

BUFFALO THEATRE ENSEMBLE

PRESENTS



By Jeffrey Hatcher

Directed by Ron May

Sept. 5 – Oct. 6
Preview Sept. 5
The Playhouse Theatre

Time and Setting: 1894, a remote asylum

Characters:

Watson
Dr. Evans
Orderly
Matron
Holmes 1
Holmes 2
Holmes 3

Director's Note:

A lot of successful filmmakers have had their share of duds.

Few seem to get the kind of “get out of jail free” card that are dealt to M. Night Shyamalan.

I suspect that has much to do with the overwhelming success of his first jaw-dropper THE SIXTH SENSE. A film that leads you one way only to completely pull the rug out from under you in the last reel subverting everything you thought was real and sending you spinning deliriously trying to recalibrate some sense of reality. You thought you were ahead of things the whole time only to find out the story was actually way ahead of YOU.

That's a profoundly enjoyable experience... that kind of surprise. The proliferation of elevelty million versions of LAW AND ORDER - which operate on that same, “whodunit, I bet you can't surprise me” – logic attests to it. We eat it up.

And with every new Shyamalan film comes the hope that perhaps THIS will be the one to capture the magic that first one brought us. THIS will be the one to surprise us the way that one did. The promise of that particular kind of magic is something so intensely exciting it's almost like it's wired into our DNA.

It's precisely the kind of twisted magic at work in many Sherlock Holmes stories – and especially the one we've had the joy of playing with – Jeffrey Hatcher's HOLMES AND WATSON.

The ending is many things.

Elementary... is not one of them.

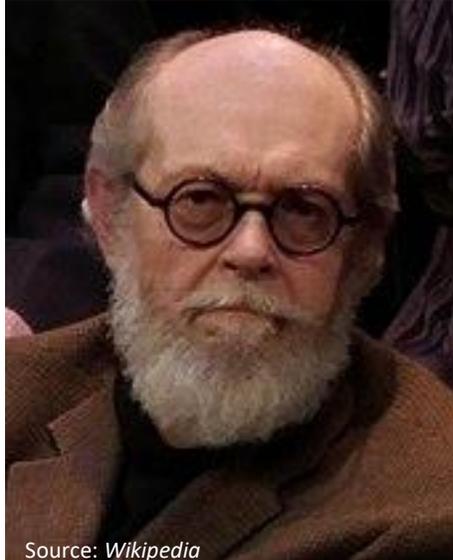
Much like the show you're about to enjoy, you'll have a handful of secrets yourself at the conclusion of the evening.

You'll know the ending.

And then it'll be your turn to keep the secrets. RM

The Playwright:

Courtesy of Arizona Theatre Company



Source: Wikipedia

Jeffrey Hatcher (Playwright) is the author of *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of The Suicide Club*, *Ten Chimneys*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Ella* and co-author of *Work Song: Three Views of Frank Lloyd Wright* and *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Mr. Hatcher authored the book for the Broadway musical, *Never Gonna Dance*. Off-Broadway, he has had several plays produced, including *Three Viewings* and *A Picasso* at Manhattan Theatre Club, *Scotland Road* and *The Turn of the Screw* at Primary Stages, *Tuesdays with Morrie* (with Mitch Albom) at Minetta Lane Theatre, *Murder by Poe* and *The Turn of the Screw* with The Acting Company and *Neddy* at The American Place Theatre. His plays – among them, *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, *Mrs. Mannerly*, *Murderers*, *Mercy of a Storm*, *Smash*,

Armada, *Korczak's Children*, *To Fool the Eye*, *The Government Inspector* and *Work Song* (with Eric Simonson) – have been seen at such theatres as Arizona Theatre Company, Yale Repertory Theatre, The Old Globe, South Coast Repertory, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Florida Stage, The Empty Space, California Theatre Center, Madison Repertory Theatre, Illusion Theater, Denver Center Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Asolo Repertory Theatre, City Theatre, Studio Arena Theatre and dozens more in the U.S. and abroad. Mr. Hatcher wrote the screenplays for *Stage Beauty*, *The Duchess*, *Casanova* and *Mr. Holmes*, as well as authoring episodes of the Peter Falk series, *Columbo*, and *The Mentalist*. He is a member and/or alumnus of The Playwrights' Center, The Dramatists Guild of America, Writers Guild of America and New Dramatists.

