



Digital Folklore

S2E2 The Links Between Us (Algorithmic Identity, Goncharov, and Tumblr)
Dr Cassandra Pfeifer, Lauren Shippen & Cherokee McAnelly

<https://digitalfolklore.fm>

[Dial-up modem and connections sounds]

Welcome... you've got *Digital Folklore*.

Female Announcer:

Previously on *Digital Folklore*...

Mark Norman:

When you've been running the show for as long as I have, topics find you.

Daisy Ahlstone:

Our friend James Bell describes folklorist as enthusiasm enthusiasts.

Mason Amadeus:

I just found this convention that's happening in a few months, the Meme Enthusiast Mega Expo.

Perry Carpenter:

How much for tickets?

Mason Amadeus:

They're big expensive.

Perry Carpenter:

We sign up as speakers.

Mason Amadeus:



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We would've to do a presentation then, what would we talk about?

Perry Carpenter:

That's all just details. We can figure that out later.

[Theme music kicks in]

Perry Carpenter:

I'm Perry Carpenter.

Mason Amadeus:

And I'm Mason Amadeus.

Perry Carpenter:

And this is Digital Folklore.

[Sounds of Perry, Mason, and Digby tossing a ball around trying to think of ideas for their upcoming presentation at the MEME conference]

Perry Carpenter:

4chan

Mason Amadeus:

Anime profile pictures.



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Digby:

MySpace.

Perry Carpenter:

Second Life.

Mason Amadeus:

Homestar Runner.

Digby:

Newgrounds.

Perry Carpenter:

Neopets.

Mason Amadeus:

Webkinz.

Digby:

Club Penguin.

[The ball abruptly stops...]

Mason Amadeus:

No, no, we're fixating again.



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Perry Carpenter:

Okay. What if we did the presentation about early 2000 browser MMOs just in general?

Mason Amadeus:

I feel like a broken record, but that's still too broad.

[Digital / computerized interface sounds as Digby searches the internet with his brain implant.]

Digby:

Also, there's already a panel about the early 2000s called All Your GIF Belong To Us.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, and there's a debate on whether it's pronounced 'gif' or 'jiff', but-

Mason Amadeus:

Well, the guy who invented the format said it's pronounced GIF, but I don't like that.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, I don't like it either.

Digby:

I miss Club Penguin.

Mason Amadeus:

So what do we have on the list?



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[Papers rustle]

Perry Carpenter:

The cultural significance and contextual analysis of None Pizza With Left Beef.

Mason Amadeus:

Really? That's the only one we wrote down?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Mason Amadeus:

What about the other thing, the water? There was a water thing, the pH thing.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, I don't remember, we've been doing this for hours.

Digby:

Ah, the pH thing was that the chemist who invented the pH scale never said what the P stands for.

Mason Amadeus:

That's it, yeah. That's right. There was that paper I stumbled on that talked about how the origin and meaning of the P in pH is a legend and nobody actually knows the truth.

Perry Carpenter:

But that's not a meme.



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Mason Amadeus:

No, I guess it's not.

Perry Carpenter:

This is a meme conference.

Mason Amadeus:

Man, I thought this would be easier.

Perry Carpenter:

Well, we have about 12 hours and we have to be at the convention center, so-

Digby:

Which is two and a half hours away.

Mason Amadeus:

I'm going to throw up.

Perry Carpenter:

Maybe we're boxing ourselves in too much.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah?

Perry Carpenter:



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I mean, we could always pull a *Digital Folklore*, find something related enough to memes, and then use that to look at a wider topic, anything else really.

Mason Amadeus:

I don't know how I feel about calling that pulling a *Digital Folklore*, but you're not wrong.

Digby:

What about that little side project thing you've been making?

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, maybe?

Perry Carpenter:

Side project thing?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I kind of wanted it to be a surprise, but mostly, I just don't know what to do with it. It's just a little audio piece about the folklore of software development.

Perry Carpenter:

Ah, yeah, you mentioned that before.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. But we got an email from Ben Krueger who listens to the show about rubber duck debugging, and that just sent me down the rabbit hole when I started on it.

Digby:



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Rubber duck debugging?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, yeah. So it's the practice of explaining a complex coding problem out loud to a literal rubber duck.

Perry Carpenter:

And that's really just the act of talking through your steps out loud, so it forces you to slow down and you often have this epiphany, something comes to you, you find the solution.

Mason Amadeus:

I still think it helps to have the actual duck though.

Digby:

Is that why you have that little rubber frog on top of your speakers?

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, no, the rubber frog is for sound design problems, he's not very good at code.

Digby:

Okay.

Mason Amadeus:

The big knitted frog is the one that I talk to about code stuff.

Perry Carpenter:

I don't know how we could really use that for a meme conference though.



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Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I get what you mean. It's not like it's not interesting, I just don't know if programmers are the demographic we're really pitching it to.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, hold on. Not programming, but you know what is programmed? The algorithm.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, okay, yeah. We could jump off from how your algorithm tailors what kind of memes you see.

Perry Carpenter:

Into how it shapes your opinions and your ideas of the world because that's what's being reflected back at you.

Mason Amadeus:

And how memes are markers of community and identity.

Perry Carpenter:

And then how that crosses over into real life.

Mason Amadeus:

And how we can-

Digby:

You're getting way too broad again.

Mason Amadeus:



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You scared me a little, dude. You got so quiet.

Digby:

I zoned out for a bit. I was scrolling through stuff on LimeWire.

Mason Amadeus:

Lime, what? Oh, my god, really?

Digby:

Yeah. Your little software thing reminded me of it. Did you know it's an AI-generated NFT platform now?

Perry Carpenter:

Of course, it is.

Mason Amadeus:

Surely, that's not run by the same folks.

Digby:

Nah, just the same name. The original LimeWire got shut down for all the piracy obviously, old versions still work though-

Mason Amadeus:

Digby.

Digby:

... if you don't upgrade.



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Mason Amadeus:

Digby, do not download an old version of LimeWire into your brain please.

Digby:

I'm fine until my rabies shot expires.

Mason Amadeus:

No, seriously, I am-

Perry Carpenter:

Hey, Mason.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah?

