

Series 1 | Episode 09 – The Cooper-Hofstadter Polarization

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Scene 1 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment

(Leonard adjusts something on a lamp while Howard, Rajesh, and Sheldon sit in anticipation around the room. A laptop rests in front of Howard.)

Leonard: Okay ... the X10s are online.

Howard: Gentlemen, I am now about to send a signal from this laptop through our local ISP, racing down fiber optic cable at the speed of light to San Francisco, bouncing off a satellite in geosynchronous orbit to Lisbon, Portugal, where the data packets will be handed off to submerged transatlantic cables terminating in Halifax, Nova-Scotia, and transferred across the continent via microwave relays back to our ISP and the X10 receiver attached to this ... (he clicks the mouse and watches as the lamp lights up) ... lamp.

(All the men cheer.)

Sheldon: Look at me! Look at me! I've got goosebumps.

Howard: Are we ready on the stereo?!

Rajesh: Go for stereo.

(Howard clicks the mouse. Theme song for "2001: A Space Odyssey" (Strauss' "Also Sprach Zarathustra") begins to loudly play on the stereo. The men rise and dance like Kubrickian cavemen. Penny enters the apartment and eyes the strange celebration.)

Penny: Hey guys!

Men: (halting their dance) Hello!

Penny: It's a little loud!

Howard: No problem, turning it down! (on laptop) San Francisco, Lisbon, Halifax ... (music retreats) ... et voila.

Penny: Okay, thanks.

Leonard: Hang on-hang on! Do you not realize what we just did?

Penny: Yeah, you turned your stereo down with your laptop.

Sheldon: Ah-no, we turned our stereo down by sending a signal around the world via the internet.

Penny: Oh. You know you can just get one of those universal remotes at Radio Shack? They're really cheap.

Leonard: No-no-no. You don't get it. Uh, Howard ... enable public access-

Howard: Public access enabled.

(They wait patiently for something to happen. Nothing does.)

Penny: Boy, that's terrific. I'll see you.

Leonard: No, hang on-hang on!

(They wait a few more seconds. Suddenly, the lamp flicks off and the men gasp.)

Leonard: (pointing) See!

Penny: No.

Sheldon: Someone in Szechuan Province, China is using his computer to turn our lights on and off.

(Several lights around the apartment begin to turn on and off randomly.)

Penny: Huh, well that's handy. Um, here's a question-why?

(The men look at each other momentarily.)

Men in unison: Because we can.

(Remote control cars start to roll around the apartment.)

Sheldon: (pointing) They found the remote controlled cars!

(The cars roll across the room toward Penny.)

Penny: (pointing at a remote control truck) Well, wait-wait. What's on top of that?

Leonard: Wireless web cams. Wave hello.

Howard: The monster truck is out of Austin, Texas and the blue Viper is being operated from suburban Tel Aviv.

(A red remote control car rolls between Penny's feet.)

Sheldon: (to Penny) You may want to put on slacks.

Penny: What? (noticing car) Eww! Stop it! (running as the car gives chase) No! Leave me alone!

Leonard: Who's running the red Corvette?-

Howard: That would be me.

[Series Title Sequence]

Scene 2 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment

(A short time later, the men are cleaning up the living room.)

Sheldon: You know, in the future, when we're disembodied brains in jars? We're going to look back on this as eight hours well wasted.

Rajesh: I don't want to be in a jar. I want my brain in an android body. Eight feet tall and ripped.

Howard: I'm with you. I just have to make sure if I'm a synthetic human I'd still be Jewish.
(puzzled looks from the others) I promised my mother.

Rajesh: I suppose you could have your android penis circumcised. But that's something your Rabbi would have to discuss with the manufacturer.

Sheldon: Not to mention you'd have to power down on Saturdays.

Leonard: Sheldon, why is this letter in the trash?

Sheldon: Well, there's always the possibility that a trash can spontaneously formed around the letter but Occam's Razor would suggest that someone threw it out.

Leonard: It's from the Institute for Experimental Physics. They want us to present our paper on the properties of super solids at the topical conference on Bose-Einstein condensates.