A Note from Playwright Jeffrey Hatcher

Courtesy of Arizona Theatre Company Learning and Education Department

The question, "Who is Sherlock Holmes?" has been asked countless times since the character first appeared in Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*. Sometimes the question has to do with Holmes' character or personality. Sometimes it's about his background and upbringing. And, since Holmes quickly became one of the most depicted characters in modern fiction, the question also has to do with how is he drawn,

what features do the illustrators emphasize, who plays him on stage, in film, on television?

I've wondered "Who is Sherlock Holmes?" dozens of times. On occasion the question shifts to "Who should portray Sherlock Holmes in a play or film script I've written?"

Sherlock Holmes, like James Bond, Scarlett O'Hara, Harry Potter and a very few others, is one of those imagined characters that gets such a firm grip on the imagination that the reader believes he possesses the man, at least his own version of him. We read a book, a character is described, we form a mental picture: how she moves, the timbre of her voice, the look in her eye. Some descriptive power is so vivid -- theatrical even -- that it gives the casting department little wiggle room.

Charles Dickens describes Scrooge and Mr. Micawber and Fagin with such specificity and relish that one must search for an actor to fill the role. It's not the same with Hamlet, Oedipus, Willy Loman, George and Martha, or Mama Rose. Actors as disparate as Ethel Merman, Angela Lansbury and Patty LaPone all played Rose in *Gypsy* without being similar to one another in any way. The same goes for Laurence Olivier, David Tennant and Simon Russell Beale, all three are splendid Hamlets without being in the least the same type.

But a Scrooge must look like Scrooge. A Fagin must appear as Fagin is described as appearing. Bond has that cruel lip and the comma of black hair that falls onto his forehead (Sean Connery's comma was part of a toupee starting with *Goldfinger*.)

"Scarlett O'Hara was not beautiful," wrote Margaret Mitchell, but who would cast a "not beautiful" actress in *Gone With the Wind*? Vivien Leigh may have been the most beautiful woman in motion pictures. She wasn't American, she wasn't from the South, she wasn't of Irish background. She was an English rose. Yet she was the perfect Scarlett.

And Holmes? Holmes allows a certain amount of leeway, but he had better be tall, he had better be trim, with aquiline features not soft ones, and God help the actor with a pug nose. His voice must have the authority of intellect and empire, and his diction must cut through diamonds.

The idea for *Holmes and Watson* was the result of this kind of thinking. It's difficult to write much more about the play without giving away the game. It's a stage thriller, like the ones that used to print in the program: "For the enjoyment of future audiences, we ask you not to reveal the surprising plot twists that occur in *Holmes and Watson*." I know what it's like to sit in the theater and try to out-guess the writer, but if you know even one or two details about the plot, you've got an unfair advantage.

So try not to get ahead of H&W. It's more fun not to know anything before the curtain goes up. You'll get a bigger kick out of it if you haven't been clued in.

I can attest to that.

About the creator:



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is best remembered for his Sherlock Holmes stories and his effect on crime fiction, despite writing a wide variety of works – from fantasy and science fiction to poetry, nonfiction and plays. Doyle was born in May 1859 in Edinburgh, Scotland, to Irish Catholic parents. Despite the family’s moderate success in the art world, the vices of his alcoholic and mentally ill father, Charles, resulted in them having little money. Doyle’s mother, Mary, loved to tell stories and Doyle attributed his strong imagination to her early influence. At the age of nine, Doyle was sent to an English Jesuit school, where he remained until his graduation at seventeen. Despite unhappiness at school, he wrote frequent letters to his mother and told stories to other boarders. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. After

returning to Scotland, Doyle attended the University of Edinburgh Medical School, where he studied medicine and botany in contrast to his family’s artistic background. Early in his university career, his father was committed to an asylum in which he would die in 1893. At school, Doyle began writing down the stories that had populated his brain, was able to find some publication, and mingled with and befriended some important writers of the time, such as Robert Louis Stevenson and J.M. Barrie. In his third year of medical school, he briefly served as a ship’s surgeon in both the Arctic and Africa; he remembered all his adventures, and often used them as material for his fiction. Upon graduation, Coyle opened his first practice in Portsmouth, which proved to be a challenging experience until his three years of struggle paid off in a comfortable income. The slow days were instead used to write, as Doyle attempted to divide his time between his practice and his art. He married Louisa Hawkins in 1885, a gentle woman who followed him whenever he was struck by the need for adventure.

