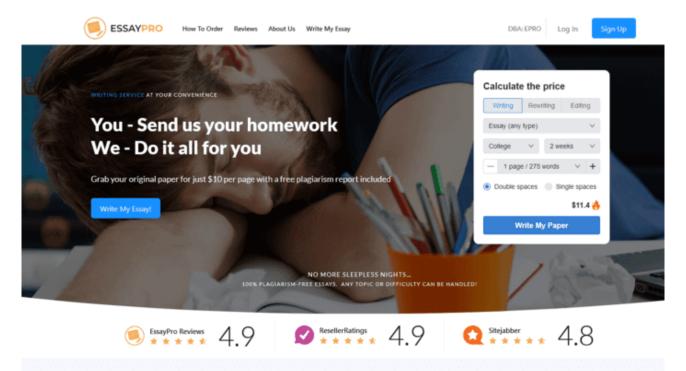
Sherlock Holmes: Logician or Theseologist?



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Sherlock Holmes: Logician or Theseologist? I propose to devote my declining years to the composition of a textbook which shal focus the whole art of detection into one volume. —Sherlock Holmes in The Adventure of the Abbey Grange He is a Logician A logician studies the way we ought to reason; she is interested in the distinction between corect reasoning and incorect reasoning. Although we all reason and are often interested in whether our reasoning is valid we are not a I logicians because we do not make a study of it; that is, we do not reflect deeply enough on this subject. Now Sherlock Holmes reasons a great deal—Watson cals him the greatest reasoning

machine in the world. But he not only reasons he also reflects on how we should reason. Indeed, he was planning on writing a textbook on the art of <u>detection</u> when he retired.

When a

person is planning on writing on a subject that he knows so wel in practice he must have thought deeply about the subject.

Sherlock Holmes' profession is crime detection. His expertise is in finding out what criminals are hiding from the rest of the world. But as he has demonstrated over and over again his kind of reasoning can be applied to al kinds of situations in which we want to uncover knowledge of things to which we do not have direct access. Sherlock Holmes was not present when a crime was committed, , but after he had done his work he was able to describe what happened, if not to the last <u>detail</u>, then at least (as he says) in <u>essentials</u>. Watson went out one morning unaccompanied. Afterwards Sherlock Holmes had no dificulty teling him, Watson, what he, Watson, had been doing. Sherlock Holmes is interested in the kind of reasoning that in a textbook on logic would come und...

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...s. Earlier we have pointed out some of the questions theseology has to answer. These are not the kind of questions we ask in logic (we have pointed out). For example, why is it that old clues can only lead to new clues when they have been corectly interpreted? In reasoning, whether premises are true or false, conclusions can folow (validly). But in the theseological process old clues incorectly interpreted wil have no ofsprings (in the form of new clues). Why? Why do clues behave in this peculiar fashion? As we have pointed out, this is not the kind of question we ask in logic.

Theseology is not a branch of logic. In theseology we ask a different kind of questions. In theseology the concept of a clue is central. If we know what a clue is, we know how to find clues and why by following them we can uncover knowledge of things to which we do not have direct access.3

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