LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

The Game's Afoot: Walking as Practice in Sherlockian Literary Geographies

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Abstract:

This article explores the relationship between readers' embodied experiences in the world and the creative act of encountering fiction. In particular, it looks at three examples of Sherlock Holmes-inspired literary tourism. Their authors each use walking as a means of encountering the literary spaces of Arthur Conan Doyle's texts and of deliberately adding to them, expanding the space of Holmes's world beyond the page. By introducing the concept of 'expansionary literary geography', this article suggests that forms of embodied, worldly engagement with literature - whether derided as 'literary fanship' or celebrated as literary tourism - can also be forms of reading, acts of creative encounters with fiction, in their own right. Its argument proceeds through close readings of three Sherlockian texts - Arthur Axelrad's _On the Scent_ (1984), David Hammer's _A Dangerous Game_ (1997), and Richard Warner's _Guide Book and Instructions for the Ascent of Holmes Peak_ (1985). It is demonstrated that through the power of walking to combine embodied experience of the actual world with acts of memory and imagination, the three authors' travels work to inscribe the Sherlock Holmes texts into the world. In this way, their walking and its representation become a form of both reading and writing, a physical experience of the unfolding of narrative in time and space, and a contribution to the imaginative expansion of Holmes's world.

Keywords: mobility; walking; expansionary; literary geography; literary tourism; Sherlock Holmes.

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'There is no branch of detective science which is so important and so much neglected as the art of tracing footsteps' – *A Study in Scarlet*

Introduction

Since the middle of the twentieth century, devotees of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, who call themselves Sherlockians, have worked collectively to define and describe Holmes's world as a social and geographical space. Following venerated Sherlockian Edgar Smith's claim that 'Holmes did in truth go out to every corner of the globe' (Smith 1948: 11), Doyle's readers have gone out into the world looking for evidence that particular buildings, streets, towns or regions should be added to Holmes's world.[1] Yet, some literary scholars have separated these embodied practices from the participatory activity that is reading. So Umberto Eco remarks, with entirely uncharacteristic disdain, that 'we all know that there are people who go looking for Sherlock Holmes's house on Baker Street' describing these activities as 'episodes of literary fanship - which is a pleasant activity, and moving at times, but different from the reading of text' (Eco 1994: 84). Robert Tally, despite his reassertion of the importance of spatiality for literary studies, reaffirms this apparently easy division between the practices of reading - nuanced, interpretative, creative - and 'literary fanship' - derivative, supererogatory, naïve; he writes that whereas 'The *critical* reader… actively interprets the literary map in such a way as to present new, sometimes hitherto unforeseen mappings' (Tally 2013: 79, emphasis added), literary fanship 'may be taking things too far' (84). Nicola Watson's influential history of literary tourism draws a similar line between reading and literary tourism, which she defines as readers' efforts to 'recapitulate through the protocols of tourism… the sensibilities implied in the text' (Watson 2006: 13) by suggesting that this practice is always less satisfactory than more sedentary reading practices. Literary tourism, she argues, is 'typically defined and constructed by nostalgic belatedness, and by a constitutive disappointment which returns the reader-tourist back to the text' (13): albeit that their proper reading is now 'garnished' with experiences of things from the world.

In this paper I wish to challenge the understandings that readers who go out into the world are doing something *less* than reading. I will show that, far from being simple fanship, or naive readings at best, or at worst a kind of necrophiliac literary tourism, channelling lively reading into the worship of dead authors and dead texts, Sherlockian practices of visiting Baker Street, or the Reichenbach Falls, or a lonely hill in Oklahoma, are precisely forms of creative encounters with fiction which actively seek to inscribe new spaces into fictional geographies. I will do this by reading three exemplary Sherlockian texts - each a record of a literary touristic experience by a Sherlock Holmes devotee - as manifestations of what I will term here expansionary literary geography. I explain this term below, but its central tenets are that literary geographies cannot be *confined* to the space of literature found in source texts, capable as they are of being co-produced by collaborative practices of creative literary 'commoning'.

The three texts I use to illustrate this expansionary literary geography are Arthur Axelrad's *On the Scent* (1984), David Hammer's *A Dangerous Game* (1997), and Richard

Warner's *Guide Book and Instructions for the Ascent of Holmes Peak* (1985). Each of these texts has been produced by a self-identifying devotee of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Each is presented as a response to Doylean geographies and as a guide for literary tourists. As I will demonstrate here, these readers are readers on the move, rather than sedentary consumers of fiction. They have used the act of walking in and between places associated with Holmesian narratives as a means of experiencing those geographies whilst also creatively expanding them beyond the bounds of Doyle's authorship and authority. Indeed, in the hands of these Sherlockians acts of literary tourism cannot be uncoupled from readers' creative acts of fictional construction.

With this claim that literary tourism is inseparable (in cases such as Sherlockian fandom) from readers' creative encounters with fiction, I am challenging the trajectory of contemporary literary tourism studies – even if I am appreciative of their capacity to add to our understanding of spatiality and literature. Inspired by Nicola Watson's assertion that the story of literary tourism is a tale of reading becoming 'progressively and differentially locked to place' (Watson 2006: 1), studies in literary tourism have looked to touristic encounters with place, through fiction, as the defining characteristic of this practice. These encounters have been understood in one of three ways: as an act of marking and connecting to literary celebrity (Trubek 2010; Watson 2009; Wells 2011; Zemgulys 2008); as an appurtenance of heritage and memory (Hendrix 2008; James 2013; Plate 2006; Reijnders 2011, 2016; Westover 2012), or, thirdly, in order to 'concretize a narrative and, in many cases, render tangible the past' (Lee 2012: 53; also Beeton 2008; Crang 2008; Reijnders 2009, 2011, 2013; Reijnders and Van Es 2016). Yet, useful as this is, it hardly exhausts the meanings we might ascribe to 'literary tourism', and it is hard to place the productions of Sherlockians into these categories – without doing violence to what they are, or ignoring them altogether.