Doyle’s *A Study in Scarlet* was published in 1887 to great popularity, including in the United States. From then on, Doyle had to learn how to balance his popular Holmes stories with the more serious works of literature that he himself preferred. The family, now accompanied by a daughter, Mary, and later a son, Kingsley, moved to London. After a bout of influenza, Doyle realized he would rather write than practice medicine. Unfortunately, his wife’s health was beginning to fail; she was diagnosed with tuberculosis, which many historians believe may have triggered Doyle’s initial fascination with the paranormal and spiritualism. Struck yet again by the itch to travel, Doyle served as a doctor in Africa for the Boer War and wrote about an article about his perception of the military upon his return, entitled “The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct.” He also became involved in politics in Edinburgh and ran for Parliament

in 1900; he lost, despite a respectable vote, instead returning to London and running for office again several years later. After Louisa's death in 1906, Doyle became very depressed, coping with her loss by solving problematic crimes at Scotland Yard. He wed Jean Leckie in 1907, whom he had known and maintained a platonic relationship with for some time, and with whom he would have three more children. During World War I, Doyle volunteered and made suggestions for British readiness to the War Office. Sadly, the war claimed the lives of many of his family members, prompting Doyle's return to Spiritualism. His writing output slowed considerably in his last years and the enigmatic man died of a heart attack in his garden in 1930, at the age of 71.

SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE CHARACTER

<https://www.arthurconandoyle.com/sherlockholmes.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherlock_Holmes

https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php/Sherlock_Holmes

<https://sherlockholmes.com/history/>

While Edgar Allan Poe created the first fictional detective, C. Auguste Dupin, Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is arguably the most famous. Doyle based Holmes on his medical professor, Joseph Bell, who was known for impressive powers of logic and observation. Henry Littlejohn, who Doyle also knew at medical school, was a police surgeon and thus provided the creative link between medicine and crime. Possible sources of inspiration for Holmes' name include the violinist Alfred Sherlock, combined with a reference to famous writer and physician Oliver Wendell Holmes. Despite his now iconic image, Holmes' style is an amalgam of the work of many artists. The original artist for *The Strand* magazine, Sidney Paget, drew him with a deerstalker hat, which was popularized by the actor William Gillette (also significantly responsible for the curved pipe), which has now become an enduring icon of the character.

As interpreted from the original stories, Sherlock Holmes was probably born in 1854 and had an older brother, Mycroft, who works for the British government. While at university, Holmes began solving minor mysteries; he later developed his natural keen awareness into a reasoning almost magical in its ability. Despite his methods being known as a "science of deduction," what he actually does is a subset of inductive reasoning, known as abductive reasoning. While deductive reasoning tries to prove an accepted conclusion by piecing information together for justification, whereas inductive reasoning allows hypothesis derived from the evidence to arrive at previously unconsidered conclusions. Abductive reasoning includes further inference, but arrives at the best conclusion. Holmes' position as a "consulting detective" served him well until he found himself in need of a roommate to help with rent; thus, Sherlock Holmes was introduced to Dr. John Watson, his roommate and partner in crime solving.

In addition to his remarkable intelligence, Holmes is also quite proficient at the violin, while his eccentric lifestyle is further emphasized by his drug use. While shocking to contemporary audiences, cocaine was used for medicinal purposes from approximately 1855 – when cocaine was first separated from the coca plant – through the early 1900s, before eventually evolving into an illegal vice. Cocaine is highly addictive due to its action on the brain and body, as well as causing feelings of extreme ecstasy and exhilaration. Watson highly disapproves of his friend’s drug habit, and is not shy when voicing his criticism.

Holmes is also more than willing to break the law when necessary to solve a case, and thrives on the acknowledgement of his skills. He loves the thrill of the chase, and thus is most passionate when working; he slips into a state of melancholy when not challenged. While Watson represents his most important relationship, Holmes also engages in a very complicated relationship with a woman named Irene Adler in subsequent adaptations. Furthermore, he relies on a host of informants, especially the street children known as the Baker Street Irregulars. Holmes has proved to be proficient in shooting, fencing, boxing, and martial arts, as the story requires.

