
Hereditary Tradition: Analyzing Connections among Detective Depictions in Texts by Poe, Doyle, and King using Harold Bloom's Revisionary Ratios Theory

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ABSTRACT

There has been a longstanding debate about the origin of detective fiction, with most recognizing Poe as its pioneer. However, there remains a need to comprehensively analyze the literary influence that spans across generations in detective fiction. This research introduces a comprehensive analysis of the literary influence that spans across generations in detective fiction, shedding light on the intricate web of connections between Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Laurie R. King. Central to this investigation is the application of Harold Bloom's theory of revisionary ratios, which serves as an invaluable analytical framework. Through the application of Harold Bloom's theory of revisionary ratios, this research provides a comprehensive exploration of the enduring significance of intertextuality in shaping the detective fiction landscape. It underscores the intricate web of influences that connect Poe's pioneering works with subsequent narratives by Conan Doyle and King. Having the enduring significance of intertextuality that shapes the detective fiction landscape, this study still offers a novel perspective on the genre's dynamic evolution. The method involves a detailed review of revisionary ratio concepts and their implications for understanding complex literary works more thoroughly. The result reveals the enduring significance of revisionary ratios in understanding the complexities of literary works, with Edgar Allan Poe's influence resonating in subsequent detective stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Laurie R. King.

Keywords: *detective fiction, intertextuality, literary formula, literary influence, revisionary ratios*

INTRODUCTION

Detective fiction holds a longstanding historical presence, with certain historians asserting its origins dating back to ancient times. Notably, it has been posited that the Bible and Voltaire's works represent early instances of "rational deduction" (Symons, 1994: 31). However, a counterargument has emerged, contending that "there could be no detective stories until organized police and detective forces existed" (Symons, 1994: 31). Symons, for his part, represents the latter group and believes that detective fiction

originates with Edgar Allan Poe. He argues that sources such as the Bible and Voltaire provide only clues to the puzzles that are necessary but not sufficient features of detective fiction. According to Peter Haining (1986: 7), Poe should be regarded as the founder of detective fiction, given that his works establish "the formula on which virtually all subsequent stories in the genre are based".

The detective fiction of Poe, Conan Doyle, and Laurie R. King share similarities in terms of the

creation of the private detective character and the use of investigative methods as the basis of the genre (Miranda, 2017; Rasevych & Syniuta, 2019; Thompson, 1993; Ulleland Hoel, 2017; Van laethem, 2017). In line with Symons's argument, this essay treats Edgar Allan Poe as the father of detective fiction and his C. Auguste Dupin as the early detective character (Bertman, 2014; Broyles, 2016; O'Brien, 2013). It is very interesting that after the publication of Poe's short detective stories in the mid-19th century, several detective writers began to appear, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with his illustrious creation, Sherlock Holmes. It has been known that Poe's formula influences Conan Doyle in writing detective fiction, as a similar pattern can be observed in Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. Like Dupin in Poe's tales, Sherlock Holmes is a remarkable private investigator renowned for his deductive thinking and investigative techniques. Dupin and Holmes rely heavily on their sharp observation skills, logical analysis and deep comprehension of human behavior to unravel intricate mysteries. They often tackle cases that perplex the authorities, employing meticulous examination of physical evidence and astute psychological understanding to uncover the motives behind criminal acts. Conan Doyle's formula builds upon Poe's foundation by giving a name to the character of Dr. John Watson as the narrator and chronicler of Holmes's cases, unlike how Dupin has an unnamed narrator. Holmes's sharp wit, use of disguises, and iconic pipe-smoking habits are also part of the formula that distinguishes him from Dupin and contributes to the enduring popularity of Sherlock Holmes (Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site, 2017; Eschner, 2017; Priestman, 2003; Rzepka & Horsley, 2020).

However, Holmes' popularity seems to exceed his predecessor. For years, there have been many Sherlock Holmes adaptations in various types, such as radio, television, film, play, print, and game adaptations (The Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia, 2023; Hewett, 2015; Link, 2023; McCaw, 2013; McCaw, 2019; Mukherjee, 2013; Naidu, 2015; Polasek, 2013; Polasek, 2014; Poore, 2013; Ue & Cranfield, 2014; White, 2021). Laurie R. King began her writing career as a mystery writer in the late twentieth century (King, 2016). She writes three different series of detective fiction, one of which, the Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes series, is still ongoing (King, 2023). As a pasticheur of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes canon, she clearly "borrows"

some aspects contained in the Sherlock Holmes canon. Coming from different periods, Poe, Doyle and King produce different representations, yet Poe's influence on Doyle and Doyle's influence on King potentially show intertextuality in their representations (Johnsen, 2006; Mukherjee, 2013).

