

Three Patch Podcast – Episode 10

Race Issues in Sherlock Roundtable

October 1, 2013

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Race Issues in Sherlock Roundtable

Consulting Fans: Drinkingcocoa, Hannah, Pythia Delphi, Mayon, Producer/Editor:
Drinkingcocoa
– Our Consulting fans discuss race issues in *Sherlock*

(Music intro: The Heath Sisters, Philadelphia Chickens: Belly Button (Round))

(Music fades)

Drinking Cocoa

Hi and welcome to the Three Patch Podcast roundtable on race issues in Sherlock. This is Drinking Cocoa and I'm here with:

Hannah

Hannah.

Pythia

Hello this is Seema, also known as Pythia Delphi on LJ.

Mayon

Hi, this is Mayon.

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Drinking Cocoa

Sherlock is a British show written by three white men and both the main characters are white. And there are a number of people of color in minor roles. I'm going to start by listing the ones I can think of, and then we'll go to questions. Starting with A Study in Pink, we have Sergeant Donovan. We have Ella the therapist. I saw a political aide and one of the reporters. I think the taxi passenger is hapa, half white and half Asian. For The Blind Banker, there's the guy at the beginning fighting Sherlock. There's Soo Lin Yao and all the people associated with the Chinese circus. There's the shopkeeper who, incidentally, is played by a woman named Jacqueline Chan who was born in Trinidad and speaks no Chinese. Thank you, IMDB. There's Soo Lin's brother. For The Great Game, we have Donovan again. I see a Tube guard listed. There's Andrew West and Raul de Santos for A Scandal in Belgravia. There's one of the palace guys who comes to take Sherlock away. There are the people in Karachi who have captured Irene, for Hounds of Baskerville. There's Chipo Chung, who's the TV announcer. This actress is half Zimbabwean and half Chinese. Then there's Corporal Lyons, who's played by Will Sharpe, who is half white and half Japanese. Dr. Mortimer, Sasha Behar, is British Indian. Off screen we have Mr. Chatterjee, who's one of my favorites.

Pythia

I'm going to discuss Mr. Chatterjee.

Drinking Cocoa

And then in Reichenbach Fall, we have Donovan again, we have Ella again, and we have the prosecuting barrister. As you have watched the series, what moments have stood out to you as times when you're conscious of race as an issue? Did you find any of these moments commendable, matter of fact, or problematic?

Pythia

I suppose the most egregious error I found was the whole Blind Banker episode. Kind of the episode that I wish hadn't happened. I find the character of Donovan slightly problematic. Some things I found commendable were, for example, in the beginning of the first episode, we see Ella, John's therapist, being this well-heeled professional woman of color, a black woman in a position of power. And I thought that was a really good thing to introduce to 21st century London.

Mayon

I also find Donovan's character very problematic. I think it's great that she's a recurring character and she's a person of color. We need to take what we can get sometimes. And

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she's not tokenized, at least in my opinion. She's not like a sassy black detective. I think commendations should be given where they can be given, even if it's a little sad that that's all we have. But at the same time, she is not a main character. She basically exists to move the plot forward and is not characterized at all. And she's an unlikable character when she is characterized. Unfortunately, I feel that a lot of times the characters of color, in very -- shows dominated by white characters, are unlikable. And they're unlikable because they're seen from the main character's standpoint, and they don't have any control over the narrative.

Pythia

There's no getting away from the fact that all the major characters in this show, not just Sherlock and John but also Lestrade and Moriarty and Mycroft -- they're all white men.

Drinking Cocoa

I actually love Donovan. I do love her and I did find her to be characterized well, or as well as somebody who has so little screentime can be in *The Great Game*. I find her hilarious when she's chasing down John and suggesting alternate hobbies for him, like fishing. Doesn't she say fishing? Like maybe you should take up something other than hanging out with Sherlock. I found that to be very human. I liked seeing that she was presented as having a race and gender and a class background that shows some of the holes in Sherlock's assumptions about life. That he's privileged and he doesn't see it, showing that some of her skepticism about him showed that maybe he was missing some of the things that she would be more aware of. But it might also have been just that I was looking really hard.