Perry Carpenter:

I was looking over that list that Mark gave us of folks that he interviewed on his show, and I'm thinking maybe we try to ring up Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah. I think she'd be great to talk to about this. She did this lecture for the Folklore Podcast about folk groups and the ore that both divides them and binds them.

Mason Amadeus:



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Oh, yeah, she sounds perfect. We could talk to her, pick her brain, and hopefully that'll help us narrow something down.

Perry Carpenter:

I'll send her a message real quick and see if she's free.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah.

[Transition sound to interview segment]

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

My name is Cassandra Pfeifer. I grew up in North Central Illinois, but I lived in England for a year where I did my master's degree. I lived in South Louisiana for seven years where I did my PhD. And now I'm in Southwest Nebraska teaching English. So I teach composition, which I use a social media literacy theme for those classes. And I teach folklore and I teach some literature classes, but folklore is really my jam-

Mason Amadeus:

Awesome.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

It's everything I love.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, it's interesting once that becomes somebody's love, the way that they can find a way to make a link to folklore no matter what the discipline they're officially in, so that's really cool. All right. Mason, do you want to frame our first official, official question?



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Mason Amadeus:

What would be a good spot to jump in? I guess, one of the things that we've been interested in and explored a little bit in the show is the ways that the online platforms we use shape the folklore that's created on them. Tumblr has a different identity than Reddit and that sort of thing.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

One of my students, actually, he was writing about algorithms in his final project last semester. And he had a sentence that I put, as I graded. I'm like, "I know this is the favorite sentence I'm going to read all day." And it was eight o'clock in the morning. But he said, "The algorithm is the brain behind my opinion." Which I thought was so fascinating because a lot of what we talk about in the composition class is how the information gets presented to us and what we then in turn do with that information.

So I think that the way the algorithms are set up to filter out content to us absolutely informs how we then transmit folklore and how we respond to it. The algorithm almost becomes part of the oral tradition. I use oral loosely because it's obviously not oral. But the algorithm is kind of stepping in and disrupting a little bit of that tradition and becoming part of the driver of it. The question then that I have is what is that doing to our folklore or what is that doing to our folk groups too? Because if we have this weird not human being such a part of the transmission process, what is that doing to our ability to relate to our folklore and stuff?

Mason Amadeus:

I feel like it's especially fascinating because it is shaped by your interactions, as well as it is shaping your interactions-

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Yeah.

Perry Carpenter:



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Yeah.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:
It's a two-way street.

Perry Carpenter:
There's definitely a power dynamic at play though, right?

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:
Mm-hmm.

Perry Carpenter:
It's because you've got the algorithm the way that it's been designed. And then the algorithm, the way that it is being continually reinforced in certain directions by millions of other inputs, other people like you. And then you have your little blip in that just creating some influence, but at the same time, gathering everything else that it is assuming that you all like or that will interact with your emotional capacity to engage with that platform either positively or negatively, that then starts to create the filter bubble that we all live in.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:
Yeah. And then some people, there's this documentary, The Social Dilemma, where they talk about that people essentially, if you look at a person who disagree with so much and you're thinking about, "Well, how are they not seeing all the things that I'm seeing?" The answer is that they're not because they have a totally different look at what is happening in the world. So you have somebody super far right and super far left. The things that they seen and then the lore that they engage with is so different that it's almost like they're living and existing in two different planes of reality because they're so opposed to each other, and it's just so fascinating.



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Perry Carpenter:

Your algorithm in a way becomes its own instantiation of your friend or your friend group because the people that you start to spend more time with, they're the ones that you're naturally going to text with back and forth, they're the ones that are going to text you. And now your algorithm is stepping in and saying, "Hey, I haven't heard from you recently." So that's really weird the way that these different platforms become their own persona in our lives. I have my relationship with everybody on a platform, but then I also have my relationship with that platform itself.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Yeah. Something that I noticed, is it last year that the Amber Heard, Johnny Depp case, that was last summer, right?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

In terms of the memes that I was seeing, it was so interesting because my Instagram feed or the for you page. Anytime I saw memes or reels about that case, it was all very much pro-Johnny Depp, Amber Heard is a villain, it's that whole characterization of that case. But I didn't follow the case, I didn't watch any of it, I was just seeing it. But then Twitter was the exact opposite, where Amber Heard was the protagonist of that case and Johnny Depp was the villain. And I was so interested that I could have these two accounts. They might as well have been different court cases and different incidents because the way that they were being represented, I was seeing both windows into it and it was wild to see it play out in that way.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. You were straddling the line of that binary with your two platforms' algorithms. That is interesting.



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Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Yeah, exactly. And what I find I think most interesting is that idea of you've never cross paths with these other people.

Mason Amadeus:

The other side of the coin we want to touch on on this is people finding their community online in different spaces, how that affects their sense of identity, even as simple as being a part of a fandom that's really passionate, that reinforcement and engaging with that can make that a bigger part of what you consider to make up your identity.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Yeah. And I've had some experience with that back in the early days of AOL and message boards through NSYNC fan fiction oddly.

Mason Amadeus:

That's awesome.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Because I was obsessed with NSYNC when I was a kid. So there was this fan fiction writer, FictionLyn, and me and my friend Julie were obsessed with her stories, just obsessed. We'd sit up all night waiting for the chapter drop to happen. So we'd be on this message board talking to all of the other FictionLyn readers. But I cannot remember what the message board platform was, but we had so much fun waiting for the chapter to drop. And then discussing the chapter and doing all of these things. That was my early teen years, 13, 14, when we were reading all those FictionLyn stories.

Perry Carpenter:



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I had similar things back in the day, but this is back in dial-up where you would intentionally go to a certain platform. One of them was a university bulletin board system that was close by. It was a lot like Reddit, so there's a general area, and then there'd be all these little subgroups that you could go into and all of them had their own different personality, everything was primarily at tech space at that time. Things are very different today, but at the same time, at the core level, they're very, very similar to what we started out with and I guess what we've been doing forever. The format's just changing or the place you go is just changing. I'm wondering, thinking about the lecture that you did for the Folklore Podcast, it seems like you drew a lot of that from the things that you instilled to your students. Is there a central thesis or idea that you're trying to communicate to your students when you approach them with these kinds of topics?