For, Axelrad, Hammer and Warner do engage in 'endeavour[ing] to recapitulate through the protocols of tourism' (Watson 2006: 13) the adventure, discovery and enchanting of the familiar and mundane that underpin the excitement of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. Just as pleasing is that their own narratives reproduce the formal features of the genre into which these stories belong. Their strategies of looking *for*, rather than simply looking *at,* actual-world locations that belong in Holmes's world reflect the generic origin of the Sherlock Holmes stories as detective fiction. Hammer's act of chasing Holmes's ghost across Europe, for instance, consciously mirror's Holmes's chasing after a place of greater safety from Professor Moriarty in 'The Final Problem' (Doyle 1930/2009: 469-80). Yet we should be careful not to suppose too much on the part of these readers - to fall into the trap of labelling them as simply shadowing or copying their source material. For, as one editor of the *Baker Street Journal* wrote, 'Investigations into the literature and world of Sherlock Holmes… are a major way in which every Sherlockian can participate actively in the Holmes Saga' (Shreffler 1986: 37). Rather than simply write about their encounters with established Holmesian places, such as 221b Baker Street, or the Reichenbach Falls, these reader-tourists deliberately convey 'personal details of the search' in an attempt to 'mak[e] the reader a fellow passenger' (Hammer 2001: 13). Their recapitulation of 'the sensibilities implied in the text', their acts of detecting literary locations, are here intended to oil the engine of participation in a

collective endeavour to make new the Sherlock Holmes stories, drawing on Sherlockians' own readings and embodied experiences. Unlike Nicola Watson's literary tourists, these Sherlockians imagine an active and creative participation in literary space, and the production of novel literary landscapes. Even if they might think of themselves as 'literary travellers' rather than literary tourists; but what we call them is less interesting than examining what they *do*: something that I would call expansionary literary geography.

Expansionary Literary Geography

It is this deliberate endeavour to turn personal and embodied experiences of actual-world places into extensions of Holmes's fictional world - and to influence fellow Sherlockians' imaginative encounters with that world - that are the hallmarks of this practice I am terming 'expansionary literary geography'. It is a species of encounter with fiction in which readers harness the creative agency of literary production in order to *consciously* add to and extend the literary space of the story. This conscious effort is necessarily creative and co-productive; crucially it is collective too. The literary tourists I discuss here each represent their own walking as an argument for a particular way of reading fiction and place as being *produced together*, unfolding in space and time beyond the bounds of a single text or the subjectivity of a single reader. These tourists do define themselves first as readers: but their acts of walking are (re)presented to other readers as a physical experience of the unfolding of narrative in time and space, a process in which not just the individual readers' but also the collective readers' contribution is key.

By making this argument, I am indebted to recent work in relational literary geography, represented in these pages (Alexander 2015; Anderson 2016; Saunders 2016) and elsewhere (Hones 2008, 2014). This strand of literary geography has coalesced around the recognition that fiction, as Hones explains, is a 'dynamic, unfolding collaboration, happening in time and space' (Hones 2014: 32). The phenomena of reading groups is an obvious example of this process. Yet the implications for our understanding of what reading as a collaborative endeavour is have not been fully explored, something that is obvious if we take into account work on literary 'commoning'.

By talking about 'expansionary literary geography' I am folding into this vision of reading the work of David Brewer in particular. His notion of 'imaginative expansion' has gained traction among scholars of fandom as a means of understanding the power of collective or communal engagement with fiction (Jenkins 2006; Mackey and McClay, 2008; Rebaza 2009; Rigney 2012). Brewer explains that for many fans it is membership of a community, virtual or actual, that provides the impetus for their desire to expand on an originary text with creative writings of their own (Brewer 2005: 12-3). Members of a reading community are more likely to share a sense of collective ownership or investment in characters and other literary artefacts, which can lead them to neglect or even nullify, for the purposes of collective activity which strengthens their ties to the group, the proprietary rights normally associated with authorship and get creative with their fictional encounters. The implications for relational literary geography are that people who read in

groups, such as Sherlockians, are perhaps more likely to see the 'dynamic, unfolding collaboration' of a fictional happening (Hones 2014: 32) as a group affair - and to attempt to communicate the results of their encounters with fiction to their fellow fans. This, I am arguing, is precisely what the travel writing of Axelrad, Hammer and Warner represents.

Each of the texts discussed here represent their readers' encounters both with Doyle's textual world and the actual world through narratives of *discovery*, mediated in whole or in part by *walking*. Each of these terms is critical. Acts of discovery are indeed an important theme in Sherlockian textual encounters, as they lend a sense of vitality to the readers' collective depiction of Holmes's life and world. Through representing their literary tourist encounters as acts of discovery, on the edges of Doyle's texts, Sherlockian travel writers engage in the act of legitimising their contributions to the collective mission of expanding Holmes's literary spaces – building on what they call 'the Saga' (Shreffler 1986: 37) with acts of readerly creativity. References to 'saga' implicitly suggest not an authorial canon consonant with the age of copyright but a world of shared stories whose authorship is held in common. Further, as Rebecca Solnit has argued, '[w]alking is a state in which the mind, the body and the world are aligned' (Solnit 2002: 7). Through this power of walking to combine embodied experience of the actual world with acts of memory and imagination – and perhaps to spark creative thinking (Oppezzo and Schwartz 2014: 1142) – the three authors' travels work to inscribe the Sherlock Holmes texts into the world. In my terms, Sherlockian practices of 'reading' and 'walking' cannot easily be separated: most importantly, they describe a fictional world and its referents but also, by physically getting out into the world, they co-produce it. Such a distinction inevitably risks abstraction but I want to give three examples of how this creative commoning takes the form and the practice of walking.

Baker Street and Beyond

In this section I will discuss *On the Scent: A Visitor's Guide to Sherlock Holmes's London* (1984), a walking guide written by Californian academic and Sherlockian Arthur Alexander, under his *nom de plume* Arthur Axelrad. I will demonstrate that Axelrad employs walking - his own, his presumed readers', and the fictive peregrinations of Holmes and Watson - to celebrate Holmes's London as a pre-existing place while also legitimising his own imaginative expansions of Doyle's geography. At the centre of this dual-faceted enterprise is his visit to 221b Baker Street. Axelrad's journey requires as much cartographic ingenuity as slavish devotion to Doyle's text. In particular, I want to focus on Axelrad's approach to that famous address. This walk affirms the importance of places as the foundation of readers' affective connection to literature. Yet, it also challenges the idea that literary tourists' visits work to *lock* literature into place, by emphasising the ways in which places are made manifest by the flows of people and meaning which pass through them. Mobility, as a vital element in the reader-tourist's experience of Holmes's London, is foregrounded in Axelrad's guidebook through his decision to divide his readers' experience of London into thirty-six walking tours (or, as he calls them, adventures). This pedestrian mobility serves to enliven Holmes's London

by emphasising the relations between places, as much as it acts as the preferred vehicle to shuttle Axelrad's gazing tourists from one to another. The importance of pedestrianism is reflected in the seemingly-overblown way in which Axelrad encourages his readers to walk to 221b Baker Street. He argues that 'neither a fast walk nor an even faster Underground ride straight to Baker Street will do' (Axelrad 1984: 15): because both short cuts will obscure the relations between places, and between the literary tourist and London, which is essential to Axelrad's co-produced, creative vision of Holmes's London.

