Detecting Meaning with Sherlock Holmes*

The Great Game: Sherlock in Popular Culture
Sherlock Holmes and Herlock Sholmès

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Overview

➢ The popularity of Sherlock Holmes

➢ An Introduction to Copyright

➢ Copyright and Sherlock Holmes

➢ Transmission of information

➢ Copyright and Lexicons

➢ The Great Game

The popularity of Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock Holmes Published Chronology

➤ 1859: Doyle Born

➤ 1887: *A Study in Scarlet*

➤ 1890: *The Sign of the Four*

➤ July 1891 to December 1892: Stories that would make up *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* published in The Strand magazine

➤ December 1892 to November 1893: Stories that would make up *The Memoirs of* Sherlock Holmes published in The Strand — Break from Holmes

➤ 1901-2 (serial): *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

➤ October 1903 to January 1905: Stories that would make up *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* published in The Strand

➤ 1908–1913, 1917: Stories that would make up *His Last Bow* (short stories) published.

➤ 1914-15: *The Valley of Fear*

- ➤ 1921–1927: Stories that would become *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes* published.

- ➤ 1930: Doyle Dies

Sherlock Holmes Internal Chronology

1794 Bow Street Runners formed (Britain's first police force)

1829 Metropolitan Police formed (at Great Scotland Yard)

1852 John H. Watson is born (date derived from STUD)

1854 Sherlock Holmes is born (date derived from LAST)

1874 Holmes's first case, during the vacation after his second year of college (GLOR)

1891 Sherlock Holmes dies (FINA) — the Great Hiatus

1894 Just kidding — he comes back, stronger than ever (EMPT)

1914 *His Last Bow* (LAST)

see Sherlock Holmes: a complete chronology by Chris J Miller or Life and Times of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, John H. Watson, M.D., Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Other Notable Personages by Leslie Klinger for more details.

Popularity

➢ *A Study in Scarlet* (STUD 1887) was not so popular

➢ The short stories, appearing in *The Strand*, became very popular

➢ Doyle preferred his historical fiction, in November 1891 he wrote to his mother: "*I think of slaying Holmes,... and winding him up for good and all. He takes my mind from better things.*"
His mother responded, "*You won't! You can't! You mustn't!*"

➢ When he did kill off Sherlock Holmes in *The Final Case* (FINA) City of London stockbrokers donned black armbands, and some 20,000 angry readers canceled their Strand subscriptions!

➢ The publication of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (HOUN) was a huge success. Queues formed to buy copies and *The Strand* had to go to a seventh printing for the only time in its history.

➢ *Collier's Weekly* in America offered such an enormous sum of money ($25,000: $650,000 in current USD) for new Holmes stories that Conan Doyle brought him back to life in *The Adventure of the Empty House* (EMPT)

➢ Doyle continued to write Holme's stories until 3 years before his death.

$25,000 is $650,000 in current USD, the highest sum ever paid to an author at the time (Drake, 2009).

Why were they so popular?

➤ People liked Doyle's style

➤ the stories were self-contained but featuring the same two main characters

  ➤ you didn't have to worry about following the plot if you missed a story
  ➤ but there was still some continuity
  ➤ the relationship between Holmes and Watson was popular
  ➤ Holmes offers genius combined with quirky independence
  ➤ Watson is sensible, generous, kind, loyal and decent

➤ the cost of paper had fallen due to cheap imported wood-pulp

➤ printing presses were more sophisticated and ran faster

➤ the 1870 Education Act meant more people could read

➤ reduced working hours introduced the notion of leisure time

    People had time to read and wanted to: each month queues formed at the news-stands on the day that the Strand Magazine was due to appear

Adaptions: Plays

➢ Doyle tried to write a play, but it was turned down

➢ William Gillette (actor and playwright) rewrote it: taking elements from several stories and adding a love interest (Alice Faulkner) and naming the page boy (Billy).

➢ The play opened in New York in 1899

  ➢ it ran there for more than 260 performances; then toured the United States
  ➢ then on to London's Lyceum Theatre in 1901 for 200 performances (a thirteen-year-old Charlie Chaplin played Billy the pageboy)
  ➢ the show was revived in 1905, 1906, 1910, and 1915
  ➢ The play introduces *Elementary, my dear Watson*, and popularizes the deerstalker hat and the curved pipe as Holmes props.