Hannah

At the same time. I feel like with Donovan's character, this is more going to like Donovan as a whole. It takes a lot of analysis and fangirling and unbiased viewing to learn to appreciate that character. I mean, when I first watched it, and even now watching it, all I can see is like, Oh my god, she's such a jerk. Like she should just let these two dudes go and have fun. There are definitely admirable things about her character, but like on a whole, she's a pretty negative character. If you're not like, I don't know, looking at it from a fan perspective of loving every character and appreciating them.

Drinking Cocoa

I don't remember what it was like not to look at it from that fan perspective. I loved actually the taxi passenger in *A Study in Pink*, because he did read to me as half-Asian half-white. And when they said he's from Santa Monica and he's American, that looked to me like it was consciously racially done in a way that just added to the international feel of the show. My background is Korean American. And when they mentioned that Mycroft had something

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to do with the Korean elections in The Great Game, I felt a little insulted. You know, I haven't lived in Korea in like 30 years, and I was still like, no! Some guy in England has nothing to do with our elections. On the other hand, I also know that TV in every country is weirdly ethnocentric.

Hannah

It's payback for K-drama's view of America and England, which is hilarious.

Drinking Cocoa

The thing that hurt me the most was, Who is that guy at the beginning of The Blind Banker who comes for a knife fight about the diamonds for Sherlock while John is fighting with a chip-and-pin machine?

Pythia

That was dreadful, wasn't it? Just throw in some random turban guy?

Drinking Cocoa

Yeah, like, is he from a culture? Did they just make him up? What's he supposed to be? Between that and then the Pakistani terrorists who are going to kill Adler-- There are terrorists everywhere in the world. You don't have to put her in Karachi.

Pythia

Yeah, that just didn't make any sense. And it's sort of like harkening back to canon but in a really bad way that they shouldn't have.

Drinking Cocoa

It seems lazy to me. It seemed like these exotic signifiers were being used as a shortcut to signal threat or something scary and possibly kind of funny.

Pythia

Yeah, and I would add the Mr. Chatterjee thing to it as well. It's like they haven't even done the basic research. I come from an Indian background, an Indian Hindu background, and Chatterjee's a Hindu name. And it's very unlikely that he would be in Islamabad, which is in Pakistan. And also this connotation that, you know, all these brown guys that commit bigamy and stuff like that -- I was really hurt by that. I don't know if they intend for some of these to be caricatures or stereotypes. Because if you look at canon-- okay, we have to take into context, say, with it set at the height of the British Empire. Still, most of the caricatures who aren't English gentlemen are completely stereotyped. Whether they're women from Latin America or even Welsh women or Indian guys or Chinese guys -- they're all types -- or

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the rich American business tycoon. They're all caricatures. I don't know whether it was a conscious choice or not to have similar caricatures in the Sherlock TV show.

Drinking Cocoa

Were there moments when you notice race-specific casting and moments when you notice that it was not race-specific?

Pythia

Well, obviously all the Chinese characters in The Blind Banker were race-specific. The circus mafia or whatever. But I thought Dr. Mortimer was an interesting choice because they made her a woman and a woman of color, whereas the original character was a white man.

Hannah

Corporal Lyons as well was not race-specifically cast. That really made me happy because I think that he was meant to be sort of like a -- authoritative figure. In the military, which is like a very masculine thing-- and I feel like a lot of times one of the most egregious casting affronts on people of color, especially Asian actors, is that they're never cast in the masculine, authoritative role.

Pythia

Yeah, it's made me happy because he's so pretty. Oh my God, he's so pretty.