In this way, Axelrad's first six walking tours are instrumental in defining 221B Baker Street as a point-of-entry into Holmes's world. They follow Dr. Watson's story, literally step-by-step, as it is recounted at the beginning of Doyle's first Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet* (Doyle 1930/2009: 15-86): from the University of London, where 'I took my degree of Doctor of Medicine' (Axelrad 1984: 1), via a walk along the Strand and a cab ride to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Walking in Dr. Watson's footsteps brings Axelrad's readers into, or perhaps *in on*, Holmes's world by aligning their respective rhythms. As 'synchronicity gives meaning to otherwise meaningless mobility' (Adey 2010: 28), so for Axelrad and his readers, the meaning of their walking comes from knowing that their movements on this path are aligned with Holmes and Watson and with other members of their textual community. The walk recapitulates two related instances in Doyle's stories: when Dr. Watson first enters and later when he re-enters Holmes's world, both presaged by an approach to Baker Street.

The first approach, from *A Study in Scarlet*, follows on from Dr. Watson's walk around London and is the route that brings Axelrad's reader-tourists to the start of this particular 'Adventure' (Doyle 1930/2009: 19). The second instance is from 'The Adventure of the Empty House', when Dr. Watson re-enters Holmes's world, after a long hiatus, by accompanying Holmes through the back streets of Marylebone, coming to witness Colonel Sebastian Moran's attempt to murder the great detective – an attempt which is foiled by a well-place mannequin of Holmes in the sitting-room window of 221b Baker Street (488-9). In both cases, Dr. Watson's journey to Baker Street signifies his stepping outside the everyday world of seemingly orderly, law-abiding middle-class London and into Holmes's liminal city of disorder, crime and intrigue. By understanding their approach to Baker Street not as a simple act of crossing the city from one literary site to another, but rather as the act of *recapitulating the rhythms* of these particular journeys, Axelrad's readers give meaning to their walk, by seeking a similar psychological transition into Holmes's London.
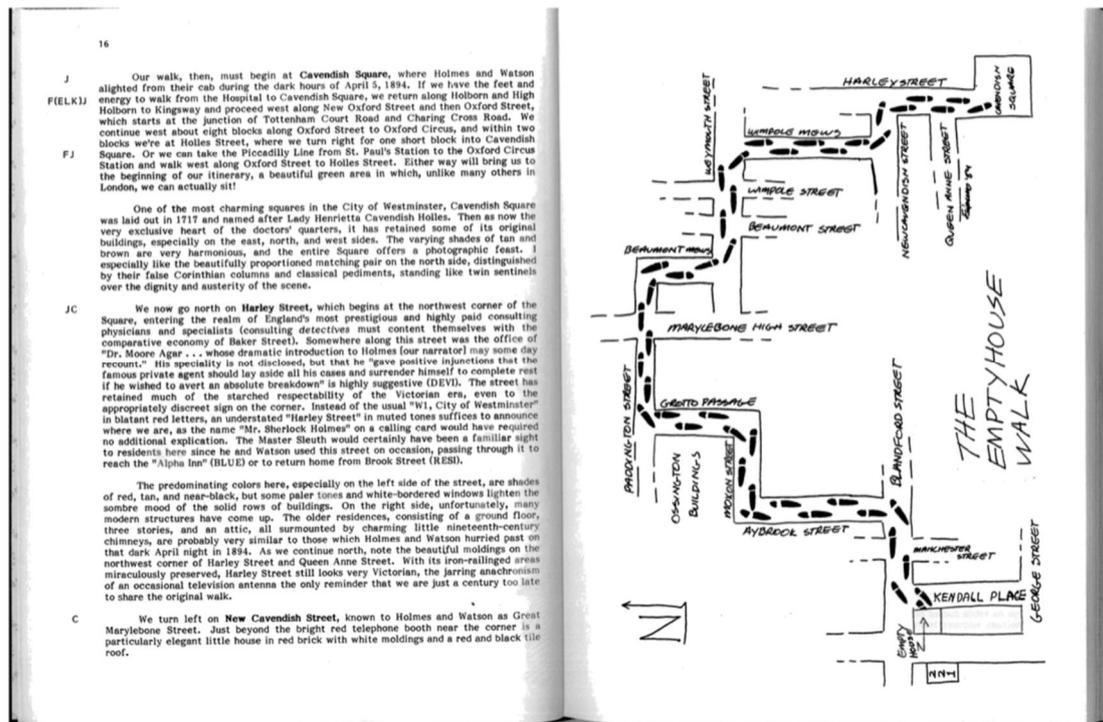
Figure 1: Bernard Davies's Empty House Walk Map reproduced in *On the Scent* © Library of Congress

Axelrad uses his narrative representation to harness the creative power of walking, representing a Holmesian London, rather than 'Holmes's London', as a space where fact and fiction meet on equal terms. His flowing narrative, which guides the reader-tourist along The Strand in real time, deftly blends actual-world places with their fictional and real-and-fictional meanings to prime his readers with a variant of the *flâneur*'s gaze so that, while 'playing the detective or observer of behaviour' (Adey 2010: 64) they can uncover particular social relations: namely, those of the half-mythical, Holmesian past. By including 'the offices of The Strand Magazine', for instance, as the place where 'almost all of *Watson's* tales were published' [emphasis mine], in the same breath as the out-and-out fictional associations of Covent Garden in the story of 'The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle' (Doyle 1930/2009: 244-57), Axelrad relies on his reader's *movements* to disrupt any easy division between what is 'historical' and what is 'fictional', and lets the Sherlockian belief that Holmes was simultaneously real and yet not real come right to the fore (Axelrad 1984: 6).

As Rebecca Solnit argues, 'each walk moves through space like a thread through fabric, sewing it together into a continuous experience' (2002: xv). The following walk along The Strand reveals the individual places of Holmes's world 'to be continually ephemeral, (re)composing, and emergent' (Anderson 2016: 122), coming into the reader-tourist's view as they move towards them and receding into the distance behind just as quickly; and yet bound together, ultimately, through the work of feet and pen.

