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A Case of the Red Pants Mondays: The Connection Between Fandom, Tumblr, and Consumption

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TMD Department

**"A Case of the Red Pants Mondays:
The Connection Between Fandom, Tumblr, and Consumption"**

Introduction

Social media networks allow for the interaction of individuals from across the globe based on mutual social connections or shared interests. These networks are of particular benefit to the propagation of fandoms. The unique search capacity of Tumblr enables the identification of fellow fans, a forum in which to engage easily in shared fandom creation, commodity consumption, and activities such as cos-play and role-play. Fandom consumption can manifest in both material and aesthetic, or cultural, forms. This paper presents the fandom of the BBC's series *Sherlock* as a case study of the connections between social media, fandom, and consumption. The series ran as two, three-episode seasons and is currently in the midst of a two-year hiatus. Though content and commodity consumption existed from the inception of the series, the current production break has expanded the desire of fandom members to create their own series-inspired original content as well as material commodities, many of which come in the form of apparel, jewelry, or other wearable goods. Tumblr has provided the forum by which this fandom can fill the void created by said break and perpetuate its very existence. For the purpose of this paper, the investigator will first identify the question(s) to be asked, then discuss methodology, provide a theoretical and practical justification for further investigation, before discussing findings and conclusions.

The BBC's *Sherlock*

The British Broadcasting Company's (BBC) modern adaptation of the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle turned out to be wildly more popular than anyone could have rightly anticipated. Since its creation, the mini-series, simply titled *Sherlock*, has been sold to over 180 territories and has received critical acclaim, while garnering awards and nominations across several categories at the BAFTAs, Emmys, and Golden Globe Awards, along with other smaller awards ceremonies. *Sherlock* and its stars are now household names with popular culture enthusiasts throughout the world, and the cast has done press tours throughout the US, Europe, and Asia. The show was created by Steven Moffatt and Mark Gatiss, who had previously worked together as writers on the long-running and very well known BBC science-fiction drama, *Doctor Who*. The creators wished to write a series where Doyle's iconic detective character, Sherlock Holmes, was brought into the context of the twenty-first century and given access to the tools and technology afforded by the times, thereby creating a new "non-canon" version of Sherlock and the rest of his universe.

The show, starring Benedict Cumberbatch as Sherlock Holmes and Martin Freeman as his companion Dr. John Watson (See Figure 1), premiered in 2010 and ran only three 90-minute episodes per season. This meant that fans of the show had only six episodes, totaling approximately nine hours of viewing time, to enjoy over a two-year period. The series then entered an indeterminate hiatus, rumors of cancellation abound, before an announcement that a third season would go into production was released late last year. Though the new season is currently in production, no release date has been set for a premiere in either its native United Kingdom or here in the United States.

Problem Statement

Joli Jenson (1992, 10) defines the fan as "a response to the star system. This means that passivity is ascribed to the fan—he or she is seen as being brought into (enthralled) existence by the modern celebrity system, via the mass media." This rather simplistic view, one that Jenson goes forth to decry, ascribes to the fan the role of a blind consumer of mass media. However, the understood condition for the continued existence of the fan (and by extension the community of fans) is that there needs to be something for the fan to *be a fan of*. John Fiske (1992, 33) labels these consumable fan commodities as "popular cultural capital" and explains that in order to achieve distinction as a fan, participants must be "active producers and users of such cultural capital." In light of this theory, if fans must be active consumers of these fan commodities to retain their status as a fan, once a series ends...how likely is it for a fan community to be able to continue on, with no fodder for discussion, no development of plot lines or characters, and no "popular cultural capital" to consume? In addition, in the lieu of "popular cultural capital" to consume, what role does the consumption and display of material commodities play in the negotiation and sustainability of a fan's identity?

Through initial observation, it is clear that the fandom of the *Sherlock* series has inhabited a large portion of the Tumblr fandom universe. Comparable in size and visibility to the fandoms of the BBC series *Doctor Who* and the WB series *Supernatural*, it is important to note that *Doctor Who* fans have 26 seasons of material to consume and discuss, and *Supernatural* is in its eighth season. Both shows are currently still in production and air weekly episodes. How is it possible, then, that *Sherlock* fans, without the aid of continuous new production material to consume, have remained in such a visible and active position within the world of online fandoms?

Methodology

The sheer prevalence of fans interacting on social media networks such as Tumblr dictates a need to further study and understand the manner by which their communities are shaping the evolution of these new social communication platforms. The researcher conducted a qualitative data analysis for this study. As a member of the *Sherlock* fandom, this placed the researcher in a position to read texts that "can only mean something in the context of the experience and situation of its particular audience" (Grossberg 1992, 53). As an active user of Tumblr, the researcher was also able to navigate easily the social media platform to collect qualitative data, by means of tracking content "tags" and observing content posted by users she knew to be active participants of the *Sherlock* fandom.

Though the project received an "exempt" status by the Institutional Review Board, the researcher still made it a point to disclose the nature and intentions of her research to the *Sherlock* fandom. Tumblr users have the ability to remain completely anonymous (in the sense of real life identity), but this does not negate the hierarchical position of certain users within the fandom community. As Fiske (1992, 33) explains, "at the level of fan organization, [fans] begin to reproduce equivalents of the formal institutions of official culture." Understanding this, the researcher has chosen to omit specific Tumblr user names in favor of assigning a sequential number to any user who produced blog-specific content i.e., anything that could be easily traced back to them through their user name. As such, if a certain user is to be discussed due to a particularly visible position within the fandom they will be referred to as "User 1," "User 2," etc.

Tumblr users create posts by one of the following methods: uploading pre-existing content, creating original content in-site, or "reblogging" content from other users that they either find or "follow." When a user reblogs, they are essentially just posting someone else's content

to their own Tumblr account. This content automatically comes attached with a link to the original source. When reblogging content from other users, the Tumblr user can either do a straight reblog, meaning that they reblog the content exactly as it appears from the source from which they are taking it, or they have the option to add their own comments to the content, thereby changing or, some may argue, creating new content in the process. No matter what method the Tumblr user chooses to populate their blog, the process of "tagging" is integral to the successful illumination and dissemination of this content. The Tumblr users "tag" their content, meaning that their posts are affixed with labels to help categorize the content and allow other users to easily search for posts relevant to their interests. If a particular blog proves to be consistently interesting or relevant to a user, the user can opt to "follow" the blog. Any posts from this blog will then appear on the Tumblr user's homepage or "dashboard" each time the user logs on. By searching for, or "tracking," content tags relevant to the *Sherlock* series, such as "#BBCSherlock," the researcher could uncover Tumblr content that was specific to the series, and discover additional tags that would prove advantageous in the search for other *Sherlock*-related content.

Theoretical and Practical Justification

The Landscape of Social Media

Social media is a ubiquitous and dominating force that has proved a powerful influence on modern human interaction. Social media dictates not only the manner in which we socialize online, but also the manner of interaction that has been adopted in the "real," or off-line, world. Dating, family life, student-to-teacher relationships, all have been altered by the influx of technology and the necessity of using social media platforms to stay connected in a dynamic modern landscape. Social media arose in response to the increasing globalization of the societies

of the developed world, which led in turn to the formation of users' "bicultural identity: [where] part of their identity is rooted in their local culture, and another part is attuned to the global situation" (Hermans and Dimaggio 2007, 36). In 2012 in America alone, 67% of all internet users also engaged in social media use, and of these social media users, nearly a quarter utilized at least two different forms of social media (Duggan and Brenner 2013). Though social media networks all share a common purpose, that is to "support social contact and enable individuals to develop a 'profile' that can extend beyond the geographical limits of their offline worlds," these platforms come in a variety of forms, all predicated on the concept of different types of "knowing" (Mallan, Ashford, and Singh 2010, 264).

Social Media and the Multiplicity of Identity

Networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn, which link users through offline social connections, or connections to these connections, require a representation of a "real" self in order to function (Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin 2008). Users' identities on such platforms are linked to an image of themselves, as they exist in the offline world, both through photographs of themselves, and descriptions and updates of their real-life activities. It must be taken into consideration, of course, that though these profiles on networks such as Facebook are meant to represent the user's real life identity, the profile is still only that: a representation.