Hannah

Okay, yeah, I wasn't going to go there but-- [laughter]

Drinking Cocoa

There was another half-Asian character, the documentary narrator in Hounds. It made me wonder if Mark Gatiss, who wrote The Great Game and Hounds, if he's a little bit more alert about casting people of color than the other two head writers. Because we know that he's on the record as saying that he wants to update the casting. He wants to show people who are incidentally gay, more like how we have it in the real world, and not have it all be a heterosexual world. I just wondered if maybe he has his eye open for that too. Oh, I was surprised by Andrew West, which is not a name that I associate with a South Asian face being portrayed by an actor who looks South Asian to me. Did anyone else have a moment there?

Pythia

Yeah, yeah, that was good in that it wasn't anything like, Oh my God, why is this? It seemed to reflect more the reality of London in this time, in this age.

Drinking Cocoa

And I also liked -- this is maybe a little bit of, I think, possibly justified paranoia or anxiety -- but that he had something to do with national security and he was shown as a brown person, a brown person doing something with national security that wasn't terrorism.

Hannah

It made me happy too that, like, then he was suspected and then found not guilty.

Drinking Cocoa

I also had a strange moment. And this is where it's not overt and maybe I'm reading into it. But when Raul de Santos is shown as having access to Botox, is that because he's an immigrant from a South American country where plastic surgery is something that people are really familiar with? I don't know. Am I reading into that?

Pythia

I never thought of that.

Hannah

No, I think that was the implication.

Drinking Cocoa

The trust we have in the show is... in some areas we don't trust and some we completely trust, and then there are areas where if I see more evidence later I'll make up my mind, but I'm not quite sure.

Hannah

Yeah, I mean, I feel like I, I trust Gatiss a little more than the other writers, but the other writers, I don't trust them.

Drinking Cocoa

If you've read Arthur Conan Doyle, what race issues occur to you? And how do you feel the BBC adaptation has handled race issues that are in the source material?

Pythia

I think the more apt question would be, what race issues didn't occur to you while reading canon? I mean, the stories are so steeped in racism and sexism. I do have a hard time going

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back to canon these days. And when I do, I only go back to it to read about these two characters and their enduring friendship. And I avoid most of the stories that make me feel, ugh, God, why did I ever read this? But I was quite young when I read it, so a lot of the stuff did pass me by. The story that really really everybody probably remembers as problematic in terms of race is Sign of Four.

Drinking Cocoa

When I was feeling like I should be a good fan and I love this show, so maybe I should go back to Arthur Conan Doyle and read him for the first time since I was in middle school, I flipped through The Sign of Four and was so mad! I felt so embarrassed because, yes, it's reflective of an incredibly imperialistic time in British history. And a lot of the literature at that time was that imperialistic and that racist, but not all. It wasn't a requirement. He could have done better than that. And it was The Sign of Four that just made me go, alright, I think I'm just gonna watch Benedict and Martin. I'm done. I'm good. But the quote-- There's a character Tonga--

Pythia

Oh, god, so cringe worthy, the pygmy, the cannibalistic pygmy guy.

Drinking Cocoa

And the quotes that made me just click away go, "He was stanch and true, was little Tonga. No man ever had a more faithful mate." So you think okay, that's all right. "We earned a living at this time by my exhibiting poor Tonga at fairs and other such places. As the black cannibal, he would eat raw meat and dance his war dance." Oh God. So I'm sitting there going, give me strength, give me strength. And then when it's not funny at all anymore-- so Tonga has killed Bartholomew Sholto -- big spoiler -- and the narration goes, "Very much surprised was he when I made at him with the rope's end and cursed him for a little bloodthirsty imp." And I thought, ehrrrr, I'm just not gonna read anymore. That was kind of awful to even look that up for this, but yeah, there's a job updating this. I remember in the commentary for The Great Game when Mark Gatiss says The Five Pips is a story that isn't often remade because it's about the Ku Klux Klan. And he says this in a really good neutral way where what I take from it is that he's appalled and he's just going to be neutral about it and assume that people are with him and that this kind of racism wasn't acceptable then, and it's really not acceptable now.

