

The Victorian Gothic Short Story
Prof. Divya A
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Lecture – 13
Arthur Conan Doyle
The Red-Headed League - III

Hello and welcome back to this edition of lecture on Arthur Conan Doyle's The Red-Headed League. In today's session I thought I will discuss some of the thematic implications that are embedded in the story as well as look at some of the illustrations that were appended to the story, when it was first published in The Strand magazine.


(Refer Slide Time: 00:39)

John Clay

- "I beg that you will not touch me with your filthy hands," remarked our prisoner as the handcuffs clattered upon his wrists. "You may not be aware that I have royal blood in my veins. Have the goodness, also, when you address me always to say 'sir' and 'please.'"
- "All right," said Jones with a stare and a snigger. "Well, would you please, sir, march upstairs, where we can get a cab to carry your Highness to the police-station?"
- "That is better," said John Clay serenely. He made a sweeping bow to the three of us and walked quietly off in the custody of the detective.

metaphorical

class/hierarchy.



I want to remind you as to how the story completed finished off in this particular detective fiction. If you remember, John Clay is the actual criminal and he is the biggest mastermind of the plot to steal money from the city and suburban bank. So, when he is caught in the act of trying to rob the bank, this is what he has to say to the man who is arresting him who is Jones from the Scotland Yard. He tells Jones 'I beg that you will not touch me with your filthy hands remarked our prisoner as the handcuffs clattered upon his wrists. You may not be aware that I have royal blood in my vein. Have the goodness also when you address me always to say sir and please. All right, said Jones with a stare and a snigger. Well, would you please sir, march upstairs

where we can get a cab to carry your highness to the police station? That is better, said John Clay serenely. He made a sweeping bow to the three of us and walked quietly off in the custody of the detective'. So, this is a strange ending in some sense because we do not have a prisoner who is embarrassed by what he has done. In fact, he is quite brazen. Look at the way he talks to the inspector from the Scotland Yard, he says that do not touch me with your filthy hands and that is a reference to the possible social position of this Inspector Jones. So, this filthy is metaphorical, in the sense that Jones who belongs to a class lower than John Clay apparently has filthy hands. He is not fit to touch the hand of nobility here being represented by John Clay and he says that I have royal blood in my veins and do address me respectfully as sir and place. And Jones takes it with a lot of humor and he sniggers at John Clay and he tries to keep up the pretense of addressing him suitably and he says that, you know, allow us to carry your highness to the police station and John Clay again responds in the same fashion and he says that that is a better way to address him. So, what is intriguing here is the fact that, John Clay is not at all embarrassed or he is not at all repentant by the fact that he has tried to commit this kind of felony against the law. And look at the way he exits. He makes a sweeping bow to the three of us. And you can also interpret this as an almost theatrical flamboyant way of John Clay. In fact, he is trying to, in some sense, play the part of a theatrical villain and he quietly walks off without making any kind of struggle in the custody of the detective. So, he is a very very interesting personality and in this conversation issues of class and hierarchy come about and it's really visceral to hear him talk to the inspector in such language even though the hands that he refers to are metaphorically filthy and we need to remember that the hands that are literally dirty are the hands of Clay. If you remember the earlier session, I talked about how his hands come through that aperture- that hole that he makes on the ground of the cellar- and the hand comes out and the hand is trying to kind of find a place to grab on to and that hand is literally dirty and even though Clay belongs to a higher station in society, if his claim is really true then it is his hands that are filthy.


(Refer Slide Time: 05:26)

The City of London — *narrative function*
the plot

- Urban environment of late Victorian London
- The biggest city in the 19th Century
- "There is Mortimer's, the tobacconist, the little newspaper shop, the Coburg branch of the City and Suburban Bank, the Vegetarian Restaurant, and McFarlane's carriage-building depot. That carries us right on to the other block."

operates on the setting of this detective fiction

Jabez Wilson's business // posh neighborhood...



