) remains strong and substantial. Denis Mellier writes on the fluctuation of the connexions between source work and adaptation *a propos Sherlock and Elementary*:

Si les identités, les correspondances, voire une forme de fidélité à l'esprit sous l'anamorphose contemporaine déterminent directement les projets des scénaristes, le large succès de ces deux séries montre que ce jeu d'érudition n'est cependant pas – comme pour tout hypertexte – une condition nécessaire à la compréhension de la série et au plaisir qu'en tire le public. En revanche, une fois notée, et cela dès les retrouvailles que propose le pilote, cette circulation de motifs, de caractères et de propriétés originales offre au spectateur le plaisir spécifique des écritures parodiques, des allusions et des effets de connivence qu'autorise la bonne mesure des déplacements et des origines reconnues. (Mellier 2015, 41-42)

- 12 This is an important stage in the decrypting of the rewriting of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, since Mellier already brings to the fore the parodic aspect which seems inherent in contemporary adaptations of well-known pieces of literature. Characterisation, and the circulation of Doylean literary motifs, are the very hypotextual ground on which Ide builds his novel, for the distance Ide creates with Conan Doyle's *Hound* indeed generates parody and pastiche. But let us first reconnect *IQ* with Doyle's original. Ide chooses to rewrite the well-known story of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, but he uses the plot of the story in a rather loose way, modernizing the Gothic paradigm present in the original plot, and transposing it in twenty-first century LA. We could describe the nature of the dialogue between *The Hound* and *IQ* as being based on a constant but dotted recollection of the Doylean hypotext, indirect allusions, or literary motifs evocative of Conan Doyle's story specifically, but mostly reminiscent of his Holmes stories in general. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is present in *IQ* in a fragmented way, those fragments "circulating"—as Mellier puts it—fluidly enough to guarantee the indubitable recognition of the canonical hypotext. Furthermore, as we shall see later on when focusing on parody in *IQ*, the pleasure felt by the reader—inherent in imitation generally speaking and playful rewriting in particular—first lies in the recognition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* as being the matrix of the parodic in *IQ*. The capital literary landmark which *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is in the history of the genre of detection favours intertextual hide-and-seek: "[t]he pleasure of parody's irony comes not from humor in particular but from the degree of engagement of the reader in the intertextual 'bouncing' (to use E.M. Forster's famous term) between complicity and distance" (Hutcheon 32). As for the hound, it does actually appear in *IQ*, although nobody is actually killed. Isaiah seeks the master of an oversize dog, the fruit of multiple cross-breeding meant to transform it into a formidable beast (no supernatural argument here, but some echo of the treatment inflicted on the dog in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*), which is trained to kill by an ex-soldier (yet another intertextual wink), whose prey is a grotesque rap singer. The chase is what is important, since we are aware of the identity of the criminal, contrary to what happens in the Holmes stories. We even have access to his thoughts and we know most of his moves, since the narrative strategy in the novel is based on multiple internal focalizations: *IQ*'s, Dodson's, the hitman's... Enough is left in the dark, though, as far as who the puppeteer giving orders to henchman "Skip" is, and what his motive might be.
- 13 The matter of "lineage" is important in both works. Its treatment in *IQ* and its echo to *The Hound of the Baskervilles* disclose an interesting cultural gap: Henry Baskerville is the heir to an old family of aristocrats, a baronet who has inherited both a name and a fortune. In *IQ*, Calvin Wright, aka "Black the Knife", is a brainless, wealthy rapper high on drugs, with no prestigious lineage and a stardom based on a "from rags to riches" personal history. But Cal lost his values on the way to the top:

Cal was bloated, unshaven, his cornrows undone. He was wearing mirrored aviators, a black bathrobe plush as a furcoat, and velvet slippers with gold tassels on them. A big marmalade cat was lounging in his arms. The cologne smell was like a forcefield. (IQ 70)

- 14 He looks and embodies the caricature of the gentrified "gangsta" rapper, modelled on famous singers such as The Notorious B.I.G., or Tupac (IQ 51, 57,⁷ 310-311) (an East Coast rapper, mentioned several times in the novel) or more recently, on Dr Dre (a major representative of West Coast rap music) or Jay Z (IQ 57), whose main characteristic is to belong to the super rich while founding their careers on a "from the projects to Pacific Palisade" story (Cal's first album is entitled *Up from Nothin'* [IQ 70]). Cal looks the part, contrary to Henry Baskerville:

a small, alert, dark eyed man about thirty years of age [...]. He wore a ruddy-tinted tweed suit, and had the weather-beaten appearance of one who had spent most of his time in the open air, and yet there was something in his steady eye and the quiet assurance of his bearing which indicated the gentleman. (Doyle 1901, 31)