Watson, alternatively, is the perfect English gentlemen and foil to Holmes’ intelligence, as well as the narrator and biographer of their adventures. He earned his doctoral degree in 1878 and served as an assistant surgeon in the British Army, during which time he served in India and Afghanistan. As a result of a bullet wound, Watson returned to London and moved in with Holmes shortly afterward, at the suggestion of his friend, Stamford. Watson was married briefly to Mary Morstan before her untimely death. He is easily recognized by his moustache, which most adaptations of the character have included. Watson is intelligent, an excellent doctor, honorable, and quite discreet in the details of the stories that he chooses to tell, and thus carries shades of Arthur Conan Doyle.

First appearing in *A Study in Scarlet* as published by *The Strand* in 1887, Holmes has been the star of four novels and 56 short stories, which are collectively known as the canon. Alas, tired of his complicated character, Doyle killed Holmes in the infamous *The Final Problem* in 1893, but public distaste forced him to bring the character back in a pre-death *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1901) and later in *The Adventure of the Empty House* (1903). Doyle continued writing the character until 1927, and Holmes has remained an enduring and popular fixture in media ever since.

THE ART OF ADAPTATION

<https://www.writersdigest.com/>
<http://writingstudio.co.za/>

Adaptation is the transformation of something from one medium into a different medium, or a change in the same medium for different purposes. As evidenced by the recent

influx of Hollywood film adaptations of novels, reasons to do so may be due to the popularity or structure of the story, perhaps the popularity of the author, or a desire for familiarity. There has always been theatrical adaptation, both from film and books. Examples include *Hamilton*, *Fun Home*, all versions of *Dracula*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and others. When it comes to literature, theatrical adaptations typically attempt to break through to the core story and message, without including all the extra, unnecessary pages. Some novels translate easier than others, and the playwright-adapter is allowed creative license to make the work fit better onstage. Works can be adapted across genres or for audiences, as seen in the Broadway Jr. scripts which are more appropriate versions of original plays for young audiences.

Sherlock Holmes has been a popular target for re-imaginings nearly since its beginnings in short stories in 1887. One of the earliest divergent works about the character was William Gillette's play *Sherlock Holmes*, which was performed for the first time on Broadway in 1899. His character wore the deerstalker hat and pipe that has since been considered a major part of Holmes' identity. Theatrical adaptation of Holmes has been frequent, as another adaptation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was seen on London's West End at the tail end of the 2010s and is currently enjoying a run at other theatres.

According to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, Sherlock Holmes is the most prolific literary character on screen and has been played by hundreds of actors in over 250 films – that doesn't even include his appearances on television shows. The first known portrayal of the character on cinema is in *Sherlock Holmes Baffled*, a 1900 film with a run time of about thirty minutes. Many short and silent films were made about the character, many of which are lost today. Sherlock Holmes films are often created in cycles: two notable Holmes were Eille Norwood and Basil Rathbone. Recently, Guy Ritchie released two Sherlock Holmes films featuring Robert Downey Jr. as Holmes and Jude Law as Watson. Not all adaptations follow the historic character or given circumstances of the work, however, as exemplified by 2015's *Mr. Holmes*, which depicts a retired Holmes trying to remember his last case (with a screenplay by Jeffrey Hatcher, the playwright of this production).

While early television tended to follow the stories quite closely, television as of late has often changed the situation or only maintained elements of the stories. For example, the wildly popular BBC Sherlock adaptation featuring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman puts the men in contemporary London, whereas CBS' *Elementary* cast Lucy Liu as Watson and also modernized the setting. Two indirect adaptations, *House, MD*, and *Psych* feature observant protagonists who solve mysteries with the help of their loyal assistants. Holmes and Watson have also appeared in radio – with one notable example featuring Orson Welles as the voice of Sherlock – as well as in board games, video games, and even American comic strips and comic books, even in such juggernauts as *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. They have been referenced in

music as well; there is even a genre known as “shrock” which is specifically music about the BBC *Sherlock*, written by fans of the adaptation that can be found online, especially on Tumblr.

INSPIRATION: FOUR STORIES

Courtesy of David Ira Goldstein, and Arizona Theatre Company Learning and Education Department

Holmes and Watson, although a unique story, might seem a little familiar to you. This is because the playwright, Jeffrey Hatcher, was loosely inspired by four of Holmes’ most famous adventures: *A Study in Scarlet*, the first appearance of the Holmes and Watson duo; *A Scandal in Bohemia*, the first short story; the infamous tale of *The Final Problem*, that featured the first appearance of Professor Moriarty; and *The Adventure of the Empty House*.