Hannah

I feel like with this show, it's almost as if, not necessarily with Gatiss' writing, but with the other dudes, it's almost as if that sort of British imperialism is still there a little bit. They're

writing from this, "I am a white British man, I'm very wealthy and powerful. I'm going to write this show." And it unintentionally sort of sticks with the canon.

Pythia

While a few strides have been made, mainly it's sort of background characters. And I don't think it's sort of a deliberate imperialism in the TV Sherlock, but there is this lack of self-awareness in some of the writing.

Hannah

Yes.

Mayon

When we're watching TV shows, oftentimes, especially from the BBC, oftentimes, they're written by people who are still in positions of privilege. And that becomes really apparent to us when we're looking for characters of color or when we see something that is problematic, but none of the show's writers or producers or directors or anyone involved in the creation really thought about it.

Pythia

I just feel that it's a lost opportunity to come to it from a 21st century London perspective. And I just looked at the statistics. Only 44% of London is white British. 60% are overall white, but there are a lot of Eastern Europeans and other white peoples here. 37% of Londoners are born outside the UK. Given that that is the reality of London, and I live in London and I walk around it every day, and my patients, a lot of my patients are non-white. And it just doesn't seem to reflect the reality of London today. And I think that they've transposed the setting without giving it a more modern spirit. I feel a bit disappointed that a person like me is still marginalized in the show, whereas I am not in real life.

Drinking Cocoa

That brings me to a quote from Afrogeekgoddess on Tumblr, who gave me permission to read this out. She loves the show and says, "What does that mean for me when I see some of my fellow fans, my fellow audience members, if you will, hating on the only visible representation of me that I see before me? When will that cross the line to trying to erase me?" She was saying that because she has a lot of interest and enjoyment of Sally Donovan, and some of the bashing of the Donovan character was making her uncomfortable, making her not feel like she could trust what was being said. That seems to tie in with what you just said, Pythia, about what we see on the screen not really reflecting what we know of London or our own lives.

Pythia

Donovan, this working class black woman trying to make it in the police force, working her way up. And then she sees this rich white guy just come in with this privilege that he's not aware of, and just get his own way. And I can totally empathize why she has such a dislike of this character. But as you say, the whole perspective of the show is to make you empathize with John and with Sherlock and she's such a buzzkill, isn't she? So you end up hating on her and it takes a bit of self reflection and looking at the show and examining the show to realize that actually, why are we actually you know, not bashing the writer and we're bashing the Donovan character?

Mayon

I was reading up on some critiques of Sherlock. And there was this one article on this blog called Racialicious about the white dude super-detective phenomenon, where basically you have a white cisgendered heterosexual man, although maybe we can argue that with Sherlock. He's not a part of the police force and yet at the same time, he is allowed into these criminal investigations. And he's the one who can figure out everything that stumps the actual police officers. It happens in Sherlock, but there's also other shows in the US, like Monk and Castle, that have the same trope. I guess it's just interesting to imagine, what if Sally Donovan, what if the actress that plays her was cast as Sherlock instead? Would people like Sherlock or would they find her to be really abrasive and would they find her to be bitchy or cold? When we think about it that way, we can see that there might be still some problems that have to do more with the fans than the creators.

Drinking Cocoa

Oh, good point. I am so crazy about Donovan. I think she's hilarious. In her defense and also in Steve Thompson's defense, I have to point out that she's aware of exactly what you just mentioned, Mayon. In Reichenbach, when Sherlock goes in to interview the kids who have been poisoned, she says, "Well, now that the professionals are done, the amateurs can have a turn."

Hannah

Do you think that if Sally Donovan were played by either a white woman or a white man that there would be this in-depth trying to appreciate her character? Or do you think fans would find it easier to hate on this character? It's sort of interesting to note that she's a very flawed character, fairly unlikable on the surface, but because she's one of the few characters of color, we try to strive to understand and appreciate her, which is sort of a sad thing, that there's there's so few, but if she weren't, do you think there'd be less of an effort?