Sheldon: I know. I read it before I threw it out.

Leonard: Okay ... if I may drill down to the bedrock of my question. Why did you throw it out?

Sheldon: Because I have no interest in standing in the Rose Room of the Pasadena Marriott in front of a group of judgmental strangers who wouldn't recognize true genius if it were standing in front of them giving a speech. Which, if I were there it would be.

Howard: I don't know. Sheldon, those topical conferences on Bose-Einstein condensates parties are legendary.

Leonard: Forget the parties!

Howard: (high pitched) Forget the parties? What a nerd.

Leonard: Are there any other honors I've gotten that I don't know about? Did UPS drop off a Nobel Prize with my name on it?

Sheldon: Leonard, please don't take this the wrong way but the day you win a Nobel Prize is the day I begin my research on the drag coefficient of tassels on flying carpets.

Rajesh: Huh-huh-hoo! The only thing missing from that insult was "yo' mamma."

Howard: I got one. Hey Leonard, your mamma's research methodology is so flawed-

Leonard: Shut up, Howard! Sheldon, we have to do this.

Sheldon: No we don't. We have to take in nourishment, expel waste, and inhale enough oxygen to keep ourselves from dying. Everything else is optional.

Leonard: Okay. Let me put it this way-I'm doing it.

Sheldon: You can't. I'm the lead author.

Leonard: Come on! The only reason you're the lead author is because we went alphabetically.

Sheldon: I let you think we went alphabetically to spare you the humiliation of dealing with the fact that it was my idea. Not to put too fine a point on it but I was throwing you a bone. You're welcome.

Leonard: Excuse me? I designed the experiment that proved the hypothesis.

Sheldon: It doesn't need proving.

Leonard: Well ... so the entire scientific community is just supposed to take your word?

Sheldon: They're not supposed to but they should.

Leonard: Alright. I don't care what you say. I'm going to the conference and I'm presenting our findings.

Sheldon: And I forbid it.

Leonard: You forbid it?

Sheldon: If I'm not taking credit for our work then nobody is.

Leonard: So you admit that it's our work.

(Sheldon starts toward his bedroom.)

Sheldon: No. Once again, I'm throwing you a bone. And once again you are welcome.

(Sheldon leaves the room.)

Leonard: Ach!

Howard: (snapping fingers) Oh no he didn't!

Scene 3 - Leonard's Bedroom

(Penny pilfers through Leonard's closet as he watches nearby.)

Penny: So, how's it going with Sheldon? Are you guys still not talking to each other?

Leonard: Not only is he still not talking to me but there's this thing he does where he stares at you and tries to get your brain to explode. Y'know, like in the classic sci-fi movie "Scanners?"

(Leonard demonstrates by placing his finger tips on his temples.)

Leonard: You know. Bzzzt-pshew! Never mind. (grabbing a shirt) How about this one? It says, "I know my physics but I'm still a fun guy!"

Penny: Oh! I didn't know they still made corduroy suits!

Leonard: (proudly) They don't! That's why I saved this one.

Penny: Okay well, let's just see what else you have. (offering clothes) Okay here take this ... and this ... and this ... and these.

Leonard: Is this all stuff you want me to try on?

Penny: No, this is stuff I want you to throw out.

Leonard: Oh.

Penny: Seriously, don't even give it to charity you won't be helping anyone. What's this?

Leonard: Oh, that's the bottled city of Kandor.

Penny: (bewildered) Uh-huh.

Leonard: You see ... Kandor was the capital city of the planet Krypton. It was miniaturized by Brainiac before Krypton exploded and then rescued by Superman.

Penny: (faux) Oh, nice.

Leonard: It's a lot cooler when girls aren't looking at it.

Penny: Here ... why don't you put these on while I find a shirt and sport coat to match.

Leonard: Great, be right back.

Penny: Where you going? Just put them on.

Leonard: Here?

Penny: (taunting) Oh, are you shy?

Leonard: No, I'm not shy.

Penny: Don't worry, I won't look.