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

My primary goal for intro to folklore for those students is to really get them to think like a folklorist or a modern folklore, I should say, where they don't respond to different folk groups and they certainly don't respond to different types of folklore through the lens of their personal reaction to it or how they personally feel about it. Conspiracy theories are probably the easiest thing to kind of think about when we see somebody who is pushing a conspiracy theory or reaction is to say, "Oh, that's so stupid, how could you possibly think that?" And my goal for my students is to just step back from that, and think about why is that conspiracy theory so useful to that person, why are they so latched onto it. Just so to eliminate the judgment factor that comes into place so often.

Anytime we see something that we don't understand, I mean, there's the new TikTok trend of ingesting borax, so that's 1,000% going to come up in my classes. And I'll say, "Our answer to this trend is to not say you guys are insane and stupid and it's a Darwin Award, and it's all these things. It's to say, what about these horrifically dangerous things? Why do they continue to be so worthwhile to us? Because when I was a kid, we did wall rushes. Are you guys familiar with wall rushes? Those-

Perry Carpenter:

It sounds like you run as fast as you can at a wall and smack into it and see if-



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Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

No. What we would do, you'd lean over and you'd take in a bunch of deep breaths, and then you'd cross your arms and they'd push on your chest and you'd pass out.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh yeah.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

We would do that for hours, constantly. And it's so unhealthy.

Mason Amadeus:

I remember my parents asking me if I was doing that at school when I was a kid, but nobody at my school was.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Me and my sisters and my cousins, we would spend hours, it was a riot to do that. And we were like, "This is the best thing ever." But it's like no, what's that doing to your brain? What are you doing to yourself?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:



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So when these TikTok challenges come up, it's not like they're unique to that one group of people, every kid has a story of something they did that they thought was cool, that could have ended really badly for them. So I try and get my students to think why do so many of us choose to do these otherwise kind of insane things, that dangerous play? There's a lot of folklores that focus on children's folklore. So a lot of their studies revolve around the dangerous play and the pushing of the boundaries and figuring out what your limits are when you're at that age.

Mason Amadeus:

This is kind of a half-formed thought, so bear with me. But when we're talking about that liminal age as you're growing up and exploring the limits of your own mortality and things like that. At that age, the company you keep and what you're surrounded by is largely due to circumstance, it's the kids you're going to school with, the kids in your neighborhood. You don't have control over that. Kids who are growing up now with widespread adoption of the internet from a very young age, there's more agency in terms of finding groups to belong to and finding identity. I don't know, do you see any manifestations of that in the students you teach or do you have any insight on that?

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

The students that I teach, largely, the way that they write about social media is it's a continuation of the groups that they have to be in already, so their social network, it's almost like a continuation in school, social network. I'm certain, especially with the students, like my gamer students, they have more of an opportunity to branch outside of those groups. But a lot of my students, the way that they write about social media and the social interaction that comes with, is they almost write about it as an enhanced version of their high school experience. I had one student, she felt like she was lost in a maze of just cyberbullying and all the things that she could no longer escape when she went home-

Perry Carpenter:

Wow.



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Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

So it almost became an amplification of... These are the groups you've been dealt with and if you don't happen to fit in with them, then you're going to have to wait it out until you get to a bigger setting where you can find new people. So when my students talk about things like that, it just makes me really grateful that I didn't have access to social media-

Mason Amadeus:

Right.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Because I was a weird kid writing NSYNC fan fiction in class, I didn't need to see anything outside of the school.

Mason Amadeus:

I think that's interesting though because that's so different from my own experience, which was online and the groups I was participating in were much more my own choice and not the same as my real-world social groups. I don't know if that is an era thing or just how I was, but I was participating in forums and message boards a lot when I was very young, around video games or animation. And that felt to me like this was what I get to choose to engage with, and all the other stuff is what I have to engage with.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah. Mine were like that too, it was very special interest focused like magic or mentalism or music or just stuff like that. And I think with your example, it's kind of like that too. That is the folk group of your



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choosing at that point, versus, I'm going to just deal with what life throws at me folk group that we get in high school and college and everything else.

Mason Amadeus:

But what you see is that largely, the students write about the experiences they have with the same group of people?

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Yeah, that's a lot of the examples that they'll use too. Also, they'll write about different teams getting in trouble for posting things that they shouldn't have or the cyberbullying that takes place. I think I've had one or two students from this area. And even in Louisiana, I have one or two students who have written about the folk groups that they've found. But the ones that do write about that, they write about them in that profound manner of like, "I have found my space, I found my people and had such a good feeling." When you're trapped, especially when you're in a small town, it's such an interesting thing.

Mason Amadeus:

I have a piece of conjecture that I want both of your thoughts on. Someone who is 21 right now was born in 2002, so by the time that they were functioning with their own agency, the internet was pretty widespread. I wonder if this experience of the internet being an extension of your physical social group has anything to do with the unification of online platforms? Again, those pillars, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.

Perry Carpenter:

I mean, the thing that I'm seeing pop up more now than what I saw 10 years ago when I was starting to study some of this, is that now there are more localized groups as well. So on Facebook, you're going to have your neighborhood group. And then these other groups that kind of follow you around to whatever area you're at like a Yik Yak or something like that, where people are largely anonymous, but it is their



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own peer group. So I think that there's an encouragement to make this wide world of the internet a little bit smaller around people that you might be able to interact with on a more local level as well.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I think I'm mentally coming back to something I believe Chelsea said, people we used to say, "The people you meet on the internet, you don't know if they're real, they're fake. It wasn't treated like a real place." And then now it's much more about real people. I'm wondering if there was a paradigm shift or if I just feel like there was a paradigm shift in terms of how we think about our identities and communities online that we engage with?

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Yeah. Even just my own experience on social media, it has over time gotten less niche. Whereas middle school, early high school me, had my different corners of the internet which was my FictionLyn group. So there was this group of people that had this thing in common and then they built out their connections that way. But now, the way that I use... I mean, the primary one that I'm usually on is Instagram, but Instagram doesn't lend itself so much to the group formation. Although I suppose it could, so maybe it has to do with the way in which you're kind of mindfully utilizing the tools that we have. And then young people like my students might not realize all of the different paths that they could take.