- 15 The novel centres on the observation of nothing-ness and attempted usurpation: the absence of heritage, of geographical or symbolic landmark, either for the ex-nobodies become stars of the rap scene, or for those who never actually reached stardom (such as the character of Deronda) but remain intent on the promotion of their potentially marketable assets.
- 16 The problem of lineage and heritage also materializes in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, with the true story of Stapleton, and specifically when the text focuses on the family portraits of the Baskervilles displayed in the lobby. Henry Baskerville comes from a very old family, epitomised by the gallery of candle-lit, ominous portraits in Baskerville House, "a dim line of ancestors, in every variety of dress, from the Elizabethan knight to the buck of the regency" (Doyle 1901, 61). The word *heritage* does not belong to Cal's vocabulary, the American *nouveau riche* supplants the Victorian heir in an episode which echoes the scene in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*:

He remembered [...] how he'd gone through the house not believing all the shit he'd bought. What was he thinking, paying real money for a fourteenth-century Scottish battle-ax or the monogrammed platinum candlesticks or chandeliers that looked like the spaceship from *Close Encounters* or the massive teak throne he'd never sat in or the seven piece Mistral sectional that was still wrapped in plastic, and where did those paintings come from? His portrait didn't look anything like him. Since when did he have shoulders round as cannonballs and a stomach like six bricks were stuck under his skin? And what was so important about Michael Corleone sitting in an armchair that he had to be taking up space on the living room wall? Cal recognized Malcom X in the third painting but couldn't remember anything about him except that Denzel played in the movie. (IQ 72)

- 17 Once more, the absence of past, of history, is blatant. Ide plays on the discrepancy between what Cal fathoms of the situation escaping him and what we know of rap culture, which causes laughter, as often in the novel. The reason why Corleone is on the wall we guess: one of the most famous gangsters in American cinema—probably the fiercest of Coppola's tragic heroes—who never hesitates to resort to violence and murder, often is mentioned in songs (in Jay Z's work for instance), along with De Palma's "Scarface", Tony Montana. Both characters have long been extensively recycled by black rap artists. Black human rights activist Malcolm X is also a paramount reference in black rap and hip-hop culture. The portrait of Wright, ludicrous among icons of cinema and political activism, adds to the satiric portrait of

the character, a sham heir to the mythology of rap culture and to the history of civil rights. Even more so as Cal's would-be ancestors happen to be fictitious, paper characters (he remembers actor Denzel Washington, not Malcolm X), yet another popular echo to the "real thing", as if in *IQ* the fake and the tacky, the pale copy or the by-product (including the Sherlockian props) systematically had to replace the original creation, always verging on the simulacrum. This might be the harshest statement made by Ide's rewriting of the Conan Doyle story. In a novel which bases its intertextual echoes on the literary lineage with Conan Doyle, the very object of *IQ* is the sense of belonging to a community, to a family, to a gang or society. *IQ* centres on dealing with one's origins, emancipation, and family and historical heritage. And despite the loss of landmarks and against all odds, Dodson and *IQ* form a community of their own, strengthened by the literary background from which they emerged in Ide's imagination. The brotherhood that unites the duo is of the Doylean spirit: friendship, partnership is what matters. When the world falls apart, when the American or British values collapse under the weight of consumerism or crime, the alternative to madness—for Holmes—or gang and criminality—for Dodson and Isaiah, is friendship.

From parody to comic crime

- 18 In an article mainly dedicated to crime fiction on screen focusing most specifically on television series, Jean-Jacques Lecercle defines two poles in modern crime fiction, a fiction, he argues, split between pastiche and *roman noir* (Lecercle 392). We have seen that *IQ* somehow belongs to the tradition of the LA Noir, and the strongly formulaic aspect of detective fiction indeed ensures a repetition providing readers with certain horizons of expectation. Suspense, the puzzle pattern respected by the plot, the crime entailing a criminal, the detective, the clues, overdetermine the genre. As Todorov argues,⁸ one cannot write detective fiction outside the formula, which is precisely the reason why it represents a perfect material for parody as a means to renovate the genre. Janice MacDonald goes as far as arguing that parody is inherent in detective fiction:

