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Impact of Sherlock Holmes’s Characteristics

Just like the Great Roman Empire, it was not built in one day, so was not the great Sherlock Holmes. By layering various fictional characters and real people’s characteristic, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle illustrates the beauty of Sherlock Holmes throughout his renowned stories. From imitating personas of his former professor, Joe Bell, and writer Emile Gaboriau’s fictional character, Monsieur Lecoq, Doyle embeds the fundamentals of Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four.* Though the stories are based in the Victorian era, Doyle was unaware of the impact Sherlock Holmes gives to people in the Victorian era, when they were suffering through depression after the wars. Thus, with direct impressions from Dr. Bell and familiar detective techniques from Lecoq, Sherlock Holmes creates a huge impact in supporting the Victorians physically and psychologically as a fictional character.

As Doyle projects Dr. Joe Bell’s appearances and personas on Sherlock Holmes, the readers almost believe in the existence of Sherlock Holmes because of Doyle’s explicit impersonation of a real person like Dr. Joe Bell. One of the scholarly texts that addresses Doyle’s creation of Holmes is an entry of Leroy Panek’s *An Introduction to the Detective Story*. Panek discusses, “Doyle based Holmes’s appearance on the lean-faced, hawk-nosed Bell … [Doyle] drew Holmes’ deduction demonstrations from Bell” to enhance the persona Doyle borrowed from Bell when creating Holmes (84). In addition to his skill of deduction, Joe Bell “used to do in the wards—telling patients about themselves and their ailments before they had a chance to announce where it hurt,” according to Panek (84-85). Moreover, throughout *The Sign of the Four*, Holmes implicitly demonstrates his method of deduction not only on Dr. Watson, but also on the wooden-leg man’s creosote involve with the death scene of Bartholomew Sholto (Doyle, 842). Thus, from Panek’s explanation of Dr. Bell’s teaching skill to Doyle’s depiction of Holmes’s deducing skill, both experts reveals the existence of such impressive person in real life in which allow people to be attracted to not only Holmes’s brief described appearance, but also his intellectual way of proving facts.

Not only has Doyle developed Sherlock Holmes’s characteristic from his former professor, but also implanted some detective tactics of Lecoq, who is created by Emile Gaboriau, on Holmes in which also makes Sherlock Holmes a timeless detective during the Victorian Era. One of the detective strategies Lecoq uses is disguise; Holmes also use disguises in *The Sign of Four*. In addition to his “eccentricity,” as Delamater and Prigozy mention in their entry, “Theory and Practice of Classic Detective Fiction,” Holmes uses disguise to get information about the suspects (22). Moreover, Panek emphasizes Doyle’s idea of Holmes using disguise comes from Gaboriau’s character, Lecoq, who initially uses disguise when solving crimes (82). As shown in *The Sign of the Four*, Holmes says, “‘Here, he is,--wig, whiskers, eyebrows, and all. I thought my disguise was pretty good, but hardly expected that it would stand that test’” to reveal himself in front of Watson and Athelney Jones, and tell them where John Small’s location (Doyle, 1479). Thus, Doyle applies Lecoq’s use of disguises as one of Holmes’s detective tactics in which emphasizes the fact that no matter what, Holmes will always find the truth; even with a disguise, Holmes will always bring hope to the Victorian readers.

Though Sir Arthur Conan Doyle develops Sherlock Holmes’s characteristics through other characters, but the creative author manage to thrive a peculiar character trait that is unlike other fictional detectives on Sherlock Holmes throughout his novellas. According to his discussion in “Murder Will Out,” T.J Binyon introduced the term *Sherlockholmitos* to distinguish the unique character traits that proved Sherlock Holmes to be different from other detectives (15). Thus by pointing out Holmes’s detailed deduction, Binyon addresses Holmes’s “showy displays” of “inferences partake the nature of all circumstantial evidence” to emphasizes Holmes’s precision of deduction skill that defined him (15). Even though Sir Arthur Conan Doyle borrowed Holmes’s deductive skills from Dr. Joe Bell, he was able to create and maintain Holmes’s efficient deductions through observations to solve each case. As shown in one of Doyle’s short stories of Sherlock Holmes, “A Scandal in Bohemia,” Holmes was able to deduce the Duke of Bohemia’s significant photo by asking the Duke simple, yet useful questions to discover the power of that picture of the Duke’s (Doyle). Holmes was able to know the reason behind the Duke’s request in a short amount of time, which not only amazed Dr. Watson, but also surprised the readers by his ways of finding the truth. Because of Holmes’s eagerness of solving a case and finding the truth, readers are emotionally attached to the style of Doyle’s writing. If Doyle did not develop some rational stubborn elements that distinguishes Sherlock Holmes from other detective, then Sherlock Holmes would not be as unique as he was, and still is; Doyle’s readers expect Sherlock Holmes to be a bit egoistic and showy because that’s what makes him classic.

In addition to his unique *Sherlockholmitos* model, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle derives a savior characteristic from Holmes, distinguishing Sherlock Holmes as a person who restore the Victorian readers normalcy after the wars. As John McBratney highlights in his article, “Racial and Criminal Types: Indian Ethnography and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Sign of Four,*” Sherlock Holmes was portray as “the guardian of social order,” as he agreed to investigate on a crime or mystery (162). Because of his dedication to solving mystery, Holmes neglects the unnecessary knowledge that would be irrelevant and useless to him in which makes him “seem beyond the system” as an “outsider,” when he is actually an “insider who merely gives the appearance of being alien,” according to McBratney (162). Thus in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s earliest novel of Sherlock Holmes, *A Study in Scarlet*, little did Dr. Watson knows about Holmes’s knowledge of the solar system, which reveals the fact that Holmes choose to ignore those fact that would be a waste to remain in memory (Doyle). Furthermore, T.J Binyon addresses in “Murder Will Out,” that Sherlock Holmes is “isolated from the rest of humanity” (10) in which John McBratney enhances the fact that “he [Holmes] is that point of discontinuity within the continuity of the social network that ensures its perpetuation” in the society (162). As result in the beginning of “A Scandal in Bohemia,” Watson mentions that Holmes unravels “those mysteries which had been abandoned as hopeless by the official police,” to restore the regulation of society. From his genuine service, Sherlock Holmes truly is the “guardian” of Victorians, who brings hope to the people with his intelligent deduction through observation.

Indeed, with his precise deduction and peculiar habits, Sherlock Holmes gives hope to the Victorians after the devastating wars between the nations. Thus Sir Arthur Conan Doyle indeed projects the best image of Sherlock Holmes in his novellas to keep the Victorians with hope through Holmes’s adventures. No matter he was generated from Joe Bell’s persona, or Lecoq’s detective tactics, without Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s eccentric *Sherlockholmitos*, Sherlock Holmes wouldn’t be as unique as he is now and wouldn’t have much impact on the people of Victorian Era. Even though he is not a real person, but under Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s pen, Sherlock Holmes almost seems like an invisible guardian, who watches over every move in England and makes sure nothing escape his eyes.

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