Leonard: I know you won't look. Why would you look? There's nothing to see. Well, not nothing-

Penny: Sweetie, put the pants on!

Leonard: Putting them on.

Penny: So, you know, isn't there maybe some way you and Sheldon could compromise on this whole presentation thing.

Leonard: No. No! Scientists do not compromise. Our minds are trained to synthesize facts and come to inarguable conclusions. Not to mention Sheldon is bat-crap crazy.

Penny: (holding strange outfit) What ... is this?

Leonard: Oh, careful. That's my original series Battlestar Galactica flight suit.

Penny: Oh, why didn't you wear it at Halloween?

Leonard: Because it's not a costume, it's a flight suit.

Penny: Okay, alright. Moving on. Oh wow, a paisley shirt.

Leonard: (proudly) Uh-huh, it goes with my corduroy suit.

Penny: (tossing the shirt to the floor) If you mean it should end up in the same place then, I agree. Is this your ... your only tie?

Leonard: Ah. Technically yes, but if you'll notice ... (turns the tie over) ... it's reversible. So works as two.

Penny: Oh. Sweetie, I don't think it even works as one. Is this all your clothes?

Leonard: Yup. Everything since the eighth grade.

Penny: The ... the eighth grade?

Leonard: My last growth spurt.

Penny: Okay, well ... I guess we're back to the corduroy suit.

Leonard: Great.

Penny: Yup.

(Penny holds the suit against Leonard to see its appearance. He picks up the paisley shirt.)

Penny: I said no, put it down!

Scene 4 - Apartment Building, Mailboxes

(Sheldon unlocks his mailbox as Penny comes down the stairs.)

Penny: Hey Sheldon!

Sheldon: Hello, Penny.

Penny: Get anything good?

Sheldon: Um, just the latest copy of "Applied Particle Physics Quarterly."

Penny: Oh, you know, that is so weird that yours came and mine didn't.

(Sheldon pauses in confusion and the two stare at one another for several seconds.)

Penny: It was a joke.

(Sheldon chuckles oddly and begins to leave.)

Penny: Yup! Tip your waitresses, I'm here all week.

Sheldon: Penny, just to save you from further awkwardness know that I'm perfectly comfortable with the two of us climbing the stairs in silence.

Penny: Oh yeah, me too. (motioning to mouth) Zip it, lock it, put it in your pocket.

(The two begin to climb the stairs in silence.)

Penny: So you and Leonard-

Sheldon: Oh dear God!

Penny: Little misunderstanding, huh.

Sheldon: A little misunderstan--Galileo and the Pope had a little misunderstanding.

Penny: Anyway, I was talking to Leonard this morning and I think he feels really bad about it.

Sheldon: Hmph.

Penny: Well how do you feel?

Sheldon: I don't understand the question.

Penny: Well I'm just asking if it's difficult to be fighting with your best friend.

Sheldon: Oh. I hadn't thought about it like that. I wonder if I've been experiencing physiological manifestations of some sort of unconscious emotional turmoil.

Penny: Wait-what?

Sheldon: I couldn't poop this morning.

Penny: You should just talk to him. I'm sure you guys can work this out.

Sheldon: It's certainly preferable to my plan.

Penny: Which was?

Sheldon: A powerful laxative.

Penny: Okay, so you absolutely should talk to him. Look, I know Leonard values you as a friend and he told me himself that without your little idea there's no way he could have come up with this whole experiment thing.

Sheldon: Excuse me, little idea?

Penny: Yeah, I mean he tried to explain it to me. I didn't really understand it but-

Sheldon: Of course you didn't. He said little idea?

Penny: Uh? Well no ... not in-not in-not in those words.

Sheldon: In what words then exactly?

(Sheldon begins pacing closer toward her.)

Penny: Um. You know, gee, exact words aren't written. It's more the spirit in which it-

Sheldon: What did he say?-

Penny: You had a lucky hunch.

(Leonard exits the apartment.)

Leonard: Hey Sheldon, I've been thinking, instead of arguing about this why don't-

Sheldon: Don't you ever speak to me again.