[D]etective fiction owes its inception to parody [...]. The formula almost immediately absorbed the device of parody, and authors used it to situate their novels self-consciously above those of their predecessors and competitors. Parody also infiltrated the persona of the great detective by molding each new character on those who had gone before and exaggerating his abilities and foibles alike to emphasize his superhumanness. [...] Whether it consists of a minor tribute to the novel's antecedents or functions through wild bouts of self-reflexiveness, parody makes its presence known. (MacDonald 71)

- 19 Linda Hutcheon's assertion that parody itself is repetition with a difference (Hutcheon 37) might explain why the repetitive formula of detective fiction made numerous parodies of Sherlock Holmes possible.⁹ Hutcheon, adding to Deleuze's definition of parody, defines the concept as "limitation with critical ironic distance, whose irony can cut both ways. Ironic versions of 'trans-contextualization' and inversion are its major formal operatives, and the range of pragmatic ethos from scornful ridicule to reverential homage" (Hutcheon 37). Let us argue then, that the *ethos* endorsed by *IQ* is exactly in between both poles: echoing Hutcheon's quote, we might venture to call Ide's literary appropriation an "irreverent homage" to Conan Doyle's *Hound* and Holmes stories in general. It is definitely the work of a fan:

I grew up in South Central LA, with all its attendant problems, and so I knew The Hood best. That was what was in my memory most vividly. And I was also a dedicated Sherlock Holmes fan. I had read, you know, all 56 stories and four novels multiple times before I was in the eighth grade. And so when it came time to write a book, there was no question it was going to be Sherlock in The Hood. (Levy 2017)

- 20 As we might have started to guess, moral parody (along with political observation) is not absent from *IQ*: the family, tradition, heritage, are debunked through moral parody and irony, which enables Ide to propose a critical discourse not so much of the genre of detection itself, as of certain themes common to both *IQ* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Following the twofold meaning of parody as discussed by Hutcheon (imitation with critical distance and repetition with difference), *IQ*'s position appears somewhat atypical. Ide explores the proportion of ridicule present in the parody, but in a selective way. Indeed, he does not apply a veneer of ridicule to the entire source-text, neither does he seek the satirical tangent to the parodic, but he uses ridicule for some elements only: specific characters or situations. In *IQ*, the *topoi* of the formulaic genre are completely respected, but the seriousness of their nature is sometimes questioned.
- 21 The case is a real case, the plot relies on true detection, not a parody of detection, the clues are real clues, not a parody of clues, and suspense is not faked: the multiple focalizations (on Isaiah, on Dodson, on the hitman or the victim) create an almost complete puzzle with one missing piece, which is the identity of the man pulling the ropes of Cal's failed assassination. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* uses Watson as an ignorant homodiegetic narrator, sometimes at a loss—a perfect mirror for the questionings of the reader walking in his footsteps as the story unfolds—the better to glorify the absent-present Great Detective in the final chapter, "A Retrospection". Isaiah's image as a "great detective" is intact and exempt from the debunking and the parodic ("criticism need not be present in the form of ridiculing laughter for this to be called parody" Hutcheon argues [Hutcheon 6]).
- 22 In that perspective, the sidekick, in the pure tradition of detective parody, appears less clever, less bright, and less efficient than the brilliant detective: the discrepancy already present in the Holmes-Watson pair (let us remember that *The Hound of the Baskervilles* opens on Holmes's humiliating justification of his intellectual superiority compared to Watson's) is emphasized in the parodic version of the couple. Dodson, as the colourful and loud foil that Ide inscribes in the tradition of the sleuth's assistant, almost appears as a projection of what the reader of Conan Doyle would wish Watson to be sometimes. Indeed, the Doylean text keeps driving home the conventionality, shortcomings, lack of intellectual genius, excessive caution, and constant reverence towards the Great Detective defining Dr John Watson. Indeed, the novel proposes the confrontation of one Victorian *cliché* based on contrasting stereotypes—the arch-traditional British sleuth and his discreet sidekick—with another, more modern—the impulsive ex-member of a gang, ex-convict for one, and the isolated genius recluse in his suburb for the other. In *IQ*, Dodson mostly serves one narrative function: he is comic relief. He does not represent the support which enables the detective to exhibit his exceptional intellect, he never "serves" Isaiah. The love-hate relationship between *IQ* and Dodson has seemingly little ground in Conan Doyle's writings—except that it could be the playful version of Watson, some irreverent avatar lacking the polite veneer of its original version, except for the emulation which comes out of their often fructuous exchanges on the cases. However, the ties between the two are quite similar. The bond that one can perceive between Sherlock and Watson when arguing over the use of

cocaine, or when squabbling in the domestic sphere in general, the protectiveness of Dr Watson—a true mother figure for reckless, sometimes childish Holmes—find echoes in Dodson and Isaiah's relationship. Even the much-discussed traces of homoeroticism between both detectives might be spotted in *IQ*, and the recounted memories of their sharing Isaiah's flat in their school days remind the reader of Watson and Holmes's initial reason to "be" together: the need for a flatmate.

