Elisa Huang

Professor Matthew Harrison

Writing 39B

26 July 2014

Phenomena of Sherlock Holmes

 By layering various fictional characters and real people’s characteristic, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle derives the beauty of Sherlock Holmes throughout his renowned stories. From imitating Joe Bell’s personas and Lecoq’s detective tactics, Doyle embeds the fundamental Sherlock Holmes in his earlier novels. Thus, Doyle establishes Holmes’ characteristics with a combination of eccentricity and deduction that distinguishes Sherlock Holmes with the title, beyond doubt, “world’s first consulting detective” (Delamater and Prigozy, 22).

 Through imitating Joe Bell’s personas, Doyle generates Sherlock Holmes as a consulting detective from Bell’s deduction skills. 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’s 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 as his protagonist (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). Thus in *The Sign of the* Four, Holmes suggests, “For example, observation shows me that you have been to the Wigmore Street Post-Office this morning, but deduction lets me know that when there you dispatched a telegram,” (236) to show his method of deduction through Dr. Watson. Throughout *The Sign of the Four*, Holmes implicitly demonstrates his method of deduction on not only Dr. Watson, but also on the wooden-leg man’s creosote involve with the death scene of Bartholomew Sholto (Doyle, 842). Therefore, from the development of Holmes’s characteristic through Dr. Bell’s persona, it reinforces Sherlock Holmes as an exclusive character yet, reveals the existence of such impressive person in real life.

 Not only has Doyle developed Sherlock Holmes’s characteristic from his former professor, but also implanted some detective tactics of Lecoq on Holmes in his novels, which also makes Sherlock Holmes a unique detective. One of the detective strategies Holmes uses is disguise. 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). Thus, as shown in *The Sign of the Four*, when 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’” (2201) to reveal himself in front of Watson and Athelney Jones, and tell them where John Small’s location. Therefore, some elements of Holmes’s playfulness characteristics as a detective come from a fictional French detective, Lecoq.

 Though Sir Arthur Conan Doyle thrives Sherlock Holmes’s characteristic through other characters, he was able to project 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 efficiency of deriving deduction 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). Therefore, Sherlock Holmes proudly demonstrates his way of deduction throughout the novel in which proves Sir Arthur Conan Doyle success of *Sherlockholmitos,* as Binyon discussed, in his novellas.

 In addition to his unique *Sherlockholmitos* model, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle derives a savior characteristic on Holmes that distinguishes Sherlock Holmes from other detectives’ characteristics. 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 make him “seem[s] 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.

 Nonetheless, 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.

Works Cited

Binyon, T.J. "*Murder Will Out": The Detective in Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. Print.

Conan Doyle, Arthur. *The Sign of the Four*. Seattle: Amazon Digital Services, 2013. Kindle eBook. Online.

Delamater, Jerome and Ruth Prigozy, eds. *Theory and Practice of Classic Detective Fiction.*New York: Praeger, 1997. Print.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. “Adventure 1: “A Scandal in Bohemia”.” *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes.* Lit2Go Edition. 1894. Web. July 23, 2014.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. *A Study in Scarlet*. Project Gutenberg Edition. 1887. Web. July 23, 2014.

McBratney, John. “Racial and Criminal Types: Indian Ethnography and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Sign of Four.*” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 33:1 (2005): 149-167. *JSTOR*. Web. 01/15/2014.

Panek, Leroy. *An Introduction to the Detective Story*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987. Print.