That's a lot of what they'll write about, especially when I do the media literacy, that's the COMP-1 thing, is that they find that, I didn't know any of this stuff about social media and I wish that I did, all the ways that it's designed to manipulate me in certain ways, but then all the ways that it's designed to keep certain types of information from me because it doesn't fall in my purview of what the data I've put out there has said about me. I wonder if there's something to how you use it and how you're taught to use it.

Perry Carpenter:



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I'm a little bit surprised that students coming in still don't realize the algorithmic influence and everything else, because it feels like there are some kids that you'll let them know that, and they're like, "Yeah, I hear that all the time." And then there are others that are completely, I guess, oblivious to it.

Mason Amadeus:

Since we're coming up close towards the bottom of the hour, I wanted to ask one final question. Is there any particular one piece of insight that a student has brought to your attention that was really an epiphany for you or was particularly impactful?

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

My favorite things that students do is when they teach me something that I never ever thought about. One student, she was writing about social media and brain development. And it was so interesting because the way she was writing about it is that if a kid gets social media too early at a certain point in their brain development, it trains them. So we see themselves through an external lens as opposed to learning to see themselves through their internal lens and get their internal validation, and I thought that was so fascinating.

It's interesting to connect it to folk groups to think about what does that disruption in the way we see ourselves, what does that potentially do. Then to the way in which we interact with folk groups? Because we choose our folk groups based on our own internal selves. We move in and out of them based off of whether or not they meet with our sensibilities that we currently have at the time. We leave them if they no longer suit our identities and the things that we value. And so if we have something causing kids to be so reliant on external forces to shake who they are, that's curious about what that does then to the formation of how we join and how we choose our folk groups and enter and exit out of them.

Mason Amadeus:

Is that perhaps what makes people dig in even harder when people in their folk groups are challenged because that is your source of primary validation?



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Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Yeah, exactly. There's a technologist, Tristan Harris, he calls it the outrage-ification on social media, because it's not just attacking an idea that you have. It's attacking your whole self and you're like, "How dare you disagree with me on this thing that is part of who I am?" It was a very big difference having a disagreement and having your whole sense of self being attacked.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Mason Amadeus:

Right, you're invalidated.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Yeah. That feels so much more like an attack than it feels like a discussion. That was something I had never thought about, what social media at different stages of our development can do to us, and that was a really cool paper that she wrote.

Perry Carpenter:

It sounds like it.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah.

Perry Carpenter:

If people want to start to follow your work or learn a little bit more about what you do, what's the best way for them to do so?



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Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

People can find me on Twitter. That's my public profile.

Perry Carpenter:

Awesome.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Yeah, I've got some links on there on my Twitter profile that goes to all the works that I've done.

Mason Amadeus:

Awesome.

Perry Carpenter:

Great.

Mason Amadeus:

Thank you so much, Cassandra.

Perry Carpenter:

Thank you so much.

Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer:

Thank you.

[transition sound back to Perry, Mason, and Digby in the studio]



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Mason Amadeus:

Okay. I downloaded all the tracks.

Perry Carpenter:

That was a great chat.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, it was. Cassandra's wicked cool. I don't know if we really narrowed anything down though.

Perry Carpenter:

No, not really.

Mason Amadeus:

Always that with folklore, isn't it? There's so much more than you expect...

Perry Carpenter:

True, true, true.

Mason Amadeus:

What if we narrowed our talk down to just one platform?

Perry Carpenter:

It would need to be a popular one though, one that's not too niche.

Mason Amadeus:

But also not one that's too popular. We can't just do Twitter, that's too big.



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Perry Carpenter:

Don't you mean X?

Mason Amadeus:

I have a weird gut feeling that it's going to be called Twitter again in the near future.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, really?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I do.

Perry Carpenter:

You willing to go on the record for that?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, why not? I'll give it a year before it's either gone or it's called Twitter again.

Perry Carpenter:

Hey, Digby, you catch that?

Digby:

You know it. I never miss a chance to make Mason look dumb in the future. I set a reminder to go off a year from now.

Perry Carpenter:



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Don't worry, you make Mason look dumb now.

Mason Amadeus:

Wow, okay. Yeah, all right. Both of you then, you're going to eat those words.

Perry Carpenter:

Any-who, we can narrow down our focus by doing something a little bit more specific than X, but maybe less specific than a Stack Overflow.

Mason Amadeus:

Also, something that's not new, something that's established.

Perry Carpenter:

I mean, what fits that criteria?

Mason Amadeus:

First thing that comes to mind is Yahoo! Answers, but that got shut down. I think we should probably do something that's still active.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, something like Tumblr? My kids are still on Tumblr.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. Tumblr's a good choice, that's been around for ages, right? Digby.

Digby:

2007.



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Mason Amadeus:

2007. And it's still going strong.

Perry Carpenter:

And it does have a really specific kind of user base.

Mason Amadeus:

And it's gone through a fair share of trouble and changes.

Perry Carpenter:

And now that I think about it, we know somebody who's really familiar with Tumblr.

Mason Amadeus:

We do?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, Lauren Shippen.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, yeah. I always think of her as the person who made the [Bright Sessions](#), I forget that she has a whole podcast specifically about Tumblr.

Perry Carpenter:

Exactly, it's [Dashboard Diaries](#).

Mason Amadeus:



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It's her and Cher McAnelly, right? Who literally works for Tumblr?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, what do you think the odds are they'd be down for a Zoom call right now?

Perry Carpenter:

Well, we don't know unless we try, right?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. I'll send them an email, also a Twitter DM, and also probably a Tumblr DM.

[transition sound to interview]

Lauren Shippen:

I'm Lauren Shippen, a writer and longtime Tumblr user who makes Dashboard Diaries with my wonderful co-host.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Hello, I am Cherokee McAnelly, the head of entertainment at Tumblr, where I've been haunting the dashboard for the past nine years.