On the other hand, previous research has not concurrently addressed how influence is depicted in both the Poe-Conan Doyle and Conan Doyle-King connections within the framework of Bloom's revisionary ratios. Examining these authors and the intertextuality present in their works is essential, as each of them has made distinctive contributions to the development and evolution of detective fiction, introducing their unique viewpoints and innovations to the genre.

When Harold Bloom introduced "Revisionary Ratios" (1997), he brought forth an entirely new concept to be pondered over by those engaged in critical discussions around literature. His theory essentially claims that all new pieces within a particular genre or tradition are revisions to previous works. Their connection with pre-existing texts significantly shapes their meaning and relevance in contemporary times. This essay delves deeper into this idea of revisionary ratios, exploring what makes it strong as well as where it falls short, ultimately assessing its impact on our collective understanding of literature, especially within detective fiction.

Bloom's theory offers a valuable perspective by emphasizing how literary traditions continually evolve over time. By recognizing that every new work revises past ones, Bloom underscores how these conventions are fluid and dynamic. This focus on change is an essential contribution to the study of literature, challenging previous notions that these conventions remain immovable and fixed.

One crucial aspect that revisionary ratios bring to the table is their emphasis on intertextuality or the relationships between texts. By bringing to light the interactions between a text and its predecessors, Bloom's theory provides insight into how meaning evolves and spreads throughout literary canons. Considering detective fiction, this becomes even more significant given its long history of revisions and reimaginings. Only by recognizing these dependencies do readers genuinely appreciate every new contribution to this genre.

The objective of this paper is to illuminate

Poe's impact on Doyle's detective fiction and Doyle's impact on King's detective fiction, and to provide a comprehensive examination of the literary influence that transcends generations within the genre, uncovering the intricate network of connections among Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Laurie R. King. At the heart of this inquiry lies the utilization of Harold Bloom's theory of revisionary ratios, which serves as an invaluable analytical framework. By venturing into previously unexplored territory, this study presents an innovative perspective on the genre and gender's dynamic evolution. It underscores the lasting importance of intertextuality as a potent force that shapes the landscape of detective fiction. Furthermore, this paper delves into the notable limitations associated with the extensive application of this theory.

The method of collecting, classifying, and analyzing data pertaining to the selected works of Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Laurie R. King in the context of revisionary ratios and their implications involves several key steps that begin by selecting a comprehensive set of literary works by each of the authors. The step is extracting the relevant textual data from these chosen works. It may include passages and dialogues that illustrate instances of literary influence, revision, or intertextuality. The data classification systematically identifies instances within the selected texts that exemplify Harold Bloom's revisionary ratios. These may include cases where a successor author revises, challenges, or transforms elements of a predecessor's work. The classification of these instances is based on the specific type of ratio they represent, such as *clinamen*, *tessera*, *kenosis*, *daemonization*, *askesis*, and *apophrades*. The next step is to context for each identified ratio by considering the broader thematic, narrative, and stylistic elements in the works before analyzing how these ratios contribute to the overall meaning and significance of the texts. The analysis process started with conducting a comparative analysis of the works of Poe, Doyle, and King to identify patterns and trends in the application of revisionary ratios and explore how each author engages with the concepts and how they impact the evolution of detective fiction.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This essay focuses only on the employment of Harold

Bloom's "Revisionary Ratios" concept to provide a deeper examination of the differences between the relationships between Poe, Doyle, and King's works. In his book, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, Bloom classifies influences in texts into six variants, such as *clinamen*, *tessera*, *kenosis*, *daemonization*, *askesis*, and *apophrades* (Bloom, 1997). In the context of detective texts by Poe, Conan Doyle, and King, this concept highlights how each author revises and reinterprets the conventions and archetypes of the detective genre established by their predecessors. For example, Edgar Allan Poe is credited with originating the detective genre in his stories featuring the character C. Auguste Dupin. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's character Sherlock Holmes builds upon and revises the conventions established by Dupin, creating a more cerebral and scientifically-oriented detective (Genot & Jacot, 2018; Genot, 2020; Hanzal, 2023).

In this way, Bloom's concept of Revisionary Ratios sheds light on the detective genre's dynamic and evolving nature, and how each author contributes to its development and transformation. It also emphasizes the intertextual relationships between different detective texts and how each new work builds upon and departs from the traditions that came before it. In his book, Bloom uses "poet" to refer to an author; however, this essay will use "writer" when discussing prose pieces as it aligns with the current study objects. Before applying these ideas in written work, a strong grasp of them is necessary. Therefore, this paper outlines the six "Revisionary Ratios" proposed by Bloom.