Now, the city of London in the Red Headed League is very significant in fact, you can say that the city of London has a narrative function to play. In fact, the plot operates on the setting of this detective fiction and this is a very crucial point. Because what is the nature of, what is the nature of this city? And if you remember 19th century Britain, London was the biggest city. Not only in Britain but in the entire western world and it is this urban environment which is somehow setting the plot in motion for us in the Red Headed League and it's a very complex, it's a very diverse urban landscape and that glimpse of London is offered in this particular story when we see Holmes trying to make a kind of a visual photograph of the scene in which he is interested in. And if you go back to the story, if you remember, Holmes and Watson, they walk to the place in which Jabez Wilson has his business- the pawnbroker's business. And then he walks to the backside of Jabez Wilson's business and he tries to account or locate the various businesses that are there in that really posh neighborhood which is abutting on Jabez Wilson's really shabby genteel place. So, we have the dark and the light side of London in the same locality almost. And this is a quotation that I have taken from the story in which Holmes is listing out the number of businesses, the kind of businesses that are there in that neighborhood. He says that there is 'Mortimer's the tobacconist and the little newspaper shop, the Coburg branch of the city and suburban bank, the vegetarian restaurant, McFarlane's carriage-building depot that carries us right on to the other block'. So, he is kind of listing out the businesses, the trades, that are there on that particular street and as I said that street is abutting on the street of Jabez Wilson's

pawnbroker's business. So, on the one side we have the shabby genteel locality; on the other side we have businesses such as the Coburg branch of the city. So, this is a posh neighborhood. And there is a variety of businesses that are there going about its day to day routine on this particular street. So, London is diverse, London is full of contradictions and it is big and large and full of juxtapositions in terms of the kind of lifestyles that are functioning in that particular city.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:03)

London

- Accelerated change
- Rising crime rates
- Class structure under pressure
- Mysterious, fascinating and dangerous
- Darkness and light

detective fiction picks up on this theme.

It is also a place of accelerated change and we need to remember that the industrial revolution is at its zenith in the second half of the 19th century and there is a kind of impression that is given in newspapers and other journalistic and narratives as well as in fiction that the crime rates in London are rising and that is the impression that literature gives to the readers and the detective fiction does pick up on this kind of impression. I would call it the theme. What is also indicated in the detective fiction or the fiction that comes about in 19th century Britain is this idea that the class structure is under immense pressure and that pressure is the result of the accelerated change in the industrial scene as well as in the fields of medicine and other technology. So, all these technologies are bringing about a kind of fluid or flexible class structure and which is also indicated in the figure of John Clay. John Clay claims that he belongs to the nobility and that he had been to Eton and other places of higher learning and at the same time he is also forced to perform acts which do not really fit in with the traditional assumptions about nobility and the elite classes.

So, people are behaving in uncertain ways in unexpected manner and that is clear through this story as well. And as I pointed out, London becomes a mysterious place, you cannot trust identities. It becomes also fascinating at the same time because there is a kind of a set of new and innovative businesses such as the kneecap store the artificial kneecap store that Jabez Wilson visits. So, there are new technologies that are being sold on the one hand and at the same time there are dangerous places such as the cellar of Jabez Wilson from which a tunnel is dug to the cellar of the city and suburban bank. So, if you want to kind of sum it up neatly and almost somehow reductively, you can call it the place of darkness as well as light. So, that we have two big contradictions.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:57)

Major concepts

- Rationalization
- The extraordinary in the ordinary
- Fake identities
- Decoy

Thought process of Holmes.

Small — *Significant*

John Clay Archie } *Small in stature.*

Other concepts that come to our mind when we really take a good look into the nature of the story are firstly, the rationalization that is manifested in the thought process of Holmes. In fact, he embodies that. He embodies the idea that he is the representative of reason, facts and truth and integrity and he is able to work things out through his really rigorous process of rationalization in this particular story. And I will show you in a short while the illustrations as well that capture the figure of Holmes in the process of thinking about. You know, putting all the facts that he has gathered through the narratives of Jabez Wilson, he processes it through his mind and comes up with a theory which he double checks and finds out that it in fact, is the truth, what he is expecting comes out to be the truth in the case of the story.