- 23 We soon realise that the motley crew that they represent is highly reminiscent of another (cinematographic) genre, belonging to Hollywood popular culture of the 1980s. They are indeed another version of "mismatched buddy cop duos", most specifically "black cop-white cop" duos so in vogue in American popcorn action movies of the 1980s,¹⁰ a guarantee of comic situations and *quid pro quos* whose hallmark we can definitely find in *IQ*:

"You talk too much," Isaiah said. "All that stuff about do you have any reason to believe—"

"I'm trying to give you the appearance of professionalism," Dodson said.

"Didn't I tell you about this? Didn't I tell you I do things my own way?"

"You ask me, your way needs a serious overhaul, you hope to make it in times like these. You can't be standing there talking to yourself and staring off into space like some kinda damn psychic. You need to communicate with your clients, be optimistic, make them feel like they getting something for their money." (*IQ* 99)

- 24 Dodson, in his own kind of promotional way, helps isolated Isaiah not to fall out of touch with the external world the same way Watson regularly brings Holmes back to the reality of his environment. Dodson ensures a minimal, coherent communication with the outside world: clients, and people who might be involved in the cases. Watson's main function in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is to converse with and moderately test the protagonists of the masquerade set by Stapleton, but he only acts as a go-between and never as the champion of truth (a concept about which Dodson cares very little in *IQ*). In *IQ*, Dodson is, as we shall further see, the main element in characterization—along with Cal "Black the Knife"—which turns the detective story into comic crime fiction. Parodic Dodson materializes what Doyle suggests, and makes the reader reassess the Watson-Holmes pair, thereby shaking the foundations of the Great Detective.¹¹

- 25 Without further dwelling on comedy in the original stories,¹² let us simply assert that witticism present in Conan Doyle serves as a stylistic basis for the perpetuation of the hypotext. The dialogues between Dodson and *IQ* perceptibly echo Watson and Holmes's bickering and their stichomythic arguments and fuel a certain idea of comic domesticity and complicity present in both works, but they also strongly partake in the history of hard-boiled detective fiction. The street-wise talk used in *IQ* echoes the notorious aphorisms of Raymond Chandler¹³, for instance in this description of one of the local gangs: "Dodson got his dope from Kinkee, who got his dope from Junior, top of the food chain. Nobody knew if Junior was the name on his birth certificate or if there was a Senior Junior around somewhere" (*IQ* 91), and in the much used street-wise slang and puns, such as in the following exchange:

"Where did you go Bug?" Dodson said.

"To see that PAWG," Charles said, smirking.

"What's a PAWG?" Anthony said.

"Phat Ass White Girl."

"Sorry I asked."

"We might want to contact the PAWG for further questioning [...]" (*IQ* 72)

- 26 Such a British and American stylistic heritage coupled with the parodic in *IQ* tend to draw the novel towards yet another generic trend, namely comic crime fiction. The relation between order and disorder, through the resolution of the crime, the balance between the comic and seriousness, which ensures the necessary tension to the pursuit of the reading towards the *dénouement*: every element is present in *IQ*. The founding generic principle of comic crime also derives from the certainty that nothing tragic will happen, which is the case in *IQ*. The novel is an anti-Agatha Christie novel, since we know the identity of the criminal before the end: it is the cat-and-mouse play and the final fight that matters. By constantly maintaining the fragile balance between comedy and crime, Ide also steps into this generic territory. This adds to the kaleidoscopic but logical generic ramifications of the novel, as journalist and writer Colin Bateman suggests on a colloquial tone, but in a condensed, recapitulative and quite apt observation about "crimcom" in the Books Blog of *The Guardian*, precisely mentioning both Conan Doyle and LA Noir as references to describe a rather shunned trend of detective fiction:

You could argue that crime is crime, and shouldn't be funny—but didn't it start out with a good and smart sense of humour? Holmes and Watson were a double act, Agatha Christie's Miss Marple and Dorothy L. Sayers's Lord Peter Wimsey always played it for subtle laughs, and on the other side of the pond when "hardboiled" or "noir" fiction kicked in with Chandler and Hammett in the 20s and 30s, the one-liners flew faster than the bullets.