Multiple roles which, in a user's offline life, can be managed and negotiated in decidedly separate spheres (such as that of daughter, sister, student, employee, or friend), are often forced into a type of social fusion as all of these different life players have access to, and ability to interact with, this online representation. As Salimkhan, Manago, and Greenfield (2010, 2) explain, "...users are communicating to many different kinds of people of various intimacy levels in their social lives all at once." As such, a certain level of identity negotiation must occur on the

user's part in order to continue successful management of these roles. Thus, it must be understood that though this profile on this particular type of social media platform is based on a "real" self, it still exists as a representational virtual identity. As Mallan, Ashford, and Singh (2010, 264) note, "This convergence between technology and the individual...gives rise to fluidity and multiplicity of identity and social relations for people...in a networked society." By even attempting to represent a real world self in a socially networked society, the factuality of a "splintered" reality becomes apparent. There now exists the necessity not only for the "real" self, but also for the "virtual" self, which can be similarly multifarious, taking on a number of different functions and faces, based on the social network for which each is intended. Jose Carlos Ribiero (2009, 291) made use of the concept of multiple virtual identities to posit that the creation of said identities can help to "increase the experiences of the self," noting the "possibility of exploring new existential, cognitive, and experiential territories through the virtual world" through such a practice.

Social networks that are predicated on real-world connections are by far the most popular forms of social media platforms (See Figure 2); however, there also exist certain networks that link people solely on the basis of shared interests. Unlike Facebook, these platforms do not require the provision of any identifying information in order to create a profile. Users' identities, therefore, exist as a showcase of their preferences. These sites differ from many other online social networks in that users can create associations and relationships with other users solely based on shared interests and aesthetic preferences, rather than "offline" identity signifiers or real-life social connections. Entire online "communities" of like-minded individuals, therefore, can be brought together without ever knowing each other's real-world identities, simply through interaction on such networks. Sites such as Pinterest and Tumblr exist for just such interaction,

operating on the belief that what is important is not "what you're like, it's *what* you like" (Frears 2000).

Tumblr

Tumblr is a social media network that utilizes a blogging platform and allows users to "follow" other users based on shared interests. Founded in 2007, Tumblr placed itself in a unique position in the social media realm by encouraging users to "Follow the World's Creators" (Tumblr 2013). By introducing itself as an online destination for creative-minded people, Tumblr capitalized on a trend that had already been pioneered by sites such as Deviantart and Flickr. Unlike these sites, however, users do not have to be active in original content creation to take part in the community. It is also common for content that originated from either Deviantart or Flickr to be shared on Tumblr. Unlike other social media networks, such as Myspace or Facebook, Tumblr users are generally anonymous, and no personal or identifying information is required to create an account other than gender and age. Once this information is entered to create the account, it is not required to appear anywhere on the user's personal blog. While Tumblr users can volunteer basic information about themselves in the "About Me" section of their blog, most choose to forego this inclusion. Tumblr users instead create a unique identity on the site that, while still allowing their real-life identity to remain undisclosed, helps them to form online relationships based on an aesthetic identity. By aesthetic identity I mean the people who they represent themselves as through a pastiche of aesthetic preference, demonstrated in the types of images they share, the music that they upload, or themes (if they exist) of their personal Tumblr. As Anna Leach, writer for London-based newspaper *The Independent*, claimed in an article from July 26, 2011, "Tumblr has changed the art of collecting by offering its users an easy way to curate their interests -- whether snowglobes or dogs in hats. ...By letting us piece

together the flotsam of the internet, Tumblr helps us remember who we are." Even the name that a Tumblr user chooses for their blog plays a part in the creation of this Tumblr identity and can help other Tumblr users to identify individuals with similar tastes or relevant interests, such as with "baconbaconbacon.tumblr.com" or "thelifeofawhiskeydrinker.tumblr.com."

Tumblr users make up only 6% of total social media users, at least in the U.S., but the site currently hosts over 100 million blogs, available in twelve languages worldwide (Duggan and Brenner 2013; Tumblr 2013). This is impressive considering that at the end of 2011, only 181 million blogs existed worldwide (Nielsen/McKinley 2012). Since the social media network's founding in 2007, there have been 49.7 billion posts total, with 82.5 million posts occurring on average daily (Tumblr 2013). Despite Tumblr's currently small percentage share of social media users, it has grown more rapidly than any other social media network in terms of visitors, more than doubling the number of visitors to the network from 2011 to 2012 (Nielsen/McKinley 2012). Tumblr users also stand apart from their social media counterparts in that they are the most educated, the wealthiest, and the youngest (Duggan and Brenner 2013) (See Figures 3 and 4).

Tumblr is a social blogging platform that is unique in its visually based, easy-to-use interface. Originally designed to bring artists and designers together, Tumblr's design and intended use is completely focused on visual representation. Unlike most "blogs," that are generally written accounts of their authors, a Tumblr blog can be (and oftentimes is) composed entirely of images. Tumblr users have exceptional control over the appearance of their personal blog, both in terms of the layout, as well as the content that populates it. They create an aesthetic specific to their blog dictated by the inclusion or exclusion of certain types of content (see

Figures 5 and 6). Since most users choose to remain entirely anonymous, this aesthetic becomes that user's "identity," or the representation of their self, to other Tumblr users.

The uniqueness of Tumblr lies in several key features. Content can be reblogged with a single click of a button from the dashboard, without ever having to leave the home page. Users can therefore produce a high-volume of posts without ever having to stop scrolling through the dashboard page. This facilitates the consistent consumption of images, content, and media while also promoting consumption to others, while concurrently establishing oneself as a producer of content, through the process of reblogging. Also, the incredibly user-friendly and intuitive interface allows for rapid dissemination of content, facilitating the ability of certain content to quickly become "viral." "Viral" content is so named because it spreads between users rapidly and reaches a large population of the online community (Sampson 2012). The incredibly simple, but powerful search capacity of Tumblr facilitates the creation of online communities who share similar interests. And lastly, the characteristics of average Tumblr users as creative-minded, young, educated, and wealthy, position them as unique in terms of the types of consumption practices in which they engage.

Social Media and Cultural Consumption

Pierre Bourdieu (1993) notably theorized that culture could be viewed as an economy in which people invest and accumulate capital. Different types of culture could then, in a sense, be considered commodities, as we assign them different levels of value just as we do with material commodities i.e. consumer goods. As such, members of a consumer society can then be considered to consume and produce both material *as well as* cultural commodities. Bourdieu also drew clear distinctions between *high* and *low* culture, relegating popular culture to the realm of the latter. He categorized high cultural commodities as those that pertained to the aesthetic

pursuits of the wealthy, such as classic literature, fine art, classically composed music: all commodities that generally merit academic study.

Bourdieu explained that the consumption of high cultural commodities could bring both esteem and continued value to one's life, based on the idea that a ken of such commodities would establish one as a possessor of fine tastes, and therefore distinguish oneself as a member of the elite. This was based on the logical deduction that within a consumer economy, access to such high cultural commodities was often dictated by class standing, with few opportunities presented to those born of a non-aristocratic environment. In other words, "cultural capital...works hand in hand with economic capital to produce social privilege and distinction" (Fiske 1992, 31). Bourdieu dismissed all forms of popular culture (television, popular music, movies vs. films, etc) as the culture of the homogenized proletariat, implying that these types of cultural commodities carry less value than those that come as the trappings of a higher socio-economic class. Also important to note is that Bourdieu made it clear that those who possess such fine taste could not come to an understanding of value through their own individual process. It was only through this "socially conditioned symbolic hierarchy" that one could develop such distinction (Allen and Anderson 1994, 71). Such distinction in taste, in Bourdieu's eyes, extended not only to consumer goods that had a decidedly aesthetic component (home furnishings, entertainment, and clothing) but also to choice of leisure activities and food.