The first explanation concerns a ratio called *clinamen* or "poetic misprison" (Bloom, 1997: 14). This ratio is an influence that occurs based on a poetic misreading. The successor understands the precursor's work differently yet unintentionally and makes some changes to it to some point where they think some changes need to be made. The next type of ratio is when a successor does a "completion" and an "antithesis" to the predecessor's symbol (Bloom, 1997: 14). In this condition, a successor is experiencing the variant of influence named *tessera*. In their work, the successor borrows a symbol of their predecessor and completes the predecessor's work, which in the end produces a new sense of his predecessor's work. Thus, the new work creates an antithesis from the previous work. *Kenosis* is a type of influence in which a successor breaks away from

repetition and moves “towards discontinuity with the precursor” (Bloom, 1997: 14). This condition implies that the successor tries to stay away from the influence of their predecessor. The fourth ratio is called *daemonization*. In his book, Bloom (1997: 14) mentions that “[t]he later poet opens himself to what he believes to be a power in the parent poem that does not belong to the parent proper, but to a range of being just beyond that precursor. In his poem, he does this by so stationing its relation to the parent-poem to generalize away the uniqueness of the earlier work”. It is a condition when a predecessor’s work inspires the successor. The successor is aware of this condition and due to their awareness of the inspiration they get. They want to keep their work original by removing their predecessor’s uniqueness. The following ratio is called *askesis*, “a movement of self-purgation which intends the attainment of a state of solitude” (Bloom, 1997: 14). A writer undergoes an *askesis* when they restrict themselves from being inspired too much by their predecessor. This attitude leads them to add their own ideas into their work to estrange it from the previous writer’s work. The last ratio of influence is called *apophrades*. It is also called “the return of the dead” by Bloom (1997: 14). The new writer’s work is somewhat the reincarnation of their predecessor. The essence of their work will remind the readers of a particular work in the past. The successor also engages the same writing style as their predecessor, which makes the readers believe that the same writer writes both the new and the old works.

This paper reveals Poe’s impact on Doyle’s detective fiction and Doyle’s impact on King’s detective fiction using Harold Bloom’s notion of “Revisionary Ratios,” which was introduced in the preceding section. This paper is divided into two discrete sections. The first part is an analysis of Poe’s influence on Conan Doyle’s detective fiction. It explains how Conan Doyle’s works are influenced by Poe’s and which ratio fits the influence that is undergone by Conan Doyle, as Poe’s successor, in writing his detective fiction. The second part discusses the same topics, yet they depart from Conan Doyle’s influence on King’s detective fiction.

The Influence of Edgar Allan Poe’s Detective Fiction on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s

Edgar Allan Poe is credited with pioneering the modern detective fiction genre, and his impact on the development of this genre, particularly on Sir Arthur

Conan Doyle, is significant. Within the context of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes Canon, it becomes evident that it aligns with the *askesis* ratio, meaning that Conan Doyle restricted himself from being inspired too much by Poe. This attitude leads him to add his own ideas into his Sherlock Holmes stories to estrange them from Poe’s detective stories. This classification is substantiated through the following comprehensive explanations, underscoring the intricate interplay of elements that define this literary relationship.

The similarities between Poe’s Dupin and Conan Doyle’s Holmes are also readily apparent. Even Conan Doyle himself states it through Watson, in *A Study in Scarlet*, who at that time is astonished by Holmes’s prowess, “You remind me of Edgar Allen Poe’s Dupin” (Doyle, 2023: 13). One of the most prominent similarities between Poe’s Dupin and Conan Doyle’s Holmes is that both of them reason backward and emphasize the importance of careful observation and the collection of data as the foundation for their deductive processes. They understand that solving mysteries requires a meticulous examination of facts. “Now, brought to this conclusion in so unequivocal a manner as we are, it is not our part, as reasoners, to reject it on account of apparent impossibilities. It is only left for us to prove that these apparent ‘impossibilities’ are, in reality, not such” (Poe, n.d., *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*). While Holmes states one of his famous lines in *The Sign of Four*, “... when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth...” (Doyle, 2023: 83) Later on, Holmes discredits Dupin’s praise and demonstrates his superiority over him by making Dupin appear less capable than he actually is. “Now, in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow. That trick of his of breaking in on his ‘friends’ thoughts with an apropos remark after a quarter of an hour’s silence is very showy and superficial. He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine” (Doyle, 2023: 13). It is a method that Conan Doyle applies to clarify that, indeed, his works are, to some point, influenced by Poe’s Dupin yet better.