➢ Doyle then wrote his own (successful) adaptation of SPEC

➢ In 1916, a silent film was made, featuring William Gillette

- ➢ it has been called "the most elaborate of the early movies".
- ➢ a print of the (lost) film was found in the Cinémathèque Française's in 2014
- ➢ You can see it at the Internet Film Archive

Adaptions: Films

➤ Guinness World Records lists Holmes as the "most portrayed movie character": more than 70 actors in over 200 films.

➤ The first screen appearance was in the 30-second 1900 Mutoscope film: *Sherlock Holmes Baffled*

➤ New films appeared almost every year since then

➤ Basil Rathbone appeared in 14 films, starting with HOUN in 1939

➤ Robert Downey, Jr. (2009, 2011)

➤ Ian McKellen (2015) *Mr. Holmes*

Adaptions: TV

➢ Jeremy Brett appeared in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

   ➢ Granada Television films made between 1984 and 1994
   ➢ 41 episodes
   ➢ He had previously appeared as Watson with Charleton Heston as Holmes in *The Crucifer of Blood* (1980)
   ➢ Often thought of as one of the greatest portrayals

➢ Benedict Cumberbatch appears in *Sherlock* (2010–2017)

➢ Jonny Lee Miller appears in *Elementary* (2012–present) with Lucy Liu as Joan Watson

Holmes in America

➢ In the 19th century, England produced more books than America

    ➢ American copyright laws only protected American authors
    ➢ Before 1891 there was no protection at all
    ➢ After 1891, foreign authors could claim copyright and if a book was published in the US, then it could not be imported

➢ So the first two novels could be printed by anybody!

    ➢ Many, many editions came out

➢ Subsequent books had fewer variants (but were often pirated)

Transformation

➤ Consider SIGN: It came out as

  ➤ *The Sign of Four*   (original)
  ➤ *At the Sign of the Four*
  ➤ *Sign of the Four*
  ➤ *A Sign of Four*
  ➤ *Sherlock Holmes and the Sign of the "4"*
  ➤ *Sherlock Holmes and the Great Agra Treasure*

? Which words change most: content words or function words?

➤ The texts change for several reasons:

  ➤ British/American spelling differences
  ➤ Type setting errors
  ➤ Differing punctuation styles
  ➤ Different paragraph breaks

What changed in SIGN?

Original	Variant	Comment
Tabaccoes	Tabbaccos	UK/US
Cold Harbour	Cold Harbor	UK/US
halloo	hallo	UK/US
card-board	cardboard	hyphenation
mild balsmic	balsamic	error
poured our	poured out	error (r/t)
personal	persoual	error (n/u)
wished	w shed	error (dropped i)
This is not	That is not	change
whiskey-and-soda	whisky and soda	UK/US, hyphenation

Also many more differences in commas/dashes/semicolons (40), hyphenation (5), paragraph breaks (12), ….

What happens when you keep copying?

Consider 6 different editions of SIGN, each based on the one before

Edition	Year	Variation	% increment
Lippincot	1890	0	0.000
Waverly	1893	24	0.059
United States Book	1893	36	0.029
Weeks	1894	113	0.100
Munro	1896	163	0.210
Books, Inc	1922	219	0.136
Kingsport Press	1923	233	0.034

➤ The quality of the text (the signal) degrades.

➤ A well known problem with analog transmission

➤ Which is why we move to digital records

Copyright and Licensing

Copyright

➤ Governments grant certain rights to authors of creative works, typically called copyrights in order to encourage them to produce more

   ➤ The most basic right is the right to forbid people from copying it without permission

   ➤ Any work produced is by default copyright of the author

➤ Some or all of these rights can be waived or transferred

   ➤ An author may sell the rights for a manuscript to a publisher

   ➤ A blogger may place their postings in the public domain

   ➤ A publisher may give permission to an author to post their paper on their website

   ➤ A work may be distributed under a license that allows copying only under some conditions

  * Renumeration was clearly important to Doyle: he wrote for money, and he kept writing for money — copyright makes it easier to be paid

- ➢ Copyright is relatively recent: the British Statute of Anne 1710, *An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or purchasers of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned* was the first copyright statute, although cities, popes and royal families had granted limited monopolies earlier.