A social media network such as Tumblr, which so easily allows the construction of an identity based on consumption of both high and low cultural commodities, oftentimes seamlessly interwoven with inclusions of images of material commodities, leads to the need for recontextualization of Bourdieu's theories in the light of modern consumption practices. On Tumblr, high art may appear next to images of hip-hop artists. A user may reblog a photo of a

truly stunning oil painting...of Elvis. Quotes from Shakespeare may caption a photo of two pop-stars hugging. Uploads of Beethoven symphonies may be linked to through images of smiling dogs in tiny taco-shaped hats. Frederic Jameson notes in his essay on postmodernism and consumer culture that:

The second feature of this list of postmodernisms is the effacement in it of some key boundaries of separations, most notably the erosion of the older distinction between high culture and so-called mass or popular culture. This is perhaps the most distressing development of all from an academic standpoint, which has traditionally had a vested interest in preserving a realm of high or elite culture against the surrounding environment of philistinism, of schlock and kitsch, of TV series and *Reader's Digest* culture, and in transmitting difficult and complex skills of reading, listening and seeing to its initiates (1987, 113).

By studying platforms that promote the construction of identity through consumption of non-material commodities that may have, at one time, been dismissed as arbitrary forms of culture, we are given an opportunity to understand how our participation in different types of social media networks will influence our behavior as consumers and producers of culture, as well as improve our understanding of ever-evolving forms of social communication and identity construction.

Fans & Fandoms

The incredibly simple, but powerful search capacity of Tumblr facilitates the creation of online communities who share similar interests. In this way, Tumblr has become the ideal tool for the creation of online fandom communities. Fandom is a term whose origins are difficult to pinpoint, but arise from common internet vernacular. Combining the words "fan" and "kingdom," this term is used to describe any community whose adorations are devoted to a particular person, work, team, musical group, etc, and who share feelings of sympathy and camaraderie based on this. In her article "A Study of Fan Culture: Adolescent Experiences with Anime/manga Doujinshi and Cosplay in Taiwan," Jin-Shiow Chen (2007, 14) notes that fandom

is "a multicultural territory, where each fan community subscribes to its own unique media substances, values, and contexts." As such, fandoms can be classified as a type of subculture as they represent a community existing outside of the hegemony and have a system of coded social practices and conventions understood only by members.

Editor Lisa Lewis (1992) brings the study of fan collectives, and lack thereof, to light in the introduction to the collected essays *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, noting, "Fans are, in fact, the most visible and identifiable of audiences. How is it, then, that they have been overlooked or not taken seriously as research subjects by critics and scholars?"

The author speculates that:

For the academy, the answer may reside in its historical propensity to treat media audiences as passive and controlled, its tendency to privilege aesthetic superiority in programming, its reluctance to support consumerism, its belief in media industry manipulation. The popular press, as well, has stigmatized fandom by emphasizing danger, abnormality, and silliness. And the public deny their own fandom, carry on secret lives as fans or risk the stigma that comes from being a fan. ...Yet we are all fans of something. We respect, admire, desire. We distinguish and form commitments. By endeavoring to understand the fan impulse, we ultimately move towards a greater understanding of ourselves (Lewis 1992, 1).

Lewis posits that to understand the impulse of the fan is to understand the impulse of humanity, only at a heightened level. As such, by examining the behaviors of groups of fans, we may gain a rather acute viewpoint of the behaviors of humanity as a whole.

Fan communities stand in stark contrast to the commonly conceptualized image of the fan as an "obsessed loner" who suffers from a "life...increasingly dominated by an irrational fixation on a celebrity figure, a perverse attachment that dominates his or her otherwise unrewarding existence" (Jenson 1992, 15). Rather, fandoms, just as any other community, can be "envisioned

as supportive and connective...to offer identity and connection" (Jenson 1992, 14-15). What is ironic to note here is that Joli Jenson also mentions in her essay on the pathology of fandom that the rise of mass media and the decline of communities in the early part of the twentieth century was the very thing that social critics and intellectuals warned against. Yet it is through consumption of mass media that consumers are finding new ways to form communities that can be supportive and fulfilling as those that may be based on religion, ethnicity, or race.

Fans as Producers and Consumers of Culture

Similar to Bourdieu's theories pertaining to the hierarchy of the cultural economy, fandoms can be seen as a "product of a hierarchical social system in which privilege and value are accorded to only the few" (Lewis 1992, 3). The idea here is that fandoms create their own form of cultural capital, and, as with the dominant cultural economy, not all members will accumulate the same amounts of capital (in this case, knowledge of the meaning of a variety of texts utilized by fandom members). Those who are able to accumulate a large amount of fan cultural capital then operate from a place of recognized status within the fandom. As such we can choose to consider the consumption practices from two different views: 1) that of the fan as a consumer and producer within the context of the larger cultural economy, 2) that of the fan as a consumer and producer specifically of fan-culture commodities. As Fiske explain in his essay on the cultural economy of fandoms, though fan-cultural capital does "not enhance one's career, nor will it produce upward class mobility as its investment payoffs," the value of such capital can be measured by "dividends [which] lie in the pleasures and esteems of one's peers in a community of taste rather than those of one's social betters" (1992, 34).

Fandoms do not exist in a vacuum, so we must also consider their place within the context of the cultural economy, as it exists *outside* of fandom culture. It is important to

understand that despite the intentions of many scholars to dispel what are deemed unfair classifications of fans and fandoms, and to approach the study of such populations with a keen, unbiased viewpoint, a certain level of snobbery, such as Bourdieu was guilty of, is easily exposed in the works of these authors. Lori Johnson goes on for several pages dismissing the very idea that fan groups should be thought of in terms of the "other" or "deviant," but then draws clear distinctions between "we" and "they" when she submits that:

The beliefs evidenced in the stigmatization of fans are inherently conservative, and they serve to privilege the attributes of the wealthy, educated, and powerful. If these are indeed the attributes and values that the critic or researcher seeks to celebrate, then they should be disentangled from their moorings in objective research or critical inquiry, and directly addressed (1992, 25).

The assumption here is that fans as consumers of popular cultural, or low cultural, commodities can automatically be assigned a place in the realm of the uneducated, lower-class masses.

Similarly, John Fiske (1992, 33) makes claims that "fandom offers ways of filling cultural lack and provides the social prestige and self-esteem that go with cultural capital," suggesting that fandom participants lack other means to accumulate cultural capital outside the context of fan communities. The presumption here is that fan members, as consumers of popular culture, cannot possibly be educated, wealthy, or have access to traditionally valued cultural capital, hence their need and desire to accumulate popular culture at such an (as some might remark) obsessive level.

Thanks to previous exploration, it has been proven that fans are not merely passive audiences, fervently consuming media and popular cultural capital (De Kosnik 2009, Jenkins 1992, Thomas 2012, Vermorel 1992). Fiske (1992, 33-38) explains, "all audiences...engage in production, not mere reception, but fans execute a broader range of producerly activity" continuing to note, "fans are very participatory." However, previous biases concerning the

nature of fandom, as well as unfair past characterizations of the fan have lead to a somewhat narrow view of the cultural production fans are capable of. Henry Jenkins explains that:

...fans' own cultural creations are not read as the artifacts of a larger cultural community but as the material traces of personal interpretations—or at least, of interpretations defined primarily in terms of a singular and stable social identity (housewives, children, punks, and so on). Such an account of fannish production, thus, gains general applicability at the expense of a more precise understanding of the social and cultural specificity of the fan community, [and] allows for the construction of a theory of dominant reading practices without offering a sharper sense of the particular character of the fans' fundamental break with those practices (1992, 209).

By examining the types of popular cultural capital that fans produce on a site such as Tumblr, and the context in which they produce it, as well as the context in which production exists in relation to *dominant* popular cultural production and consumption, some of these biases about the cultural scope of fan members might be dispelled.

Findings

Popular Cultural Commodities

Initial investigation of the "#BBC Sherlock" tag revealed that there were many different types of popular cultural capital being both consumed and produced by the *Sherlock* fandom on Tumblr. The first that should be considered are those that the fandom members are primarily just consuming. In other words, though they might make posts containing the content, the actual production materials such as video stills from episodes, clips from the series, and other material; these have been released by the BBC primarily for consumption by the fans. In the series, Dr. John Watson also writes a blog of his and Sherlock's cases and daily activities, just as Dr. Watson kept a daily account in the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The BBC, in a rather extraordinary decision, enlisted writer John Lidster to create the actual blog, matching much of the content from the episodes word-for-word and even including a section at the end of each

entry with colorful commentary from the characters of the show (See Figures 7 & 8). Lidster also recreated several other websites and blogs mentioned on the series, including Sherlock's own "The Science of Deduction," and the BBC made them available through their own *Sherlock* series page. Links to these websites along with screenshots from them were commonly seen appearing in fandom members' posts on Tumblr.