Poe’s detective stories, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) and *The Purloined Letter* (1884), set the groundwork for the genre, establishing key elements that would become central to it. These included a detective who relied on deductive reasoning to solve crimes, a narrative told from an

outsider's perspective who was not privy to all the information, and the use of cryptic clues and puzzles that challenged readers' own deductive skills are both prime examples of Poe's influence on this genre. Both works also have a similar formula of main characters. Poe narrates Dupin and the anonymous narrator, who is actually Dupin's closest friend. Influenced by Poe, Doyle narrates Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, the narrator and Holmes' best friend. Conan Doyle introduces a new element by revealing the identity of Holmes' companion.

Conan Doyle was heavily influenced by Edgar Allan Poe's detective stories when crafting his own detective fiction works centered around Sherlock Holmes. In fact, Conan Doyle's portrayals align with conventions introduced by Poe himself. Similar to Poe's protagonist detective characterizations, Holmes, as Doyle's protagonist, exhibits superior analytical and deductive thinking skills that he applies methodically to solve crimes effectively. "It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment" (Doyle, 2023: 15). Holmes emphasizes the importance of collecting data and facts before forming conclusions. In *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*, he carefully examines a lost hat and a goose to piece together a complex story involving a theft and a hidden gem. Meanwhile, the unnamed narrator of Dupin stories "... could not help remarking and admiring (although from his rich ideality [he] had been prepared to expect it) a peculiar analytic ability in Dupin" (Poe, n.d., *The Murder in the Rue Morgue*).

Not only that, but Conan Doyle also presents the story through Watson's perspective, an outsider privy only to limited information, a technique reminiscent of how Poe told his narratives. This dynamic is vividly portrayed in Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, where Watson is tasked with accompanying Sir Henry Baskerville to reside at Baskerville Hall in Devonshire, all the while unaware of Holmes' covert investigation. The revelation of Holmes' involvement only occurs when he unexpectedly emerges before Watson.

"It is a lovely evening, my dear Watson," said a well-known voice. "I really think that you will be more comfortable outside than in."

"For a moment or two I sat breathless, hardly able to believe my ears. Then my senses and my voice came back to me, while a crushing

weight of responsibility seemed in an instant to be lifted from my soul. That cold, incisive, ironical voice could belong to but one man in all the world."

(Doyle, 2023: 634)

This narrative element underscores the theme of Holmes' calculated secrecy and the limited perspective of Watson in the story.

In addition to the formal elements of detective fiction, Poe's influence can also be seen in Conan Doyle's use of dark, moody, and atmospheric settings, which are reminiscent of Poe's Gothic fiction as seen in Poe's *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*, "[t]he apartment was in the wildest disorder – the furniture broken and thrown about in all directions... On a chair lay a razor, besmeared with blood. On the hearth were two or three long and thick tresses of grey human hair, also dabbled in blood, and seeming to have been pulled out by the roots" (Poe, n.d., *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*) and in Conan Doyle's *The Hound of Baskerville*, "[t]he fog still hung about the house and screened us with its friendly shade" (Doyle, 2023: 794). Another example is shown in *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*, "[it] was a bitter night, so we drew on our ulsters and wrapped cravats about our throats" capturing Holmes' London as a place of shadows and mystery, and the crimes he investigates often involve a sense of macabre (Doyle, 2023: 205). In terms of presenting stories, Conan Doyle inserts a more significant number of witty conversations between characters than he does narrations. One of the most entertaining exchanges in the Sherlock Holmes stories is the one that takes place between Holmes and Dr. Sterndale, the villain of the story.

"How do you [Holmes] know that?"

"I followed you [Sterndale]."

"I saw no one."

"That is what you may expect to see when I follow you..."

(Doyle, 2023: 842)

When readers read those sentences, they get a sense of Holmes' wittiness, which is so enticing for them that it makes them want to learn more about Holmes' characterization. Because of this style, Conan Doyle's stories are more memorable and not "flat"; through dialogues, readers can relate more easily to the characters' characterizations. In addition, Dr.

Watson, who is the narrator for most of the Sherlock Holmes stories, frequently expresses his confusion and amazement about the brilliant style of Holmes' deduction. As an illustration, in *The Study in Scarlet*, Watson is profoundly impressed by Holmes' deductive prowess when Holmes accurately surmises that Watson has recently returned from Afghanistan during their initial meeting.

“How are you?” he said cordially, gripping my hand with a strength for which I should hardly have given him credit. ‘You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive.’”

“How on earth did you know that?” I asked in astonishment.”