  - ➢ Before printing, copyright was not really necessary
  - ➢ It was very much connected to censorship and control of information
  - ➢ It originally applied only to books, but now is applied much more widely: translations, maps, performances, paintings, photographs, films, programs, …

- ➢ Copyright laws are national laws, although they may be harmonized by treaties

  - ➢ A text may be illegal to copy in one country, but legal in another

- ➢ Copyright laws change over time

  - ➢ E.g. in the U.S. originally 14 years for books only

➢ Now 70 years after the death of the author for almost everything (but not recipes or fashion!)

➢ New technology complicates things

   ➢ Sending email involves making multiple copies on different servers
   ➢ Recording speech can happen without the creator's knowledge

* International copyright was important to Doyle — it was American publishers who paid the advance for HOUN

But copyright also restricts

➢ Many translations and pastiches flourished — current copyright laws would stop them

➢ Copyright on most of the stories stopped in the year 2000, so Holmes is now in the public domain (except the last few stories in the US)

➢ This is one of the factors that has enabled the recent flood of new Holmes-based films and TV (and books)

  ➢ it costs nothing to use the characters
  ➢ you can make changes to them without asking for permission to the copy-right holder

➢ It was one of the reasons I chose the texts for my research

➢ Lack of copyright allows people to use, enjoy and extend the stories and characters

Copyright issues are very complicated

Some Rough Guidelines

➤ Copying something which is under copyright is illegal unless specific permission is granted or it falls under **fair dealing**, such as for the purpose of research or education

➤ How can you get permission?

  ➤ You can buy it (for some works)
  ➤ You can get signed permission from the copyright holder
    (or recorded permission for preliterate speakers)
  ➤ You can get implicit permission (e.g. for email or web pages)
  ➤ It can be permitted by a license
    ∗ **CC-by** allows you to copy and redistribute if you acknowledge
    ∗ **CC-by-nc** allows you to copy and redistribute if you acknowledge and it is for non-commercial use

➢ The following factors will be considered to decide if it is fair dealing (in Singapore)

  ➢ purpose and character of the dealing, including whether such dealing is of a commercial nature or is for non-profit educational purposes
  ➢ nature of the work or adaptation
  ➢ amount copied, relative to the whole work
  ➢ effect of the dealing upon the potential market for the work, and effect upon its value
  ➢ the possibility of obtaining the work or adaptation within a reasonable time at an ordinary commercial price
  ➢ whether the copy is for the purpose of criticism or review; for the purpose reporting of news; for the purpose of judicial proceedings or professional advice (a sufficient acknowledgment of the work is required)
  ➢ it is not an infringement if a person makes a copy from an original copy of a computer program as a back-up

Copyright for Corpora

➤ Arguments for restrictive licensing

    ➤ Competitive advantage (common for speech corpora)
    ➤ Compensation for the effort of creation
    ➤ Minimize effect on the value of the original work

➤ Arguments for open licensing

    ➤ Annotation is expensive: making the data open gets the best return on this investment
    ➤ Annotation is typically ongoing: opening the data gets you more feedback
    ➤ Researchers are evaluated by the impact that their work has: open data generally has more impact.
    ➤ Language data is part of our shared heritage

Choice of License if you create data

➢ Should be considered early on (before you start compiling your corpus)

➢ May depend on the funding body

➢ Depends on the source data

➢ General trend is to open licensing

  ➢ Open Science Project
  ➢ Open Access Journals
  ➢ Open Source Software

➢ Try to chose a standard license (such as Creative Commons)

➢ NTU's policy: "The final research data from projects carried out at NTU shall be made available for sharing (via the NTU Data Repository) unless there are prior formal agreements with external collaborators and parties on non-disclosure or proprietary use of the data." NTU's default license is CC-BY-NC

Creative Commons Licenses

License	Derivative Works	Same License	Commercial Use
CC-BY	+	-	+
CC-BY-SA	+	+	+
CC-BY-NC	+	-	-
CC-BY-ND	-	-	+
CC-BY-NC-SA	+	+	-
CC-BY-NC-ND	-	-	-

BY Attribution (all licenses)

SA Share Alike (requires copies to have the same license)

NC Non-Commercial   (Not Open)

ND No Derivatives (allows only exact copies)   (Not Open)

Many, many other license also exist (GPL, MIT, BSD, Apache, …)

The Open Definition

➤ The Open Definition sets out principles that define **openness** in relation to data and content.