As we continue west we pass many sites that play prominent roles in the Saga and which we'll examine in detail in later Adventures. On our right is Wellington Street (where we find the Lyceum Theatre, important in *The Sign of the Four*), which becomes Bow Street as it extends north to the Covent Garden Theatre (where Holmes enjoyed Wagner) and the Bow Street Police Court (where Holmes revealed the shocking truth about Hugh Boone, the Man with the Twisted Lip). On the left side of the Strand at number 100 is Simpson's-in-the-Strand (where Holmes and Watson took something nutritious on occasion). We pass Southampton Street on the right (the offices of The Strand Magazine, in which almost all of Watson's tales were published), leading up to Covent Garden Market (where Holmes and Watson pursued the mystery of the Blue Carbuncle). (Axelrad 1984: 6)

In Axelrad's telling, a Holmesian London has four heterarchical components - Dr. Watson's original walk, Axelrad's own secondary journey, the reader-tourist's recapitulation of both – and the implicit presence of the journeys – on foot or in the imagination - of other members of the Sherlockian collective. Being mobile helps the reader-tourist to piece all four together into one experience. Prefiguring the Empty House walk, as an event where the reader-tourist is drawn into Holmes's world, this walk along The Strand acts draws the reader-tourist into this city as a space where fiction and fact meet, in the form of the revealed past and the implied present.

Furthermore, Axelrad's long walk to Baker Street articulates an understanding that Holmes's London is built not only by drawing Doyle's text into the world, but rather from a variety of knowledges blended by the reader-tourist's mobility. Though he describes the route to Baker Street as 'the Canonical route of Holmes and Watson', which 'leaves no doubt whatever in the mind of the true believer as to the current location of the fabled suite of rooms', the passage from Doyle that Axelrad quotes does not have enough detail to support such a claim. Dr. Watson writes, 'Holmes's knowledge of the byways of London was extraordinary, and on this occasion he passed rapidly, and with an assured step, through a network of mews and stables the very existence of which I had never known. We emerged at last into a small road lined with old, gloomy houses…' (Doyle 1930/2009: 489). The four subsequent pages of detailed, step-by-step narration of Holmes and Dr. Watson's route are possible because Axelrad relies on other Sherlockians' imaginative expansions; in particular the earlier sleuthing by British Sherlockian Bernard Davies, who scoured historical maps and street directories of London to produce a likely route for Holmes and Dr. Watson through the 'network of mews and stables' behind Marylebone. Davies' map of The Empty House Walk (fig. 1) is respectfully reproduced opposite page 16 of Axelrad's guide (Axelrad 1984: 16).

Through the narrative of his walk, Axelrad deftly blends together the multiple, heterarchical geographies of this part of Holmesian London, reflecting the importance of readerly co-production to the creation of Holmes's world. As with Axelrad's walk down The Strand, his (and his implied readers') mobility is the mechanism by which different geographies are brought into relationship with each other. We can see this at work in the following passage.

> We now go north on Harley Street, which begins at the northwest corner of the square, entering the realm of England's most prestigious and highly paid consulting physicians and specialists (consulting *detectives* must content themselves with the comparative economy of Baker Street)… The Master Sleuth would certainly have been a familiar sight to residents here since he and Watson used this street on occasion… If we turned right on Wimple Street and continued north a short distance we would come to Devonshire Place where Dr., later Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Dr. Watson's literary agent, [once] had a "practice". (Axelrad 1984: 16-7, emphasis in original)

The interpellation of 'just' here serves both to collapse the distance between us and Holmes and to compound the bathetic feeling of belatedness, as if one had 'just' missed the train. Yet the performance of Holmes's London that Axelrad and his reader-tourists take part in, their embodied mobility blending Sherlockian reader knowledges with Doyle's textual geography, and assuming that none has a prior authority, suggests that, in actuality, the reader is not 'too late' at all: Holmes's London is still being built of readerly imaginations and actual world experiences. Axelrad's lament that he is 'just a century too late' may thus be an example of the familiar Sherlockian irony, because in the next walk he readily includes a twentieth-century motorbike parked outside No.22 Baker Street, Axelrad's choice for the 'true' 221b, in his justification for picking that site, describing it playfully as 'a modern version of Holmes's getaway Hansom cab' (1984: 20).

'It was a way station, one of many'

Axelrad's contribution might still be too derivative to be representative, however. So let us consider a second, truly exemplary, Holmesian travel-text. At the centre of David Hammer's *A Dangerous Game: Being a Travel Guide to the Europe of Sherlock Holmes* is the story of Hammer's own, ambiguous relationship to the Sherlockian credo that Holmes is the man 'who never lived and so can never die' (Starrett 2015: 4). More than his peers, Hammer's Sherlockian travels made the implicit case that the fictional geographies and characters of the Sherlock Holmes stories can be traced to actual world places, trajectories and histories. Yet, in his memoirs, Hammer admits that 'I never really believed that Holmes had lived. I still don't, but I do believe that he was real; so real, in fact, that if he has not become a figure of history, he has of heritage, which surely constitutes a significant form of reality. Besides, as I once wrote in the same context, there is meaning in myth and fact in fiction' (Hammer 2001: 10).

In *A Dangerous Game*, Hammer mobilises this ambiguous belief (and 'irony' here is surely not the apposite term) by presenting his tour of continental European Holmesian places as a form of literary pilgrimage, to the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland. This site is arguably the most important place in the Sherlockian world. Yet, as with all the examples of Sherlockian travel writing in this paper, for Hammer being on the move is arguably as important as arriving at his destination, perhaps even more so. His continual movement along the streets and roads of Western Europe, punctuated by momentary stops in railway stations, hotels and other places of transience, chasing after Holmes and

Dr. Watson create the impression that Hammer is chasing a spectre which lies always just ahead, outside of his reach. He relies only on fragmentary evidence as his guide - an old *Baedeker* guidebook, the text of 'The Final Problem' (Doyle 1930/2009: 469-80), his own hunches. Indeed, his destination never draws nearer, even as he reaches the celebrated Falls, for as he writes, 'Meiringen [the village near the falls] was not intended as a goal… It was a way station, one of many' (Hammer 1997: 63). In any case, Holmes had already fled his putative grave site, en route for Florence, eluding Hammer's grasp once again.

