Butt Pirates: Media Piracy and the Queer Imagination in Rural America

I remember watching TV as a kid around the turn of the century and thinking there was something wrong with my generation—that it had been taken over by some sort of a violent epidemic. Home from school sick or during snowstorms while my parents worked, I would watch tabloid talk shows like *Maury* and *Ricky Lake* that consistently portrayed teenagers as out-of-control wildings who would do anything regardless of the legality.

One of the talk shows that capitalized on this narrative, and one I (probably ill-advisedly) watched as a kid, was *The Jenny Jones Show* (1991-2003). A semi-scripted tabloid talk show about eccentric but otherwise "regular people," *Jenny Jones* parades various subcultures around as a sort of modern freakshow—punks, gang members, and sex workers are all characters in what feels like an attempt at vilification.

Like most reality television, *Jenny Jones* largely functions by creating conflict. The subjects of the show would not be told the entire premise of the episode they were starring in and would be given alcohol to impair their judgement before being ambushed with "the truth" (not as a reflection of reality, but the reality of the show) not just in front a studio audience, but on camera for the whole world to see on television.[1]

Conflict on *Jenny Jones* is often created through the forced meeting of a subculture with dominant society: a repeated motif on the show is the exasperated parent (often soft-spoken and conservatively dressed) who doesn't know how to deal with their outspoken child's controversial wardrobe.

As this show structure works to exemplify, subcultures are often viewed as generational rebellions from imposed morals of the past, but, even though they may be superficially rebellious, subcultures are actually a form of solidarity among class members and often serve as a visual expression of class structure. In this sense subcultures are deeply rooted in the identities of previous generations, not rejections of them.[2]

Like most things the United States, class structure on Jenny Jones is not openly acknowledged but is nonetheless a core function of its operations. While we might be nudged through the setup of the show to think that punks or goths are bad, we are at the same time faced with people who don't speak articulately, who live in trailers, or who come from broken homes. Despite its unspokenness, viewers can aesthetically infer that this is not the upper echelons of polite society. By extension, it's not just the *subculture* that is bad, it's *poor people* who are bad.

On top of this, how (and with whom) we sympathize is largely dictated by the structure of the show. By showing us a studio audience that reacts animatedly in disbelief, we can literally see ourselves as a spectator, and cue our own reactions with those of the highly orchestrated audience.[3]

1. *Talked to Death*, Directed by Eames Yeates, HBO: 1997.
2. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Methuen, 1979).
3. These shows are often filmed in suburbs to lower their costs, but audience members are often

A 1995 episode of *Jenny Jones* was such an egregious example of this type of sensationalism that the episode never aired. Titled "Secret Crushes on People of the Same Sex," the premise was that a man would confess his affection to an unsuspecting male friend. This friend and the show disagree on how much of that premise he was told, but they both agree that he did not know his friend was going to come onto him. This surprise was meant to be entertaining. Three days after the episode was filmed, Scott Amedure, the out guest of the episode, was murdered in his small-town Michigan trailer by the man he had just confessed his affection to.[4]

In court, it was argued that the public nature of the guest's humiliation amplified his response to murder.[5] The violent narrative I thought was true about a generation of people may have been exaggerated (if not a completely fabricated) for the camera, but it was now real. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy.

While "Same Sex Secret Crushes" was a trashy media representation of a gay man, and ultimately went unaired (not because of its content, but because of how it continued after the cameras turned off), the next few years saw a massive increase in queer representation in the media that raises many questions about what is considered "positive representation."[6]

Like the subcultures of *Jenny Jones*, class structure is rarely spoken about explicitly in relation to queer identity. Instead, queer people are often talked about as a singular group, even though they are stratified across all segments of class structure. This is partly due to their representation in the media: while Scott Amedure was murdered in his small-town trailer, the explosion of "positive" queer representation in the media in the subsequent years largely represents queer people as urban and upper middle class.[7] This is purposeful for several reasons.

During the 2012 presidential campaign in the United States, the first time a major party supported legalizing same-sex marriage, then Vice President Joe Biden credited not decades of political activism by queer people, but the hit primetime sitcom *Will & Grace* for changing the narrative on LGBTQ+ identities in the United States.[8]

Will & Grace (about a gay male lawyer in New York City and his straight fe-

---

bussed in from nearby cities. These outside guests are then arranged based on reactions to revelations of drama on stage with the most animated are invited back for future tapings.