A Study in Scarlet is split into multiple parts. Part I begins with Dr. Watson’s return to London after his discharge from the Second Anglo-Afghan war due to a shoulder injury. He tells his friend, Stamford, that he needs a place to live and is introduced to Holmes at work in a lab; his quick analysis of his prospective roommate fascinates Watson and the pair move in together. Holmes is sent a telegram asking for help at an abandoned house. Once there, he investigates the murder of Enoch Drebber and goes to meet his secretary, Joseph Stangerson, but he was also murdered. The word “RACHE”, which has been determined to be the German word for revenge, was left at the scene of both crimes. They also find two pills, one of which is poison. The scene is interrupted by a Baker Street Irregular who summoned a cab as requested by Holmes. The cabbie enters and Holmes handcuffs him, declaring him Jefferson Hope, the murderer

Part II occurs years before in Salt Lake Valley where a man named John and little girl Lucy are rescued from imminent death by a group of Latter-Day Saints who offer them sanctuary if they live under their faith; he adopts Lucy and, later, she falls in love with Jefferson Hope. The elders disapprove as they want her to marry either Joseph Stangerson or Enoch Drebber, who are both Mormon. John tells Hope about the plan but, after he throws out the suitors, a countdown to her marriage day is left around his farm. Hope returns to the farm to see John’s grave and no sign of Lucy. In Salt Lake City, he learns Stangerson killed John and Lucy was wed to Drebber; she dies shortly after of a broken heart. As his enemies flee to London, so does he. Back at Baker Street, Hope tells the story to Holmes and company and recounts their murders. The day before his trial, Hope dies of an aneurysm as a result of a long-standing medical condition.

In *A Scandal in Bohemia*, Holmes is visited by the disguised King of Bohemia. He reveals that, due to his upcoming engagement, he is worried about the damage that may be caused by the scandal surrounding his previous relationship with Irene Adler, an

American opera singer. Thus, he hopes Holmes will recover her evidence of the affair. He sneaks to her wedding, in disguise, but ends up being forced to witness the wedding which ends with the couple splitting ways. Holmes returns to Baker Street to collect Watson. As Adler pulls up to her home, Holmes leaps in to protect her in the midst of a fight and is invited into her home. At his signal, Watson throws a smoke bomb with the hope that Adler will rescue her precious item – the photograph. The next morning, Holmes and the King go to the safe, but Adler has replaced the picture with one of her in a dress and a note revealing that she is only keeping the letter to protect herself. Holmes keeps the letter and Watson reveals that Holmes has continued to call her “the woman.”

The Final Problem begins with Holmes visiting Watson’s house and telling him he survived three murder attempts that day as Moriarty wants him off his trail. Watson, following his instructions, meets a disguised Holmes on the train. As the train pulls away, they see Moriarty on the platform and their attempt to escape intensifies. Now in Strasbourg, Holmes learns Moriarty’s accomplices have been arrested and he tells Watson to go, but he refuses. Now in Switzerland, they head up to Reichenbach Falls. Watson is given a letter by a boy requesting his expertise at the hotel. Despite knowing it is a trap, Holmes sends Watson back. Upon his return, there is a set of footprints and note from Holmes telling his friend he is about to fight Moriarty. Watson sees the sign of a struggle and an implied fall to the death – both Holmes and his nemesis are no more.

Written three years after Holmes’ supposed death, *The Adventure of the Empty House* concerns the murder of the Honorable Ronald Adair. The man had no enemies and was found in his locked sitting room with an open window above a 20 foot drop, surrounded by papers and money; the police learn he won a lot of money in working with Colonel Sebastian Moran. The corpse was found with a soft-point bullet at the back of his head but no one is sure from where the gun was fired. On the way there, Watson runs into an elderly book collector who is revealed to be Holmes! He explains to a joyous Watson that he was able to throw Moriarty over the waterfall yet caught himself and was able to pull himself back up. He explains what he was doing during the past three years, but the conditions of Adair’s murder intrigued him, and thus he returned. Holmes, convinced that Adair was killed by Moriarty’s cohort Colonel Sebastian Moran, places a wax bust at the empty house across from Baker Street which Moran shoots, thus revealing his involvement in Adair’s murder

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE 1890s

Courtesy of Arizona Theatre Company

1890

– January 11: Britain forces Portugal to retract their claim on areas between colonized Mozambique and Angola.