However, as the most successful of all popular fiction genres, crime fiction rapidly descended into formula, with thousands of not very subtle variations of little old ladies investigating cosy murder mysteries or tough talking PI's with a cool line in sardonic put-downs flooding the market. They not only became clichéd, but even worse, the subject of parody from which they have never really recovered.

[...] Which means, bizarrely, that if you want to find something new and challenging, comic crime fiction is now the place to go. (Bateman 2010)

- 27 Thus, looking towards comic crime could be a strategy in order to renovate and liven up the ties with the Doylean hypotext. And in a way, adapting the essence of the British detective pattern, considered nowadays as the paragon of the noble art of fiction belonging to the nineteenth century, to a place marked by a strong subculture and a different kind of literary image, is a clash of fictional worlds interesting enough to strike us with a modern feature which we have witnessed elsewhere: the mixing of the noble and the popular. Such a mix is very much at the heart of TV adaptations of Sherlock Holmes, whose present day fans and followers keenly seek to integrate within popular culture through popular media, in what purists sometimes call vulgarization but which might also be the kiss of life to the Canon/canon. The contribution of *IQ* to the genre is first to prove the plasticity of the Victorian Sherlockian figure once again by making it even more universal, transnational, crossing racial boundaries, but also to further reconcile the all too serious modern trend of the detective genre with comedy.

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NOTES

1. "‘You really are an automaton—a calculating machine,’ I cried. ‘There is something positively inhuman in you at times.’
He smiled gently.
‘It is of the first importance,’ he cried, ‘not to allow your judgement to be biased by personal qualities. A client is to me a mere unit, a factor, in a problem. The emotional qualities are antagonistic to clear reasoning.’”(Doyle 1890, 14)
2. Obviously, the choice of a prophet’s name for Ide’s sleuth echoes the name of Mosley’s character.
3. See the article by Ryan Gattiss explaining the literary material he saw in South Central LA, “south of the ten”, quite far from stereotypical Los Angeles: “I moved to Downtown Los Angeles in late 2007. I’d lived in Southern California for a number of years, but most of my understanding of the City of Angels came almost exclusively from movies and television. My biggest problem in consuming an exclusively cultural diet was that I thought of Los Angeles as monolithic, that it existed as a single metropolis. It took me moving here, and riding the bus, to learn that it isn’t, and it doesn’t. [...] I spoke to former gang members, nurses, firefighters, and other citizens who lived through the 1992 LA riots. What I heard changed my view of Los Angeles, as well as my own understanding of my writing and work” (Gattiss 2017).
4. For a further analysis of the BBC series *Sherlock*, see Jaine Chemmachery’s essay in this volume.
5. “Race-lifting” is changing a character’s original ethnicity in adaptations of a work of fiction.
6. In the list of skills drawn by Watson: “11. Is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman” (Doyle 1887, 16).
7. The hit “California Love” by Tupac (featuring Dr Dre) was released in 1995.
8. See “The Typology of Detective Fiction”: “Detective fiction has its norms: to develop them is to disappoint them: to ‘improve upon’ detective fiction is to write ‘literature,’ not detective fiction” (Todorov 43).
9. One thinks of the pastiches and parodies by notorious writers such as P.G. Woodhouse (*The Strange Disappearance of Mr. Buxton-Smythe* [1901], *The Adventure of the Split Infinitive* [1902]), or Mark Twain with *A Double Barrelled Detective Story* (1902), or later stories written by American novelist and screenwriter Robert L. Fish (*The Incredible Schlock Homes* [1966]).
10. Riggs and Murtaugh (Mel Gibson and Danny Glover) in *Lethal Weapon* (Richard Donner, 1987, 1992, 1998), Crockett and Tubbs (Don Johnson and Philip Michael Thomas) in NBC TV series *Miami Vice* (Anthony Yerkovich and Michael Mann, 1984-1990), Jack Cates and Reggie Hammond (Nick Nolte and Eddie Murphy) in *48 Hrs* (Walter Hill, 1982), John McClane and Zeus Carver (Bruce Willis and Samuel L. Jackson) in *Die Hard 3* (John McTiernan, 1995).
11. Ide’s Dodson is reminiscent of yet another character belonging to later hardboiled black detective fiction, since he shares many features with Raymond Alexander, aka “Mouse”, Easy Rawlins’s violent and reckless friend and would-be partner in the series.
12. For an analysis of comedy in the *Sherlock Holmes* series, see Hayne.
13. Here is a sample of “Chandlerisms” found in *The Big Sleep*: “[...] You’re broke, eh? ‘I been shaking two nickels together for a month, trying to get them to mate’” (Chandler 90); “You can have a hangover from other things than alcohol. I had one from women” (Chandler 159); “‘Tall, aren’t you?’ ‘I didn’t mean to be’” (Chandler 5).

