

# Why sherlock holmes is just as original as c. auguste dupin

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Why Sherlock Holmes is Just as Original as C. Auguste Dupin After reading two famous amateur detective stories by Edgar Allan Poe and two by Arthur Conan Doyle, I found myself questioning the originality of Doyle's stories as compared to Poe's stories. The stories in question are "The Purloined Letter" and "Murders in the Rue Morgue" by Poe and "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" and "A Scandal in Bohemia" by Doyle. All four of these stories had very exciting story lines and had very interesting mysterious aspects. Since the Poe stories of C.

Auguste Dupin were written well before Doyle's stories of Sherlock Holmes, this leads to the question of whether or not Doyle's stories are genuinely original or if much of his stories ideas were copied from Poe. I believe that Doyle's detective stories are just as creative and original as Poe's detective stories. One of the biggest and probably most obvious similarities between the stories is that of the plots. In "The Purloined Letter", Dupin is contacted by the prefect to help the police retrieve a letter that had been stolen.

This letter was of great importance to a certain person and if this letter was released to the public it would reveal things that could ruin that person's reputation. The prefect knows Minister D- stole the letter. He also knows that the letter must be very close to the minister who stole it because the ability to produce the letter when needed is just as important to the minister as actually having it. The police have searched the minister's hotel room and were not able to find the letter.

Dupin then goes to the minister's hotel room and easily retrieves the letter because he knows that the minister would hide it in plain sight, since he

knew the police would come looking for it. Many of these aspects of Poe's story are repeated in Doyle's *A Scandal in Bohemia*. In "*A Scandal in Bohemia*" Holmes is confronted by an important king to retrieve a letter and a photo of him with his ex lover that proves their relationship. If the photo was released it could hurt his reputation immensely. The king has tried many things to retrieve the letter but was unsuccessful.

Holmes then goes to the woman's house and tricks her into revealing the location of the letter by faking a fire thinking that the photo would be the first thing she would grab. Because of these similarities between the two stories by Poe and Doyle it appears that Doyle had copied his ideas from Poe who had written his story years earlier. In "*Murders in the Rue Morgue*", Dupin goes to investigate a murder scene. At this scene there are many clues that would lead one to think it was a human that committed the murder.

However, it was difficult to come up with a motive for that person because bags of money were still on the floor and the women that were murdered hardly ever made contact with others which makes it difficult to believe that there is someone who would want to cause them harm. Dupin goes on to find some more clues that lead him to believe it wasn't a human that committed the crime but a sailor's Orang-Outang. Dupin then gets the sailor to come to his house and gets him to admit that it was his animal that committed the murder.

Again these scenarios in Poe's story are very similar to those in Doyle's story "*The Adventure of the Speckled Band*". In "*The Adventure of the Speckled*

Band", Holmes is consulted about a very suspicious case. A woman was killed a few years ago and before she died she had said it was the speckled band that killed her. Holmes goes to the house where she was killed to investigate. At first Holmes believes the speckled band was a group of gypsies that would hang out on their property, but after further investigating he had realized it was not gypsies but a speckled snake that the girl's father kept inside the house.

Another huge similarity between the two stories that would imply Doyle had copied Poe's ideas is the narrator of the story. In " Murders in the Rue Morgue" and " A Scandal in Bohemia" the reader is given a lot of information by the narrator about the main character. In both stories the narrator is a close friend who lives with the detective. Also the narrator always tells the reader everything that is going on and he is also a fairly smart person but not as smart as the main character. Holmes and Dupin also have very similar detective methods.

Both characters are capable of seeing things that normal people are not. They will put themselves in the suspects shoes and think as they would to discover more clues. When they discover clues they will come up with a hypothesis and then investigate it until it is proven true or more clues are revealed to them causing them to come up with a new hypothesis. They also will never tell the narrator what they are thinking or ask him for advice. They do all of their sleuthing on their own and reveal it to the narrator once they have solved the case.

In both " Murders in the Rue Morgue" and " The Adventure of the Speckled Band" the detectives inform their partner what they have been thinking all along and how they solved the mystery. Even though there are all these similarities between the Dupin and Holmes stories there are also many differences that give each story their own originality. For example, " A Scandal in Bohemia" is extremely similar to " The Purloined Letter" however, at the end Dupin is successful in his endeavour whereas Holmes is not.

The ending of a story is always the most important and such a drastic difference between the two stories certainly provides Doyle with a little more originality. In " Murders in the Rue Morgue" which is very similar to " The Adventure of the Speckled Band", Dupin comes up with his hypothesis and he is correct. In " The Adventure of the Speckled Band" Holmes comes up with his hypothesis but soon realizes that he was incorrect and is forced to come up with a new hypothesis. Dupin gives off the impression that he is the perfect detective that never makes mistakes and Holmes actually makes a mistake.

This huge difference between the stories makes Doyle's story very original and not so much of a copy of Poe's story. One noticeably large difference between the Dupin and Holmes stories is that of the background story of the mystery or information as to why the crime happened. In the Dupin stories the plot jumps right to the events that happened and what Dupin does to solve it. For example in " Murders in the Rue Morgue" Dupin reads about the murder in the paper and then goes to solve it. There is no background information given on the people involved in the murder.

In the Holmes stories the reader is given significant amounts of background information to the characters involved in the mystery. For example in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" the reader is given much information on the background of the victims in the murder. Being given this information the reader understands more how the victim is feeling and can become more involved in the story. This effect on the reader is something that makes the Doyle stories very original and not an exact copy of Poe's stories.

The biggest difference between Dupin and Holmes would have to be their personality. Dupin is described as a loner that sits at home and spends his time thinking whereas Holmes is a very well known person to other people and is also addicted to cocaine. Dupin can be seen as a very serious person where Holmes is more of a quirky and adventurous person. This difference between Holmes and Dupin gives Holmes a much more creative and interesting character than Dupin, implying that Doyle did not rip off Poe's detective character when he was making his own.

All of the similarities between Doyle's stories and Poe's stories would lead one to believe that Sherlock Holmes was just a rip off of Dupin. Since Poe was the first author to write about a detective it seems obvious that other authors would take ideas from his stories just as Doyle did. There was most likely something that Poe had read or experienced that gave him his ideas for Dupin so it is only natural for writers to get their ideas or concepts from other places.

However, because of all the original ideas and differences to the Holmes stories I believe that Doyle's detective stories are just as creative as Poe's

stories. It is the main ideas of the story such as the outcome or the personality of the main character that are different which causes the stories to actually be much different. For this reason I believe that the Holmes stories are genuinely original and that Arthur Conan Doyle made significant contributions to the detective story.