➤ It makes precise the meaning of **open** in the terms **open data** and **open content** and thereby ensures quality and encourages compatibility between different pools of open material.

➤ It can be summed up in the statement that:

"Open means anyone can freely access, use, modify, and share for any purpose (subject, at most, to requirements that preserve provenance and openness)."

➤ Put most succinctly:

"Open data and content can be freely used, modified, and shared by anyone for any purpose"

Spreading Overseas

Transmission

- Writers are also readers and translators are both
- They read, often in multiple languages
- This can inspire new works
- Holmes was partially inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's (1809–1849) "C. Auguste Dupin" a detective even before we had the word!
- Often people imitate style and even reuse characters
  - **pastiche** "a work of art that imitates the style of some previous work"
  - **fanfic** "Amateur fiction created by fans, incorporating the characters and concepts another work, typically without permission from the author or owner"
- We will also look at this in week 12 *Holmes in Translation*.

Sherlock Holmes and Herlock Sholmès

➤ The *Arsène Lupin* stories were written in French by Maurice Leblanc (1864–1941).

➤ They appeared from 1905 to 1939.

➤ In the 1906 story *Sherlock Holmes Arrives Too Late* an aged Holmes meets a young Lupin for the first time.

➤ Conan Doyle objected to the use of the name, and when the stories were collected in a book, the English detective Herlock Sholmes appeared instead.

➤ He appeared in two more stories.

➤ When they were translated into English and published in the US in 1910, the names were further changed to Holmlock Shears and his assistant Wilson.