One-step above these studio-produced commodities and frequently appearing on fandom members' blogs were fan-produced commodities that were directly derived from this studio-produced popular cultural capital. Photosets and gif-sets were amongst the most popular of these. A photo-set is a grouping of two or more related photos, sometimes altered, de-colored, or with amusing captions written over them. A gif is a short animation composed of several images saved as one file. Both of these forms were often employed to highlight a certain part of an episode, or were used out of context in order to tell part of the user's own imagined scenario (See Figure 9). Photo manipulations, meaning studio-produced images that have been photo-shopped, color-altered, or collaged also appeared often. Many times these photo-manipulations tell a story or contain text of song-lyrics a user felt particularly relevant to the image (See Figure 10).

Fan fictions and role-play logs are another category of popular cultural commodity produced and consumed by fandom members. Fandom members, who engaged in role-play, where two or more members acted out imagined scenarios as characters of the *Sherlock* series through text, utilized two major platforms to do so. The website Omegle, where users with similar interests can meet anonymously to chat, was often used. Fandom members would create a "log" of their role-play chat and then post it as content to their Tumblr page (See Figure 11). Other users chose to engage in text or instant messaging conversations and then take

"screenshots," or images captured from their computer or phone screen, which were then posted as photos to their Tumblr page. On the *Sherlock* series, John Watson and Sherlock Holmes often communicate via text-message, which the creators chose to highlight by displaying the texts onscreen as they are sent and received each episode. The characters sign each message with "-JW" and "-SH," respectively, a method generally employed by role-players as well. Many times these anonymous interactions result in one or more of the members deciding to convert the role-play scenario into a fan fiction, although this is not the only reason that fan fiction is produced.

The term fan fiction refers to "stories produced by fans based on plot lines and characters from either a single source text or else a 'canon' of works" (Thomas 2011, 1). Fan fictions do not, however, need to always stay true to plot lines, nor even stay within the same universe as the original material from which they were derived. "Alternative Universes" ("AUs"), are a popular device of fan fiction writers and role-players alike. In "Aus.", characters from the series are taken out of their original setting and imagined in a completely different one, with different relationships to each other, different time lines or periods, and even sometimes on different planets. Sometimes "AUs" are derived from other popular works of literature, such as one particularly interesting and bizarre *Sherlock* fan fiction based on Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. The *Sherlock* fandom members seemed particularly fond of these alternative realities, as the original production gave them only six episodes from which to draw material. This lack of production material also created a proliferation of fan fiction and role-play that continues the plot line of *Sherlock* beyond the final episode of the last season. This imagined period after the rather traumatic final episode of *Sherlock*, called "The Reichenbach Fall," is referred to as the "Post-Reichenbach era" by fandom members, and "#postreich" or "#postfall" appear as a tag commonly accompanying such fan fiction or role-play logs. A final common

theme of these fan fictions and role-play logs concerned "ships," a fandom term referring to imagined (or "non-canon") romantic relationships between characters of the series. Many of the tags utilized by the *Sherlock* fandom members are specific references to these "ships," with some members expressing extreme devotion to a particular "one true pairing," or "OTP." The most common "ship" content tag, "#johnlock," refers to a pairing between Sherlock Holmes and John Watson. Other content tags utilize similar name combinations. Amongst these tags, "#mystrade" (the pairing of Greg Lestrade and Mycroft Holmes), "#sheriarty" (Sherlock Holmes and Moriarity), and "#sherlolly" (Sherlock Holmes and Molly Hooper) seemed to be the most commonly used. Any fan fiction relating to same-sex pairings was known as "slash fiction" or simply "slash."

Though fan fictions appeared as a common popular cultural commodity on fandom members' Tumblr pages, the posting of entire fan fictions were rare as some of these works can be novel-length, reaching hundreds of thousands of words in length. Rather, a short description was often accompanied by a link to a website such as "An Archive of Our Own" or "fanfiction.net," popular hosting sites for such content. This link often appeared in the form of a piece of fan art, a photo of a character, or one of the photo manipulations popular as separate content. Some popular fan fictions utilized an image for these links that became synonymous with the story itself and could be read by other fandom members as representing the particular fan fiction, even without a title listed or caption included. Many fandom members also composed "rec lists," or recommended reading lists for fan fiction, which were often organized by category and genre. A popular version of this "rec list" that appeared on many Tumblrs was the "*Sherlock* Fandom Classics List," a collection of links pertaining to fan fictions that the majority of fandom members had read and considered required reading for other members.

Photos of fandom members taking part in "cos-play," or "costumed play," were yet another category of produced and consumed popular cultural commodity (Chen 2007). These photos demonstrated an extensive knowledge of each character's costuming and the styling and even mannerisms of the costumed players was such that the resemblance to actual cast members was often uncanny (See Figures 12 and 13). By taking on the appearance and dress of the show's characters, the fan could not only re-establish their identity as a fan, but also place themselves in a role to either act out scenes from the original or even continue the story line as they saw fit. In this instance, clothing gave them power over the direction and nature of the fandom's collective story lines. Some fandom members even created entire Tumblr accounts dedicated to playing out these characters, and would encourage other members to submit questions to which they would respond in character. This form of role-play and cos-play combination was expressed with a combination of written answer along with either a gif or photo of themselves in costume (See Figure 14).

Being a platform that encourages and promotes a primarily visual identity, fan-created art was by far the most commonly produced and consumed popular cultural commodity while tracking the various tags of the Tumblr *Sherlock* fandom. Fan art appeared in both traditionally produced forms, as well as pieces that were digitally produced. The subject matter ranged all the way from basic portraits of characters (see Figure 15), to comic book stories (see Figure 16), to Japanese cartoon-style renderings of the cast members (see Figure 17), right up to rather graphic depictions of sexual congress between characters. This latter type of art, referred to simply as "smut," appeared as a staple throughout the *Sherlock* Tumblr fandom, and was often accompanied by one of the tags that referenced a "ship." Though these were common themes of *Sherlock* fan art, there were many other works present throughout the Tumblr fandom. One

entire Tumblr page was devoted to reinterpreting famous works of art as fan-produced art (see Figures 18 and 19). A specific subject of fan art was sometimes also elevated to a level of textual reading whereby an element of the art became synonymous with the fandom. One fandom member's drawing of Dr. John Watson in a pair of red briefs caught the fancy of the fandom and soon, every Monday became "Red Pants Monday," ("pants" being the British equivalent of "underwear") with fan artists contributing similar drawings to the user's blog and flooding Tumblr with their drawings, paintings, and photo-shopped images. Eventually, even just an image of red men's briefs could be read as symbolic of the fandom as a whole (See Figure 20). Like fan fiction, fan art often appeared in the form of links to other hosting sites, such as Deviantart.

The final category of popular cultural commodity to discuss concerning the *Sherlock* fandom is that of what is known simply as "*Sherlock* crack." This is content produced and consumed by fandom members that is of a rather...unusual nature. Though much of this content could possibly fall under the "gif-set," "photo-set," or "fan art" categories, the researcher felt that this particular content deserved of a category all its own. A long-running joke amongst the Tumblr fandoms contends that the longer the *Sherlock* fandom has to wait for the release of the third season, the more desperate, and therefore, more bizarre members' actions become, as well as the type of content they produce. As one Tumblr user so eloquently summarized on their own blog, "On a scale of one to *Sherlock* fandom, how mentally unstable are you?" (User 1, 2013). The user then illustrates their point with examples of "*Sherlock* crack" placed beneath the text (See Figure 21 -Figure 26). Another fandom member includes an example of "*Sherlock* crack" and simply labels it "The Road to Season 3" (See Figure 26). Often times this content pokes fun

at texts commonly read and utilized by fandom members, but more often than not, "*Sherlock* crack" is provided without explanation or any seeming reason for its existence.

