

The Frankfur School's  
**THE CULTURAL BARXIST**

Furry culture, politics and art.



Issue #2  
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# Who We Are

We are a group of furrries including artists, writers and musicians. We all come from different backgrounds, and we come together because we want to fight against oppression. Oppression from our economic system, or oppression from our political system. We come from different political tendencies, and while we may have some disagreements on the causes and solutions to the oppression we face we can still work together to fight against it. We are here to spread class consciousness, to fight Nazism, and to promote the accepting and caring community that we love.

Our contributors for this edition are:

Attica - Twitter @LeftistFoxbutt

Dobes - Twitter @DobesCrusher (Artist of the Front cover, and comic on page 4-6)

Koro - Twitter @Late\_Night\_Fox

John Privet - Twitter @JohnAtyxyt (Artist of Back Cover)

Agouti Rex - Twitter @thenewmeat (Artist of the comic on page 13)

Sylvia - Twitter @sm66vdg

Rose LaCroix

As well as others who wish to go uncredited.

If you would like to submit something to the zine, such as a piece of art or an article you think would fit in, please contact us at:

<http://theculturalbarxist.wordpress.com>

[www.twitter.com/CulturalBarxist](http://www.twitter.com/CulturalBarxist)

[culturalbarxist@gmail.com](mailto:culturalbarxist@gmail.com)

## Pride and Liberation by @korosarum

As the majority of our fandom is LGBTQ+, I'd like to hope everyone reading has had a happy Pride Month. This year it was not providentially recognized however even when it was recognized by the President, LGBTQ+ people (especially those of color): were far more subject to police harassment and abuse, more likely to fall victim to sex crimes or be forced to resort to sex work due to lack of other options, and make up a disproportionate number of homeless youth.

The corporate recognition of our rights seems like a form of progress, but it's nothing more than a marketing tactic. LGBTQ+ people in most states are still discriminated against in housing or work. The only ones who can guarantee us the rights that we deserve is ourselves and our allies, not the government or corporations.

Liberation almost seems a forgotten phrase in the modern LGBTQ+ community, but that's what many of the ancestors of our movement fought for. They saw our current society as being fundamentally opposed to our way of life, a government that punished them for their sexuality or gender expression, and a world of corporations where they had to hide who they were in order to survive. Not much has fundamentally changed from the world they saw, although now we are occasionally gifted rights long withheld, but that doesn't mean those are guaranteed to us. Even now we fight against those who would undo this meager progress.

The word of our movement is now Assimilation, with respectability politics taking the leading role in the movement for equal rights. We are told to hide our true selves, to 'pass' as cisgender and heterosexual. We are told to not upset the system, to work within it's boundaries. LGBTQ+ people of color have it the worst by far, with respect and acknowledgment rarely forthcoming from their allies in the greater movement. At times they are even actively maligned by the rest of the movement, as is the case with Minneapolis' Pride Fest rejecting their wishes and allowing the police to march in their parade, despite it coming in the wake of the Yanez trial and the police forces negligence in confronting their problems.

*"Whatever your personal opinions and your insecurities about homosexuality and the various liberation movements among homosexuals and women (and I speak of the homosexuals and women as oppressed groups), we should try to unite with them in a revolutionary fashion. ... Some people say that [homosexuality] is the decadence of capitalism. I don't know if that is the case; I rather doubt it. But whatever the case is, we know that homosexuality is a fact that exists, and we must understand it in its purest form: that is, a person should have the freedom to use his body in whatever way he wants." - Huey P. Newton, August 1970*

Stonewall was a riot, and now we need a revolution. A political system that restricts the rights of any minority group is one that is unjust. An economic system that has nothing more than profit in mind when it considers who to market to is one that is motivated by greed. The current system is a failure for not just our community but for the vast majority of the planet, and we must lead the creation of a new system in order to guarantee our rights.



**Queer Liberation Now!**

# CONVENTIONS AS A SAFE SPACE...



RETURNING HOME FROM BLFC, I'M REFLECTING ON HOW AMAZING FURRY CONVENTIONS ARE AS AN AVENUE OF EXPRESSION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING FOR LGBTQ FOLKS.

FURRY IS SUCH A DIVERSE FANDOM AND FOR MANY PEOPLE IT'S THE ONLY ENVIRONMENT WHERE THEY FEEL SAFE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?



STYLIN'!



IT FEELS AWESOME TO BE AROUND SO MANY COOL FOLKS WHO UNDERSTAND AND CARE!



RESPECT PEOPLE'S PRONOUNS AND HOW THEY WANT TO BE ADDRESSED. IF YOU'RE CIS, TRY INTRODUCING YOURSELF WITH YOUR PRONOUNS. THIS MAKES IT EASIER FOR TRANS AND NB FOLKS TO SHARE THEIRS. BE AN ALLY!