(Sheldon enters the apartment and shuts the door angrily.)

Leonard: What ...

Penny: (making crazy circles with her fingers) Uh, he

Scene 5 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment

(Leonard enters the living room wearing his corduroy suit and carrying a briefcase. Sheldon sits as his laptop.)

Leonard: Okay, I'm leaving for the conference.

Sheldon: Have fun presenting my "lucky hunch."

Leonard: Sheldon, I didn't mean it like that-

Sheldon: Then why did you say it-

Leonard: I don't know. I wasn't choosing-

Sheldon: Were you trying to impress Penny?

Leonard: No. No, not at all. (Sheldon glares) A little bit.

Sheldon: How'd that work out for you?

(Penny enters the apartment.)

Penny: Leonard, ready to go?

Sheldon: Libido one, truth zero.

Leonard: Okay, I'm going to ask you one more time. We did the work together, lets present the paper together.

Sheldon: And I'm telling you for the last time, it's pandering, it's undignified, and bite me.

Leonard: Let's go.

Penny: Bye Sheldon.

Sheldon: Goodbye Penny.

(Sheldon directs a "Scanners" brain-explode motion at Leonard as he turns in the doorway. Leonard shakes his head and leaves.)

Sheldon: (to self) Urgh! One of these days, PSHEW!!

Scene 6 - Conference Center, Hallway

(Penny places a name tag on Leonard's suit as Rajesh watches.)

Penny: There you go.

Leonard: You're right, this side does look better.

Penny: No-no, I didn't say better. I said less stained.

(Howard exits the conference center doors and meets the others.)

Howard: I just checked the house. There's probably twenty, twenty-five people in there.

Leonard: You're kidding.

Penny: Is that all?

Leonard: All? In particle physics, twenty-five is Woodstock.

Penny: Oh! Well, then good!

Leonard: (anxiously) I wasn't expecting such a crowd. I'm a little nervous.

Howard: It's okay, just open with a joke. You'll be fine.

Leonard: A joke. Okay. How about this, um-okay-uh, there's this farmer and he has these chickens but they won't lay any eggs. So, he calls a physicist to help. The physicist then does some calculations and he says, "I have a solution but it only works with spherical chickens in a vacuum."

(Howard and Rajesh laugh along with Leonard. Penny looks on dumbfounded.)

Penny: Oh, sorry. I've just-I've heard it before.

Howard: Let's roll. Hey, nice suit.

Leonard: It's a classic, right?

(The men begin to enter, Penny lingering behind them slightly.)

Penny: (to self) I really should have brought my own car.

Scene 7 - Conference Room

(Leonard ends his presentation to a small crowd inside a darkened room.)

Leonard: So, in conclusion, the data show that at temperatures approaching absolute zero the moment of inertia changes and the solid becomes a super-solid. Which, clearly appears to be a previously unknown state of matter. (to applause) Thank you.

(The lights come revealing Penny fast asleep on Howard's shoulder. He holds his cell phone camera and snaps a picture.)

Leonard: Are there any questions?

(In the back, Sheldon sits wearing dark sunglasses and a hooded sweatshirt.)

Sheldon: Yeah! What the hell was that?

Leonard: Any other questions?

Sheldon: Doctor Sheldon Cooper here. I am the lead author of this particular paper.

(He rises from his seat, removing the glasses and hood. He receives no reaction from the audience.)

Sheldon: (to awkward silence) Thank you. (pointing at Leonard) And you sir, you have completely skipped over the part where I was walking through the park, and I saw these children on a merry-go-round, which started me thinking about the moment of inertia in gasses like helium at temperatures approaching absolute zero.

Leonard: I didn't skip it. It's just an anecdote. It's not science.

Sheldon: Oh! Oh, I see. Was the apple falling on Newton's head, was that just an anecdote?

Leonard: You are not Isaac Newton.

Sheldon: No-no, that's true. Gravity would have been apparent to me without the apple.

Leonard: You cannot possibly be that arrogant.

Sheldon: You continue to underestimate me, my good man.

Leonard: Look, if you weren't happy with my presentation then maybe you should have given it with me.