Material Commodities

Though popular cultural commodities were the most prevalent content of fandom posts, photos of, and links to purchase, material commodities (consumer goods) also made their fair share of appearances. Tumblr was used as a forum to promote goods sold from sites such as Etsy, a craft and vintage community host (see Figure 27), and Redbubble, a site devoted to assisting fan artists in getting their work printed on t-shirts, hooded sweatshirts, and a variety of sticker mediums (see Figure 28). Fan art was certainly the fan cultural capital that most easily translated into material commodity. Some Tumblr users found that their art was in high demand, not only for consumption in the form of viewing as an online image, but as a physical consumer good. Though paintings, prints, posters, stickers, and shirts were certainly the most common forms of physically consumable fan art, particularly crafty fandom artists found other ways to sell their art (see Figure 29).

Cos-play goods were another wearable category of fan material commodity. Surprisingly, these goods appeared the least often of all the types of material commodities observed while tracking tags. This could be due to their rather prohibitive cost, as well as the seeming "DIY" or "do-it-yourself" attitude that seemed to permeate much of the Tumblr fandom. Though these character costume recreations were painstakingly detailed, such work often meant their cost could reach into the hundreds of dollars. Oftentimes it was much more cost effective for a committed fan to don a t-shirt should a fan wish to adorn themselves in fandom goods but was not ready to commit to a full outfit; a wide variety of pins and jewelry were also available

for purchase both directly from users Tumblr sites, as well as sites such as Etsy (see Figures 30 and 31).

The content of the material commodities being produced and consumed varied as far as textual content as well. Some goods were based on studio produced content and texts, and could be easily recognized, read and understood by non-fandom members who had seen the *Sherlock* series (see Figure 32). Others of these goods were so fandom-text specific that it would be difficult even to explain to all but the most dedicated fandom member (see Figure 33). Some content of the material commodities even served a dual purpose: to declare fandom membership while also taking a stance on a specific social or political issue (see Figures 34 and 35).

Consumers vs. Producers

Though the majority of these commodities were being both consumed and produced by fandom members, it is important to note that many fan-related commodities found their way onto non-fandom member blogs as well. Fandom members were easy to spot, as their usernames were usually *Sherlock*-related, and the majority if not all of their blog was often dedicated to the show, with the content tagged in such a way that it was clear they were privileged to texts exclusive to the fandom. Often, users would use a picture of a character from the show as their personal icon that would appear on the Tumblr dashboard when tags were tracked. Many users also utilized the "About Me" section of their Tumblr page to declare themselves as proud "Sherlockians," the chosen name for fandom members. Some of these users were even cross-fandom members, explaining their status as "Wholockians" (*Doctor Who* and *Sherlock* fans) or even the ultimate "Superwholockians" (fans of the *Supernatural*, *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock* series).

Conversely, non-fandom Tumblr users employed usernames that had nothing to do with the *Sherlock* series, and further investigation of their blogs revealed very little content pertaining to the show. Though these types of users could be categorized as "fans," as they are clearly interested in the popular cultural content, it would be difficult to place them within the category of "fandom member." Finding non-fandom members consuming popular cultural capital that was tagged with the "#BBC Sherlock" tag was a fairly common occurrence, however, as the tags that were being tracked became more specific to texts read only by the *Sherlock* fandom, such as those having to do with "ships" or "AUs," it became clear that these types of popular cultural capital were pretty much exclusive to the fandom. As Fiske notes (1992, 39), "fan culture makes no attempt to circulate its texts outside its own community." It was also rare for non-fandom Tumblr users to consume any form of material commodity related to the series. Lacking from their blogs were photos of themselves in *Sherlock* inspired t-shirts or jewelry, nor were there any links to merchandise on Etsy or similar sites present.

Another interesting discovery was that though non-fandom members were sometimes seen to consume popular cultural capital, *production* of both popular cultural commodities and material commodities seemed restricted solely to members of the fandom. Tags such as "#myart," and captions such as "So...I made a thing" (a common phrase in Tumblr vernacular), appearing beneath content posted by users with fandom-related names were quite common. Role-play dialogues and links posted to fan fiction archives were also exclusive to users who possessed *Sherlock* fandom status. The same was true of fan art and links to the material commodities featured on sites such as Etsy and RedBubble. Also interesting to note was that not once did the researcher come across posts referencing fandom members purchasing material commodities from a mass-produced source. It seemed rather, that these goods were being

produced solely by fandom members, for fandom members, and being promoted laterally throughout the Tumblr fandom universe. References in posts to material commodities consumed almost always contained a link to the original creator's online host shop as well as personal Tumblr, the idea here seeming to be "keep fan production in the fan community; recognize and support these artisans and craftspeople."

Conclusions

At the conclusion of this study, it has become clear that there are a number of key points to address. It is clear that social media is having a profound influence not only on human interaction as a whole, but particularly on the propagations and behaviors of fandoms. As Josh Stenger (2006, 26) notes in his early examination of the online *Buffy* fandom, various online platforms have "exponentially increased opportunities for fans to find one another and to express and cultivate their devotion to a series, character, or actor." Tumblr in particular has seemed to greatly aid in the cohesion of these fan communities, due to unique features that allow for the easy identification of other fans through intuitive search measures, as well as providing a blogging interface that facilitates the promotion and consumption of both popular cultural as well as material commodities (physical goods) in the form of images.

Tumblr has, in a sense, become a forum, a veritable showcase in fact, for the display and consumption of both types of commodities produced or hosted through other platforms. It is important to remember, however, that though Tumblr has eased the cohesion and interaction of these fan groups, and the promotion and consumption of both cultural and material commodities, these practices occurred even in the days pre-dating the Internet. Fan conventions, fan newsletters, all were utilized to bring like people together in past times. Though fan conventions still occur periodically, newsletters and fan-made magazines have been replaced by new

technologies. In the case of the *Sherlock* fandom, technology has played a clear role in facilitating the perpetuation of the fandom, but these technologies can be examined, as theorized by Marshall McLuhan (1964), not only for the content they deliver, but also by their own characteristics and the way these characteristics affect society. McLuhan believed that all new technologies were merely an extension of our own desires of associations as humans and interactions with each other, which was highly influenced by the increase of our globalized selves...as a direct result of other technologies. In much the same way that Lewis believed the fan impulse to be a heightened exposition of basic human desires, McLuhan claims that technologies come to life as extensions of ourselves and in response to our own desires. Understanding this, Tumblr can then be viewed as the result of our desire for further connectivity, closer relation to others "like" us, yet through a medium that precludes physical interaction and off-line knowing. In this sense we can also consider the need for further research in regards to the role Tumblr plays in the previously mentioned "blurring of lines" between *high* and *low* cultural commodity, and how this may be a reflection of our own societal desires.

As the *Sherlock* fan's identity became threatened by the lack of production capital to consume, Tumblr offered one solution in the form of exposition of material commodities, particularly those related to dress. The fan could then reclaim their identity by donning items soaked in textual meaning, and post pictures while wearing these items, thereby producing their own cultural capital content. By providing links to material commodities for fan consumption, Tumblr also facilitates the role of fandom members as producers as well as re-asserting their identity and perpetuating the existence of the community. In this instance, the fan is taking part in what Fiske (1992, 38) refers to as "enunciative productivity," where "the choice of clothes or accessories are ways of constructing a social identity and therefore of asserting one's

membership of a particular fan community." It was interesting to note here that the consumption of mass-produced material commodities was forsaken in favor of this seeming "cottage industry" of individual fan producers. In fact, no source of mass-produced goods was even discovered during the researcher's investigation. This is especially relevant in terms of apparel consumption, which, at the popular (and some might argue "fashionable") culture level, relies on mass-production to reach a broad, demanding population. Such results denote implications for further research in terms of what the rising popularity of technologies such as Tumblr could have on the consumption of mass-produced apparel, the production of small-run, demand-based apparel lines, and the influence of these social media sub-cultures on future apparel production and consumption.

Tumblr's highly visual-focused nature has also played a key role in the sustainability of users' identities as popular cultural capital consumers when facing a series production break. The continued production and consumption of popular cultural commodities on Tumblr helps to sustain the fandom-related aesthetic identities of these fandom members. In other words, if a member's identity on Tumblr is determined by the visual content with which they populate their blog, a fan's identity is then dependent on having series-related popular cultural capital content to consume. If, in the case of a series like *Sherlock*, there is a limited amount of studio-produced popular cultural capital to consume, it becomes necessary for the fan either to produce material themselves, or to consume popular cultural material produced by other fandom members facing a similar situation.