The other interesting concept that we can find in the story is that there is the extraordinary in the ordinary. You know, the bizarre is there in the everyday humdrum commonplace activities of the everyday. So, the ordinary becomes somehow extraordinary, the ordinary becomes very very significant as well. And the very ordinary facets of life might somehow lead to complicated and big crimes as well as is the case with Jabez Wilson. So, Jabez Wilson is an ordinary small time trader and he is somehow being connected with a big crime that would involve the possibility of 30,000 napoleons being stolen from the city and suburban bank. So, the point that the larger ideological point that Doyle perhaps tries to unconsciously or consciously communicate through the story is that you cannot ignore the smaller details of life. Small- the idea of something being small should not make it something that we should ignore, small becomes significant and in this respect what is also important is the fact that John Clay and his companion who is referred to as Archie by John Clay at the end of the story both of them are small in stature. So, it's a remarkable coincidence and it also tells us that the smaller details, the smaller figures are to be taken seriously because they might be connected, involved with things that are larger than life-- things that are very very important to the functioning of society itself.

The other concept or theme that is recurring in the story is the idea of fake identities. If you look at the figure of John Clay we do not know what his real identity is. He goes by the name of Vincent Spaulding and in the past he would have gone by other identities. And he is a man who somehow seems to belong to an aristocratic lineage as well as he is performing deeds which connect him with the really marginal criminal sections of societies, who are not usually identifiable with the respectable classes slash elite classes. So, identities become somehow not certain-- they are not anchored in one particular idea or notion. And this is also connected to the fact that social structures, social classes, are under immense pressure in this particular point in time in Great Britain. And we also realize that John Clay's companion also has multiple identities. And earlier I also talked to you about the fact that Holmes himself has multiple personalities within his figure. At one point he is very energetic and at another point is very contemplative. So, dual personalities seem to kind of live inside his psyche. So, identities multiply. And then there is another major issue that is also explored in great detail in this particular story and that is the idea of the decoy.

So, Jabez Wilson and the Red Headed League organization are decoys in this particular story. They are red herrings, they are like empty signifiers somehow, because they are being used for another larger purpose. So, while Jabez Wilson is devoting his time in the offices of the Red Headed League trying to copy out encyclopedia Britannica, what is happening in reality is the fact that Clay and his companion are digging a tunnel. So, there is a larger important purpose at work and Jabez Wilson is being used and manipulated to serve that larger crime narrative. So, decoy is also very significant in terms of the motif that is used in this particular story.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:02)

Illustrations

□ Illustrations by [Sidney Paget](#) in [The Strand Magazine](#) (august 1891)

"a British illustrator famous for his illustrations of the [Sherlock Holmes](#) stories in [The Strand Magazine](#)"



Now, I would like to share some of the first illustrations that came out with this particular story in 1891 and if you remember, the story was published in The Strand Magazine in August 1891. And Sidney Paget was the man who illustrated some of the scenes from this particular story and published it the story in the magazine. So, he is a British illustrator famous for his illustrations of Sherlock Holmes stories in The Strand magazine.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:36)

Mr Jabez Wilson



This is the illustration of Mister Jabez Wilson and he is looking at a newspaper there and he is interested in that particular advertisement that calls all red headed men to apply for a particular vacancy in the league. And this is the scene that is depicted in Holmes's 221 Baker Street living room and you can see that he is very stocky, middle aged, bulky with unkempt sort of appearance, loose baggy clothes. So, Paget is at pains to capture the details that have been sketched in the story by Doyle. And he has that proof that newspaper advertisement with him when he comes to discuss his case with Holmes.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:38)

What on earth does this mean?



John Watson



Now, that paper column which talks about the advertisement for the Red Headed League is read by Watson-- John Watson. So, we do get to hear about the advertisement for the first time from Watson's words. So, Watson is the one who is voicing out who is kind of narrating the story very seriously from this point on and we have Holmes listening to it with his companions there.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:17)

The league has a vacancy



What is interesting about these two illustrations is that-- this is John Clay and as I said this is John Watson. Now, as I pointed out earlier this story has a very interesting structure. You need to remember that Wilson is in the living room of Holmes and he is talking to Holmes and Watson and he is narrating the past, but what is interesting in the story as we look at the text is that we somehow get the voice of Clay slash Vincent Spaulding within the story as well. So, we have a kind of a scene within a scene aspect-- almost a play within a play because we have Clay speaking to Wilson and Wilson is narrating that to...and narrating that to Holmes and Watson. So, it's an interesting textual structure that we need to be very attuned to in order to understand the theatrical aspect. And you can also connect it to John Clay's bow at the end of the story when he walks off with the inspector. So, that theatrical aspect is there, embedded in the story right from the beginning.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:51)

The door was locked and shut



narrated by Wilson.

