

# Representations Of Moriarty In 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Comparative Study Between The Character James Moriarty In Sherlock Holmes : A Game Of Shadow ( 2011 ) Movie And Jim Moriarty In Sherlock (BBC) TV Series As A New Trademark

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**Abstract :** This thesis is based around the new trademarks of Moriarty. The recent adaptations introduce new sides to the character than the ones from Conan Doyle's stories. Therefore, three new trademarks are examined and put in the analysis.

**Keywords:** Comparative Study Between The Character James Moriarty In Sherlock Holmes, Game Of Shadow ( 2011 ) Movie And Jim Moriarty In Sherlock (BBC) TV Series As A New Trademark, Representations Of Moriarty In 21st Century.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The character of Sherlock Holmes is believed to have been inspired from Conan Doyle's own professor, Dr. Joseph Bell. Dr. Bell could diagnose patients' diseases based on minor observations (Lycett, 2008, p. 190). This must have intrigued and fascinated Conan Doyle when he created Sherlock Holmes as one of his fictitious characters. As mentioned, Holmes has been portrayed numerous times since A Study in Scarlet was published and the character continues to be renewed and updated for new audiences. Therefore, Holmes is one of the most portrayed fictive characters in stage and cinematic productions (Porter, 2012, p. 6).

This thesis is based around the new trademarks of Moriarty. The recent adaptations introduce new sides to the character than the ones from Conan Doyle's stories. Therefore, three new trademarks are examined and put in the analysis. The three chosen trademarks are:

1. Moriarty, the Napoleon of Crime
2. Jim Moriarty representing the 20<sup>th</sup> century Villain
3. James Moriarty, the Immortal Anti-hero

When viewing the more recent film and TV-adaptations, how is it possible to view Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's literary works with the character of Sherlock Holmes as a cultural and universal text? It is obvious to see that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's character receives new trademarks in the 21st century. Therefore, this thesis wishes to illustrate and analyse the changes experienced in connection to Sherlock Holmes and thus examine why these changes are possible.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He has a brain of the first order. He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them."

—Sherlock Holmes to Dr Watson speaking about Professors Moriarty, "The final problem".

Holmes described Moriarty as follows:

"He is a man of good birth and excellent education, endowed by nature with a phenomenal mathematical faculty. At the age of twenty-one he wrote a treatise upon the binomial theorem which has had a European vogue. On the strength of it, he won the mathematical chair at one of our smaller universities, and had, to all appearances, a most brilliant career before him. But the man had hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind. A criminal strain ran in his blood, which, instead of being modified, was increased and rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental powers. Dark rumours gathered round him in the University town, and eventually he was compelled to resign his chair and come down to London. He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. He is the organiser of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He has a brain of the first order."

—Holmes in "The Final Problem"

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter compares characterization of Sherlock Holmes and James Moriarty in two different media- literature and films. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original literary stories are compared to the analysis users theories which show the new trade marks that are added to Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty.

### **Selected film and TV adaptations:**

There are number of film and TV adaptations happened in 21st century. It made a new trend in Sherlock Holmes stories and created huge fans in worldwide. It can be said that the character lives over centuries by these type of adaptations. The two chosen film adaptations made Sherlock Holmes gain a new huge fan base in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The elder fan base is joined by newer fans who have discovered the consulting detective. The two film adaptations were blockbusters directed by Guy Ritchie. The first adaptation in 2009 is called Sherlock Holmes. The second adaptation is titled Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows and it premiered in 2011. The two films star Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law acted as the two iconic characters and placed them in Victoria, London.

One of the reasons for incorporating these films is based on a statement from the director. Guy Ritchie wants to make a representation where he could avoid using the cliches that surrounds Sherlock Holmes. He wants to remake the character of Holmes and in order to do so he adds a new trademark to the representation. Holmes is an action hero who is not afraid of going into fights face to face with his bare hands.

The first TV-series adaptation to be included aired its first episode in 2010. Sherlock was an instant success and the creators Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat (imbd.com, a). The characters of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson are portrayed by Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman respectively. The couple still resides at 221B Baker Street, but the television series is set in the 21<sup>st</sup> century London. The TV-series creates moments of origins for certain trademarks and this is the reason for including it.