4. E Birmingham, "Fearing the Freak: How Talk TV Articulates Women and Class," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 28, no. 3 (September 1, 2000): 133–39.

5. Megan Garvey, "The Aftershock of Shock TV," *The Washington Post*, March 25, 1995.

6. Wendy Hilton-Morrow and Kathleen Battles, "Visibility," *Sexual Identities and the Media: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2015): 69-99.

7. While it's obvious that "positive" is a highly contested term, it's important to know that "middle class" is also highly contested. Wealthy people often don't see themselves as wealthy because class structure is understood by comparing ourselves to those around us, and more often those above us. See Rachel Sherman, "Orientation to Others: Aspiring to the Middle or Recognizing Privlidge," *Uneasy Street: The Anxieties of Affluence* (Princeton University Press, 2017): 28-57.

8. Seth Abramovitch, "Joe Biden Cites 'Will & Grace' in Endorsement of Same-Sex Marriage (Video)," *The Hollywood Reporter*, May 6th, 2012.

male interior designer roommate—two white-collar jobs the average person doesn't interact with on a regular basis) began airing two years after the powerful media organization GLAAD began grading television networks on their number of queer representations.[9]

Released each year, "Where We Are on TV" (and for a few years the "Network Responsibility Index") breaks down the number of LGBTQ+ characters on primetime television into graphs and charts. In these reports, GLAAD largely focuses on quantity and not quality (although they have worked to cancel shows they felt had negative representations of queer people).[10] This "more is better" approach frames year-over-year representation as one of endless growth: networks are graded partly on whether there are more queer characters than their previous season.

This focus on endless growth mirrors our economic expectations, which GLAAD regularly frames its exposés in relation to. While GLAAD requires each year to be queerer than the last, networks require that year to reach a larger audience, of which there needs to be a larger percentage of a key demographic, all so they can charge more for advertising. To GLAAD these goals are related: to them, inclusive programming is "good business" because of how much (more) spending power queer people have.[11]

However, this projection of endless growth was interrupted when the aggressive expansion of cable networks and internet platforms in the 90s fragmented the television market, thinning the advertising base of the then dominant broadcast television networks. With broadcast television less profitable, shows needed to be cheaper to produce to meet the corporate imperative of constant growth. It's here that reality television has its moment.[12]

It's important to know that this market fragmentation did not happen evenly across class structure: without the technological means (reflective of both economic and geographic circumstances) of accessing cable television or high-speed internet, rural Americans—the very people most represented in shows like *Jenny Jones*—were a captive audience for broadcast television. Without projecting ourselves onto the audience, we would just be laughing at ourselves.

When the primary source of representation for rural queer people comes from media made in major cities, and is

---

9. GLAAD History and Highlights 1985-Present: 1996, Where We Are on TV

10. Reuters, "Fox Drops 'Seriously, Dude, I'm Gay,'" *The Washington Post*, May 29th, 2004.

11. GLAAD, *Network Responsibility Index: Primetime Programming 2006-2007* (2007): 4. It's worth noting that the increased focus on attracting advertisers fundamentally changed queer media. Because large corporate advertisers would not associate their brands with explicit sexuality, queer media became more mild. See Wendy Hilton-Morrow and Kathleen Battles, "Consumer Culture," *Sexual Identites and the Media: An Introduction* (Routledge): 111.

12. This isn't to say that reality television didn't exist before, or that it wouldn't exist without these economic circumstances, but there is evidence that this is this case: COPS, the recently cancelled pinnacle of poverty-as-entertainment, was first developed during a major writer's strike, and the GLAAD-cancelled "Seriously, Dude, I'm Gay," was later subject to a class-aciton lawsuit for skirting Writer's Guild rules. See Chad Raphael, "The political-economic origins of Reali-TV," *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture* (New York University Press, 2009): 123-140.

about the people in those same cities, it creates something that George Gerbner and Larry Gross refer to as "symbolic annihilation,"[13] and contributes to what is called "metronormativity," or equating queerness with urban life.[14]

For rural queer people, this symbolic annihilation comes from two fronts: when Rural America became the face of moral politics, or what politicians cynically refer to as "real America," they often mean it is untainted by "liberal media narratives." It's a place where homosexuality could not possibly exist as it would transgress the conservative notion of the moral family unit. At the same time, queer communities with political currency—namely white, affluent, and urban—were eager to broadcast their existence as "good queers" through representation on shows like *Will & Grace*.[15] This dual-sided dictation of the representation of queer people leaves rural queers invisible. If not on television, in what ways can rural people create, understand, and own their own images?