Although Hammer describes his tramping around Europe as a quest to locate the significant *places* of Holmes's Europe (he refers to himself as a 'site-maven' and references to Holmesian places or sites pepper his foreword) (1997: 3), the paratextual elements of *A Dangerous Game* create a frame which works to foreground a sense of continual mobility and onward travel. Hammer's use of photographs is particularly powerful in this respect. With only a few exceptions the photographs in this section of his book depict tropes of mobility. The photograph illustrating Chapter 3, entitled 'A Charming Week and a Lovely Trip', is a good example (fig. 2) (30). Taken at eye-level, it shows a path running straight ahead, flanked on left and right by low bushes, with fields beyond. In the distance, stand two trees, their relationship to the path made indistinct by their distance from the photographer. In the far distance, framed to rise from the horizon, stand the Swiss Alps, veiled in shadow. Many of Hammer's photographs show similar scenes, or suggest mobility in other ways (such as that of 'The Grindelwald Station' viewed in such a way so that the tracks lead away from the camera, pulling the viewer's eye towards the station in the middle distance and, ultimately, the mountains beyond) (90). Hammer's images reinforce the twin ideas that his journey is one of continual movement and that Holmes lies just over the horizon.

Hammer's opening comments about Holmes's existence ('the deliberate confusion of fantasy with reality is supreme idiocy… [yet] if Holmes was not real, why then do so many people regard him as such?') (1997: 1) suggest that he is ambiguous about his literary pilgrimage's capacity to bring closure. That is to say, were Hammer to find Holmes's grave, it would weaken his careful construction of Holmes's world as a place that is at once of the imagination and wholly actual. Therefore, while Hammer does engage in activities that are redolent of literary pilgrimage, such as photographing the statue to Holmes at the Hotel du Sauvage in Meiringen (67), which acts as a kind of memorial site, his persistence in replicating Holmes's forward momentum ever frustrates his ersatz attempts at a communion with the departed. We might contrast the notion of texts like this as 'compelling', with its sense of compelling attention and stilling our movement – as the synonyms 'captivating', 'riveting', 'transfixing' attest – with the alternative of 'impelling' or propulsive, the urge to drive us forward, to drive us on.
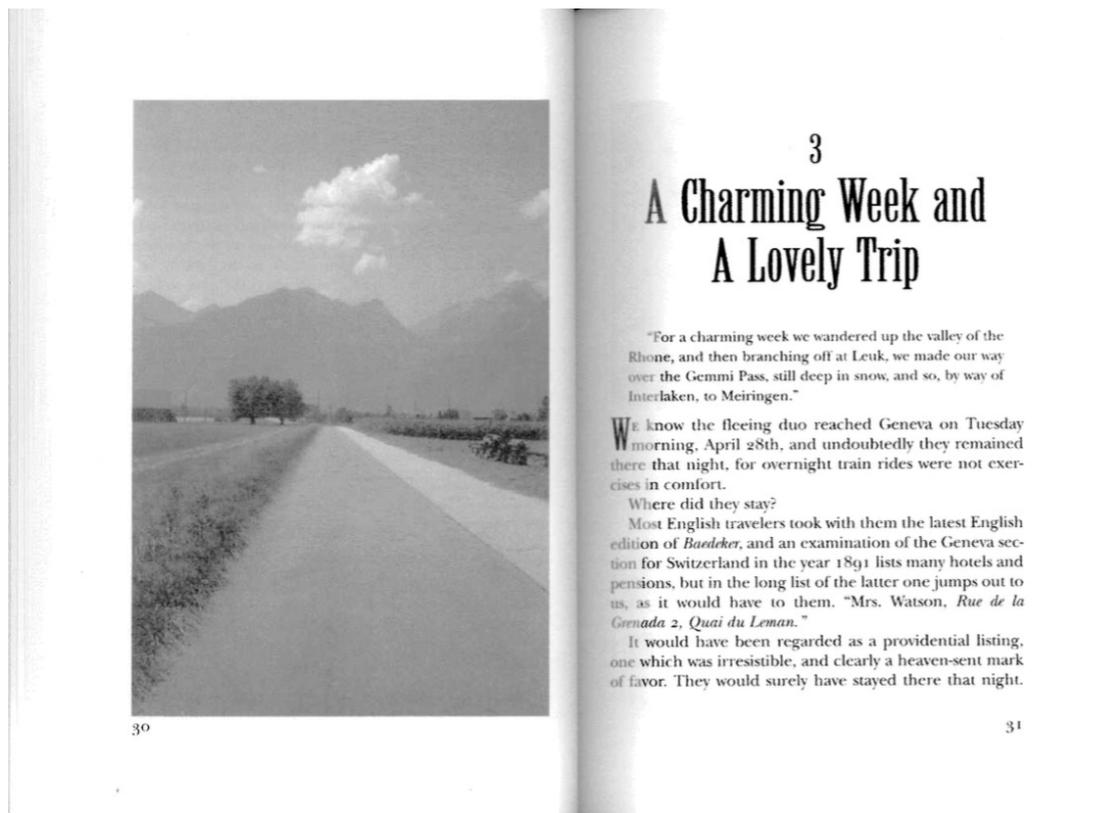
Figure 2 Hammer's photograph of the road from Geneva to Meiringen © Library of Congress

Hammer's treatment of the Reichenbach Falls is illuminating in this context. There is, in fact, an form of grave site - a plaque which commemorates the struggle of Holmes and Moriarty at the Falls. It was placed there in 1957 by the combined efforts of two Sherlockian societies, the Sherlock Holmes Society of London and, gloriously, the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota. It records the place from where Holmes fell, not where his body might have lain, had he in fact died, had he in fact existed in the conventional sense. *A Dangerous Game*, however, though published forty years later, makes no mention of it. Rather, Hammer uses the 'protocols of tourism' to 'recapitulate' (Watson 2006: 12) a particular sensibility of 'The Final Problem' (Doyle 1930/2009: 469-80) and 'The Adventure of the Empty House' (483-96): ceaseless forward motion. For, on his approach to Meiringen, the town beneath the Falls where Holmes and Dr. Watson stayed, Hammer muddies the waters around the purpose of his pilgrimage, saying, 'it is easy to conclude that Meiringen was a destination - *the* destination - of Holmes and Watson' yet one should not, because, once again, 'Meiringen was not intended as a goal, much less an armageddon, for it was a way station, one of many, on a Swiss walking trip' (Hammer 1997: 63).

Once in Meiringen, having known all along that he would find only the pilgrim's equivalent of an empty grave, Hammer rushes past the site of Holmes and Moriarty's embracing fall to dwell instead on the possible routes through the mountain that might have facilitated Holmes's escape from death. He calls on the services of the one of the

Hotel du Sauvage's walking guides, to imagine the route that Holmes took over the alps. Herr Gerber confirms that 'the guides had discussed Holmes's route among themselves', suggesting that Hammer is not alone in his interest in Holmes's movement. This conversation and its aftermath - Hammer falling asleep over his own attempts to prove that Holmes took the Grimsel pass out of Reichenbach - indicate that even in the calm quiet of the Alpine night, Hammer remains in motion, imaginatively and narratively, in search of Holmes (Hammer 1997: 70-3).