Though it is now clear that the introduction and utilization of a platform such as Tumblr has played a key role in the facilitation of fandom cohesion and the exchange of popular cultural and material commodities, the active role of the fan in said production and consumption needs to

be considered as a unique case of fandom involvement. Lawrence Grossberg's (1992, 53) essay on the affective sensibility of fandom claims that:

Audiences are constantly making their own cultural environment from the cultural resources that are available to them. ...This view of an active audience only makes it more difficult for us to understand the nature of fandom, for if all consumers are active, then there is nothing against which to measure a fan. ...But we have to consider the relationship without falling back into theories which privilege either the text or the audience by giving one the power to determine the relationship. For even if it is true that audiences are always active, it does not follow that they are ever in control.

In the case of *Sherlock* fandom, the fandom members *have* taken control, simply out of sheer necessity of perpetuation. Though production capital and plot lines determined the original course and scope of popular cultural capital and content, the long hiatus in production has left content open to re-interpretation, redirection, re-contextualization and (especially in the case of "*Sherlock crack*") extreme creativity. As such, the *Sherlock* fandom has proven themselves tremendously resourceful in the face of such a challenge.

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Figure 1

Sources: British Broadcasting Company (BBC) official website

The Landscape of Social Media Users

	% of Internet users who....	The service is especially appealing to ...
Use Any Social Networking Site	67%	Adults ages 18-29, women
Use Facebook	67	Women, adults ages 18-29
Use Twitter	16	Adults ages 18-29, African-Americans, urban residents
Use Pinterest	15	Women, adults under 50, whites, those with some college education
Use Instagram	13	Adults ages 18-29, African-Americans, Latinos, women, urban residents
Use Tumblr	6	Adults ages 18-29

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users. Facebook figures are based on Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Omnibus Survey, December 13-16, 2012. Margin of error for Facebook data is +/- 2.9 percentage points for results based on internet users (n=860).

Figure 2

Social Networking Sites

% of internet users who use social networking sites

		Use Social Networking Sites
All internet users (n=1,802)		67%
a	Men (n=846)	62
b	Women (n=956)	71 ^a
Race/ethnicity		
a	White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,332)	65
b	Black, Non-Hispanic (n=178)	68
c	Hispanic (n=154)	72
Age		
a	18-29 (n=318)	83 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=532)	77 ^{cd}
c	50-64 (n=551)	52 ^d
d	65+ (n=368)	32
Education attainment		
a	Less than high school/high school grad (n=549)	66
b	Some College (n=519)	69
c	College + (n=721)	65
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=409)	72
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=330)	65
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=283)	66
d	\$75,000+ (n=504)	66
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=561)	70 ^c
b	Suburban (n=905)	67
c	Rural (n=336)	61

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users.

Note: Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., ^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g. age).

Figure 3

Tumblr

% of internet users who use Tumblr

		Use Tumblr
All internet users (n=1,802)		6%
a	Men (n=846)	6
b	Women (n=956)	6
Race/ethnicity		
a	White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,332)	6
b	Black, Non-Hispanic (n=178)	5
c	Hispanic (n=154)	8
Age		
a	18-29 (n=318)	13 ^{bcd}
b	30-49 (n=532)	5 ^d
c	50-64 (n=551)	3 ^d
d	65+ (n=368)	1
Education attainment		
a	Less than high school/high school grad (n=549)	5
b	Some College (n=519)	6
c	College + (n=721)	7
Household income		
a	Less than \$30,000/yr (n=409)	6 ^b
b	\$30,000-\$49,999 (n=330)	3
c	\$50,000-\$74,999 (n=283)	5
d	\$75,000+ (n=504)	8 ^b
Urbanity		
a	Urban (n=561)	7
b	Suburban (n=905)	5
c	Rural (n=336)	6

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Post-Election Survey, November 14 – December 09, 2012. N=1,802 internet users. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points for results based on internet users.

Note: Percentages marked with a superscript letter (e.g., ^a) indicate a statistically significant difference between that row and the row designated by that superscript letter, among categories of each demographic characteristic (e.g. age).

Figure 4



Figure 5

Source: Random selection from Tumblr.com

YOUHAVEALREADYWON

Ask me anything Archive

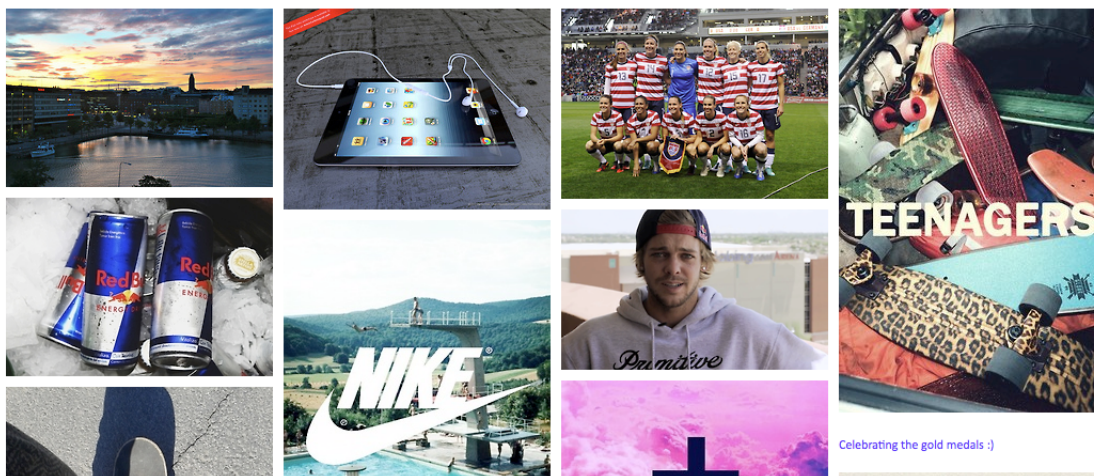


Figure 6

Source: Random selection from Tumblr.com

THE PERSONAL BLOG OF

Dr. John H. Watson

16th June

Untitled

He was my best friend and I'll always believe in him. [Read More](#)

0 comments

16th March

Hello Boys!

Do forgive me for hacking into your blog... [Read More](#)

1 comment

About me



I am an experienced medical doctor recently returned from Afghanistan.

Hit counter

1 8 9 5

My photos

Figure 7

Source: <http://www.johnwatsonblog.co.uk/>

Didn't realise you were keeping a blog, John. I wouldn't have thought you were the type. And as for what happened with Sherlock, it doesn't surprise me one bit. Good luck, mate.

Mike Stamford 31 January 13:56

What you on about? I saw something on the news. Was that you?!

Bill Murray 31 January 14:12

Seriously, John! What's going on?? Are you all right?!

Harry Watson 31 January 14:16

Sorry, no need to panic. I'm fine. Better than fine. I'll write up what happened but I want to do it properly. Give me a couple of days.

John Watson 31 January 16:12

You can't just leave it at that!!! Tell me what happened!

Harry Watson 31 January 16:15

Oh yes, do tell us how Sherlock did it

Anonymous 05 February 16:46

Will you answer your phone!!!!

Harry Watson 05 February 22:01

When are we going to find out more?