While New York City and San Francisco often served as stand-ins for queer spaces, the reality is thankfully more complicated: there continues to be growing neighborhoods for queer people in almost every city in the United States in what Samantha Allen calls "oasis cities," or areas where queer people congregate in conservative states.[16] The closest city to me growing up, Minneapolis, was (and is) by many standards a queer haven—it's just not one that is represented in the media as such.

But while these places are outside of the political and economic centers more traditionally accepted as queer areas, they are still undoubtably urban. And, as near or as accessible as they are to the non-represented rural areas, these urban "oases" still do not represent what my home was like: they are culturally, politically, and economically very different.

So, let's talk about queerness in rural spaces and go back to my childhood for a second.[17] While things have certainly changed in the last twenty years with expansion and proliferation of the internet, the violent perception I had of my generation—or, in hindsight, my class—was based on broadcast television. Growing up without cable television (which is, for

---

13. Wendy Hilton-Morrow and Kathleen Battles, "Visibility," *Sexual Identities and the Media: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2015): 69-99.
Liz Millward, Janice G. Dodd, and Irene Fubara-Manuel, *Killing off the Lesbians : A Symbolic Annihilation on Film and Television* (McFarland & Company, Inc., 2017).
14. Scott Herring, *Another Country: Queer Anti-Urbanism* (New York University Press, 2010).
15. Lisa Henderson, "Queer Visibility and Social Class," *Love and Money: Queers, Class, and Cultural Production* (New York University Press, 2013): 40.
16. Samantha Allen, *Real Queer America: LGBT Stories from Red States* (Little, Brown and Company, 2019). Frédéric Martel, *Global Gay: How Gay Culture is Changing the World* (MIT Press, 2018): 14-18.
17. Urban and rural are highly contested terms. Scott Herring, describing the urban/rural divide in the aptly titled chapter "I Hate New York," writes "official and legal definitions of urban or rural based on population density often arbitrary and don't reflect the varied nuances of different kinds of locations. Here he says that distinctions between urban and rural spaces are 'context specific, phantasmatic, performative, subjective…'" See his footnote on page 418 that has many references on attempts to define urban and rural. Scott Herring, *Another Country: Queer Anti-Urbanism* (New York University Press, 2010): 43, 418.

economic and infrastructural reasons, harder to access in rural areas), watching Jenny Jones was less about my interest but my lack of other options. With only a handful of channels, I watched what was presented to me, especially during the day.

Here it is important to understand that the way cultural developments are disseminated across class structures is explicitly linked to technological developments: as media changes and expands, access is first given to wealthy people, often only in major cities. "New" media first hits high-end markets where profits are highest before continuous profit and market growth push companies to monetize less profitable markets. Today it's 5G networks, which are not only exclusive to major metropolitan areas, but are also only supported by the newest phones.

It's also important to understand that "new" media isn't blanketly new, but deeply reliant on existing infrastructures, such as the repurposing of cable television networks as internet networks in the 1990s.[18] This "building-on" movement of technology means existing biases in media access are often carried over to newer medias from older ones. Without cable infrastructure, which is largely limited to urban areas, my internet access at home was limited to the dial-up connection made through my family's phone line, which in turn limited the kind of content that was accessible online.

For me, being "one step behind" explicitly continued until at least my mid-20s: as smartphone use exploded around 2010, the internet split in two: we created a section of cyberspace that was walled off from the regular web and could only be accessed through apps on new and expensive smartphones. There, apps like Instagram and Grindr further expanded the cultural access and networking opportunities in queer communities, something that was again inaccessible to me until much later in my life. It wasn't that I was unaware of these new cultural products, technologies, and opportunities, or that I didn't want access to them, it's that economic and geographic inequities kept me away from them.

I promise I don't say any of this to complain: growing up, I didn't actually think much about how small-town culture impacted my identity. That is, until I left.

I moved to New York City in 2015 and went to MIT three years later. It was in these places that, for the first time in my life, truly powerful people—celebrities, politicians, billionaires—were not that far removed from my social circle. While I rarely interacted with them directly (I'm sure we both hate each other), these people are no longer imagined through media fictions but are very real.