Sheldon: As I have explained repeatedly, unlike you, I don't need validation from lesser minds. (to audience) No offence.

Leonard: Really? So why did you come?

Sheldon: Because I knew you'd screw this up.

Leonard: I didn't screw it up.

Sheldon: Oh, please! I admit that spherical chicken joke, that was hilarious, but it was straight downhill from there.

Leonard: You know, I've had enough of your condescension. Maybe I didn't go to college when I was eleven, like you. Maybe I got my doctorate at 24 instead of 16, but you are not the only person who is smarter than everyone else in this room. (to audience) No offense. (to Sheldon) And I am clearly not the only person who is tormented by insecurity and has an ego in need of constant validation.

Sheldon: So you admit that you're an egotist?

Leonard: Yes. (to audience) My name is Dr Leonard Hofstadter and I could never please my parents so I need to get all my self-esteem from strangers like you. (pointing) But he's worse!

Sheldon: Okay, that is it!

(Sheldon attempts to "Scanners" brain-explode Leonard again. Howard holds his cell phone camera toward the fighting physicists.)

Leonard: Stop it! You cannot blow up my head with your mind.

Sheldon: Then I'll settle for an aneurysm.

Leonard: (swatting at Sheldon's hands) Stop it!

Sheldon: You hit me. (to audience) You saw him! He hit me!

Leonard: You were trying to blow up my head.

Sheldon: So it was working.

Leonard: It wasn't-it was not! You are a nut case.

Sheldon: Oh we'll see about that! (brain-explodes at Leonard again) Heads up you people in the front row, this is a splash zone.

Leonard: (swatting) Stop-stop it! Quit it!

(The two struggle in front of the crowd.)

Penny: (to Howard) Is this usually how these physics things go?

Howard: (still recording) More often than you'd think.

(Leonard and Sheldon fall to the floor, wrestling one another.)

Sheldon: Vulcan nerve pinch!

Leonard: No!

Scene 8 - Leonard and Sheldon's Apartment

(Leonard eats while sitting on the living room chair. Sheldon enters through the front door. They stare at one another momentarily.)

Sheldon: You could have offered me a ride home.

Leonard: You're lucky I didn't run you over.

Sheldon: I really don't understand what you're so unhappy about. You begged me to come, I came. There's just no pleasing you.

Leonard: You're right, I'm the problem. I'm the one that needs help.

Sheldon: Well that's not much of an apology but I'll take it.

Leonard: Excuse me! Is there anything you'd like to apologize for?

Sheldon: Yes. I'm sorry I tried to blow up your head. It was uncalled for.

(Howard and Rajesh enter the apartment excitedly.)

Howard: You won't believe this.

Rajesh: Somebody got the whole thing on a cell phone and put it on YouTube!

Leonard: What?

(Howard sits in front of a laptop.)

Sheldon: Now, who would do that?

Howard: That would be me. Hey check it out, it's a featured video!

(The men gather around the laptop. A YouTube video of the conference fight plays to "Three Stooges" theme music.)

Leonard: Oh geez. Does this suit really look that bad?

Sheldon: Forget your suit, look at my arms waving. I'm like a flamingo on Ritalin.

(Penny enters the apartment.)

Penny: Howard, would you like to explain to me why your Facebook page has a picture of me sleeping on your shoulder captioned, "Me and my Girlfriend?"

Howard: Uh-oh, here comes the talk.

(Penny frowns and tries to "Scanner" brain-explode Howard's head.)

Scene 9 - Somewhere in China

(Two Chinese men watch the YouTube video fight. One wears clothes remarkably like Sheldon, the other like Leonard. They speak in Mandarin.)

Chinese Leonard: What losers.

Chinese Sheldon: Yeah. Gigantic American geeks.

(They laugh enthusiastically. A moment later, the lights flicker off in the room.)

Chinese Leonard: (smiling) Who's doing that?

Chinese Sheldon: (looking at laptop) Someone from Pasadena, California named ... "Wolowizard."

In unison: (laughing) Awesome!

[End Credits Roll]