The books
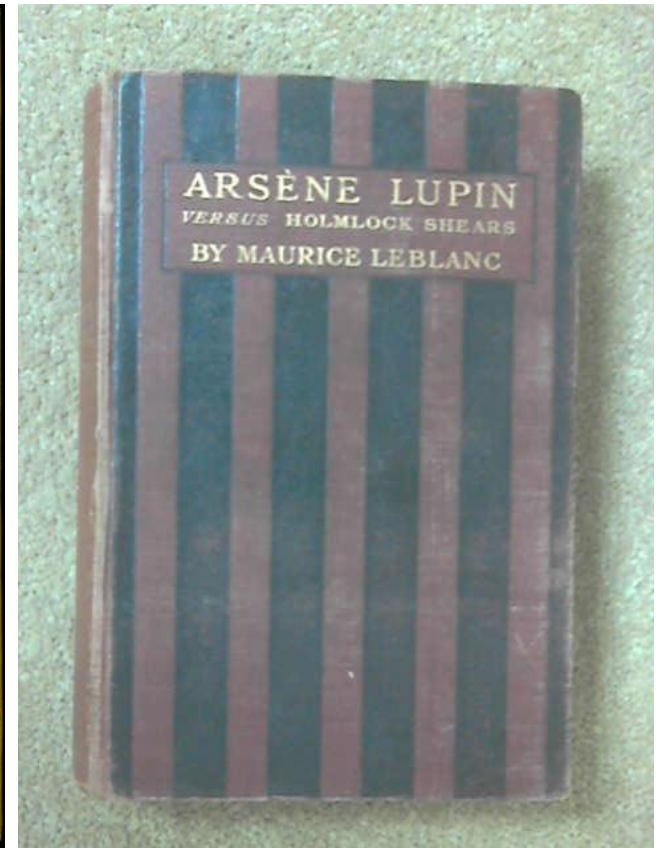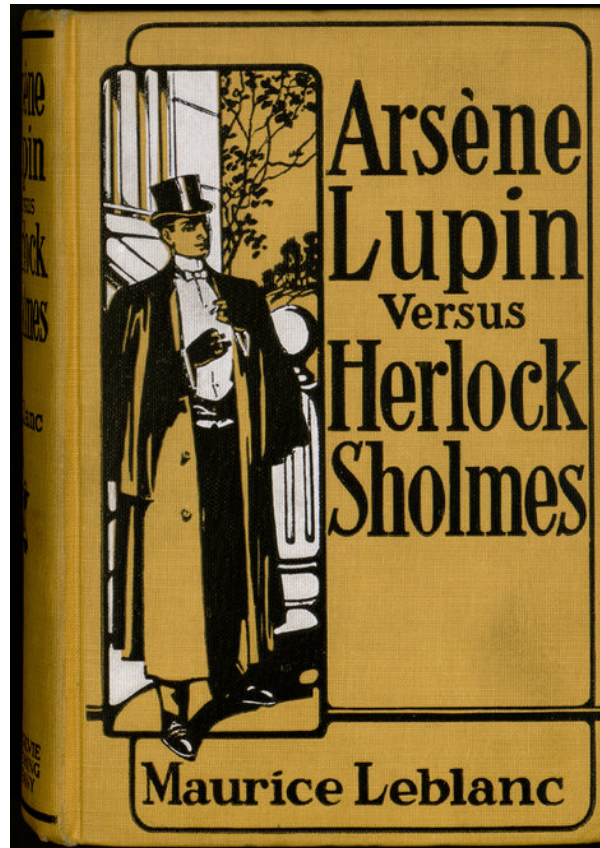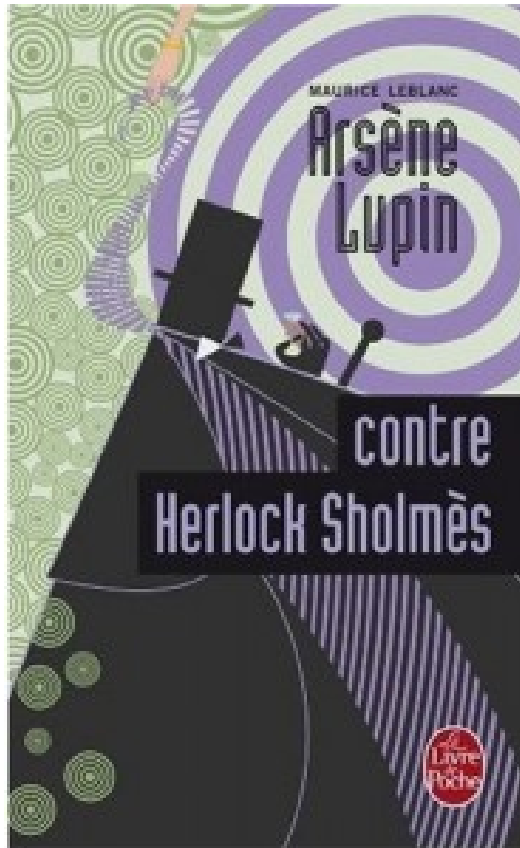
➤ A series of 230 cheap pulp novels ran from 1907 to 1911 in Germany.

  ➤ The first ten had Holmes as the hero, with the series title *Detective Sherlock Holmes und seine weltberühmten abenteuer* "Sherlock Holmes' Most Famous Cases"

  ➤ Fearing legal issues the series was changed to *Aus dem Geheimakten des Weltdetektivs* "The Secret Files of the King of Detectives"; Holmes was still the hero, but his side kick was Harry Taxon.

➤ These were translated in French as *Les Dossiers Secrets de Sherlock Holmes* "Sherlock Holmes' Secret Files" but changed from issue 2 to *Les Dossiers Secrets du Roi des Détectives* "The Secret Files of the King of Detectives"

➤ The German series was translated/adapted into Dutch as *Harry Dickson de Amerikaansche Sherlock Holmes* "Harry Dickson, the American Sherlock Holmes", with assistant Tom Wills. The Dutch series lasted 180 issues, until May 1935.

➢ A Belgian publisher asked writer Jean Ray to translate the Dutch series into French: *Harry Dickson, le Sherlock Holmes Americain* began in January 1929.

➢ Ray thought the original stories mediocre and asked permission to rewrite them. The publisher agreed, provided only that each story be about the same length as the original, and match the book's cover illustration!

➢ The series has 178 issues in all (1929–1938)

➢ The stories are set in the 1920s and 1930s.

➢ The stories are far more fantasy-oriented than the true Holmesian canon. Villains include Professor Flax 'the human monster', mummies, Hanuman, Medusa, …

➢ Harry Dickson's fame in France rivals that of Sherlock Holmes and Arsène Lupin.

