

# The New Criterion

## Features

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## Sleuthing Conan Doyle

by [Alexandra Mullen](#)

On *The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes: The Life and Times of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* by Andrew Lycett and *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters* edited by Jon Lellenberg.

Alistair Cooke once told the English actor Jeremy Brett that the three most influential people of the previous hundred years were Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, and Sherlock Holmes. Still going strong 120 years after his first appearance in *A Study in Scarlet*, the unfortunately fictional Sherlock Holmes almost completely overshadows his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a fact ruefully or practically acknowledged in the American naming of a new biography of Doyle by Andrew Lycett—Holmes appears in the main title, in big type; Conan Doyle only in the subtitle, at the bottom of the jacket, in much smaller type. Another new biography, which mostly lets Conan Doyle speak for himself through his letters, prints his name boldly front and center and doesn't mention Holmes on the jacket at all. Since there is a certain rivalry between the two books, both of them fine, it will be instructive to see if their choices of titles have any effect ...

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