Pythia

Because there is so few people of color and women of color, we try to embrace Donovan and try to find all the redeeming qualities we can and try to see things from her perspective. Whereas if there were more people, likable and unlikable black characters, perhaps you won't have to make such an effort to find her likable or relatable. I mean, I do. I do find her relatable.

Drinking Cocoa

Let's talk about the episode that never happened. How many times have you actually watched or re- watched The Blind Banker?

Pythia

I watched it a few times, but only a little bit. And that's only to admire Benedict's fine arse. Or his running or his getting prettily strangled, but not the whole episode.

Mayon

Yeah, I've watched it once. I was thinking about watching it again for this, but I just could not bring myself to do it.

Hannah

I've seen it more than once, but definitely not as much as the other episodes.

Drinking Cocoa

I've watched it more than once. It took me a long time to give it a second watching.

Pythia

You asked one question in the pre-recording. If you were Steve Thompson's editor, what would you say to him and I just have two words, and that's, "Bin it."

Hannah

Done, problem solved. I'm not at all Asian. I'm white and Native American. I taught myself Chinese and I've traveled in China and most of my friends are, are Asian and more a part of that culture. And so I watched this with my friends and after we got over our initial shock, it made me question a few things. So when I first watched it, I immediately sort of, it got me a little, like, angry. And I remember trying to give it the benefit of the doubt being like, this is a BBC show. These are intelligent people writing the show. Maybe I'm being too hypersensitive? Until I talked with the rest of my friends about it, and one of my friends, AliceXZ, she's like a pretty well known fan artist for Sherlock. She loves Sherlock, but we do not watch this episode. You know, we try to joke about it. If we see something like in real

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life together that's like kind of racist we'll just start saying like, "You want lucky cat?" We try to, like, marginalize the racism so it's, like, less hurtful. We just don't talk about it. But at first I thought I was being, like, overly sensitive, like you know, maybe I just have my racism goggles, orientalist goggles on too tight. No, it's not the case. After I realized that and maybe sort of ashamed as a person who sort of toes the line between, like, the culture and race of who was, like, writing this show and the culture that's shown on screen in this episode. It made me conflicted and embarrassed. It's just a painful episode. There are a few things that I noticed. One is when they see the spray painted symbols and they're taking photos and stuff. They're trying to figure this out. They're like wracking their brains. Finally Sherlock, there's some point where he's like, oh, Chinese! Chinese number one, John. Like all these problems, like my main thought was Sherlock's this genius. He spoke German in the first episode like it was no big deal. He doesn't know a damn word of Chinese and it's like the most common language in the world? How is he not asking someone? How is he not asking someone who speaks Chinese to help him on this? Why is that so outlandish?

Pythia

In that world, no white man ever has a friend who's Chinese, obviously.

Hannah

He went to a graffiti person but he didn't know a person who knew Chinese. The poor kid who was in love with Soo Lin Yao, who is just to me like really problematic. I couldn't figure out if he was just like fetishizing this person that he didn't know, and that was uncomfortable for me. It's like with Mr. Chatterjee, the audience is just as expected to assume that bigamy amongst the brown people is normal. We're expected to assume that like this brother killing his own sister is normal in Hong Kong somehow, like we're expected to assume like it's this horrible Third World place where everyone is like ruthless and bloodthirsty. And this brother kills his own sister because of honor. Like, what? What the hell? I actually was a little hopeful when the leader of this mysterious organization was a woman, but still, no. Also, origami, question mark? What the hell?

Pythia

Oh, and ancient torture implements that they took all the way down to that tunnel.

Hannah

"Ancient torture, Mr. Holmes." [laughter]

Pythia

The only way to watch this episode is to play a drinking game. Every time someone says "ancient Chinese numeral system," we all have to take a shot.