Something I struggle with in these new worlds, and something that continues to inform my practice as an artist, is how often resources are taken for granted here. And it was these new environments that triggered a reevaluation of my own background—one that is deeply defined by the inaccessibility of resources. For some, the consumption of media is only the act of watching, listening, and reading, but for many others, the act of simply getting the media to a point of display is

18. Amanda D. Lotz, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast: How Cable Transformed Television and the Internet Revolutionized It All* (MIT Press, 2018): 6.

inherently part of the process.

As I've written above, my limited access to media and culture meant that the internet had to fill in a lot of gaps for me—and it did, as much as it could. But, while the internet was culturally enlightening for me in a way other media forms couldn't be, there was a major limit in the speed of the connection: the average time to download one song on my family's shared computer was about a half-hour, and a full-length movie could take a full day to download. Because I was using a phone line that had to double as an actual phone line, this was not an option.

These limits were painfully apparent because, unlike broadcast television which presents only what you can access, the internet presents a lot of things that aren't necessarily easy to access. There were movies and games I could click on and see, but either couldn't afford or wouldn't load in any functional sense.

Instead of accepting that there would just be things right in front of me that remained inaccessible, clickable but not knowable, I often chose to take them in the only way I could. And so, it was less the internet, but *stealing* that allowed me to access the kinds of media that was reflective of who I was or who I wanted to be. The reasons for this are economic and geographic, but also technical, and a lot of what made stealing the preferred means of access is due to the way peer-to-peer (P2P) networks work.

P2P file-sharing networks were first popularized in 1999 by Napster, the short-lived music sharing platform.[19] While the amount of music made available by Napster was at the time wonderful, shocking, and revolutionary, the technical backbone which made this access possible continues to have positive ramifications on media access today.

When downloading a file over a P2P network, a computer gets fragments of the file from many other computers all over the world which the "client" (such as Napster) then assembles into a single file. This represented a significant change in moving and accessing media. It offered redundancies in file sources, and, mostly significantly for me, it meant that a download could operate in the background of a computer for as long as it needed to until the file is complete. Previously, regular downloads operated in a linear function, needing to download the file in its entirety at once. If the connection is interrupted, the download needed to restart from the beginning. The decentralization and non-linear creation of remote file sharing was a profoundly impactful technology for many reasons, but it was especially great for slow connections.[20]

There is a major problem in that, without proper safeguards (often another technological and economic barrier[21]), P2P programs make the physical locations of the computers publicly visible to anyone else who accesses the network, potentially exposing the users' identities—and their crimes of copyright infringement—to copyright holders and, in

19. Aernout Schmidt, Wilfred Dolfsma, and Wim Keuvelaar, *Fighting the War on File Sharing* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

20. This decentralized P2P technology has developed into important uses outside of piracy, including Microsoft OS updates, and Dropbox file syncing.

21. The repeal of net neutrality coupled with the consolidation and deregulation of telecom, data, and

turn, law enforcement.

Because of this, copyright holders often patrol (pay-trolls, we could call them) P2P networks, attempting to make sure everyone is paying for their copyrights by creating lawsuits and sending cease-and-desist letters sometimes before the identities of the pirates are even known. Whether it is suing "John Does," or a "swarm…whose true identities are currently unknown,"[22] these cease-and-desist letters are often not delivered to the people they are meant for.[23]

These inequities in accessibility of media became very real in 2011 when the gay pornography studio Corbin Fisher began sending cease-and-desist letters to people accused of pirating their films over P2P networks.[24] While not unusual in form compared to any other copyright infringement case, the sensitive nature of pornography often means that the people receiving these threats are willing to pre-emptively settle rather than fight them and risk outing themselves in the courts or to their family as sexual minorities or simply as viewers of pornography. Certainly understanding these dynamics, porn studios could be accused of extortion with these kinds of letters[25], and there have been instances of scammers capitalizing on these threats.[26]

The Corbin Fisher film in question is called *Down on the Farm* and is described as "our All-American guys in the most All-American setting—a rural and rustic Midwest farm"[27]—the very setting where this film would be largely inaccessible.

My copy of the film—pirated and compressed—cuts right to the action: a group of very similar looking 20-something white men fuck each other on a farm, first in a rustic looking cabin, then in an actual barn. While, again like Jenny Jones, class structure is not recognized in the film—there is no real story other than one that can be inferred by its aesthetics—there is an inherent class structure in its setting. And without a story, we're left to our ideas of what rural men are—something that surely means something different to someone who *isn't* rural.[28]

---

advertising markets has created what I refer to as a "privacy tax." This "tax" is both material and immaterial, as privacy-enhancing software is rarely free, and takes significant amounts of time to understand, manage, and use.