Lauren Shippen:



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And we make Dashboard Diaries where we talk about Tumblr and all of the weird stuff that goes on there, including diving into our own embarrassing Tumblr archives. If you are a fan or a fan of fandoms or a Tumblr user or want to understand what's going on on Tumblr, that's really what our show is for.

Perry Carpenter:

It's a fun show.

Mason Amadeus:

It is.

Lauren Shippen:

Thank you.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Thank you.

Lauren Shippen:

I thought it'd be fun to do a little quiz. I'm going to give you four movie titles, one of them is real and I need you three to pick the real movie.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, gosh.

Lauren Shippen:

So, Goncharov from the 1970s, directed by Martin Scorsese. Shazaam from the '90s, starring Sinbad. Kazaam from the '90s starring Shaquille O'Neal. Interview with a Vampire from the '90s based off the book of the same name. Which of these is a real movie?



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Mason Amadeus:

I think it was Shazaam, right? Because there was a whole Mandela effect about Kazaam starring Shaquille O'Neal, and that was a whole thing on the internet that I feel like I remember seeing, and I think it was a Sinbad movie, right?

Lauren Shippen:

Cherokee, Perry, what do you guys think?

Cherokee McAnelly:

Well, my thought was going to be Kazaam, so now I feel like I have been Mandela affected.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, no.

Perry Carpenter:

For me, the real one was Shazaam because I think I was old enough to see it when it first came out. But I could be remembering wrong, that's how Mandela effect works, right?

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah.

Lauren Shippen:

All right. So we've got two votes for Shazaam and one vote for Kazaam. Is that where we're at?

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yes.



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Mason Amadeus:

Which one had Sinbad?

Lauren Shippen:

Shazaam has Sinbad.

Mason Amadeus:

The one with Sinbad is the real one.

Lauren Shippen:

All right. The real movie in this is Kazaam starring Shaquille O'Neal.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, no. That was-

Cherokee McAnelly:

Hey, look at that.

Lauren Shippen:

There is of course now a movie called Shazam! starring Zachary Levi that's in the DC Universe.

Perry Carpenter:

Nice.



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Lauren Shippen:

And the Interview with the Vampire was a little bit of a tricky one because this was a Mandela effect that happened to me earlier this year. When I started watching the TV show. I've always remembered it as Interview with a Vampire, it's Interview with the Vampire, which I didn't know. But yeah, Kazaam is a real movie, Shazaam is not, but a lot of people do remember seeing a movie with Sinbad, but it doesn't exist.

Mason Amadeus:

I got double Mandela-ed.

Lauren Shippen:

You got double Mandela-ed? I have to think of something you encounter all the time in digital folklore.

Mason Amadeus:

That was something that threw me for a loop when I first heard about it. It's called the Mandela effect because a lot of people remember Nelson Mandela dying in prison, I think, in the '80s. I might have that wrong. But Nelson Mandela did not, he died in 2013. It's the communal mass misremembering of things is proof that we have shifted to an alternate universe.

Perry Carpenter:

Right.

Lauren Shippen:

Yes, yeah.

Perry Carpenter:

One of the prevailing theories for a lot of Mandela effects is that the Large Hadron Super Collider from-



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Mason Amadeus:

CERN?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, CERN. The last time they did that, they actually inflicted a multiverse on everybody.

Lauren Shippen:

You know what? I believe it. And I like to think that there's a multiverse somewhere where I can actually watch Goncharov, it's a real movie that exists. We should probably talk about what Goncharov is and how exactly it began. Goncharov is a movie by Martin Scorsese from the 1970s. It's the greatest mob movie ever made, and it doesn't exist. It is essentially mass hallucination, but a participatory hallucination that Tumblr had last fall that grew out of a post from a few years prior actually, of these knockoff boots that have a fake movie poster on the tongue of the boot. And it says, "Martin Scorsese presents Goncharov," and then a bunch of other information. And this post floated around the internet for a couple of years. There's actually a Reddit post about it as well, and everybody's sort of speculating on what it was actually trying to be. Most people agree that the real film I was trying to reference was Gomorrah from 2008. But then for some reason, last fall, Tumblr decided to pretend that this was a real movie and make it so. I remember seeing it actually 18 months ago on my own Tumblr dash.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Really?

Lauren Shippen:

Because somebody commented like, "This loser hasn't even seen Goncharov." And it was just like a joke, and then for whatever reason-

Cherokee McAnelly:



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Oh.

Lauren Shippen:

November of 2022, I think the first post that really blew up was a movie poster that somebody made, a Goncharov movie poster. And then, Cherokee, I mean, you got to see behind the scenes, this thing take flight. What happened?

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah. That movie poster which cast the film and everything essentially created the framework in which everyone could kind of play with Goncharov. So I think that was really the catalyst. And I'm looking right now at our last six months metrics. And the metrics for Goncharov, it is a line straight up in the air on the line graph overnight, genuinely overnight on the 21st of November. There it went from barely just a few searches for Goncharov, there were a few thousand starting on the 20th. And on the 21st there were over 133,000 searches alone, 12,000 posts made, 212,000 reblogs, and this is just on that one day.

Perry Carpenter:

Geez.

Cherokee McAnelly:

So it really was just a powder keg, just from zero to 100, zero to a million genuinely overnight. And that engagement kind of continued for about a week on a high level and then it kind of slowed down around mid to late December.

Perry Carpenter:

Wait, when you're doing those analytics, do you have the ability to understand what population that's coming from?

Cherokee McAnelly:



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Oh, it's not unfortunately something that at least I, with my very basic statistics knowledge know how to access.

Perry Carpenter:

Got you.

Lauren Shippen:

But what would you say, Cherokee, is likely the Tumblr user base demographics? Is that something that-

Cherokee McAnelly:

Well, yes, I can share that with you.

Lauren Shippen:

We've never talked about that for some reason.

Cherokee McAnelly:

I have a doc I can pull up right here, so I'm not guesstimating. Okay. Tumblr is 42% Gen Z, 38% millennial, and 20% Gen X and Boomer. Gender split is 56% female, 44% male or identifying as. And our biggest user base is definitely in the US. And one kind of interesting thing that we do track is duplication across platforms. So for example, 74% of people who are on Tumblr are not on Snapchat.