Bill Murray 06 February 19:46

Most popular posts

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- ▶ [The Aluminium Crutch](#)
- ▶ [Hat-Man and Robin](#)
- ▶ [The Great Game](#)
- ▶ [Diamonds are forever](#)
- ▶ [My new flatmate](#)
- ▶ [A strange meeting](#)
- ▶ [Serial suicides](#)

Cases

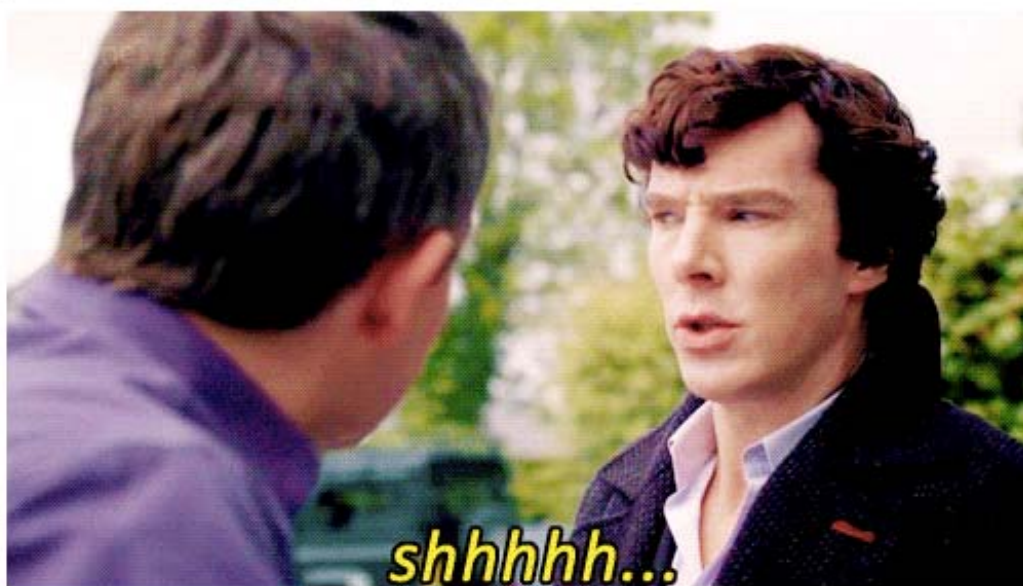
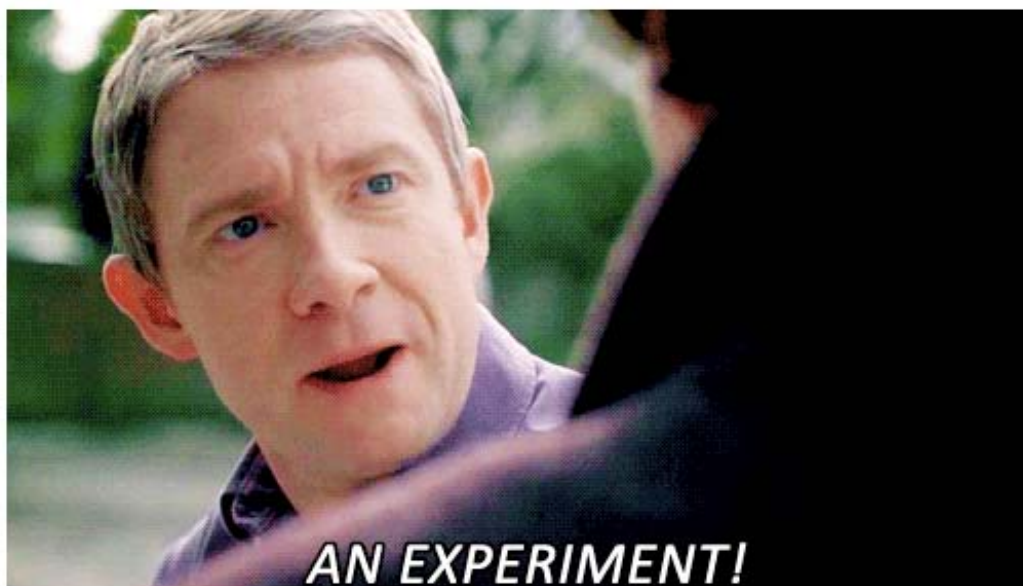
- ▶ [The Hounds of Baskerville](#)
- ▶ [The Woman](#)
- ▶ [The Six Thatchers](#)
- ▶ [The Aluminium Crutch](#)
- ▶ [The Speckled Blonde](#)
- ▶ [The Geek Interpreter](#)
- ▶ [The Great Game](#)
- ▶ [The Blind Banker](#)
- ▶ [A Study in Pink](#)

Comments by

▶ [Mrs Hudson](#)

Figure 8

Source: <http://www.johnwatsonblog.co.uk/blog/31january>



#johnlock #benedict cumberbatch #martin freeman #john watson #Sherlock Holmes #n

Figure 9

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock>



Figure 10

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock>

 **omogle** **Talk to strangers!**
 You're chatting with a random stranger on Omegle!
 You and the stranger both like sherlock holmes, and jordan.

You: John. Case. SH
Stranger: I'm on my way. JW
Stranger: Tell me what's happened? JW
You: A pigeon is missing. SH
Stranger: I take it back. I might be not on my way after all. JW
You: No, it is brilliant, John. Champion breeding pigeon. Missing from an estate. SH
You: I haven't had anything to do for the entire week, John. SH
You: I will find this pigeon. SH
Stranger: You don't think it just... flew away? JW
You: That is one of seventeen possibilities with the information I have at hand. SH
Stranger: I'd like to know about the other sixteen. JW
You: It is a manor house, John. SH
You: There are five individual members of staff, not including the client's husband or child. SH
You: Assuming ransom, carelessness or callousness is a motivation for the most likely of the subjects, there are at least sixteen individual motives. SH
Stranger: Right. Fine. Fair enough. JW
Stranger: I suppose you ought to be off to look into it then. JW
You: Motive, John. SH
You: I am on my way to interview staff. SH
You: (twenty minutes later)
You: No motive. SH
Stranger: Pardon? JW
You: The maid left the hutch open accidentally when replacing the bird's water. SH
You: Two minutes with her had her crying and apologizing. SH
You: But the bird was electronically tagged. SH
Stranger: Sorry to hear it? JW
You: I was given a beacon. SH
You: It gives coordinates. I've calculated it. The coordinates are for Regent's Park. SH
You: Join me for pigeon hunting? SH
Stranger: Bit busy for that, sorry. JW
You: Your loss. SH
You: (two hours later)
You: This is INSUFFERABLE. SH
Stranger: Well, you did say you needed something to do. JW
You: I've located it. I see it right now. SH

Figure 11

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock+rp>



Figure 12

<http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock%20cosplay>



Figure 13

<http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock%20cosplay>

Either of you like dancing?



Anonymous



[Ask the-improbable-truths a question](#) #sherlock #bbc sherlock #ask sherlock #anon