This relentless focus on forward movement shapes Hammer's representation of Europe as criss-crossed with trajectories of departure, of places *haunted* by what they once were - and what they might yet be. Thrift's reminder that places are not things-in-themselves but rather dynamic 'stages of intensity, traces of movement, speed and circulation' (Thrift 1994: 212-3), the points where movements slow and leave their mark, finds expression here. This sense of liminality haunts the places, the traveller and the book itself, which is 'peripheral, being after all only a sort of travel book', whose author is 'essentially time-travell[ing]' (Hammer 1997: 2). The hazy, interstitial nature of the places he passes through is apparent as Hammer describes them as part of Holmes's 'penumbra' (5) - that is, being at the very edge of his shadow. As Hammer describes it, Holmes's Europe is filled with places that are, themselves, always on the move. In Brussels, his trusty *Baedeker* guide apparently helps him to locate the former site of the Station du Midi - when he arrives he discovers it was 'demolished a year before my visit'. (If Hammer experiences the sense of nostalgic belatedness characteristic of literary tourism, he is careful not to dwell on it.) His next stop, to the Place du Trone, is equally unsatisfying, as 'new Mies-square buildings surrounded the area, looking like glass excrescences rising from the ground', while the nearby Grand Hotel Britannique, one of his candidates for Holmes's temporary abode in Brussels, has 'been commercially supplanted' (17). The literary tourist, like the tourist in general, is almost by definition doomed to various degrees of disappointment.

There is nevertheless a small side-path or sidetrack, opening out from this analysis of Hammer's spectral Europe. This is perhaps the most exciting 'haunting' that arises out of Hammer's spectral Holmesian Europe, but also the most oblique. In all the eighty-three pages of Hammer's literary pilgrimage through Holmes's Europe, there are only three pictures taken indoors. They show, respectively, the dining room, entrance hall, and reading room of the Hotel du Savage, which Hammer argues is the hotel at which Holmes and Dr. Watson sojourn in 'The Final Problem' (Hammer 1997: 65-6). (In the story the hotel's name is given as the Englisher Hof, though no such place has ever existed.) These pictures seem to offer the reader experiences similar to that promised by vicarious of actual visits to authors' homes, namely the feeling that 'the writer might at any point re-enter' the room (Robinson and Andersen 2002: 19). The power of this feeling is perhaps so strong because, although Hammer slyly declines to mention it, the Hotel du Sauvage was the very place where Doyle and his first wife, Touie, stayed during a vacation in 1893. It was during that stay that Doyle conceived of the idea to kill off Holmes at the nearby Falls. These photos, then, represent a double haunting: by Holmes and by his author. And this 'haunting' prevents Hammer's search for the site of Holmes's putative death ending up in a final 'resting place'.

'A willed waking dream'

For both Arthur Axelrad and David Hammer, acts of literary tourism which 'recapitulate through the protocols of tourism' the 'sensibilities implied by the texts' (Watson 2006: 12) are constitutive of an encounter with literature that drags Holmes's travels out of their captivity in Doyle's texts. That is, they indicate the practice of expansionary literary geography. Both travellers focus on shadowing a particular moment of Holmesian mobility, whether a hurried passage to Baker Street or a flight across the Swiss Alps, as a way to engage creatively with the spaces of Holmes's world. The third and final example of Sherlockian travel writing that I will consider goes further. Its attempt to bring Holmes into the actual world involves *far* more than the mere recapitulation of Holmesian textual sensibilities. Richard Warner's *Guide Book and Instructions for the Ascent of Holmes Peak* (1985), written to celebrate the official naming of a small hill outside of Tulsa, Oklahoma in honour of the Great Detective, foregrounds mobility as a method to recreate this place as a literary tourist site: a heterotopic space of imagination and folded geographies.

Warner's *Guide Book* makes lavish use of the protocols of a particular kind of American tourism, not to recapitulate the contents of any specific Sherlock Holmes story but rather to lay the foundations of this 'prominent and historical hill' (Warner 1985a: 29) as a tourist site. In the process, Warner shapes it into a place that is tied to Holmes, but given its peculiarly American frontier location, at a tangent from Doyle's texts and those of the fans. In the nineteenth century, American guidebooks were central in opening up the country to cultural and material appropriation by middle-class, white Americans, principally from the educated east coast. Herbert Gottfried notes that the kinds of travel these guidebooks promoted was 'grounded in the pursuit of landscape experiences, and practiced within a framework that included comfortable accommodations and adequate travel infrastructure' (Gottfried 2013: 10). By framing the spaces outside of current settlement through a focus on untamed landscape and wilderness, Gottfried argues that guidebooks 'shaped perceptions of American landscapes and enabled Americans to develop "an image of their own land"' (10).

Warner's own *Guide Book* knowingly recapitulates many of the sensibilities of this kind of American tourism, in an effort to present Holmes Peak as a place worthy of being claimed by American Sherlockians for the world of Sherlock Holmes. It is as if Warner has planted a flag on a new territory for Sherlockian colonists or emigrants, rather than revisiting a part of the Old World of the Holmesian Canon (fig. 3). The first sections of his *Guide Book*, which provide a general introduction to the hill, cover such aspects as 'Location', 'History', 'Geology' and 'Flora and Fauna'. In each category, Warner's writing privileges the eye of the explorer or frontiersman, rather than the urban, twentieth-century literary tourist. Under 'Location', for instance, Warner leads with the Peak's latitude and longitude, before noting that it 'can be found in the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 17, Township 20 N, Range 12 E of the Indian Meridian in Osage County, Oklahoma' (Warner 1985b: 1). Warner's language, with its sections and townships, echoes the orderly partition of the American Midwest that was