Mason Amadeus:

Interesting.

Cherokee McAnelly:

51% for TikTok, 48% for Twitter. So Tumblr really is for those who are really active on Tumblr, it's their primary social platform.



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Mason Amadeus:

Half of Tumblr users do not use TikTok?

Cherokee McAnelly:

Correct.

Mason Amadeus:

That's buck wild to me.

Lauren Shippen:

That is wild.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah.

Mason Amadeus:

Especially given the breakdown of almost half being Gen Z.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Cherokee McAnelly:

I do think there was a big exodus from other social platforms to Tumblr. I feel like this is not a correct characterization, but I always call Tumblr the antisocial-social platform because you're engaging about your passions with people you may not know. It's kind of where you can go to dive in and geek out, be unapologetically yourself. Often people are anonymous on there, and I do think that kind of drove a lot... Just like we see a lot of Gen Z, there's a movement for flip phones because people are starting to



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use their socials and other things just on their computers and keeping their phones to reduce their screen time. And so I do think it was very much a rejection of the social aspect of social media. Even though Tumblr obviously is a very social platform, but in a completely different way I feel than others. I never see it as a competitor of other platforms because I think it's so different and unique, it's just a completely different beast.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah.

Perry Carpenter:

It's very artist friendly.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah.

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah.

Mason Amadeus:

This is a bit of a divergence, but I'm super curious because I did not know that there was any sort of a push of people moving away from smartphones as their primary way of interacting with social media and back to computers. That breaks my brain a little bit because I use my computer primarily for them, but I feel old for doing that.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Right.



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Mason Amadeus:

You're telling me the kids are doing that now and it's cool again?

Perry Carpenter:

It's cool to have a flip phone, yeah.

Cherokee McAnelly:

From what I have heard, yes. And I will say I have seen more and more flip phones when I'm just out and about in the world, with the younger age groups. I feel like I sound very hello fellow kids right now saying this. But it's true. Yeah, there has been a distinct kind of shift away from smartphones. And honestly, I saw that and I was like, "That sounds great, I would love to not be glued to my phone all the time."

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah.

Perry Carpenter:

Can you imagine? I remember the first time I got a flip phone back when texting, you used to have to pay by character on it.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Oh my gosh.

Perry Carpenter:



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But it would take literally forever to write a three sentence text because you just have those keys and you're like, "Oh, I need a T, how many times do I have to press this key?"

Mason Amadeus:

I remember T9 word being a godsend. I was really good at texting with T9 word.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah. My parents sent me a package from San Francisco with things I'd left, I'm from San Francisco originally, with things I'd left at home. And for some reason, one of the things they shipped me was my first flip phone.

Perry Carpenter:

Nice.

Cherokee McAnelly:

So now I have that for some reason, no charger-

Lauren Shippen:

Sell some Gen Z in Brooklyn.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah, exactly. They were like you, "We have a feeling you might want this so you can fit in with the kids."

Perry Carpenter:

You should absolutely create a flip phone app though, just to see what consumption is like on that form factor.



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Cherokee McAnelly:

We used to have text to post. You could text a number what you wanted your post to say, and it would post on your Tumblr.

Perry Carpenter:

Gosh.

Cherokee McAnelly:

I think we sun-setted that a few years ago-

Lauren Shippen:

Did we?

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah.

Lauren Shippen:

That's hilarious.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, so I'll tell you a quick story because I'm in an upper demographic, I just turned 50 the last year, probably about the time Goncharov was going hot on Tumblr. So I had used Tumblr a few years ago, and it didn't click with me at the time, but my kids are huge Tumblr users. And I was like, "What's going on with Tumblr?" And my son said this is where all these very niche groups of people hang out. Both him and I are on the autism spectrum, so he said there's a whole bunch of neurodivergence there. They have a whole bunch of friends that are spread across several different communities, and those communities are represented there as well. And then, he said, "Let me send you some of the best posts that I've



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seen." And he sent this post about somebody that had a dream that they were working in a delicate and selling clown meat. And just all the interaction about-

Cherokee McAnelly:

I think I've seen that post.

Perry Carpenter:

What is clown meat? Is it human? Is it not human? And what are the laws and the ethics surrounding this? And just the way everybody was piling onto this, creating this really interesting rich discussion about clown meat. And I thought that that was fantastic.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Look, only on Tumblr.

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah, I really do think that that and just that Goncharov in general is a thing that could only happen on Tumblr because of who the user base is and what they like to do and the way that they behave. What was amazing, and here I will drop this document in the chat here, is that somebody compiled a document of all of the Goncharov lore, the script excerpts, the scoring that people made, the casting, the costuming.

Perry Carpenter:

That master doc is amazing.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Oh my gosh.



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Perry Carpenter:

The level of detail that's in that is crazy.

Lauren Shippen:

It's incredible.

Mason Amadeus:

Can I just bring something up? That's the first thing I saw, is the act of adding lore to the Goncharov story referred to as gonching.

Lauren Shippen:

Is it referred to as gonching?

Mason Amadeus:

Well, "The very first line says there's a discord server now for gonching."

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah, I think gonching, I mean, I've seen gonching used more generally to just mean participating in the Goncharov fandom. So I think that if you are just playing along with the joke, I think you are gonching, you don't necessarily have to be adding to the lore. And I also don't know, I think that there's so much out there on Tumblr that's not in this document that's probably not in the discord, but that is on Tumblr of people adding to the lore, people putting their head cannons forward, which in this case, a head cannon could easily become canon because there is no real canon. And so it does become this sort of democratic system of like, okay, well, what book posts are getting big enough that the people who are



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making these documents are hanging out and these discords are sort of making them official Goncharov of lore.

Perry Carpenter:

Well, I mean the cool thing about a master doc like that and some of the other posts that have been out there, some of the other archival ways of managing this is that they are literally managing the canon in a lot of ways. Of saying, no, you can't or at least you shouldn't try to create something that is directly competing with or conflicting with this other set of quote unquote, facts that we've established or seen structures that we've established or casting or catchphrases or anything else. I think that it's fascinating to see the group agreement with that as well.