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Drinking Cocoa

One of the points that made me saddest about how horribly stereotypically characterized Soo Lin Yao was was when you see her signature on the doorbell. They put flowers around it.

Pythia

Flowers, oh. That was awful, wasn't it?

Drinking Cocoa

That is a beautiful example of stereotype. What we have is the backstory of this woman who was orphaned, who was completely impoverished, who had to do something really desperate and frightening with her brother to survive.

Hannah

But she's still Hello Kitty.

Drinking Cocoa

Exactly. This is a kawaii signature. That's a stereotype. That's not good characterization. Forget all the loaded racism or imperialism just on the basis of characterization. This is a conversation I wish somebody had known to have.

Hannah

Art department.

Drinking Cocoa

It just shows you who's working on the show, because to make a comparison, there is a homophobic joke in A Scandal in Belgravia that I laughed at, and it passed for me even though it was homophobic. Where Steve Moffat has John and Sherlock snickering at Mycroft. They call him the Queen. That's a slur and I laugh my ass off every time. I think it's hilarious. Okay, why am I laughing? Basically, I have to trust. I want to trust and I do trust because you know that every word that Steven Moffat writes is going past Mark Gatiss. I don't have the equivalent trust, obviously, for Asian race representation on the show. Anyway, this kawaii signature of Soo Lin Yao's really shows you who's not working on the show. They would have caught something. This is such a detail-oriented show for when it's in their field of expertise. I love this show, and I'm trying to find a way to come to terms with this episode. I have no idea what kind of feedback has reached Steve Thompson about this episode, but I do know that in fandom, it's the episode that never happened.

Hannah

I hope a lot did.

Drinking Cocoa

After that, if I had been a writer who had gotten that kind of feedback, it would have been scary to come back. I tried to think of the things I would say to him. Obviously first, I would say do not use the words ancient and Chinese together, ever.

Hannah

With Soo Lin Yao and her whole too-kawaii-to-function, can we talk about how she theoretically had just as hard an upbringing as her brother and yet did not fight back in any way? She didn't even try. It would have been probably a little crappy to have them have, like, a kung fu showdown in the middle of that museum, but just give it a shot, lady. Just a little-- have like wire work and-- [laughter] That would almost have been worth it.

Pythia

That would have been a cracktastic episode.

Hannah

Yeah, she's just so the wilting flower, ancient Chinese wilting flower. So do not need to see that on a TV show that was made in the 21st century.

Mayon

These are things that get repeated over and over again. I mean, we're not unfamiliar with the wilting flower. I kind of saw her as the China doll because she's like Madame Butterfly. She's the main character in Memoirs of a Geisha. She's that character, the character that is just so tragic and demure and so connected with the ancient secrets of her culture. Even the head of the crime organization, the Black Lotus, she is also a trope. She's the dragon lady. These are not -- they're not unfamiliar to me. If I were the beta for Steve Thompson, first I would have to swallow my anger and my pride, but I would want to educate him and I would want to show him that these are things that have been done since, basically since Western culture came in contact with and orientalized Eastern cultures, and that they've carried over into these media tropes today, and that they're not really okay in the 21st century.

Drinking Cocoa

I was actually surprised. I found this to be more of a throwback than most popular culture. It's not like I see this all the time and The Blind Banker is just another example. It's that I

thought, wow, I remember this from my childhood, you know, from like the 70s. This kind of racism. I haven't seen it in a while in something so mainstream.

Hannah

But the thing is, you haven't seen it because I feel like a lot of Western shows don't have episodes or segments that are so centered around Asian characters. A lot of Western shows that I watch, if they have Asian characters, they're sort of just like there for added diversity. I think a lot of writers are scared to have a storyline like this simply because of the whole ancient Chinese magics thing. I think that this episode was so themey that the racism just showed through more. I was reading the biography of Anna Mae Wong. She had to deal with this crap in the 1920s. It's the same. It's identical, like her career was marginalized by playing these dragon lady slash wilting flower characters. It's the same.

