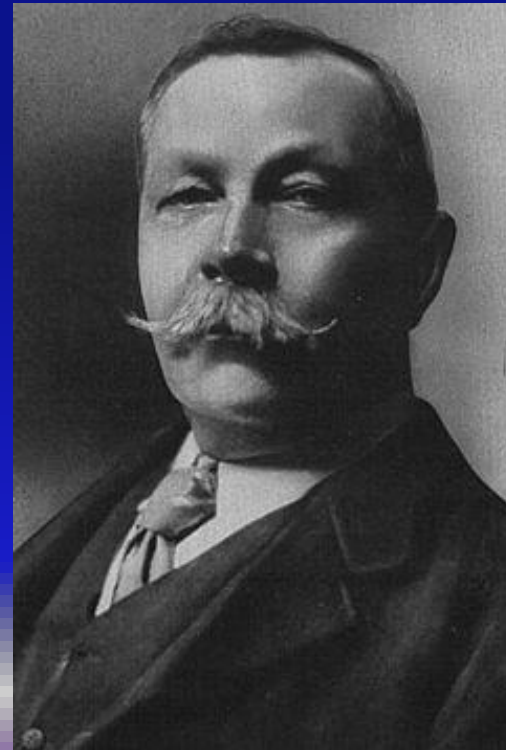


The Classical Formula

- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
(1859 – 1930)



Influences On Conan Doyle

- **Eugène François Vidocq** (1775-1857) who had been a police informer, a thief-turned cop, and who became the first head of the Sûreté (the French police Force). Vedoc (early 1800s)
- **Emile Gaboriau** (1832-1873) – French detective fiction writer. Detective Lecoq, reformed criminal.
- **Wilkie Collins** (1824 – 1889) – English – Victorian fiction writer
- **Charles Dickens** (1812 – 1870) –English – Serialized fiction
- **Edgar Allan Poe** (1809 – 1849) – American –

Influences On Conan Doyle

Profession of Medicine:

- He was a doctor – he practiced, he traveled
- In Medical School –

- Dr. Joe Bell – his medical school teacher who was a

- great diagnostician--diagnosis on the spot
- observant analyst – amazed young Doyle

Bell saw things and added them up

Doyle then creates Sherlock Holmes

Other Influences on Doyle as a Writer

- Literacy of the general public expanding at this time
- Victorian period ideas = keeping order and justice is important
- Goodness needs to be restored to society
 - Holmes is the agent of order

1887 – Conan Doyle Writes First Sherlock Holmes Story –

- The World – Victorian England
- 1895 is *the* main year - 1881 – 1903 - Holmes and Dr. Watson live on Baker Street

Origins of Sherlock Holmes

- “A Study in Scarlet” first story
- Serialization – wrote for *The Strand Magazine*
- “A Scandal of Bohemia”
- Later – “Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes”



"HURRY GIVE ME A BOX OF THE LITTLE"

The World – Victorian England

- 1895 is the main year
- Values taken for granted by British society.
 - a Middle class rises from the industrial revolution – many live in comfort, material wealth –
- Great middle class concern with objects and money.
- Ability to rise in class structure
-

The World – Victorian England

- Increase in leisure time – reading / art / literature. 1870s forward – more literacy
- Magazines published – reading as component of a culture
- Family, politics, responsibility
- It is important to “play by rules” of this society.

The World – Victorian England

- Belief in PROGRESS of humanity
- England – hierarchy of social classes – outward signs of wealth –
- People are aware of their “place”
- Belief in monarchy and values and order – the structure
- Stay in your place and keep overall order –
- AVOID SCANDAL

The World – Victorian England

- The right ORDER OF THINGS:
- White English / American male.....women second
- Then “Other” people
- Look for this set of cultural ideas as foundation for the way in which Holmes approaches crime, solving it, the world, etc.

CLASSICAL FORMULA

- “Speckled Band” – one of Doyle’s favorite
- Conventions of the Mystery become set in these stories and novels.

PLOT

Sherlock Holmes stories structured a certain way

- Detective introduced to establish his reputation, skill, genius in detection
- Watson recalls Holmes cases – Speckled Band as unusual

PLOT

- Client /Victim typically arrives in Holmes & Watson's quarters
 - Holmes and Watson are at home visited by client with a problem.
 - There is usually a mysterious death and odd circumstances (ie: cheetah, baboon, band of gypsies).