Cherokee McAnelly:

And I do think it's really interesting just given the fan casting power of Tumblr as well. I always think about how many movies and shows have been fan cast on Tumblr before they were cast elsewhere, and they were completely accurate. Most recently Ben Barnes from Shadow and Bone as the Darkling, that was a Tumblr fan cast that became reality. And so I do think Tumblr somehow has this kind of hive mind where everyone just agrees on the vibe or something because it really did feel like, yeah, this is the cast and this is the plot. And obviously there's a big deal with clocks throughout as symbolism, like duh. So I love that kind of seamless agreement that just happens.

Lauren Shippen:

Tumblr is yes and personified, right?

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yes, that's it.

Lauren Shippen:



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One of the things that I've loved too is I've seen some, I'll have to make sure to reblog this next time I see one of these posts. But I've seen posts and certainly back in November when there was lots of gonching going on, that are modern AU of Goncharov. And it's people doing posts about a fan AU of Cannon that fans made. And there's five over 500 fix in the Goncharov on AO3, the largest fan fiction website.

Perry Carpenter:

Well, and I think you hit on something there though, when you talk about AO3, is that the reason that something like this can take off so well on Tumblrs, you do have a fantastic collection of creative people, creative writers, artists, people who can put these things together. And it's an outlet for them. So it's not just trying to do something for the sake of doing, it's something for the creative process and the community that they're wanting to get involved in. And it would come out some other way if it didn't go into Goncharov.

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah, yeah.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Absolutely. And I feel it's built with collaboration in mind. It's so easy for people to kind of pile on a post.

Perry Carpenter:

And we could talk about that in a second too, because that fits into what makes something viral, is that participation piece. And there's been a lot of studies on that.

Lauren Shippen:

Well, I do think that there is something unique about Tumblr's infrastructure and the way that actually Tumblr functions. Tumblr now is very much, yes, the home of fandom on the internet. Sure, there's fandom on TikTok and on Twitter, but Tumblr has just sort of always been that. But I think it became



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that because of the way in which reblogs work, the way that the dashboard works. The way that you can have a Tumblr account and have a bunch of sub blogs that you can post to. So you can have your Marvel sub blog, you can have your DC Comics so that they don't overlap because some people really like to keep their fandom blogs very specific. Whereas if you want to do that on Twitter, you would have to create separate accounts for each new Twitter profile.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. Tumblr supports very well natively all sorts of media that you can include in a post, even audio posts, which is not something you really see anywhere else.

Lauren Shippen:

That's true.

Mason Amadeus:

But you can do photos and videos and quotes and reblogs and things like that all in ways that are presented very well. Whereas video on Twitter is like a compromise from a user element standpoint because it was added in later and it doesn't super fit with the design.

Perry Carpenter:

I think when you look at platforms, you do have to think about how do I want to interact on platform X? And it has to be tailored to that. And I think Tumblr is very much, it caters towards somebody that needs to express themselves, period. And is going to let them do that, versus TikTok where you do have to be fairly comfortable with doing something on video. But TikTok itself is also, it's a folklore factory in a lot of ways because it allows you to create something, and then it can let somebody else become part of the conversation by stitching or duo-ing or something like that. And I think Tumblr does that, but in a



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much more multimode type of way. So you can get all these different creative vibes. Somebody's a great writer, somebody's a great manipulator of imagery, somebody else is going to create music and so on. And it just comes together in a very full way.

Cherokee McAnelly:

And I like how on Tumblr, as you said, you can kind of build posts exactly how you want to see them. And then you can also add onto people's posts in whatever media you want as well. You can reblog and add a poll or a photo or a GIF or whatever it is. And so I think you kind of see the journey that it's taken across all these people's blogs, especially when it's one of those posts that becomes a reblog chain where people are just adding on their own kind of take.

Lauren Shippen:

Gosh, there was this... I think there was, was it the, Mr. Sandman Man Me a Sand Like that collaborative kind of?

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah.

Lauren Shippen:

"Make him so sandy."

Cherokee McAnelly:

So they made up an entire song?

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah.



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Dr Cassandra Pfeifer, Lauren Shippen & Cherokee McAnelly

<https://digitalfolklore.fm>

Mason Amadeus:

Oh my gosh.

Perry Carpenter:

Nice.

Mason Amadeus:

Thank you for re-unlocking that in my brain.

Perry Carpenter:

There's one of the things that I want to touch on, there's probably two reasons for this. One is because I found it in a book called Memes and Digital Culture, and it is from the Mandela effect version of Lauren, somebody named Limor Shifman, and the name sounds so close to yours-

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah, I was just about to say.

Perry Carpenter:

... in a weird alternate universe type of way.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Oh my God.

Lauren Shippen:

From the multiverse where Goncharov exists.

Perry Carpenter:



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Yeah.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Exactly.

Perry Carpenter:

And in her book on memes. And this is like 10 years old at this point, she wrote about a study from Jonah Berger and Katie Milkman, and they talked about the five Ps of what makes something go viral. And so one is positivity, so it's something that people can enjoy, can have fun in, they can celebrate. Another one is provoking high arousal emotions, and that's usually things like anger or joy, celebration. Another one is packaging, just the way that it looks, the way that it feels, prestige of maybe being associated with somebody great like Martin Scorsese. And then the last one is participation. Can everybody pile on to this thing? And I think when you look at something like Goncharov, it is because you see several of these things lining up in just the perfect way.

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah, that's really interesting because it sort of relates to a book that I'm reading right now called *Because Internet*, which is about the history of internet language. And one of the things that she talks about in the chapter that I just read was specifically around early memes as we think of memes. So like little cats and Doge and these various things. And sort of the impact font memes. And how in the beginning they were existing in a very specific community because of the amount of effort that it took to make them them.

And then when meme maker websites came to fruition, all of a sudden they exploded. And I think that the ability to participate and the ease of participation is so important and something that definitely lends itself to the Goncharov phenomenon because yes, you can be a beautiful visual artist or an



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incredible writer and write script pieces or write music or whatever it is. But you can also just be a person with a Tumblr account who makes a post about a moment in Goncharov like you would talk about a moment in a movie. And because there's no sort of one true source, everybody's participation is equal. And I think that's really unique. I love the internet.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah.