Pythia

Yeah, we have to laugh, because otherwise we'd be crying.

Hannah

That's our defense, like my friends and I. Our defense mechanism is to, like, quote the worst parts of this show and sort of laugh at it, because otherwise we would just be like heartbroken.

Drinking Cocoa

If I had tried to do something with this script, I think I would have said I would love to see this as Sherlock being a member of an international world where he sees something that makes a lot of sense in another culture, and he has to learn it. I don't know whose idea it was to say Episode Two has to feature London's Chinatown. But imagine being Steve Thompson and knowing, obviously, I think obviously, knowing nothing about how to write Chinese characters, or Chinese-English characters, being given this assignment.

Hannah

But you know what, though, that's when you learn. Like that's when you do your research as a writer. It's unacceptable if you're not going to put research in and give it a shot. That's what writers do. They have to write about things that they don't know about all the time. No one who writes for Doctor Who knows what, like, alien culture is like, but they have to figure it out. I understand that, but at the same time, like oh my god, learn.

Drinking Cocoa

If it's your assignment.

Hannah

If it's your assignment, if you're writing this, like, Oh my god, ask a real live Chinese person. I'm just not going to give them any goddamn slack. I feel like he just thought, Oh, this culture is simply too foreign for me to learn about. I'll just guess. It's not like this show is syndicated in China and Korea, like in every other Asian country. No one will watch it, right?

Drinking Cocoa

In most fandoms there are times when the source material feels offensive. What do we do as fans if we feel offended by something in a show or series that we dearly love?

Pythia

Well, we bitch about it like we're doing here. We stop watching that particular episode or we ignore that bit of canon or whatever it is. And I suppose that we try to rectify it by our fan works and acknowledge that it is problematic and though we do get hurt by it, but there are other aspects of the show or books that we do still admire.

Drinking Cocoa

Did any of you feel like, I can't go on watching this? This is too much? "This" meaning the entire series that allowed this episode to air as it was.

Hannah

I definitely felt like that for a while. For one, for the fact that friends of mine had already seen the whole series and assured me that it gets better, I probably would have stopped watching. In my own professional life, having seen this episode and realizing like an episode of this level of racism can actually like be produced and put out in the 21st century, has made me realize in my own professional life to watch out more for that and be less trusting of writers and directors. I work in film. This summer we shot a movie. There was a scene where the lead actress is supposed to walk by a Chinese massage parlor in New York City and see a masseuse standing outside, smoking a cigarette, and being sort of Dragon Lady, angry like staring angrily at the white person. And she walks by. And they were having huge casting issues, trying to find someone willing to play this masseuse. And normally, as a costume designer, I don't question the directors. I don't talk to them about what they're doing. They're the boss. This time I spoke up. I was like, you're not finding anyone because no one wants to play that role. It's boring and a little ignorant and a little stereotypical. What they did was they cast me as the masseuse yelling at my friend on a phone in Mandarin, smoking a cigarette angrily. And I'm not completely white, but I look very white. And as like a white person like speaking Chinese on the phone, it actually sort of dissipated the racism because it confused the audience so much. The ladies at the

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massage parlor were standing outside cheering like they thought it was the funniest thing they'd seen all week. So thanks, Blind Banker, for making me a little more apt to risk my job and speak up to my directors about them being racist jerks.

Pythia

I would watch the movie just for that scene.

Drinking Cocoa

Thank you, Sherlock fandom for being a place where we can talk about these things.

Multiple speakers

Bye!

(Music outro)

Transcription Team

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>, produced and edited by Emma Grant. Betaed by Drinking Cocoa.

Contact

Other consulting fans are encouraged to contribute to the discussion by posting comments on our various social media outlets, sending email, or leaving voicemail. Here's where you can reach us:

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Skype Username: [threepatch.podcast](#)

Music

The Heath Sisters, Philadelphia Chickens: Belly Button (Round)

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