ABSTRACTS

A novel published in 2016, *IQ* is a rewriting of Conan Doyle's 1902 *Hound of the Baskervilles*. *IQ* centres on a black sleuth called Isaiah "IQ" Quintabe, unmistakably reminiscent of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, hired to solve a series of crimes in twenty-first century Los Angeles. Generically speaking, the novel is a patchwork version of many forms of detective trends, mingling the Victorian detective tradition and American Noir, old and new, with a dash of Hollywood pop culture. Parody and comic crime fiction make such generic blending possible, bridging the gap between American and British detective fiction. *IQ* sheds light on the paradox at the heart of the Holmesian myth: a space for imagination to reinterpret and vivify the literary figure of the past, the myth also entails numerous clichéd or even fabricated characteristics, oversimplifications, and the merchandizing of what has become a real brand or product. Joe Ide uses both facets of the myth, integrating visual and popular culture in an irreverent literary homage to Conan Doyle, the better to deal with the ideas of lineage, transmission and authenticity also present in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The contribution of *IQ* to the genre further proves the plasticity of the Victorian Sherlockian figure. It makes it even more universal, transnational, crossing generic and racial boundaries. It also further reconciles the trend of the detective genre with comedy, in an original piece of Sherlockiana.

Publié en 2016, *IQ* est une réécriture du *Chien des Baskerville* (1902) d'Arthur Conan Doyle. Au centre de ce roman, la figure d'un détective noir, Isaiah Quintabe, dit « IQ », qui rappelle incontestablement Sherlock Holmes, propose ses services afin de résoudre une série de crimes dans le Los Angeles du XXI^e siècle. Du point de vue du genre littéraire, *IQ* peut se définir comme un *patchwork* de nombreuses déclinaisons du récit policier, mêlant la tradition du roman policier victorien à celle de l'*American Noir* passé et actuel, le tout agrémenté d'un soupçon de *pop culture* hollywoodienne. La parodie et le *comic crime* rendent un tel mélange possible, et permettent de jeter des ponts entre roman policier américain et britannique. *IQ* met en lumière le paradoxe qui caractérise le mythe de Sherlock Holmes : la réécriture du mythe constitue d'une part un espace de liberté créatrice qui permet la réinterprétation et l'actualisation de cette figure littéraire du passé, mais d'autre part elle véhicule, *a posteriori*, bon nombre de clichés, de simplifications abusives, de caractéristiques qui relèvent de la pure invention, et elle est souvent l'occasion de la marchandisation de ce qui est devenu une véritable marque, un produit. Joe Ide joue avec les deux facettes de ce mythe en introduisant des éléments de culture populaire et de culture visuelle ultra contemporains dans cet hommage littéraire, certes irrévérencieux, à Arthur Conan Doyle, pour mieux parler de filiation, de transmission et d'authenticité, à l'instar de son prédécesseur dans *Le Chien des Baskerville*. La contribution apportée par Joe Ide au genre prouve une fois encore la grande plasticité de la figure victorienne de Sherlock Holmes. En effet, le roman de Ide met en évidence son universalité, sa capacité à passer d'un continent à un autre mais aussi à traverser les frontières génériques et ethniques. Enfin, *IQ* réconcilie également un peu plus la tradition du roman policier avec la tradition comique, réunies dans ce spécimen original de *Sherlockiana*.

INDEX

Keywords: Sherlockiana, literary genre, detective fiction, American Noir, parody, heritage

Mots-clés: Sherlockiana, genre littéraire, roman policier, American Noir, parodie, transmission

oeuvre citée IQ, Hound of the Baskervilles (The), Sign of Four (The), Study in Scarlet (A), White Butterfly

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