Holmes in Turkey

➤ Holmes' stories were also popular in Turkey, where in addition to stories by Doyle, the Harry Taxon/Harry Dickson stories were widely translated

➤ Many **pseudo-translation**s flourished "texts which have been presented as translations with no corresponding source texts in other languages ever having existed"

➤ In one series *Sherlock Holmes'in Metresi* "Sherlock Holmes's Mistress", he is a bumbling detective and his mistress Miss Barclay solves the mystery.

➤ He also appears as a character in a popular local crime series: Cingöz Recai "Recai the Shrewd" in *Şerlok Holmes'e Karşı Cingöz Recai* "Sherlock Holmes vs Cingöz Recai"

➤ Two series "The famous English Police Inspector Sherlock Holmes Series" (83 dime novels 1944–1945) and "Sherlock Holmes' Wonderful Adventures" (85 16-page stories) contained a mixture of cut-down versions of the original stories and new stories.

➢ Most of these books were published with neither author or translator shown

The books

Summary

➤ Sherlock Holmes was very, very popular

➤ There are more Holmes stories written by other authors than by Doyle

➤ Stories inspire other stories

➤ Copyright laws attempt to balance the benefits to the authors and the benefit to society

  ➤ Strict copyright gets authors (publishers) money for longer
  ➤ Strict copyright enables people to create more
  ➤ Loose copyright allows authors/translators more freedom
  ➤ Loose copyright allows consumers access to more
  ➤ There are copyright exceptions (research/parody/review/indexing)
  ➤ Big data analysis often ignores copyright

Copyright and Lexicons

Who owns language?

➤ You can't copyright facts: e.g. the weight of an electron

➤ Is a dictionary definition a fact?

  ➤ *dog* "a member of the genus Canis (probably descended from the common wolf) that has been domesticated by man since prehistoric times; occurs in many breeds"

➤ The definition shows some creativity

? Can you come up with a better definition?

? Are some words easier to define and why?

- ➤ What part-of-speech a word is, how it is translated, collocations it appears in and declensions and variant spellings almost certainly can not be copyrighted

- ➤ The choice of which words to put in, format, division into senses (the **macrostructure**) can probably be copyrighted

- ➤ The wordings of definitions can also probably be copyrighted, but there is a long tradition of following earlier definitions quite closely

- ➤ Terminology shows less creativity
  "It is highly unlikely that even the fine-tuned expert definitions found in national and international standards would qualify as … unique expression. Standard definitions are frequently reused in other standards, in general and technical texts, and in terminology databases" Wright (1996: 2), cited in Alberts and Jooste (2012)

- ➤ Examples cited in dictionaries are normally so short as to not be protected

by copyright — standard practice is to never ask for permission to cite them, but to properly cite them (Landau, 1989)

The Great Game

The Sherlockian Game

➢ The Great Game (aka the Sherlockian game, the Holmesian game) is the pastime of attempting to resolve anomalies and clarify implied details about Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson using the canon.

➢ *canon* "a collection of books accepted as holy scripture especially the books of the Bible recognized by any Christian church as genuine and inspired"

➢ It is common to distinguish between the *canon* and *apocrypha* "14 books of the Old Testament included in the Vulgate (except for II Esdras) but omitted in Jewish and Protestant versions of the Bible; eastern Christian churches (except the Coptic Church) accept all these books as canonical; the Russian Orthodox Church accepts these texts as divinely inspired but does not grant them the same status"

➢ The canon of Sherlock Holmes consists of the 56 short stories and four novels written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

➢ The great game treats Holmes and Watson as real people and uses aspects of the canonical stories combined with the history of the era of the tales' composition to construct fanciful biographies of the pair.

Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes

This was the essay that sparked things off:

There is, however, a special fascination in applying this method to Sherlock Holmes, because it is, in a sense, Holmes's own method. 'It has long been an axiom of mine,' he says, 'that the little things are infinitely the most important.' It might be the motto of his life's work. And it is, is it not, as we clergymen say, by the little things, the apparently unimportant things, that we judge of a man's character.

If anyone objects, that the study of Holmes literature is unworthy of scholarly attention, I might content myself with replying that to the scholarly mind anything is worthy of study, if that study be thorough and systematic. But I will go further, and say that if at the present time we need a far closer familiarity with Sherlock's methods.