The TV-series also adds a new trademark to the iconic character. The villain character extremely different from other adaptations. Jim Moriarty plays an IT professional and he is very young compare to other Villains. These TV series revealing some new plot for the audience interest such as the sexual relation between Sherlock Holmes and Jim Moriarty. The second season started by the explanation of Holme's death and the possibility of escaping, and thus these gay relation revealed.

## 4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to uncover a pattern in the newest trademarks, transcripts from the adaptations are analysed. This is done to examine how the trademarks are represented. The trademarks that surround Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories have

survived numerous adaptations in more than 100 years. The trademarks make it possible for audiences to decode the adaptation as a representation of the original Sherlock Holmes' stories. A trademark is a symbol, word or sign which is recognisable by others. Especially in every crime story, there is a villain indeed. Thus, Moriarty is an equal and opposite opponent for Sherlock Holmes. Professor James Moriarty was the arch-enemy of Sherlock Holmes, and the main antagonist of the Sherlock Holmes films, alongside Lord Blackwood in the first film. Whilst he appears to be a respectable mathematics professor, James Moriarty is in fact a criminal mastermind who is linked to a massive network of crime and deception.

### 1. Moriarty: The Napoleon of Crime:

Professor Moriarty was a fictional character from the 19th century Sherlock Holmes novels by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He was an adversary to Sherlock Holmes, a man with knowledge equal to Holmes.

"He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He has a brain of the first order. He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them."

—Sherlock Holmes to Dr Watson speaking about Professors Moriarty, "The final problem".

### 2. Jim Moriarty : Representing the 20<sup>th</sup> century Villain:

"Every fairytale needs a good old-fashioned villain. You need me or you're nothing."

—Moriarty to Sherlock

Jim Moriarty representing the 20<sup>th</sup> century villain. The appearance of the character definitely makes a trade mark in our society. Jim Moriarty appears as an IT professional and a young good looking gentleman. He has the codes to unlock every doors in the world. It's simply related to the Binary codes in Information Technology. The world of technology controlling by simple binary codes and it can be easily access by Jim. However, the character and situations are representing the present cultural situations. So, it has got more acceptance by the audience. The presentation of the character Jim Moriarty definitely plays an exciting problem "The Final Problem" by the people taste. We can also assure one thing that Jim Moriarty: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Villain is the unforgettable villain we have ever met in 20th century.

### 3. James Moriarty, the Immortal Anti-hero:

Professor James Moriarty was the arch-enemy of Sherlock Holmes, and the main antagonist of the Sherlock Holmes films, alongside Lord Blackwood in the first film. Whilst he appears to be a respectable mathematics professor, James Moriarty is in fact a criminal mastermind who is linked to a massive network of crime and deception.

James Moriarty, the best anti-hero ever seen. Sir Arthur wrote this character as the central part of Sherlock Holmes works. Without Moriarty, Sherlock has nothing to do. These characters were created in the old London. But these characters are very relevant to the present society. Hence why, it has the world wide acceptance of Sherlock Holmes stories. They are the immortal stories and characters created by Sir Arthur Conane Doyle.

## 5. CONCLUSION

TV series adaption has influences of the twentieth century because the story and characters developed in this century. The acceptance of the character is the most unique evidence that it has become a trade mark in our society. Jim Moriarty is the anti-hero of 20th century who was recreated in the modern cultural context completely from the essence of the character James Moriarty. Jim Moriarty, the film adaption character reminds the real James Moriarty of the book. This character represents the exact Moriarty whom Arthur has drawn in his book. The visualization of the same cultural context, attitudes, and costumes and so on of the character of Moriarty in the film reminds the real Moriarty. The movie recreates the characters in a way people want to watch.

To wind up, James Moriarty and Jim Moriarty have some similarities. Both of these characters follow the essence of the real villain. The irony is that these two characters introduced in different centuries; the 18th and 20th and these characters are distinct with their cultural context and story. Despite of all the peculiarities, these characters got an envious acceptance in worldwide and remain as the most acclaimed villain in the history of literature till date. It reveals that the character of Moriarty has become a new trade mark.

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