- October 9: Clément Ader's steam-powered airplane Eole becomes the first take-off of an airplane under its own power.
- October 22: West Australia is allowed to self-govern.

1891

- November: Scotland Yard moves to a new building on the Victoria Embankment and rebrands itself as New Scotland Yard.
- American William James publishes *The Principles of Psychology*. The Ader Eole, first tested in 1890.
- March 9-12: The Great Blizzard in England leads to extreme weather conditions and approximately 220 deaths.
- April 1: The London to Paris telephone system is accessible for the public.
- June 25: Sherlock Holmes makes his first appearance in *The Strand* magazine.
- October: Eugène Dubois discovers the Java Man early human fossils in Indonesia, believed to be the "missing link" between ape and human evolution.

1892

- January 14: Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, second in line of succession to the British throne, dies of influenza.
- May 28: Environmentalist John Muir founds the Sierra Club.
- October 31: The first collection of Sherlock Holmes stories are published.
- December 18: Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* ballet premieres in St. Petersburg.

1893

- January 13: The Independent Labour Party of the U.K. meets for the first time.
- January 17: The Kingdom of Hawaii is overthrown by the United States Marine Corps.
- June 21: The world's first Ferris Wheel is presented at the Chicago World's Fair.
- December: *The Final Problem* is published, shocking audiences.

1894

- March 1: The Local Government Act is passed, which creates local democratic councils in rural and urban area and allows women to vote in local elections.
- July 22: The Paris to Rouen Competition is the first automobile race.
- October 15: French army officer Alfred Dreyfus is arrested for treason.

1895

- February 13: The Lumière brothers patent the Cinematographe, both a camera and projector.
- March 16: Scottish William Ramsey isolates helium.
- April 3-5: Wilde v. Queensberry ends and induces Oscar Wilde's criminal prosecution for homosexuality, leaving him in poverty.
- Freud and Breuer publish Studies on Hysteria.

1896

- March 1: Henri Becquerel discovers radioactive decay.
- May 4: *The Daily Mail* is founded.
- May 18: Plessy v. Ferguson upholds the doctrine of "separate but equal" in the U.S.
- July 26-August 1: The International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress takes place in London.
- September 22: Queen Victoria becomes the longest reigning monarch.
- Svante Arrhenius predicts the effect of greenhouse gases on global temperature.

1897

- April 30: The electron is discovered.
- May 13: Guglielmo Marconi transmits the first wireless communication over the sea.
- May 26: Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is published.

1898

- June 23: The Royal Army Medical Corps are founded inside the British Army.
- July 28: Marie and Pierre Curie announce their discovery of polonium.

- October 28: French murderer Joseph Vacher is found guilty by forensic evidence.

1899

- October 9: The first motorized bus appears in London.

- October 11: The Second Boer War begins in South Africa.

- July: The newsboys strike of 1899 occurred in New York City as a result of child labor practices.

ASYLUMS AND MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE 19TH CENTURY

<http://www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk/19th-century-mental-health>

<https://www.nursing.upenn.edu/nhnc/nurses-institutions-caring/history-of-psychiatric-hospitals/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/short-history-mental-health/201408/the-long-mad-century>

As the central setting of *Holmes and Watson* and for its prominence in media and entertainment, the asylum is an important thing to consider. The treatment of mental illness in the Victorian era was very substandard and the “spooky” idea of mental health hospitals can be attributed to poor conditions in asylums, such as the Bethlem Royal Hospital, from which the word “bedlam” – meaning uproar and confusion – is derived.

Prior to the Victorian Era, mental illness was considered the family’s problem, but for-profit institutions become popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. During the Enlightenment, people began to care more for the mentally ill and thus more humane treatment began to appear as sufferers were seen as patients rather than monsters. However, rapid institutionalization of the nineteenth century – as evidenced by the increase of facilities in England from a few thousand to 100,000 – overwhelmed doctors and thus care returned to pre-Enlightenment conditions and many sufferers were often sent to workhouses instead.

In addition, psychiatry has the unusual honor of being more prone to abuse due to false diagnosis to remove problem citizens – such as dissident women and criminals – from society. For example, early asylums often physically restrained victims with straitjackets or shackles, they would sedate victims in a variety of ways, engage in bloodlettings, use certain “shocks” – water, for example, and later electroshock – among other methods such as certain psychosurgeries, which would damage the brain and often turn victims into vegetables whether or not they were actually mentally unwell. The treatment of patients was really quite terrible and people rarely got the care or attention they needed as many of their issues or symptoms were waved away as a ‘delusion’. Thus, the appearance of three Sherlock Holmes in an asylum would not have ended well in the historical reality.