imposed by Jefferson on the Louisiana Purchase lands; Warner is explorer – a Lewis or a Clark – but also land surveyor, land agent, and booster.[2] Yet, in line with Gottfried's tourist framework of 'comfortable accommodations and adequate travel infrastructure' (Gottfried 2013: 10), Warner is hardly recommending roughing it on the frontier. Warner's language of exploration and land claiming is peppered throughout with references to luxurious travel, including: a nearby private airport capable of handling 'private planes up to the size of small jets' (1985b: 7); the availability of 'berthing arrangements for personal yachts' (7) at the local Mississippi river port; and the option of arriving in a private rail car, in lieu of standard passenger services.
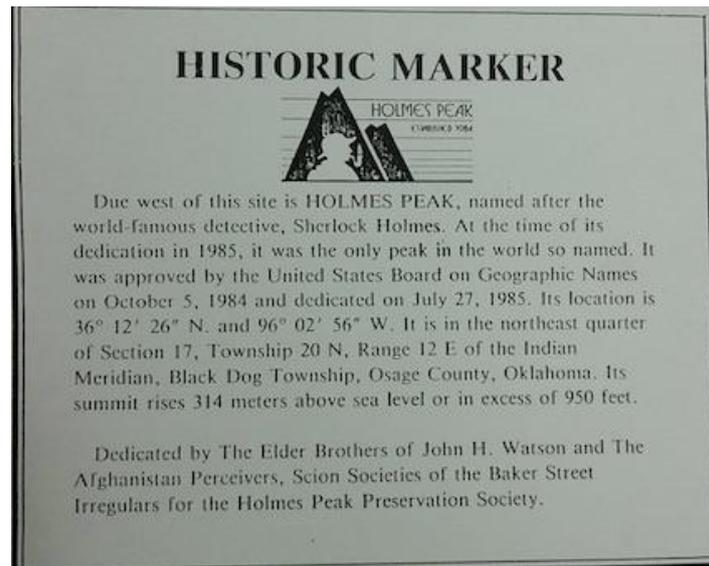

Figure 3 Reproduction of the text of an Historic Marker near the site of Holmes Peak © University of Minnesota Special Collections and Rare Books

References to private train cars, private jets and personal yachts indicate the droll tone that permeates Warner's *Guide Book* - a tone which establishes a particular, Sherlockian way of seeing the Peak. As Michael Hardwick, Warner's fellow Sherlockian and the author of the *Guide Book*'s foreword suggests, this use of 'deadpan humour' is intended to 'present the serious detail with style and flair' (Warner 1985b). It also works to keep the idea of 'Holmes Peak' and the hill that carries that name at a slight and constant distance from each other. As Watson has written, literary tourism involves 'a willed waking dream that converts the fictive to the real and back again, a potent mix of skepticism and belief' (Watson 2006: 212). We can see both skepticism and belief at work in the way Warner's text presents Holmes Peak as a genuine literary site, with a peculiarly American history, steeped in Native American settlements, European exploration and American literature, yet all the while undoing his own claims by keeping his tongue firmly in his cheek.

While his wry tone is employed throughout, a few such instances indicate the power of this comedy in ensuring the reader does not fall too far into the trap of truly believing in Holmes Peak. In the section on 'Flora and Fauna', for instance, Warner notes the local abundance of poisonous snakes, but says, 'it is very doubtful that any of

these snakes will be encountered, because, even in Oklahoma, the snakes are aware of the dangers of attacking a Sherlockian who has read 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band'. If a visitor does get bitten, it is obligatory to mention this to the other members of the party' (Warner 1985b: 5-6). Discussing transportation options, he warns: 'Assuming the identity of freight and having oneself shipped to Tulsa or riding the rails is frowned upon' (7). Finally, in a section on medical care he says: 'For those who want that extra bit of security they can send one dollar (US) and a clean handkerchief to the Society. The Society will have the handkerchief processed and returned prior to the visit' (8). This ever-present humour, which is a common practice among Sherlockians who maintain an ironic belief in Holmes's real existence, erects a secondary Holmes Peak, made of rhetoric and humorous language, that sits at a distance from the actual world Holmes Peak, as recognised by the United States Board on Geographic Names.

Most importantly, however, central to Warner's creation of Holmes Peak as a literary tourist site is his employment of a mobile, Sherlockian gaze as a method for claiming and shaping the space through which it moves. The European gaze has long been recognised as a tool for claiming the world. Gottfried reminds us that '[t]ravel is linked to appropriating things' (Gottfried 2013: 5) and the traveller's eye plays a large role in this appropriation. For Warner, this gaze is doubly important because much of the pleasure of literary tourism comes from what Watson, after Philip Pullman, describes as 'cut[ting] windows through from this world to other worlds' through the act of 'double-seeing' – 'an ability to see both [actual and fictional] worlds at once' (Watson 2006: 210). As he is creating Holmes Peak from the ground up, Warner must create these double meanings from scratch. Tellingly, he does this by creating a walking route, from 'Base Camp' to the hill's summit. By traversing this route, Warner's text implies, the Sherlockian tourist imprints new, alternative meanings into the landscape. In keeping with his desire for Sherlockians to claim the hill for their own, Warner's description of the route comes not as disembodied direction but in the form of a guided walk, by which the reader-tourist sees the Peak through Warner's eyes. His instructions for walking from the Base Camp onwards, for instance, read in part: 'Camp No.1, called Paddington for convenience… can be recognised by a blackjack oak that grows nearby' (Warner 1985b: 10). Later on in the walk he writes, '[f]rom Marylebone, the climber can see the challenge of the ascent to Camp No.3' (11).

This act of double-seeing and thus of claiming the site crucially depends on the reader-tourist's imaginative enactment of mobility. Each of the three 'camps' that divide the walking route into shorter stages have two names which suggest a tension between stillness and mobility: they are Camp No. 1, or Paddington; Camp No. 2, or Marylebone; and Camp No.3, or St. Pancras. These camps (in reality, a clearing next to a stunted tree, another nondescript clearing, and a false summit) come into being in relation to each other, through the reader-tourist's imagination, ignited or impelled by the reading-walking of Warner's route. His choice of alternative names for the camps provides a further indication that this imaginative act is entirely intentional and thoroughly considered. Paddington, Marylebone and St. Pancras are of course three major north-west London train termini, all built in the nineteenth century, and in the general vicinity of Baker Street. Following Warner's guide, the Sherlockian reader-tourist is encouraged

to imaginatively traverse nineteenth-century London, from west to east, in the same action as traversing the hill, from base to summit. Warner's use of train station names also suggests, after Schivelbusch, that these imaginative camps act as transition points, between one kind of space (Holmes Peak/the city) and another (Holmes's London/the railway itself) (Schivelbusch 1986).

