Holmes vs Watson

**Watson makes Holmes Shine**

Two very important characters in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles* are Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson. Though these two men have some very significant similarities and differences, two things stand out above the rest.

A noteworthy similarity is that both are intelligent men, which is shown many times throughout the story. Holmes loves to show off his intelligence. The reader can see an episode of this in chapter one when Holmes is able to so accurately profile Dr. Mortimer simply by studying his walking stick (504-505). The reader catches glimpses of how intelligent Dr. Watson is throughout the story. It becomes very clear on several occasions, one of which is when he knows just which person to ask about who might be the owner of the initials L.L. Watson asks Dr. Mortimer, “I suppose there are few people living within driving distance whom you do not know? (553)” This question takes him directly to Laura Lyons who is key to solving the mystery.

Despite their many similarities there is one key difference that separates Holmes from Watson. As proud as Holmes is, Watson is humble. “Really Watson, you excel yourself,(504)” says Holmes, making Watson feel like he has done well, but he follows it immediately with, “Some people without possessing genius have a remarkable power of stimulating it.(504)” (We get the feeling that this is why Holmes keeps Watson around.) This quote shows how Holmes thinks of himself as the genius and is willing to say it, and how he seems to feel even more intelligent by putting Watson down.

A study of these two men shows that many of Holmes’ deductions are based off of what Watson observes. Holmes even admits this when he says, “I confess [Watson] I am very much in your debt.” So, while they are both very intelligent, Holmes wouldn’t look nearly as amazing without Watson there to make the observations and let Holmes take the credit. Watson’s humility allows Holmes’ intelligence to shine.