Paget capturing it imaginistically

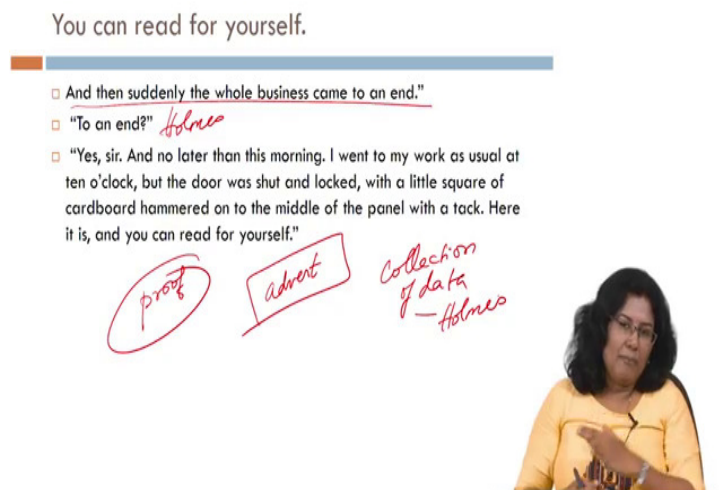
And this image again is not it there-- in the sense that it is narrated to us. This is narrated to us by Wilson. But here we have Paget capturing it in his illustration. In fact, what we actually do have is this plaque, this notice, that Wilson takes off from the door and brings it to the offices of Holmes. So, we are given an image of what would Wilson look like when he goes to that office and finds it locked with the notice put up on the door.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:44)

You can read for yourself.

- And then suddenly the whole business came to an end.
- "To an end?" *Holmes*
- "Yes, sir. And no later than this morning. I went to my work as usual at ten o'clock, but the door was shut and locked, with a little square of cardboard hammered on to the middle of the panel with a tack. Here it is, and you can read for yourself."

proof *advent* *collection of data - Holmes*



And he takes this and brings it to Holmes's office, Holmes home, and this is the conversation which is related to that illustration. And Holmes asked...and then suddenly

the whole business came to an end, this is this as said by Jabez Wilson: ‘To an end?’ asked Holmes. ‘Yes, sir and no later than this morning I went to my work as usual at ten o’clock but the door was shut and locked with a little square of cardboard hammered on to the middle of the panel with a tack. Here it is and you can read it for yourself’. So, he brings that notice as proof; the idea of proof is also very very important in the context of this story and that newspaper advertisement is one other such proof that Jabez Wilson brings to the office of Holmes. So, he is trying to gather material he is trying to collect all the information related to his case and he brings it to Holmes for him to work with. So, this collection of data is what Holmes also does, isn’t it, in the fiction of Doyle in connection with this detective? So, collection of data is not only the attitude of this detective, but it seems to be going on everywhere in terms of not only the story, but also outside in the society. If you remember Charles Darwin’s collection of data in relation to the natural world and other scientists and researchers working in diverse fields from medicine to archaeology, they collect data in order to classify it and make sense of it and come to some kind of conclusion. So, there is an empirical gathering or bringing together of information and that seems to be prevalent across society- be it literary narratives or be it the real tangible, material world.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:56)



Now, this scene is again narrated by Wilson. So, this is the past, we have the past that is retold by Wilson to Holmes and Watson. And this is captured in image by Paget and we have Jabez Wilson here and we can somehow see that he is kind of astounded, there is a

element of a surprise, a moment of being stunned in fact, he is stunned that he has got the job and this is Duncan Ross who is carrying out, apparently, the duties of the Red Headed League and we have Vincent Spaulding here, who is also John Clay as we know from having read the story. So, we are kind of focusing on Jabez Wilson. Everybody looks towards him. It's his face that comes to our attention and it's a face as I said, of being surprised, stunned, he is frozen in that moment of time and that also connects with his not being able to make sense of the whole scheme of affairs. So, he is a dull head in that regard. Even though he is a bit suspicious about this whole scheme he just goes along with it. I will come to that point shortly as to the motivation behind Jabez Wilson's actions.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:41)