(Doyle, 2023: 8)

The reader is able to empathize with him on his perplexity and bafflement since they, too, have had these emotions at one time or another. Thus, Watson's role is crucial and seen as a conduit for establishing an attachment between the stories and the audience. In contrast, Poe employs a narrator who remains nameless to deliver lengthy narrations throughout the stories. This state creates a separation between the stories and the readers, forcing the latter to confront the concept of “uncertainty” and causing them to lose their footing and concentration much easier in the midst of the narratives, making the stories have a lower level of engagement. Through the distinct representation technique of the story narrator, Conan Doyle sought to establish a clear demarcation from Poe's creation, thereby manifesting the emergence of an *askesis* ratio within his Sherlock Holmes Canon. Nevertheless, it is unavoidable to conclude that Holmes' stories are more memorable than Dupin's stories, given that Holmes has sixty stories published over a forty-year period between 1887 and 1927, whilst Dupin has only three short stories written between 1841 and 1843. Despite these factors, what ultimately matters is the narrative style that Doyle utilized.

Furthermore, their similarities and differences are also depicted through the story plot. The best and clearest examples are Poe's *The Purloined Letter* (1884) and Conan Doyle's *A Scandal in Bohemia* (1891). Both stories are very similar, and it is impossible that Conan Doyle did not look up to Poe's work when he wrote *A Scandal in Bohemia*. In Poe's works, it can be seen that the position of women is nothing more than being a

victim or dead body. Just like in *The Purloined Letter*, a woman – who is emphasized as a Queen – is a victim of the stolen letter. The culprit is a man called Minister D. Minister D steals the Queen's letter, which contains proof of her love affair (Poe, n.d., *The Purloined Letter*).

On the other hand, in a similar story, Conan Doyle conducts some changes exemplifying the application of *askesis* ratio in his storytelling approach. He puts more power and control on a woman character—Irene Adler, as in *A Scandal in Bohemia*—which means he does not objectify women as much as Poe does. Irene Alder is the culprit in this story. She steals a photograph of her and the King of Bohemia that can prove their love affair. Conan Doyle does not stop there. He is even willing to downgrade his genius detective by being outwitted by Adler. Instead of being irritated by this incident, Holmes declares that he respects Adler for outwitting him. It is quite interesting that Holmes, who is not fond of any women, approves of Adler as “the woman” (Doyle, 2023: 123–135).

For the rest of the Sherlock Holmes canon, Conan Doyle divides the equal number of men and women as victims and dead bodies. In *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet*, the male character, Arthur Holder, is a victim as his family heirloom, the beryl coronet, is stolen. Similarly, in *The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb*, a young engineer, Victor Hatherley, becomes a victim when kidnapped and subjected to a dangerous situation. While women occasionally find themselves in perilous situations in Conan Doyle's stories, they are not exclusively portrayed as victims. Doyle's female characters are not confined to victimhood. Mary Morstan in *The Sign of Four* actively participates in solving the case, while Violet Hunter in *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches* refuses to be a passive victim, challenging the typical damsel-in-distress role, and seeks Holmes' help to unravel a mysterious situation. It suggests that he is not biased toward a certain sex. As mentioned in the previous explanation, women are, in fact, portrayed to be dead in Poe's works.

Dead women's bodies can be found in both *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) and *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (1842) (Poe, n.d., *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*; Poe, n.d., *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*). Once, Poe argues in his essay that “[w]hen it most closely allies itself to Beauty: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world” (Poe, 2006). On the one hand, he values women as something aesthetic or a symbol of art, but

on the other hand, he objectifies women, making them appear to be objects rather than human beings.

Another noteworthy aspect between Poe's and Doyle's works is the title-naming. Looking at the titles of Dupin's stories, it can be understood that Poe tells his readers explicitly about the content of the stories. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) generally explains that it is a murder story, even though at the end of the story, it reveals a unique twist that the culprit is none other than an "Ourang-Outan" (Poe, 2006: 238–270). There is *The Purloined Letter* (1884), which is clearly a story about a letter that is purloined – a fancy word for stolen (Poe, 2006: 327–344). The only story with quite a mysterious title is *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt* (1842). Poe only gives his readers a little chance to speculate what it is about. There can be dead bodies or not.

With his clever use of evocative story titles like *The Adventure of the Devil's Foot* (1910), *The Red-Headed League* (1891), *The Five Orange Pips* (1891), and *Silver Blaze* (1892), Doyle masterfully immerses readers into rich worlds filled with intrigue. In particular, this tactic proves especially effective in detective fiction, where it serves as a powerful tool for engaging readers' intellectual curiosity while delivering riveting entertainment. His carefully crafted titles inspire readers to journey into the mysteries of these tales, where they can encounter new revelations and gain insight into complex themes woven within each narrative.