THIS BRINGS TO MIND THE QUESTION- WHAT MAKES A SPACE INCLUSIVE AND WHAT CAN WE DO TO KEEP IT THAT WAY?



NICE TO MEET YOU! I'M FLUFFY AND I USE HE/HIM PRONOUNS.



I'M TOFFEE. SHE OR THEY IS FINE FOR ME.



DON'T USE SLURS OR MAKE BIGOTED JOKES OR STATEMENTS. IF YOU HURT SOMEONE'S FEELINGS, DON'T DOUBLE DOWN. BE AN ADULT AND APOLOGIZE.



I'M SORRY YOU WERE OFFENDED.



RESPECT OTHERS' SPACE. NOT EVERYONE LIKES BEING TOUCHED. ASK FIRST!



TOUCHING OR GRABBING SOMEONE IN A COSTUME UNEXPECTEDLY IS RUDE AND COULD BE DANGEROUS. THEY HAVE IMPAIRED VISION AND MOBILITY.



KEEP AN EYE ON FRIENDS WHO ARE DRINKING AND PARTYING



THEY SAID NO, OK? ASSHOLE!!



I'M JUST A CUTE WIDDLE FOXY!

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING MESSED UP HAPPENING, SAY SOMETHING. TALK TO CON STAFF IF YOU WITNESS HARRASSMENT, HATE SPEECH OR OTHER BEHAVIOR THAT MAKES OTHERS UNSAFE.



CONVENTIONS ARE FOR ALL OF US! NOT FOR BIGOTS WHO WANT TO CAUSE HARM TO OTHERS -



HEY BUDDY, IF YOU THINK BIGOTRY OR FASCISM IS JUST AN OPINION, YOU'RE WRONG. THESE BELIEF SYSTEMS HAVE NO PLACE IN A COMMUNITY FULL OF LGBTQ PEOPLE, PEOPLE OF COLOR, AND NEURODIVERGENT AND DISABLED FOLKS.



KARL POPPER HAD SOME CHOICE WORDS ON THE TOPIC OF TOLERANCE AND BIGOTRY:

Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.

- From The Open Society and Its Enemies

ANY WAY, WITH ALL THAT IN MIND, BE KIND AND EXCELLENT TO EACH OTHER !!





## Extremism by Roxe LaCroix

In some ways, the US has become a lot like Pakistan. We have a highly militaristic, opportunistic, and corrupt government, police force, and military that is shot through with infiltrators from what basically amount to terrorist groups. We have almost tribal mentalities in some remote places. We have reactionaries who are powerful enough to influence the government.

Large parts of the country are run by police groups that are sympathetic to rogue paramilitaries, or are themselves rogue paramilitaries. Certainly, the military-industrial complex has armed them well; some police forces now have MRAP (mine-resistant vehicles), machine guns, and Stingray devices that they deploy freely against activists. Furthermore, the “Constitutional Sheriffs” are a dangerous paramilitary gang of reactionaries that supported the militia takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, and the Oathkeepers consist of active and former military and LEOs, and are frequently seen in the company of Neo-Nazi groups.

They also keep company with the soldiers of fortune our government has hired from vast corporate armies; during the Bundy Ranch standoff, known private military contractors who had honed their skills during brute force nation-building missions in Iraq were seen pointing weapons at Federal agents. They, like the remains of the Mujahideen that formed the Taliban, are hardened soldiers with no allegiances except their own ideology. Like the Mujahideen, they are also products of the military industrial complex that armed and trained them.

The people here, much like the people of Pakistan, are for the most part just caught in the middle and trying not to think too much about just how bad things actually are. It is a common liberal defense mechanism to live in some kind of denial over the state of the country, or the very real danger that roving, well-organized gangs of right wing extremists pose.

More to the point, many people don't want to consider just how serious this threat is because nearly everyone in America has either friends or blood relations that are, to some extent, involved with the far right. They may be alienated from us, but alienated fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers are still kin, and losing that kinship would still be traumatic for most people.

Now consider if some other country were to try to sort out the far right-wing threat we face here in the US the way our reactionary government is trying to sort out similar threats in places like Pakistan and Afghanistan. It would be chaos! You'd have AC-130 gunships blowing up Klan rallies. You'd have churches targeted by Hellfire missiles. You'd have talk radio hosts kidnapped by special forces. You'd have family picnics turned into massacres by Predator drones mistaking innocent people for dangerous terrorists.

The fact is, our government isn't doing anything about right-wing extremism because they don't know any other way to fight terrorism except with total brute force. They won't admit to the scale or scope of this terrorism problem because that would obligate them to act. And they won't act because they know that many innocent people would be killed or radicalized in the process. And truth be told, most of us don't want to see family members turned into mulch by a helicopter-mounted 20mm Gatling gun. Neither do people in Pakistan.