Duncan / William Morris - Solicitor / Archie.
He congratulated me warmly
Jabez Wilson

- He took a step backward, cocked his head on one side, and gazed at my hair until I felt quite bashful. Then suddenly he plunged forward, wrung my hand, and congratulated me warmly on my success.
- " 'It would be injustice to hesitate,' said he. 'You will, however, I am sure, excuse me for taking an obvious precaution.' With that he seized my hair in both his hands, and tugged until I yelled with the pain. 'There is water in your eyes,' said he as he released me. 'I perceive that all is as it should be.

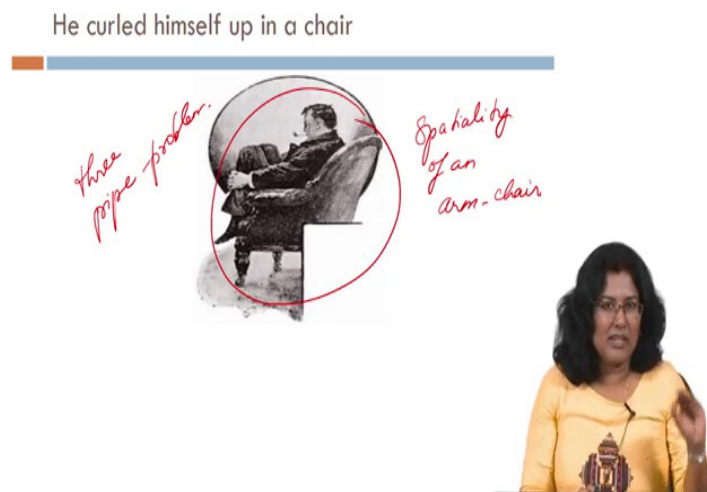


Now, this is the text that is connected to that illustration. 'He congratulated me warmly.' He being, as I said, Duncan Ross or William Morris- that is another identity that he has. And in this particular identity he is passing off as a solicitor, a lawyer and finally, he is referred to as Archie by John Clay. So, look at the proliferation of identities which are being used by these criminals in order to cheat the society. 'He took a step backward, cocked his head on one side and gazed at my hair until I fed... until I felt quite bashful'. That 'I' is Jabez Wilson. 'Then suddenly he plunged forward, wrung my hand and congratulated me warmly on my success.' So, look at the way this facade is orchestrated. So, Duncan Ross slash William Morris slash Archie is kind of sizing him up-- sizing Jabez Wilson up-- and then he is very active he just grabs his hand and congratulates

Wilson on getting the job. And he says 'It would be injustice to hesitate said he, you will however, I am sure excuse me for taking an obvious precaution. With that, he seized my hair in both his hands and tugged and I yelled with the pain. There is water in your eyes said he as he released me. I perceive that all is as it should be.' So, it's a very funny scene in some respects as well because at one moment we have Duncan Ross congratulating Jabez Wilson on getting the job and the next moment he is just seizing the hair of Jabez Wilson and then trying to he is trying to pull it off. And this act is to make sure that Jabez Wilson is not wearing a wig which would indicate that really which would mean that he will not get the job.

