

Master's Thesis Abstract

Student ID Number: 22 GH 205

Name:

The Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Major Program / Course :
• Modern Inter-Cultural Studies Course

Yuma Yamada

Title

Masculinity in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories

In the nineteenth century Britain, with industrialization and urbanization, everything including work and life were forced to adapt to the new society. That caused a vague anxiety become prevalent across Britain. It was a time when the roles of men and women were more clearly divided than now, and men had a common ideology, masculinity. It is also seen as encompassing qualities such as physical courage, chivalric ideals, virtuous fortitude, was not only a paradigm for male behavior and morality, but also a catalyst for reorganizing and stabilizing an unstable social fabric. However, many cultural researchers say that there was a crisis of masculinity as the era moved toward *fin de siècle*. The qualities required of men changed during this period.

Sherlock Holmes, the main character of the detective stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, was active in that era. In the second narrative, when Holmes explains his work, he states, "I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection." And even though he had only sought to solve difficult enigmas in earlier stories, after his well-known resurrection from the Reichenbach Falls, Holmes says that he represents justice so far as his feeble powers go in the later story. This shows a change in his attitude toward the case and his work. I hypothesize that this change in his attitude may represent the ideal of masculinity, influenced by the crisis of masculinity.

Holmes' masculinity of the earlier stories is to be scientific. Holmes is a detective who actively incorporated science into his work. Combining his vast knowledge with the scientific methods of observation and deduction as necessary qualities for a detective, Holmes identified and caught criminals, bringing stability once again to the social order that had been shattered by the crime. Having outwitted the police and the criminal, Holmes' intellectual and scientific traits are first put forward by the author as the new masculinity.

From the middle period stories, Holmes remains scientific, but he embodies chivalry more strongly as his masculinity. Holmes condemns those who commit crimes for personal gain. This is because Holmes acquires morality and judges men who had corrupted from the norm of masculinity. Literary scholar Joseph Kestner argues that Holmes monitors not only the social order but also masculinity. Furthermore, he begins to save women, knowing the danger.

In the later period, justice and patriotism are reflected in his masculinity. As long as the crime is committed for self-centered reasons, Holmes becomes a man who is willing to cooperate with the police and who has a strong desire to bring the guilty person to justice. Holmes' justice eventually leads to the capture of agents of espionage activities and others who pose a threat to the state. Once a retired detective, Holmes comes to work again in "His Last Bow", responding to the British government's request for help in interstate affairs. There is evidence of patriotism is in his heart.

Masculinities that Holmes embodies had not shifted with each period, but was acquired gradually and merged with the masculinities that he had previously possessed. The hero, who removes social unrest, would have embodied the ideal of masculinity that is always desired in changing times as a factor that stabilizes society.