Figure 14

<http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock%20cosplay>



Figure 15

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock+fanart>



Figure 16

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock+fanart>



Figure 17

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock+fanart>



Figure 18

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/letsdrawsherlock>



Figure 19

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/letsdrawsherlock>

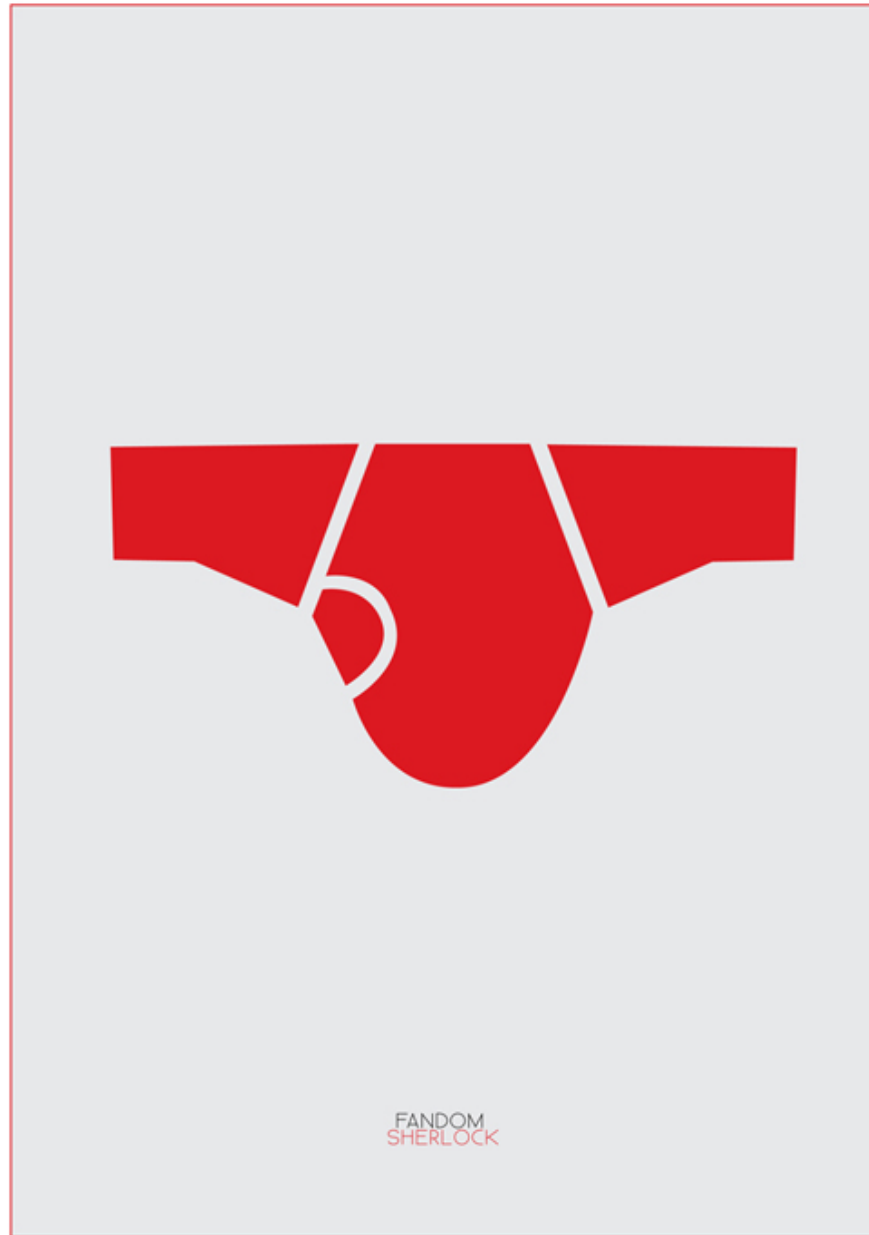


Figure 20

Source: <http://www.dailydot.com/entertainment/sherlock-martin-freeman-red-pants-monday/>

On a scale of one to the Sherlock Fandom how mentally unstable are you



#sherlock #bbc sherlock #sherlock fandom #james moriarty #jim Moriarty #jim #mori

Figure 21

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock%20crack>



Figure 22

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock%20crack>



Steven Moffat: "There is a clue everyone's missed."

Well played, Sherlock, well played.

#sherlock #the reichenbach fall #reichenbach theory #this is a crack blog and you have be

Figure 23

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock%20crack>



#second gif #sherlock #take this software away from me

Figure 24

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock%20crack>



Figure 25

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock%20crack>

The road to season 3



Figure 26

Source: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/sherlock%20crack>

Sell Registry Community Blogs Mobile Gift Cards Hi, Secondhand. Your Shop: SecondhandSwank Your Account Help

Etsy 25 bbc sherlock Cart

All Items
Handmade
Vintage
Craft Supplies

HANDMADE
Geekery
Jewelry
Art
Accessories
Clothing
Paper Goods
Dolls and Miniatures
Crochet

VINTAGE
Clothing
Electronics

CRAFT SUPPLIES
Yarn
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SHOW ONLY
 In Your Favorites
 Accents Etsy Gift Cards

bbc sherlock 1,096 items Sort by: Most Recent

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SHERLOCK bbc I may be on ... SummersC... \$19.00 USD	Sherlock "IOU" Apple Vinyl D... ECKDesigns \$4.00 USD	221b Baker Street Glass Do... Chilllimebou... \$16.00 USD	Brainy is the new Sexy - BBC... HalloFemme \$2.99 USD
Any 6 Buttons XDcreationz \$5.00 USD	I Believe In Sherlock Holmes ... frostirons \$3.50 USD	MORIARTY WAS REAL Silic... frostirons \$4.00 USD	Sherlock Holmes Book Purse... NovelCreatio... \$48.00 USD

Figure 27

Source:

https://www.etsy.com/search?q=bbc%20sherlock&order=date_desc&view_type=gallery&ship_to=US

REDBUBBLE    SIGN IN 

EXPLORE > SHERLOCK > ALL TIME POPULAR

All Time Popular **Sherlock** (5,091 results)

Showing

- Works
- People
- Groups
- Journals
- Forums

Refine Your Search

Sherlock +

Sherlock Holmes	2,497
Bbc	1,844
Bbc Sherlock	1,577
Benedict Cumberbatch	1,147
Holmes	1,103
John Watson	902
Show more	

Featured Recent Popular




Figure 28

Source: www.redbubble.com/explore/popular+sherlock



Figure 29

Source: https://www.etsy.com/listing/93892096/sherlock-john-bookmark-set?ref=sr_gallery_41&ga_search_query=bbc+sherlock&ga_order=date_desc&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_all=1&ga_search_type=all&ga_facet=bbc+sherlock

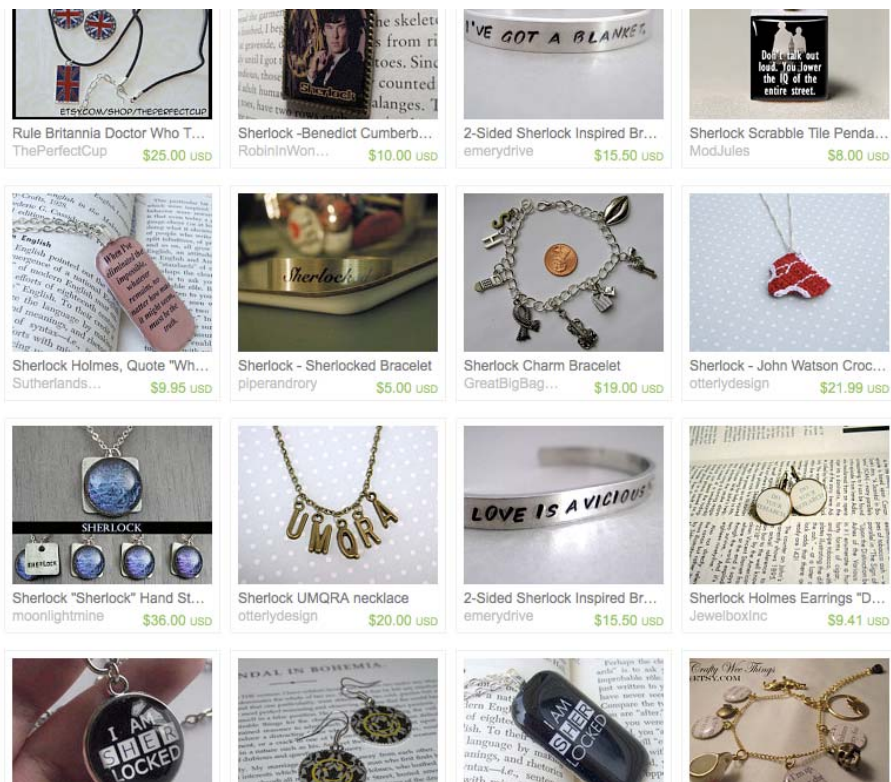


Figure 30

Source:

https://www.etsy.com/search/handmade/jewelry?q=bbc+sherlock&view_type=gallery&ship_to=US&page=3



Figure: 31

Source: https://www.etsy.com/listing/115156813/i-need-to-go-to-my-mind-palace-sherlock?ref=sr_gallery_31&ga_search_query=bbc+sherlock&ga_order=date_desc&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_all=1&ga_search_type=all&ga_facet=bbc+sherlock



Figure 32

Source: https://www.etsy.com/listing/91356954/i-am-sher-locked-sherlock-holmes-bbc-t?ref=sr_gallery_40&ga_search_query=bbc+sherlock&ga_order=date_desc&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_all=1&ga_search_type=all&ga_facet=bbc+sherlock



Figure 33

Source: https://www.etsy.com/listing/126224450/red-pants-bee-pants-bbc-sherlock-themed?ref=sr_gallery_15&ga_search_query=sherlock+red+pants&ga_order=most_relevant&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_ship_to=US&ga_all=1&ga_search_type=all&ga_facet=sherlock+red+pants



**SOME CONSULTING
DETECTIVES
MARRY
ARMY DOCTORS.**

GET OVER IT.

H8 SHOULDN'T BE YOUR DIVISION

Ross Wilson

Figures 34 and 35

Source: <http://www.redbubble.com/people/rosscowilson/works/8474551-some-consulting-detectives>