So, what is the point of this gesture? The point of this gesture is to kind of prove to Jabez Wilson that this is a really serious organization, which takes its job, vacancies, seriously, and then they are somehow trying to kind of instill integrity into this situation, which is the point of that head-tugging scene. And once Duncan Ross makes sure that this is real and that this is not a wig, he is given the job, that is, Jabez Wilson is given the job.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:26)



Now, Jabez Wilson has completed his narrative of this Red Headed League and his place in that and he has left the place. He has left 221 Baker Street and after that what is the impact on Holmes? Holmes is curled up in a chair and he is in a contemplative mood. So, when Watson asks what you are going to do, he says that it's a three pipe problem, which means it would take him the time that would involve smoking three pipes to make sense

of this narrative. It's a very interesting image. Holmes is trying to kind of go into his mind the way he is curled up, the way he is trying to accommodate himself within the spatiality of an arm chair, indicates that he is trying to go inward into his mind. So, the mind becomes a space with which to work with which to analyze data and come up with a solution. So, this physical representation is somehow also a clue into the mental activity that Holmes is engaged in.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:52)

A three pipe problem

□ "It is quite a three pipe problem, and I beg that you won't speak to me for fifty minutes." He curled himself up in his chair, with his thin knees drawn up to his hawk-like nose, and there he sat with his eyes closed and his black clay pipe thrusting out like the bill of some strange bird. I had come to the conclusion that he had dropped asleep, and indeed was nodding myself, when he suddenly sprang out of his chair with the gesture of a man who has made up his mind and put his pipe down upon the mantelpiece.

bird of prey
Holmes - predator
Criminals = John Clay



And this is the text relevant to that illustration, the narrative says 'It's quite a three pipe problem and I beg that you would you would not speak to me for fifty minutes'. So, that is the duration that Holmes would take to make sense of this particular set of events that had happened to Jabez Wilson. 'He curled himself up in his chair with his thin knees drawn up to his hawk like nose. And there he sat with his eyes closed and his black clay pipe thrusting out like the bill of some strange bird. I had come to the conclusion that he had dropped asleep and indeed was nodding myself, when he suddenly sprang out of his chair with the gesture of a man who has made up his mind and put his pipe down upon the mantelpiece.' What I am interested here is the comparison of Holmes's physique especially his hawk-like nose and the comparison of his black clay pipe to the bill of some strange bird. And hawk is a bird of prey. We need to remember that. Holmes becomes the predator here metaphorically, in the language of Watson, who is the biographer, quote unquote. And who is the prey? The criminals become the prey here-criminals such as John Clay. In fact, if you think about the last scene when Holmes and

his companions are waiting inside the cellar of the bank waiting for Clay and his accomplice to come through the tunnel, we can see that Holmes is doing the hunting. So, Holmes is the figure there, the predator there who is capturing the criminals when they are at work, as they are at work. So, that element is communicated here in the language, in the metaphorical language of Watson. The hawk like nose is very very interesting in that regard. And what is also interesting is the fact that the pipe itself becomes an organic thing, whereas, in fact, it's a material good that Holmes gets from outside to use as his pipe. So, pipe here becomes a part of the body of Holmes and that part of the body is compared to a strange bird. Once again a bird that is swooping in the sky, waiting for its time to swoop down and capture its victim and in fact, that is what Holmes does as soon as he has thought through his problem. He puts the pipe down on the mantelpiece and he is ready to go around London seeking some information and that would lead him to capture his criminals.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:35)

The door was instantly opened



Back



So, when he goes to visit the business of Jabez Wilson, he knocks on the door and its Vincent Spaulding who comes to attend the knock on the door and Holmes talks to him for a bit he seeks some directions to a particular place and then Vincent Spaulding closes the door and promptly and walks into the cellar or to the business...to the inside of the business and Holmes tries to strike on the floor, the pavement floor in order to check its solidity and he moves off. So, this is also a very crucial scene and that scene is captured

here by Sidney Paget. The important prop here is the stick used by Holmes to check as to whether the ground beneath him is solid or not hollow.

(Refer Slide Time: 34:35)

All afternoon he sat in the stalls



Once Holmes has gone over the ground of the several businesses in the neighborhood of Jabez Wilson's pawnbroker's shop, he goes to listen to some classical music. And in that time he is really enjoying the moment there and that is captured in this image, he is completely in a contemplative mood enjoying the music.