GLOSSARY

Asylum: An institution to care for the mentally ill.

Broadmoor: A high security psychiatric hospital founded in 1863 in Berkshire, England.

Calling Card: Immensely popular among the upper classes during the Victorian era: small cards, similar to business cards, showing the name and perhaps the address of a person, couple, or family. Calling cards were presented when making social visits or enclosed when sending gifts.

Catatonic: Catatonia is a form of insanity involving a seizure or trance that can last for hours or days.

Colloquies: Conversations.

Cutter: A small, lightweight boat designed for speed rather than to hold many passengers. A cutter typically has one mast. Cutters are frequently used by the authorities, such as the U.S. Coast Guard.

Consternate: To stress someone out.

Delusion: A belief in direct contrast with established facts.

Deus Ex Machina: Dates from ancient Greek times, where "deus ex machina" ("god from the machine") in a play referred to the act of lowering a god on stage using a cable device to decide a dilemma and give fate a nudge. These days, deus ex machina has the negative connotation of an utterly improbable, illogical or baseless plot twist that drastically alters the situation.

Doppelganger: A German word that literally means "double-goer": a lookalike or double of another person.

Ferry: A ship vessel used to carry both people and items across bodies of water.

Florence: The capital of Italy's Tuscany region, considered the birthplace of the Renaissance.

Garotte: A cord used for strangulation.

Hypnoid state: The Victorian practice of hypnotherapy was a popular treatment for a variety of ailments, endorsed by the British Medical Association in 1892. Hypnotism was most commonly used by Victorian physicians to try to stop unhealthy behaviors, such as alcohol or drug use, through direct suggestion.

Lake District: An area in northwest England immortalized by William Wordsworth.

Melancholy: Thoughtful sadness.

Mendelssohn: German composer and conductor of the Romantic period.

Moor: Broad area of open land.

Penny Dreadful: Cheap, sensational popular literature produced in Britain during the 19th century. Costing only a penny per installment, these serial stories featured lurid tales about criminals or the supernatural.

Plumber's Rocket (Smoke Rocket): A small rocket that does no damage, but creates a thick cloud of smoke. Victorian plumbers used smoke rockets to release smoke into pipes as a way of testing for leaks.

Psyche: In psychology, the entire mind including conscious and unconscious.

Psychical trauma: Mental or emotional trauma; "psychical" means of or related to the psyche—the mind, soul, or spirit.

Red Herring: Something, especially a clue, that is or is intended to be misleading or distracting.

Reichenbach Falls: A group of waterfalls in Switzerland with a combined height of 820 feet.

Schooner: A small sailing vessel with two or more masts. The schooner's speed and ability to sail in shallow waters once made it a popular choice for both pirates and recreational boaters.

Scotland Yard: The headquarters of the Metropolitan Police Service of London.

Sherry: A varietal of wine that includes brandy.

Skiff: A shallow, flat-bottomed boat with a sharp bow and a square stem, easily handled by one person.

Stiletto: A dagger used for stabbing.

Strychnine: A highly toxic, colorless, bitter alkaloid frequently used as a pesticide. When inhaled or swallowed, it causes poisoning that results in muscular convulsions and eventual death via asphyxiation.

Subconscious or Unconscious: Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) described the human mind as resembling an iceberg. The conscious is the part of the iceberg above the water, consisting of the thoughts, memories, feelings, and ideas of which a person is aware at any given moment. The subconscious is the portion of the iceberg that is underwater but still visible, consisting of the thoughts and ideas that a person could potentially bring into his or her conscious mind; something that is "in the back of your mind" is in the subconscious. The unconscious is the portion of the iceberg that is so far below the

surface of the water that it cannot be seen, consisting of the ideas, memories, and feelings that a person is not aware of, but that nevertheless influence behavior.

Subliminal: Subconscious, something that is present but of which a person is not fully aware.

Superintendent: Superintendent is the fifth-highest rank in the British police force (chief constable is the highest rank, followed by deputy chief constable, assistant chief constable, and chief superintendent). A superintendent ranks higher than an inspector or a chief inspector.

Telegraph: A way to transmit a physical message, rather than using a vocal messenger.