PLOT

- Holmes establishes his powers of observation
- Explains the situation to audience

PLOT

- Presentation of crime itself and clues that will lead to solving.
- In “The Speckled Band”
 - Helen Stoner – in great terror because of problem with stepfather
 - Flashback of story – presents series of clues Holmes listening (Watson too)
- these clues offer few clear solutions to us, audience

PLOT

“The Speckled Band”

- Holmes investigates – and is intrigued
- Detective questions several witnesses and those involved – young woman and stepfather.....
- Holmes checks on the will first - money and property
- Looks for motive
 - stepfather is a suspect.
 - gypsies are suspect – red herrings appear (false possibility)
lead dog's scent astray by smell of fish.....

Holmes checks other witnesses, pieces of info., false info....

PLOT

- Detective prevails....knows....finds the SOLUTION
 - Police are inadequate
Inspector Lestrade – (Holmes feels superior)
 - Solution is dramatic revelation of the criminal's identity
- Watson can't put clues together himself

PLOT

- Watson can't put clues together himself
- Holmes sets things up that will occur---he has solved it but Watson and we/audience have not
- Dramatic revelation = the speckled band is a snake
- Snake has been trained to kill in order to gain inheritance/property

PLOT

- Classical mysteries come with sense of order restored when mystery is solved in the end.
- Holmes has no pangs of conscience when Roylet killed – order and morality is restored.
- Pleasure and closure when things come back together in end.

CHARACTERS

- Holmes = a detective who is an eccentric amateur
– a consulting detective called in to solve things on basis of his reputation
- Watson = his companion – good natured but not as astute as detective
- Bachelors living together

CHARACTERS

- Victims = secondary and depicted with less detail. We're not as interested in them as we are in the detective
Helen Stoner not a very vivid character
- Villains = varied – arch criminals in Doyle - men who have stepped to dark side - who were good but are turned around by greed, jealousy, etc.

CHARACTERS

- Suspects = other possible criminals that complicate matters – gypsies
- Police = thick headed who can't see beyond the obvious

CHARACTERS

- “The Final Problem”
 - Moriarty = the most evil man alive
- Their final confrontation – is a very different criminal problem
 - Moriarty is villainous figure who is the equal of Holmes as a heroic detective figure
-

Holmes' Demise

- Conan Doyle does do away with Holmes – and his archrival Moriarty in “The Final Problem”
- Much to the dismay of the audience.
- 1903 Doyle writes *Hounds of the Baskervilles* – that is set prior to the “The Final Problem” – the events of that novel occurred prior to death above.

POINT OF VIEW

- Conventional
 - Often 1st person narrator – Dr. Watson –
- There is some variety in novels or stories
- The teller doesn't lay out everything for reader

POINT OF VIEW

- Watson's point of view narration “withholds” information because Watson he doesn't see all.
- Not omniscient

THEMES

- Reassurance
- Victorian – reassertion **NEED TO** restore order in society by catching worst criminals

THEMES

- Society needs Holmes who can reason through all this –goes beyond the simple scientific method to solve crimes.
- p. 52 – Holmes states that it is “a wicked world[and] when a clever man turns mind to crime it is the worst of all.”
- Destroying villain does not bother the Victorian conscience in the least bit.

The WORLD – ISOLATED

- Central detective character is loner, eccentric. Lives own style of life.
- There is certain ennui and dissatisfaction with life. Holmes' addiction, etc.

The WORLD = ISOLATION

- Isolation: = physical world of classical typical mystery.
- Crime happens in separate world – Stoke Moran 200 years old, falling down –
 - “the locked room mystery”
 - isolated in the country all that can be known is in one isolated spot. –

The WORLD = ISOLATION

- An underlying theme in turn of century Victorian society – chaos and disorder threatens – but a rational person with strong intellect can prevail and restore rational order.
- Set of Victorian values of order is restored.
- Conan Doyle reinforces these ideas in all stories.

The WORLD = REASON

- CLASSICAL formula affirms power of the observant intellect –to find an explanation for the inexplicable and to bring order out of disorder – at the heart of Sherlock Holmes stories and all that they influence –
-

The WORLD = REASON

- Only a particular kind of **detective** can see the truth because of how he looks at things... with his capacity for observation and reasoning.

The WORLD = REASSURANCE

- World already circumscribed and easy to put back together, as a result
- Order is restored – Sense of things brought back to where they should be:
 - girl can be married
 - evil villain removed entirely
- Satisfaction at pleasure of closure