From all of the analyzed aspects, it can be concluded that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories can be categorized as *askesis* in terms of their influence from Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin stories. While Conan Doyle undeniably found inspiration in Poe's ground-breaking detective tales, he adeptly balanced paying homage to his predecessor with forging his own distinct literary identity. In portraying Sherlock Holmes, Conan Doyle draws certain parallels with Poe's Dupin, particularly in their shared emphasis on deductive reasoning and meticulous data collection as the foundation of their investigative methods. However, Conan Doyle goes beyond mere imitation. He introduces unique elements such as Holmes's idiosyncrasies and his deeply developed friendship with Dr. Watson, setting his stories apart from Poe's Dupin whose friendship with his unnamed narrator is not comprehensively developed. Although both Dupin and Holmes are exceptionally skilled detectives, Doyle

focuses more on developing his characters. With his peculiarities, Holmes becomes an iconic figure, while Dupin remains a more mysterious character. Doyle often uses Dr. Watson as the narrator, providing a unique perspective.

In contrast, Poe's Dupin stories typically have an unnamed narrator who lacks the same depth or recurring presence as Watson. Poe's stories often depict women as victims or objects, whereas Doyle introduces more empowered female characters like Irene Adler in *A Scandal in Bohemia*. Poe's story titles usually straightforwardly describe the central mystery, while Doyle employs more captivating and intriguing titles that draw readers into the narrative. Conan Doyle's extensive Sherlock Holmes collection comprises numerous stories spanning several decades, while Poe's Dupin stories are limited to just three. Doyle's stories feature more engaging dialogues and interactions between characters, making them easier for readers to connect with and enjoy. Doyle not only builds upon Poe's foundation but also expands and shapes the detective fiction genre in new ways by departing from strict imitation. This deliberate departure from strict emulation signifies an artist consciously breaking free from excessive influence to infuse their own creativity and innovation into their creations. In doing so, Conan Doyle both honors Poe's legacy and reshapes the detective fiction genre into something uniquely his own.

The Influence of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Detective Fiction on Laurie R. King's

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories have had a lasting impact on the detective fiction genre, and this influence can be seen in Laurie R. King's Sherlock Holmes and Mary Russell series. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's influence on Laurie R. King's Sherlock Holmes and Mary Russell series is palpable. The impact of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle on Laurie R. King's Sherlock Holmes and Mary Russell series is unmistakable, giving rise to a *tessera* manifestation of literary influence, meaning that King takes inspiration from a symbol of Conan Doyle, which is Sherlock Holmes, and continues the narrative of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, ultimately offering a fresh perspective on the Sherlock Holmes stories. As a result, King's texts create an antithesis of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. It is a concept that warrants in-depth exploration and analysis in the subsequent discussion.

This part aims to dissect the intricate facets of this influence, providing a comprehensive understanding of how Conan Doyle's legacy has been interwoven into King's texts, thereby shaping the evolution of detective fiction.

King's series is a feminist reimagining of the Sherlock Holmes stories, in which she introduces a new character, Mary Russell, who becomes Holmes' apprentice and, later, partner in crime-solving. The unique dynamic between these two characters serves as a crucial element throughout the series, exploring their professional and personal partnership. King effectively pulls readers into this world from Russell's perspective by utilizing a first-person point of view for her protagonist.

King's series, which begins with *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* (1994), is a reinterpretation of Conan Doyle's original Sherlock Holmes stories and explores the detective's later years when he takes on a young protégé named Mary Russell. The continuation of Sherlock Holmes' character in King's series reveals how much Conan Doyle has inspired her writing approach. The depiction she gives is heavily influenced by the original stories, where she seamlessly integrates various key traits from Holmes' personality into her own portrayal. King showcases him as a highly analytical individual who utilizes his deduction skills along with close surveillance techniques to solve mysteries while preserving many traits that make him popular among readers to this day. Thus, she keeps alive one of literature's most enduring characters. Interestingly, in King's text, Holmes is depicted to be less than Russell.

"I became, in other words, more like Holmes than the man himself: brilliant, driven to a point of obsession, careless of myself, mindless of others, but without the passion and the deep-down, inbred love for the good in humanity that was the basis of his entire career. He loved the humanity that could not understand or fully accept him; I, in the midst of the same human race, became a thinking machine."

(King, 1994: 289)

Conan Doyle's impact can also be observed in using enigmatic hints and brainteasers in King's stories, which mirror the traditions of the initial Holmes stories. King frequently includes intricate quandaries and tests for the reader, resembling those found in

Conan Doyle's initial works.