The Continent: A reference to the mainland continent of Europe

The Strand: A U.K. magazine known for stories and brief articles, in circulation from 1891 to 1950.

Veracity: Accuracy or truthfulness.

Vienna: The capital of Austria.

Wales: The southwest country of Great Britain.

Things to think about, prior to performance:

Many actors have played Sherlock Holmes through the years. Discuss what makes Holmes an attractive role for actors.

Read one or two of the many Sir Arthur Conan Doyle stories of Sherlock Holmes and make a list of Sherlock's characteristics.

What other mystery plays, books, or movies have you read or seen besides *Holmes and Watson*?

What do you believe are the key ingredients of an engaging mystery?

Ever since Edgar Allan Poe introduced the first literary detective—C. Auguste Dupin—in his short story “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” readers, moviegoers, and theatre audiences have loved detectives. Why do you suppose we are fascinated by detective stories?

Things to watch for in performance:

Notice the set pieces, the furniture, the costume pieces and the prop pieces. Are the shapes predictable? What is recurrent and what is different? How does each location look alike or different?

Notice the layering of sound, both before the performance begins and during the production. Can you find a recurring theme of music?

What elements of the production establish mood, tone, and atmosphere?

Notice the colors in the production. Which pieces, patterns, or colors are unique and which do several characters or scenes share?

Notice when the action takes place on the stage and when it invades the theatre where the audience sits. What is that effect?

What is your reaction to the end of the production? What does this say about human relationships?

Things to think about after the performance:

The relationship between Holmes and Watson is a constant throughout Doyle's stories and novels and is also explored in most adaptations. How would you describe this relationship?

What does the relationship mean to Watson?

What does it mean to Holmes?

Why is Watson necessary to Holmes?

Is Holmes necessary to Watson? Why or why not?

Were you able to solve any of the mysteries in the play before the characters did? What led you to your conclusions? What clues did you note along the way? What clues did you miss?

What revelations surprised you?

Arthur Conan Doyle's story "A Scandal in Bohemia" is the only Sherlock Holmes story in which Irene Adler appears. In the story, Holmes makes it very clear that while he admires Adler, he is not in love with her. Do you believe his assertion?

Doyle's original Sherlock Holmes stories have titles that reference particular cases, such as "The Adventure of the Crooked Man" or "The Problem of Thor Bridge." Many adaptations also use titles designed to suggest danger and adventure, such as *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* and *Sherlock Holmes Faces Death* (both films from the series of 1940s adaptations starring Basil Rathbone). This play is called simply *Holmes and Watson*. Why do you suppose the playwright chose such a simple, straightforward title? Do you think the title is effective? Why or why not? What alternate titles might you suggest?

Discuss the role of disguise in the play. Are disguises freeing or restrictive to the character in the play? When, if ever, do we see the true selves of the characters? Are

there times in your life when you find you are wearing a disguise literally and figuratively? Are disguises freeing or restrictive to in our lives?

Sherlock Holmes is renowned for deductive reasoning, which depends on keen observation. What abilities and skills are required for good observation?

Actors develop their skills of observation in their training. What other professions do you believe use the skill of observation? How do you suppose such people put this skill into practice? What is the difference between really observing and simply seeing or watching? Is there a greater advantage to observing unnoticed than to be a known observer? When is observation a necessity?

Other Analysis “Tools”:

What happens in the very last moments of the play? Certainly, the last few minutes, but, more importantly, the last thirty seconds? In that time, WHAT happens or is said, and what does that say about what the play is ‘about’?

In addition, what is the significance of the title? Why did the playwright decide that this was the quintessential title for his work?

Be a detective: This Holmes-themed online challenge invites you to test your powers of observation. <http://www.oneonlinegames.com/games/spotthedifferencesherlockholmes>. You will be shown a “before” and an “after” picture. You must spot the differences in the time limit to win. Good luck! Make your own murder mystery.

Buffalo Theatre Ensemble also sincerely thanks the Library for research support for classes studying the production, and the production.

The running time for this production is approximately ninety minutes with no intermission.

Please join us for a **pre-show discussion Thursday, September 5th from 6:45 – 7:15 pm MAC 140** preceding the preview performance. Note that pre-show discussions will include the director and designers, and will be a discussion of the approach to this production.

There will be a **post-show discussion** following the **Saturday, September 7th** performance. The post-show will be with director, cast and crew, and we will be fielding questions from the audience.

Please join us!