(Refer Slide Time: 35:05)

All the afternoon he sat in the stalls

- All the afternoon he sat in the stalls wrapped in the most perfect happiness, gently waving his long, thin fingers in time to the music, while his gently smiling face and his languid, dreamy eyes were as unlike those of Holmes the sleuth-hound, Holmes the relentless, keen-witted, ready-handed criminal agent, as it was possible to conceive. |

animal imagery that is associated with Holmes

*echo of John Clay's fingers
agile, ready, quick*



And this is the relevant text. 'All the afternoon he sat in the stalls wrapped in the most perfect happiness, gently waving his long thin fingers in time to the music while his gently smiling face and his languid dreamy eyes were as unlike those of Holmes the sleuth hound, Holmes the relentless keen witted, ready-handed criminal agent as it was possible to conceive'. So, this image of Holmes is quite contrary to the image that we saw here, one who is in a very serious contemplative mood, one who is almost like a predator trying to chase its victim. That is what Holmes is pointing out. He says that he is perfectly happy in that scene enjoying the music, gently waving his long thin fingers in time to the music and once again the thin fingers remind me of the fingers of John Clay as it comes through the cellar opening at the end of that lurid scene when everywhere there is darkness just there is light in that little aperture or opening and the fingers come through. So, there is an echo of that scene here -echo of John Clay's fingers. And we have a kind of a very languid image of Holmes here with dreamy eyes, which is quite unlike that of the ready-handed criminal agent who is compared to the sleuth hound. Once again we have an animal imagery here that is associated with Holmes. And Holmes is depicted as a man who is relentless when he acts like the sleuth hound. He is relentless keen witted ready-handed and this relentless and keen witted and ready handed-- especially the ready handed adjective-- is something that is also used to describe John Clay. If you remember Jabez Wilson's words, he says that John Clay is agile, quick, ready. So, there is a kind of a mirror image of Holmes in the representation of John Clay as well.

(Refer Slide Time: 37:25)

Mr. Merryweather stopped to light a lantern.



atmosphere



Now, this is an illustration that shows us the final scenes of the detective fiction. We have Holmes, Watson, Inspector Jones and Mister Merryweather; Mister Merryweather is the director of the bank and he is leading his party into the cellar of the bank where they have stored 30000 napoleons which they have borrowed from France. And it is this money that John Clay and his accomplice are trying to rob. And John Watson and Holmes and Merryweather and the inspector are taking their stations inside the cellar of the bank whereas, John Clay and his companion are in the cellar of Jabez Wilson at this particular night. So, what is also important in this scene is its atmosphere. It's a very ambient scene. Everywhere, there is darkness and suddenly there is a light lit by Merryweather and again there is an echo of the scene where John Clay tries to bring light as he is trying to find out if all is well within the cellar the first time around and he checks for that, moment and that is when we see that lurid spark from John's Clay's... John Clay's light.

(Refer Slide Time: 38:50)

The cellar of the City and Suburban Bank

□ Our cabs were dismissed, and, following the guidance of Mr. Merryweather, we passed down a narrow passage and through a side door, which he opened for us. Within there was a small corridor, which ended in a very massive iron gate. This also was opened, and led down a flight of winding stone steps, which terminated at another formidable gate. Mr. Merryweather stopped to light a lantern, and then conducted us down a dark, earth-smelling passage, and so, after opening a third door, into a huge vault or cellar, which was piled all round with crates and massive boxes.