Conan Doyle's writing style heavily influenced The Mary Russell series by incorporating concise yet direct prose to evoke a sense of mystery, a trademark attribute in his timeless tales featuring Sherlock Holmes. Not only does King pay homage to Conan Doyle by drawing on themes similar to those explored in his original works, but she also expands on this by introducing new characters like Mary Russell, who act as dynamic counterparts for our beloved detective. Thus, categorizing King's texts as *tessera* is evident. Moreover, King delves into new topics such as societal views toward women's roles within society along with other perspectives like those who feel out-of-place for those familiar with Conan Doyle's renowned crafted worlds. Through her imaginative storytelling techniques enriched with insights into these controversial topics plaguing modern society today, the readers are given more depth than ever before within our understanding and relationship with this literary masterpiece.

Among several stories of Mary Russell, this essay provides King's second detective story of the Mary Russell series entitled *A Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1995). This selection is made based on the consideration of the development of its main character, Mary Russell. This novel is considered an early story of Russell, which is capable of presenting the origin of the Mary Russell series. "*A Monstrous Regiment of Women* continues the literary tradition of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and, as in *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*, once again brings new life to Holmes" (King, 1995: 286). Other than that, *A Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1995) highlights how much more assertive and influential Mary becomes compared to her previous role as an apprentice under Sherlock Holmes' tutelage in, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* (1994), who works more or less based on Holmes' instruction (King, 1995).

In *A Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1995), Mary's character is characterized by her active involvement in making critical decisions related to the investigation. She no longer relies solely on Holmes' guidance but evaluates situations independently and contributes substantially to the resolution of the case. She always has her own way of solving a mystery. "Holmes would have done the matter by telegram, I knew, but I always prefer the personal touch in my matters of mild blackmail" (King, 1994: 111). In this

story, she received the case comes from Margery Childe, a “charismatic suffragette and a mystic whose draw on the young theology scholar is irresistible” who is also a friend of Russell’s college mate in Oxford, Veronica Baconsfield (King, 1995: 286). The development of Mary Russell is perceived as a manifestation of *tessera* in King’s texts which becomes an essential aspect to consider in this article since the critical point of the discussion will revolve around Mary Russell as a character. Also, having Russell as an active character will give a clear distinction throughout the comparison process.

At the beginning of *The Beekeeper’s Apprentice* (1994), Laurie R. King provides an “Editor’s Preface” in which she claims that someone has sent her a tin trunk that contains some belongings of someone anonymous, “... when the UPS delivery woman came barreling down the driveway and, somewhat to my surprise, began to unload not the order of vegetable seeds I was expecting but a very large, heavily strapped cardboard box...” (King, 1994: 8). It is the second time she has received the parcel. The contents are varied and seem pretty random, ranging from a photograph, a coin with a hole in the middle of it, an emerald necklace, a shoelace, a beeswax candle, and manuscripts written by Ms Mary Russell about the story of Sherlock Holmes and her adventures. “And, right at the bottom, a layer of what proved to be manuscripts, although only one was immediately recognizable as such, the others being either English-sized foolscap covered top to bottom with tiny, difficult writing or the same hand on an unwieldy pile of mismatched scrap paper. Each was bound with narrow purple ribbon and sealed with wax, stamped R” (King, 1994: 9).

At the beginning of the series, King was unsure if the manuscript’s sender was Ms. Russell herself. However, her doubts grew when she traced the shipment back to a young man. The absence of any notes with the parcel made it even more mysterious, leaving King to wonder why it had been sent to her and for what reason. This event serves as a catalyst for her involvement in editing Mary Russell’s written works and pursuing publication of them. King cites that there was no mention of copyright limitations in any accompanying notes, thus justifying her actions. By positioning herself as Mary Russell’s editor and asserting receipt of the mysterious trunk, King enhances verisimilitude within the unfolding narrative (King, 1994).

The method of building a sense of reality is inherited from Conan Doyle’s writing style, which is employed in his Holmes stories. However, in the case of Conan Doyle, he does not act as an editor for Watson, who writes Holmes’ biography. He showcases a different attempt to establish the sense of reality in the Sherlock Holmes canon. This method is shown directly through Watson’s writing. In some stories in the canon, Watson often states that some cases contain very sensitive aspects. He cannot mention specific names, dates, or places to protect Sherlock Holmes’ detective practice and their clients’ privacies, such as in *The Illustrious Client*. By strengthening this, Conan Doyle is shaping the readers’ mindset that everything happens in the stories is real, so that he has to act meticulously.

In taking on such an iconic literary detective as Sherlock Holmes, King undoubtedly shows courage in her writing process. The most admirable about her approach is how seamlessly she transforms his narratives into a feminist framework while situating Sherlock Holmes within an entirely new era—the early twentieth century—with great skill and finesse. Equally striking is how King challenges well-accepted ideas among scholars regarding Holmes’ alleged distrust of women; through Mary Russell’s introduction, she shatters this myth convincingly. Her work serves as an impressive continuation of Conan Doyle’s original Sherlock Holmes stories, set between December 1920 and February 1921.