Out of these American tourism protocols, this wry approach and the mobile, Sherlockian gaze with its imaginative dimension, Warner shapes Holmes Peak as a new site for Sherlockian literary tourism, one which is not a fixed place but rather a heterotopia, a site where space, time and imagination fold into each other through acts of reader-tourist perception. Camps Paddington, Marylebone and St. Pancras are one example of the heterotopic space of Holmes Peak. Sitting at Marylebone, for example, the reader-tourist is presented as likely aware both of the 'damnable prairie grass' (Warner 1985b: 11) and the associations with Holmes's London, of fog and rain, of dark gas-lamps and darker alleyways. With these 'camps', Warner folds the physical geography of the Oklahoma plains with the reader-tourist's literary geography of Holmes's world, and, perhaps, experiences of the actual world, because these three stations are real places which can be visited as sites in themselves.

Beyond his instructions for ascending the Peak, Warner has also produced a section titled 'Future Plans for Holmes Peak', which enacts again the 'potent mixture of skepticism and belief' that forms the 'willed waking dream' of literary tourism (Watson 2006: 212). The section lays out the supposed 'plans for future improvements' harboured by the 'Holmes Peak Preservation Society' (an entirely fictitious association) (Warner 1985b: 12). Among these is a hotel, called the Englisher Hof, in honour of the last hotel at which Holmes and Dr. Watson stayed in Switzerland, before Holmes's apparent death in the Reichenbach Falls. The hotel will include 'overnight accommodations, gourmet restaurant, gift shop, sauna, swimming pool, tennis courts, golf links and cricket pitch', all to be built 'near the summit of Holmes Peak' (12). Other projected improvements include a scenic highway over the Peak, from Base Camp to the hotel, a condominium building also near the summit, an extensive Holmes theme park and a 'Doyle Ski Basin' - a seasonal attraction, naturally (12). Together, these 'improvements' create a dream-like image of Holmes Peak, as a heterotopic space of ludic possibility, unfixed in space and time, fact and fiction. Yet, the reader is brought down to earth through the ever-present knowledge that these 'improvements' would be impossible to build on such a small hill as Holmes Peak, barely three hundred meters as it is from base to summit.

Moreover, these 'improvements' are Warner's way of making a wry commentary on the idea that literary tourism necessarily involves the direct 'recapitulation of the sensibilities' of the original text, with a particular emphasis on the '*commodification* of the imagined and the imaginers' (Watson 2006: 12; Robinson and Andersen 2002: 15, emphasis added). In Robinson and Andersen's understanding, the 'imaginers' are only ever the authors. Yet, Warner's *Guide Book*, as an attempt to create a wholly new literary site, demonstrates that readers can be just as creative as authors at creating fictional worlds and the bridgeheads to the actual world. Each component of his 'Future Plans for Holmes Peak', for instance, takes its inspiration from Doyle's stories but uses the idea in an original way. The 'Bee Farm Village', for instance, proposes a collection of retirement

homes, modelled on Holmes's cottage in Sussex, at the base of the Peak; the 'Violet Smith Velodrome', a cycling track for professionals and amateurs, takes its name from the protagonist in 'The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist' (Doyle 1930/2009: 526-38); and the 'Doyle Ski Basin' looks outside of the text, to a recreate a favourite activity of Doyle, known to Sherlockians not as the author of the stories, but in the secondary position as 'Dr. Watson's literary agent' (Warner 1985b: 12).

Conclusion

From 221b Baker Street, where Holmes did not live, to the falls at Reichenbach, where he did not die, and on to Holmes Peak, Oklahoma, where no-one had previously imagined Holmes had ever set foot. These are three examples of sites and spaces produced through the practices of expansionary literary geography. This paper has sought to provide a window into the practices of the textual community of American Sherlockians, as they have sought to prevent Holmes and Watson from becoming closed off from the world, inside the covers of Doyle's texts. I have focused on uncovering the role that Sherlockian travels, as contributions to Sherlockian expansionary literary geography, have played in moving Holmes into the world, our world, without fixing him in place. The main theme that emerges from these three sources is that of *discovery*. By framing their encounters with the fictional world of Sherlock Holmes as something more than acts of re-treading the paths of fiction, and instead as acts of discovery in the actual world, Axelrad, Hammer, and Warner aim to minimise the sense of nostalgic belatedness that often attends to literary tourism. They do this by representing the world of Sherlock Holmes and the stories by which it is known not as an already-existing place, but as a work-in-progress, a space where fact and fiction, the past and the present meet through readerly encounters with text and the world. In this way their different approaches to expanding Holmesian geographies reinforce the chief assumption of the textual community from which they arose: that readers have a role to play in the creative co-production of fictional worlds – worlds that are very real.

Each example of Sherlockian writing discussed here foregrounds mobility through representations of walking. For each reader-tourist walking is the method by which they expand the world of Sherlock Holmes beyond the confines of fiction, book and building, into the 'network of mews and stables' of everyday life. This is because 'on foot everything stays connected, for while walking one occupies the spaces between those interiors the same way one occupies those interiors' (Solnit 2002: 9). As I said at the beginning of this article, rather than facilitate mere acts of 'literary fanship' (Eco 1994: 84), these fans' pedestrianism echoes Holmes and Watson's walking through narrative spaces, and aims to continue those footsteps off the page and into new literary spaces. These new peregrinations are creatively constructed out of the fans' own literary tourism experiences. They thus combine the actual-world experiences of Axelrad, Hammer and Warner into an expanded Holmesian literary geography.

These mobile literary tourists move 'through space like a thread through fabric, sewing it together into a continuous experience' (Solnit 2002: xv). Walking mobilises both the literary-tourist gaze and the readerly imagination to produce new readings of

places, whether London streets or Oklahoman hills, that are as convincingly dynamic as they are necessarily fleeting. As it is represented here, the act of walking is a way to recapture a sense of connection to a landscape of fiction and fact where every seemingly solid place - whether 221b Baker Street, or the site of Holmes's apparent death at the Reichenbach Falls, or the playfully projected theme park at Holmes Peak - continually slips out of the traveller's grasp, being ultimately impossible, not to place, but rather to pin down.

Notes

[1] 'Scholarly works have demonstrated… that Holmes travelled to Russia, China, India, Tibet, the South Seas, America, Canada, Japan; that Holmes was an American (a thesis asserted by no less than Franklin Delano Roosevelt), a Canadian, a Frenchman' (Klinger 2003: lxvii).

[2] Jonathan Raban, using the history of Lewis and Clarke's westward journeying to frame his own explorations of the Pacific Northwest, writes: 'Jefferson projected a north-south meridian and a westward-running baseline as the master axes of the grid. He then spread over the undiscovered country a ghostly reticule of six-mile squares, named "townships". They stretched across an infinity of western space… Each township was subdivided into thirty-six "sections"' (2013: 53).

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