Perry Carpenter:

Absolutely.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah. So much.

Mason Amadeus:

I think we covered a lot of ground.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah.

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah, we definitely did. This was such an interesting conversation. Thank you so much.

Cherokee McAnelly:



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This was so much fun.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, thank you.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, no, thank you both. This is awesome.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah.

Lauren Shippen:

Yeah, so, so great.

Cherokee McAnelly:

Yeah, let's do this again soon.

[transition sound back to studio]

Mason Amadeus:

Brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. Those two are awesome.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, and I think Goncharov is the perfect thing to talk about. It fits MEME expo really well, I think we can take a folkloric angle on it.



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Mason Amadeus:

100%. And I can start in on an outline. Oh, holy smokes, dude. We have to mobilize-

Perry Carpenter:

Holy-

Mason Amadeus:

It's 7:00 AM.

Perry Carpenter:

What? I'll drive you start drafting on the road.

Mason Amadeus:

I was kind of hoping we could split the drive and at least get in a power nap each?

Perry Carpenter:

I think the sleep ship has sailed, let's stock up on energy drinks on the way out of town

Mason Amadeus:

As if a giant meme expo isn't already enough of a fever dream. All right. Digby. Hey, we're heading out.

Digby:

Okay. Are you two good to drive? You've been up all night. I know that's typically not good for humans.

Mason Amadeus:

What a weird way to put that. Yeah, we're fine.



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Perry Carpenter:

Obviously if it gets dicey, we'll just stop and figure something out.

Digby:

Did you decide what you're presenting on?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. We're going to talk about Goncharov. It's a movie that doesn't exist, but everyone on Tumblr is pretending it does as a meme. And there's a ton of lore, it's wild.

Digby:

Oh.

Perry Carpenter:

What?

Mason Amadeus:

I swear it is way more interesting than I just made it sound.

Digby:

No, it's there's a Goncharov panel at noon.

Mason Amadeus:

No.

Perry Carpenter:



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You're kidding.

Digby:

Well, hey, clearly that means it was a good idea, right?

Mason Amadeus:

What are we going to do?

Perry Carpenter:

We're going to drive there and we're just going to have to wing it.

Mason Amadeus:

On virtually no sleep?

Perry Carpenter:

Sounds like it.

[Perry and Mason exiting the studio]

Mason Amadeus:

I don't know why I'm acting like this isn't par for the course. All right, let's bounce. Hold the fort down Digs. We'll be back soon.

[Digby calling from afar]

Digby:



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Bring back stickers for me.

Perry Carpenter:

What's he going to do with stickers?

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, you haven't seen his room?

Perry Carpenter:

You mean the utility closet?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I told him he could have it.

Perry Carpenter:

I thought that Digby's office sign was a joke.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, it sort of is. It's not an office so much as it's a tiny little bedroom.

Perry Carpenter:

Great.

Mason Amadeus:

I think, come on. Practically speaking though, it's good to have someone onsite 24/7. All that audio gear is expensive. Plus I get wicked annoyed when they don't deliver packages because I wasn't there to sign for them.



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Perry Carpenter:

I'm just going to gloss over the fact that you taught a raccoon how to forge your signature. I mean, what does the UPS guy even say when that happens?

Mason Amadeus:

Come on, you're not so weird about Digby being on the team, right?

Perry Carpenter:

Having someone that can Google things with their brain is actually the thing that I really like about Digby. All the signature stuff and the editing, take that with a grain of salt.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. I mean, hey, honestly, I never saw the internet brain thing coming. Hey, I didn't notice the van has a built-in DVD player.

Perry Carpenter:

Blu-ray-

Mason Amadeus:

Oh.

Perry Carpenter:

But I never turned it on.

Mason Amadeus:

But what if there's something in it from the previous owner?



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Perry Carpenter:

\$5 says it's either Serenity or Bio-Dome with Pauly Shore.

Mason Amadeus:

Perry, why are those the two ones that you would-

[Sounds of a disk ejecting]

Perry Carpenter:

Oh. No way.

Mason Amadeus:

That is so funny. We were literally talking about Shazaam earlier.

Perry Carpenter:

I thought that that was the one that doesn't exist.

Mason Amadeus:

No, it's the other way around, obviously.

Perry Carpenter:

Are you sure?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, it'd be pretty wild if I was holding a DVD That doesn't exist. Are you sure you're good to drive?

Perry Carpenter:



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No. Yeah, I'm fine to drive. I'm not even that tired really. For some reason something flipped my brain.

Mason Amadeus:

What's that phenomenon? It's the thing where you hear about something and then you start noticing it everywhere.

[Theme music kicks-in. Closing credits]

Mason Amadeus

Thanks for listening to Digital Folklore.

Perry Carpenter:

And a huge thanks to our special guest this episode, Dr. Cassandra Pfeifer, Lauren Shippen, and Cherokee McAnelly.

Mason Amadeus:

As always, take a look at the show notes of this episode and you'll find links to all of their work.

Perry Carpenter:

You can also find a link to the Digital Folklore Discord channel where you can hang out and chat with us as well as other fans of the show.

Mason Amadeus:

If you haven't left us a rating, a review on [Apple Podcasts](#) or [Spotify](#), please consider doing that.

Perry Carpenter:



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We're like an urban legend, you got to keep us alive by telling a friend, a friend of a friend, a crazy uncle. You get it.

Mason Amadeus:

Digital Folklore is a production of 8th Layer Media, which is a fancy name that Perry and I hide behind to seem more like we know what we're doing.

Perry Carpenter:

And for tax purposes.

Mason Amadeus:

And for tax purposes.

Perry Carpenter:

Thanks again for listening, we'll see you soon.

[After credits scene – Music fades, mechanical/computer interface sounds....Digby doing research with his embedded access to the Internet]

Digby:

I can't believe how many of these torrents are still up.

No way. It's got to be like a student film or something. There's no real Goncharov, right? I can't get this far and not find out.

It's just one download. ...If it seems sketchy, I'll just stop it and delete it.

Awww... four hours? What kind of dial up download speed is this?

More people need to see these things.



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