22. Civil Action No. 11-cv-10802 (United States District Court for the District of Mass May 06, 2011).

23. Rhett Pardon. 2011. "Corbin Fisher Suit Describes Day in Life of a Pirated Movie," *Xbiz*, March 29, 2011.

24. ryant, "Will Corbin Fisher's Gay Porn Piracy Crackdown Inevitably Out Gay Teens?" Queerty, Febuary 11, 2011.

25. Corbin Fisher is not the only porn studio to sue torrent users for copyright violation. In 2017 a different studio sending similar cease-and-desist letters was counter-sued for extortion after it demanded payments out-of-court.

26. This can be literal, in the case of lawyer John Steele, who uploaded pornography he owned the copyright to, and then sued anyone who downloaded the works. It can also be completely fabricated.

27. https://www.corbinfisherphotography.com/Down-On-The-Farm/

28. Berit Brandth and Marit S. Haugen, "Doing Rural Masculinity—From Logging to Outfield Tourism," *Journal of Gender Studies* vol. 14 no. 2 (2006):13-22. Walter S. DeKeseredy, Stephen L. Muzzatti and Joseph F. Donnermeyer, "Mad Men in Bib Overalls: Media's Horrification and Pornification of Rural Culture," *Critical Criminology* (2013). Shannon E. M. O'Sullivan, "Playing 'Redneck': White Masculinity

Masculinity, especially rural masculinity, can be defined as the perceived control of one's environment—part of which is providing resources.[29] As the United States' economy shifts away from manufacturing, the sinking prospects of decent work in rural areas make this difficult to do, and the "dignity of work" increasingly feels out of reach for men, especially from rural and lower-class families.[30] Poor people have very little control over their environment, and so may feel emasculated.

Pornographic film makers, understanding the economic power dynamics at play, have taken advantage of this economic reality, capitalilzing on young men who are trying to make a living on their own for the first time.Here, like "Secret Crushes on People of the Same Sex," this kind of porn becomes a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy: men often become porn actors because of the promise of a decent income, to fulfill their masculine duties off camera by representing an idealized form of masculinity on camera.[31]

But beyond material resources like money, an increased use of media as mediation with the world puts growing importance on immaterial resources: the required control of one's life inherent in masculinity also involves controlling one's own narrative. Most porn actors attempt to do this by assuming a pseudonym, which creates a distinction between their porn lives and their "real" lives and offers some privacy for the latter. On P2P networks we can—perhaps naïvely—assume a pseudonym of our IP addresses, hoping that accessing pornography is something that will remain private, but, as Corbin Fisher has done through legal retribution, this narrative can be taken away.

As the news of Corbin Fisher's cease-and-desist letters were picked up by gay blogs at the time (while certainly not authoritative, they were the only media outlets to report on this and so a good example of why diversity in media is necessary), there were concerns about the damage this could do to someone living in the closet, that these speculations would put people in danger by outing them.[32] Corbin Fisher's legal team dismissed the danger of these letters, as well as the humanity of their targets, by simply referring to the defendants "thieving little shits."[33] Again, like the episode of Jenny Jones, we see that media consumption could lead to real, physical violence.

While P2P networks can offer media to audiences previously limited by economic, geographic, or technological barriers, there are still great limits to the types of content P2P technology can provide: despite the occasional techno-egalitarian notion of horizontal consumption that

---

and Working-Class Performance on Duck Dynasty," *The Journal of Popular Culture* vol. 49 (2016): 367-384.

29. Mick Brewer, "Good Ol' Country Boys Playin' on the Farm: Online Articulations of Rural Masculinity by Men Who Have Sex with Men.," *Sexuality & Culture* vol. 22, no. 2 (June 2018): 357. Brandth, 2006.

30. Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: W. Morrow and Co, 1999): 993.