There is a special kind of epigram, known as the Sherlockismus, of which the indefatigable Ratzegger has collected no less than one hundred and seventy-three instances. The following may serve as examples:

'Let me call your attention to the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.'
'The dog did nothing at all in the night-time.'
'That was the curious incident,' said Sherlock Holmes.

And again:

'I was following you, of course.'
'Following me? I saw nobody.'
'That is what you must expect to see when I am following you,' said Sherlock Holmes.

To write fully on this subject would need two terms' lectures at least. Some time, when leisure and enterprise allow, I hope to deliver them. Meanwhile, I have thrown out these hints, drawn these outlines of a possible mode of treatment. You know my methods, Watson: apply them.

? Did anyone notice any hard-to-interpret things in SPEC, DANC and REDH?

Dr. Watson's Christian Name

➤ Watson's name is John H. Watson
"*Somewhere in the vaults of the bank of Cox and Co., at Charing Cross, there is a travel-worn and battered tin dispatch-box with my name, John H. Watson, MD, Late Indian Army, painted upon the lid.*" THOR

➤ But in *The Man with the Twisted Lip* (TWIS) his wife, Mary Morstan, refers to him as James!
"'*It was very sweet of you to come. Now, you must have some wine and water, and sit here comfortably and tell us all about it. Or should you rather that I sent James off to bed?*"

➤ Rejecting the possibility of a misprint, Sayers discovers a possible solution:

> ➤ *Hamish* is a masculine given name in English
> ➤ It is the Anglicised form of the vocative case of the Scottish Gaelic **Seumas**: *Sheumais*.
> ➤ The Scottish Gaelic *Seumas* is the equivalent to the English *James*

➤ So his middle name is Hamish, but Mary Anglicizes it to James.

Indian Animals

➤ In SPEC, we are told "*He has a passion also for Indian animals, which are sent over to him by a correspondent, and he has at this moment a cheetah and a baboon, which wander freely over his grounds, and are feared by the villagers almost as much as their master.*"

➤ But Baboons and Cheetahs come from Africa

➤ For the story it doesn't matter: exotic animal is exotic animal

➤ The story was written early on, when Doyle had just returned to London, was not very wealthy and did not have easy access to libraries

➤ You can see it as a problem of information access or of how we treat otherness

? Can you come up with an explanation that works in canon?

Summary

➤ Fanfiction, fan wikis, and fandom in general are often looked down upon

➤ But they have a long and distinguished history

➤ Many respected novelists have borrowed characters from each other

➤ Many respected novelists are geeks

➤ Studying something minutely helps one to do it better

Father Knox's Ten Commandments

I. The criminal must be someone mentioned in the early part of the story, but must not be anyone whose thoughts the reader has been allowed to follow;

II. All supernatural or preternatural agencies are ruled out as a matter of course;

III. No more than one secret room or passage is allowable. I would add that a secret passage should not be brought in at all unless the action takes place in the kind of house where such devices might be expected;

IV. No hitherto undiscovered poisons may be used, nor any appliance which will need a long scientific explanation at the end;

V. No Chinaman must figure into the story;[1]

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[1] In Msgr. Knox's time, one of the most overused plot mechanisms was the introduction of "a Chinaman" or other foreign, exotic or otherwise unusual character from "another land" as the malefactor. This comment was not intended as a "racist" one, but as a reaction to this plotting mechanism.

VI. No accident must ever help the detective, nor must he ever have an unaccountable intuition which proves to be right;

VII. The detective must not, himself, commit the crime;

VIII. The detective must not light on any clues which are not instantly produced for the inspection of the reader;

IX. The stupid friend of the detective, the Watson, must not conceal any thoughts which pass through his mind; his intelligence must be slightly, but only very slightly, below that of the average reader;

X. Twin brothers, and doubles generally, must not appear unless we have been duly prepared for them

Created as a set of bylaws for the Detection Club (which included G. K. Chesterton, Emma Orczy, Dorothy L. Sayers, Anthony Cox, Agatha Christie)

these Ten Commandments served as a codex for the Club as well as a general code for the writing of detective fiction: Conan Doyle frequently broke them.

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