King incorporates a literary device frequently used in detective fiction that involves introducing an investigative companion for the detective. In this situation where Sherlock Holmes resides alone following retirement without Watson living with him anymore; thus King introduces Russell to fill that void for Watson’s replacement role while being more prominent than he was since she leads her investigation alongside Holmes’. Consequently, highlighting Russell’s inquiries throughout makes their workload evenly divided between both detectives, which contrasts Conan Doyle’s perception of Watson being secondary to Holmes’ requirements, which prioritized his role over others.

King’s texts showcase such an exciting occurrence that Sherlock Holmes trusts a woman to carry out her investigation and respects her findings, which significantly contrasts with Conan Doyle’s depiction of Holmes’ lack of faith in women. The story

concludes with an even more astonishing development as Holmes enters into marriage with Russell, a woman who is 39 years younger than him. "And yes, Holmes and I married too, and although it may not have been a union of conventional bliss, it was never dull" (King, 1995: 284). This event defies the established norms within previous stories starring Conan Doyle's iconic character, effectively shattering overarching myths surrounding male-female dynamics within these works. Women hold significantly elevated positions within this narrative as they actively engage in work efforts and give rousing speeches while advocating for equal rights through exploring the feminist religious movement championed by suffragettes, all portrayals aligning well with King's feminist beliefs. Although Conan Doyle does not entirely undermine women's roles aside from portraying an untrusting image for him through Holmes' character traits, empowering depictions such as these are not typically found throughout his works.

Long-winded descriptions are a hallmark of King's narrative style in her novel: she spends ample time painting vivid portraits of locations, individuals, and even the protagonist's own ruminations. Although this creates an immersive reading experience for some audiences, it may leave others feeling bogged down or puzzled by where things are headed next, especially compared to authors like Conan Doyle, who emphasize dialogue to keep readers engaged. Still, there is some overlap between these two writers; King nods toward suffragettes in her title choice, as do many of Conan Doyle's own intriguing titles that tease but do not reveal too much about his mysteries.

In essence, King's literary approach is unconventional and iconoclastic. She dismantles every aspect of Conan Doyle's established framework while still utilizing his iconic character, Holmes. However, King applies a different methodology to the traditional detective formula employed by Conan Doyle. It is worth noting that King's work is intended to continue the Sherlock Holmes canon. However, she adds a fresh perspective to the archetypal detective, creating a new paradigm in stark contrast to the original. Consequently, King's work embodies the concept of *tessera*, as it introduces a fresh and innovative approach to the classical detective genre.

CONCLUSION

Through an extensive analysis of detective fiction within this essay, a novel perspective on the diverse influences at play between Poe-Conan Doyle and Conan Doyle-King narratives comes to light. Conan Doyle drew upon Poe's foundational detective fiction elements. Conan Doyle borrows the general formula of Poe's detective fiction, such as the formula of main characters—not the characters' names—and plot, which makes his works have the same sense as Poe's works. However, Conan Doyle adds some developments with his own ideas on narrator-naming, writing style, woman's depiction, and story-titling to estrange himself from being too influenced by Poe, establishing his own distinct voice. Thereby, this process subjects his works to an *askesis*.

On the other hand, Laurie R. King's Mary Russell series, influenced by Doyle's works, brings a *tessera* influence on the detective fiction genre. King borrows Conan Doyle's Holmes—literally the name of the character—to be one of the main characters in her detective fiction and creates a continuation of Conan Doyle's Holmes stories yet with a completely different sense—and formula—from what Conan Doyle has. While inheriting some of Holmes' deductive prowess, Mary Russell evolves as a character who no longer relies solely on Holmes' guidance. In King's novels, Mary actively engages in critical decision-making, often evaluating situations independently and contributing substantially to resolving cases. This shift in the role of the detective, from a singular Holmes figure to a more collaborative dynamic, reflects the *tessera* aspect. It adds a new layer to the genre by exploring the empowerment of a female detective, showcasing the evolution and adaptability of detective fiction over time. As a result, her work exemplifies *tessera*.

This study stands as a pioneering effort in detective fiction research and contributes to a deeper understanding of the detective fiction genre and its evolution over time. There is a notable absence of prior research applying Harold Bloom's Revisionary Ratios to examine the intricate web of revisionary variations among Poe, Conan Doyle, and King. This research introduces a pioneering approach to comprehending the dynamic interaction of literary influences within detective fiction, filling a critical void in the existing scholarly work.

COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

Herewith the author declares that this article is totally free from any conflict of interest regarding the data collection, analysis, editorial process, and publication process in general.

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