

Detecting Meaning with Sherlock Holmes*

Sherlock Holmes in Translation

based on slides by Uganda Kwan

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SH in China

- SH introduced into China in 1896 (光緒二十二年)
 - Shiwu Bao 《時務報》 Chinese Progress
 - Serialized (non-fiction) magazine

- Chinese modernization was not uniform
 - “Why Should We Learn from the Barbarians?”
 - China resisting foreign knowledge 1840-1860
 - Partial absorption 1860-1890 (self strengthening movement)
 - Conscious learning 1895-
 - Wholesale westernization 1911-1917

True Crime

➤ The first stories were:

1. 《英包探勘盜密約案》 1896.9.27–10.27 (Vol 6-9) [NAVA](#)
2. 《記伢者復仇事》 1896.11.5-25 (Vol 10-12) [CROO](#)
3. 《繼父誑女破案》 1897.4.22—5.12 (Vol 24-26) [IDEN](#)
4. 《呵爾唔斯緝案被戕》 1897.5.22-6.20 Vol27-30) [FINA](#)

➤ Rewritten from first person to third person

- Matches the Chinese court case/ kung-an 公案
- common in late Imperial China
- this matches the readers' taste and social convention

➤ Subsequent translations treated the stories as fiction

夏洛克·福爾摩斯

- Xiàluòkè Fú'ěrmósī
- Translations came in through Hokkien
 - Sherlock Holmes
 - “歇洛克. 呵尔唔斯” 1895-6
Translated by Lin Shu (1852-1924) from Fu Jian province who spoke Hokkien
this would be pronounced “ho-ee-mo-see” or “hock-ee-buah-see”
 - 休洛克福而摩司 1902
 - 福尔摩斯 1904 — 5

Cheng, Xiaoqing (程小青)

- Cheng Xiaoqing (1893-1976) was the most popular author of Chinese detective fiction in the first half of the twentieth century
- He translated Holmes stories into both classical Chinese and then vernacular
- He then went on to write his own crime series set in Shanghai
 - Huo Sang (\approx Sherlock)
 - Bao Lang (\approx Watson)
 - The duo lived in a spacious apartment on Aiwen Road, where Huo Sang played the violin (badly) and smoked Golden Dragon cigarettes as he mulled over his cases.
- a 1940s edition of his Huo Sang stories ran to 30 volumes!

Bibliography

- Cheng Xiaoqing (2007) *Sherlock in Shanghai: Stories of Crime and Detection* Tr. Timothy C. Wong. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, ISBN 978-0-8248-3099-1
- Christian Metz (1974) *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* [Essais sur la signification au cinéma], Oxford University Press, 1974