31. Fauldi, 1999.

32. jd, "This Gay Teen 'Will End My Life' If He's Outed By A Corbin Fisher BitTorrent Lawsuit," Queerty, March 9, 2011,

33. Kevin Farrell, "Corbin Fisher Calls Gay Teens 'Thieving Little Shits'; Lies About Charitable Donations," Hornet, August 15, 2018,

P2P networks hint at, there is still a top-down organization in the types of content on these networks.[34]

Because P2P networks operate in a democratic fashion—instead of getting a file from a centralized server, files are downloaded from a community of people who host the files all over the world—if there are not enough people with the file you are trying to access (called seeds) the download usually does not work. This means P2P networks naturally favor popular media, or put another way, they inherently favor stealing over the distribution or promotion of any niche or original content. So, while they can give access to people who otherwise wouldn't have it, P2P networks still only open these new audiences to representations made within the accepted profit-based discourses. They don't open the door to new creators who might be more able to accurately represent people on the margins.

While copyright holders like Corbin Fisher like to portray these issues as black-and-white, that media pirates have the resources and the ability to pay for content but simply do not want to, there are many other reasons people steal media. As I've already explained, in my own case it was lack of access, in both technical and economic terms. It can also a desire for anonymity, or perhaps embarrassment: payments create a paper trail or require a trip to a store to be seen purchasing. These issues are especially relevant to someone who is closeted to any degree.

And for lower-class and rural-based people, there are real benefits to consuming pornography. Studies on pornography use across various social groups shows that people often use pornography to express their sexualities in moments which, for whatever reason, they are not able to express it physically. This is a common issue for a queer person who is closeted, or for a person who lives in a rural area and does not have access to as many potential partners as a person in a major city would. Those who earn less money, as is often the case for people in rural areas, are also more likely to use pornography, likely for the same reasons.[35]

But this link between pornography and class structure goes back further—they've been connected for as long as modern pornography has existed. While there have been depictions of sexuality for as long as human history, the invention of photography and mass printing technologies is what pushed conversations about the morality of visual sexuality into the mainstream. Whereas early printed pornography was largely literary, and so only available to those who could both afford the prints and an education to be literate, the increasing spread and affordability of printed matter coupled with invention of photography meant that pornography could reach wide swaths of society like never before.

This led to regulations from the ruling classes who were concerned that the uneducated couldn't handle the corrupting nature of explicit sexuality, even when

34. Michel Bauwens, Vasilis Kostakis, and Alex Pazaitis, *Peer to Peer* vol. 10 (University of Westminster Press, 2019).

35. Xiaozhao Yousef Yang, "Is Social Status Related to Internet Pornography Use? Evidence from the Early 2000s in the United States," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* vol. 45 issue 4 (2016).

lower class people were regularly the subjects of that pornography.[36] As the internet made pornography closer yet, these issues appear once again in the form of content filters, which are primarily designed to keep pornography out of the hands of those who the ruling class think "can't handle it."[37]

This affects what Shoshana Zuboff calls the "right to the future tense," which is "the individual's ability to imagine, intend, promise, and construct a future."[38] As my own experience shows me, imagining a future requires a model of what that could be: having an idea that a future can be something other than what is seen in our immediate surroundings requires that something come from somewhere else—often through the media. This is especially true of rural queer people, whose identities are much less present in their immediate surroundings.

Politics of the last few decades, on several fronts, continue to perpetuate these issues: inequities across subsections of wealth, race, sexuality, and geography make access to culture vary significantly. While access to representation is important, it is also important to understand that identity is deeply intertwined with sexuality, class, technology, and geography. The development, propagation, and survival of our identities, and so their representations, relies on an endless feedback loop between our cultural, economic, geographic, and technological realities. By recognizing our personal stake in each of these intersections, we can better recognize the shortfalls they create our individual experiences, and work to fix those shortfalls to build a more equitable future.

If the violent portrayals in tabloid talk shows could stick with me as a kid, maybe an increase in more diverse portrayals can stick with the generation younger than me. But we need to be diligent that these portrayals are not only accurate and inclusive but are also accessible to the people who need them the most. And if they are not, we should not hold any moral outrage on the theft of media but instead encourage it. This means advocating for strong privacy laws and net neutrality, against content filters and DRM, reforming copyright laws to shorten the time before works enter the public domain, protecting fair use, and for the decriminalization of copyright infringement.

36. Lisa Z. Sigel, "Filth in the Wrong People's Hands: Postcards and the Expansion of Pornography in Britain and the Atlantic World, 1880-1914," *Journal of Social History* vol. 33, no. 4 (July 1, 2000): 859–85.
37. Peter Lehman, "You and Voyeurweb: Illustrating the Shifting Representation of the Penis on the Internet with User-Generated Content," *Cinema Journal* vol. 46 no. 4 (Summer 2007): 109.
38. Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2020): 19.