



A Study in Sherlock Holmes

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Innovate: IA Project Showcase



Research Question: To what extent does Holmes' social impact on public perception of criminology compare to Holmes' impact on the evolution of forensic science between the 1880s and the 1920s?

Background

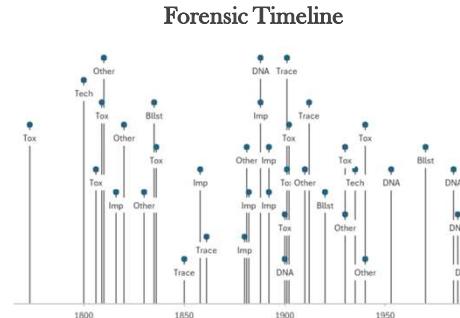
Holmes is "the most portrayed literary human character in film and television." - Guinness World Records 2012

Holmes was inspired by Dr. Joseph Bell (Jann, 1990), under whom Doyle studied medicine at Edinburgh University.

"Sherlock Holmes is a literary institution." - Claire Burgess, Guinness World Records adjudicator

T. S. Eliot—renowned Modernist poet and author—proclaimed that "Every writer owes something to Holmes" (Preston, 1959).

Forensic Timeline



Literature Review

"Scientific detective" - distinguished from Poe's Inspector Dupin through scientific method (Berg, 1970; Snyder, 2004)

Watson's narration: "the reasoner" (Kissane & Kissane, 1963) Detective committed to "pure reason" (Clausen, 1984).

Holmes' deductions: occupation, marital status, interactions with others (Menes, 1981) - "elementary" (Jann, 1990)

Ashton-Wolfe (Illustrated London News) linked forensic methods invented by Doyle to current techniques (Berg, 1970)

Victorian Era was one of the "most influential and important epochs in history" (Cubukcu, 2015)

1829: Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police (Taylor, 2014)

1911: Disguises and plainclothes detective photo

Majority of the 15,000 officers from "exclusively the lower rungs of the social ladder" (Shpayer-Makov, 2009)

Thematic Coding - Qualitative

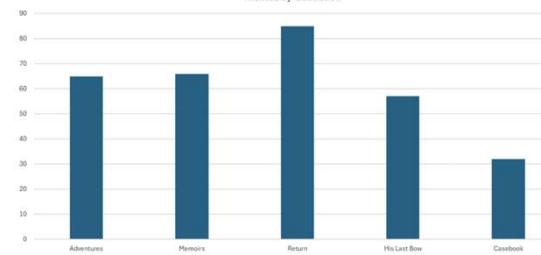
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POPULARITY
QUOTES
AUTHOR
PREVALENCE

HYBRID CODING - Deductive + Inductive Coding
Codes: fingerprint, observation, deduction, police, crime
Categories: Deductive reasoning, disguises, intel gathering, etc.

"Holmes fell upon his knees upon the floor and, with the lantern and a magnifying lens, began to examine minutely the cracks between the stones. A few seconds sufficed to satisfy him, for he sprang to his feet again and put his glass in his pocket." (pg. 9)	Magnifying lens	Cracks	Observations	Usage of deductive reasoning and observations
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Themes by Collection



Hypothesis

Forensic significance = Overestimated
Social impact = Underestimated
and greater than the forensic significance



Public Perception
On criminology norms



Conclusion

Hypothesis was supported (ANOVA yielded $p < 0.05$)

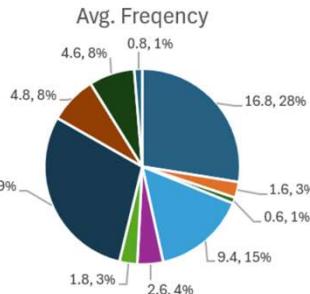
Three most common themes were existentially social in nature:

Usage of detective reasoning and observations

Complicated relationship with law enforcement officers
Genuine dedication to solving crimes and protecting the public

While the forensic significance of Holmes remains unquantified due to lack of access to physical London criminal records and investigation files, it remains second to his social significance and his influence on shaping public perception of criminology.

Results



- Usage of deductive reasoning and observations
- Affluent citizens turned to and trusted Holmes
- Mistrust of Holmes
- Holmes' complicated relationship with law enforcement officers
- Holmes operates outside the law when necessary
- Holmes does not firmly enforce capital punishment
- Holmes' genuine dedication to solving and protecting the public from crime
- Holmes' complex nature
- Diverse knowledge
- Modern detective

ANOVA

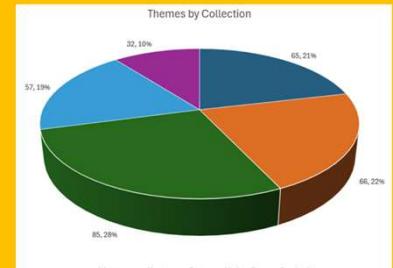
$$p = 1.8835E - 8$$

$$p < 0.05$$

$$F = 11.1304$$

Significantly significant difference
FREQUENCY per THEME

Next Steps



Randall Stock's BSI Poll:

Ranking the Holmes Novels

Story	Points	Rating
1. <i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i> (179)	880	100
2. <i>The Sign of the Four</i> (24)	602	68
3. <i>A Study in Scarlet</i> (23)	535	61
4. <i>The Valley of Fear</i> (17)	413	47



Acknowledgements

Link to full paper and complete references

Thank you!