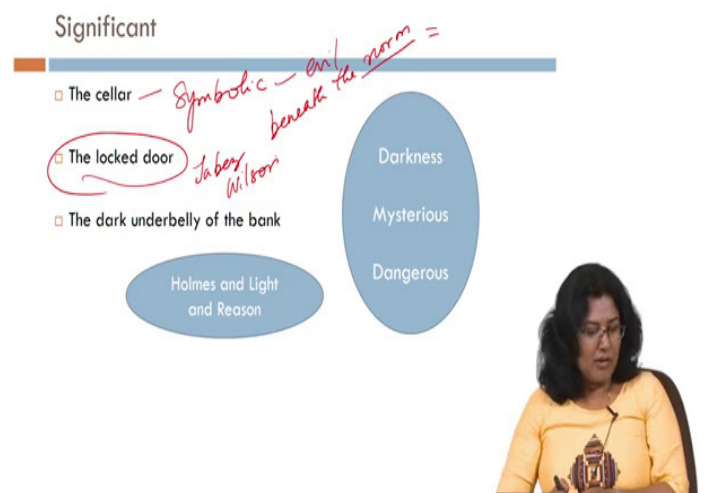
labyrinth



This is the relevant text for that illustration, 'Our cabs were dismissed and following the guidance of Mister Merryweather we passed down a narrow passage and through a side door which he opened for us. Within there was a small corridor, which ended in a very massive iron gate. This also was opened and led down to a flight of winding stone steps, which terminated at another formidable gate. Merryweather stopped to light a lantern and then conducted us down a dark earth smelling passage and so, after opening a third door into a huge vault or cellar which was piled all around with crates and massive boxes....'

Very very detailed scene and we are almost led, the reader is almost led alongside this party which is headed by Mister Merryweather. So, what Merryweather is doing here is bringing his group of companions into the bottom of the bank and it's as if they are going down into the earth and that same idea is communicated in this phrase 'earth smelling passage'-- they keep going down and down and down and into the final huge vault or cellar which was piled with big boxes, massive boxes. So, again what image that comes to us when we read this section is that of a labyrinth. This winding passage that leads to a particular space deep below in the earth. Again the idea that we have to go deep down in order to meet with, in order to tackle, in order to handle, in order to stop crime is a concept that is brought through in this particular scene.

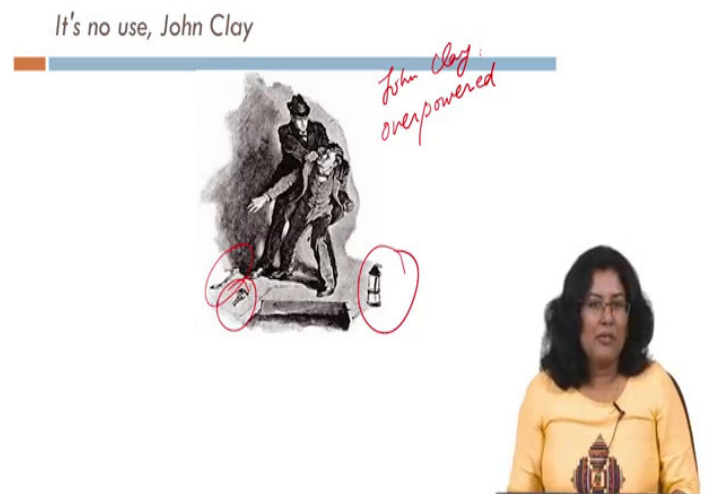
(Refer Slide Time: 40:45)



So, this section as I said is very very significant because the cellar becomes somehow symbolic and it's symbolic in the sense that all evil things somehow happen beneath, beneath the ground, beneath the norm let us say-- the norm being the usual, ordinary, level playing space, where we have businesses, where we have shops and other normal functions of society. So, if you go down deep into the earth, you will come up with activities that are evil in some respect or the other. So, the other significant image or concept that we have is the locked door that is met with by Jabez Wilson. So, he is somehow-- who is somehow shut out of certain things symbolically. In fact, he does not even know what is going on it within the cellar of his pawn broking... pawn broker's business. So, he is metaphorically and literally being shut out he is constantly facing a

locked door. And the underbelly of the bank that we saw in the previous passage and in that illustration is important as well because it is connected to issues of darkness which is symbolic of London itself. The mysterious aspects of London which are just hidden deep down and the dangerous face of London too, where we have criminals trying to plot events in order to rob the society. So, Holmes is the one who is going to bring light and reason into this massive scene of darkness. So, the light that Merryweather and John Clay light are decoys in some sense. They are not the right light. They are momentary flickers and the actual light will be brought forth by this great detective Holmes.

(Refer Slide Time: 43:01)



And this is the final scene of the story when the inspector captures John Clay in the act of entering the cellar of the city and suburban bank and you can see that energetic scene, that very vivid scene, being captured in the image by Sydney Paget. We have the lantern there, we have a pistol lying about and some kind of weapon is there too, and the small size of John Clay is also indicated in the representation of the two figures. So, he is being overpowered. The idea of being overpowered literally and figuratively is indicated in the scene.

Thank you for watching, I will continue in the next session.