Fighting right-wing extremists will require us to first find a completely new paradigm to fight extremism in general that doesn't rely on the imperialist dogma of “shock and awe,” and since the military industrial complex profits handsomely from the scorched-earth approach favored by reactionaries, it isn't going to happen unless they are dismantled first. Dismantle the military-industrial complex, and you'll have taken the first step toward dismantling right-wing extremists.

Dismantling the military-industrial complex is theoretically simple. The better part of it could be neutralized by nationalizing the production of all vehicles, weapons, and materials used by the army first, as part of a program of nationalizing all heavy industry. The assets of these vast corporations could then be scaled back to utilitarian levels as the military's mission changes from enforcing the whims of the aristocracy to a purely defensive footing. Police departments would be shrunk and demilitarized by a new emphasis on de-escalation, stricter laws



What is lacking, at least currently, is the political will. There is still a reluctance, among the media and especially among candidates for office, to acknowledge the scale of the problem and to advocate for the active dismantling of the military-industrial complex. There is still a taboo about nationalizing industry. Those who were raised and educated during the Cold War will be especially difficult to convince of the need to put an end to war profiteering, since they are likely to see it as an existential threat given the extreme distrust of communism nascent in the American psyche. Also, the military-industrial complex has become so bloated that it employs many millions of Americans, many of whom profit handsomely from their endeavors. Particularly among the middle classes, you will find tremendous resistance to the idea of nationalizing the production of arms and material simply because the middle classes in this country are largely a product of war profiteering.

This is why we have to focus our efforts on normalizing these ideas, bringing them to the conversation, and never backing down on them. This is a strategic advantage if we play it well; we can dominate the conversation on right-wing terror and the military industrial complex because at the moment, that conversation is muted and isn't being given the attention it deserves.

Bring it up in conversations often. If you're a writer, work some sketchy dealings involving war profiteers and right-wing terrorists into your stories (I know I will). If you're an artist, game designer, or songwriter, use your skill to call attention to this. And if- great respect to those who do- you choose to run for political office, have the courage to speak out about this issue even if it seems like a Third Rail now. Someone has to be the first to stand at the podium while cameras are rolling and admit the scale and scope of this problem.

Let's own the conversation. Let's get people talking about cutting the military-industrial complex and their redneck Taliban down to size. We can do this.

## Furries, Queer Subculture and the Myth of being Ostracized by @sm66vdg

*'The myth of nerd oppression let every slightly socially awkward white boy who likes sci-fi lay his resentment at the feet of the nearest women and people of color'*

- Willie Osterweil, What Was the Nerd? (<http://reallifemag.com/what-was-the-nerd/>)

The current political climate has seen drastic and sudden changes throughout Europe and North America. From Brexit, to the presidential election of Donald Trump, there is clearly a resurgence in far-right tendencies throughout society. In part, due to the crushing austerity measures and a lack of an answer from organised and disciplined socialist movements. Small glimmers of hope emerged from the growth in popularity of left-leaning candidates such as Bernie Sanders in the USA, Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France and the most recent and most successful of these candidates, Jeremy Corbyn in the UK.

But what does this have to do with the furry fandom? There is a general regard in any fandom or subculture or other non-political interest that it remains just that, non-political. However, we have to be aware that EVERYTHING is political, even the furry fandom has to answer for that. From its emergence in white middle class suburbia in the 1990s, to the growing furry cons which attract tens of thousands of people. There is an underlying political feature within this. This has been seen with conventions where cities are now promoting and accepting them due to the economic prosperity they can bring:

*"They've embraced us, and we've embraced them right back," says Tom Loftus, with Visit Pittsburgh, the city's convention and visitors' bureau. He says the furries have had a positive impact on the city. "From an economic standpoint this year alone, it's going to be \$5.7 million in direct spending," he says. And Anthrocon donates every year to a local animal-related charity or organization.'* <sup>1</sup>

In many ways, this is akin to pinkwashing within the LGBTQ+ movement. Where the commercial interests of banks and corporations is prioritised over the people and grassroots community and origins of the movement. Whilst the origins of the furry fandom are different, many of us have had to deal with the consequences of pinkwashing, even in furry spaces. Even the charity at furry conventions to animal welfare is still riddled with next to no dialogue in the fandom on animal rights (potentially another article) or the consequences of focusing on certain forms of animal welfare over others due to a fear of being perceived as being 'political'. <sup>2</sup>

The fandom stems from and attracts certain socio-economic groups and backgrounds. It seems immediate that the fandom is in many ways capitalistic, or at the very least it emerged and maintained itself through capitalist, specifically neo-liberal capitalist means. Therefore, to announce that politics should be avoided is at best a reactionary response to the growing necessity of political discussion and action in an ever-increasing world where class antagonisms grow deeper and deeper and too many people are dealing with the direct and blunt consequences of political and economic decision making. Discussions around the fandom and its future should be encouraged, after all, we have an almost 40,000 year old history, from the Lion-man of the Hohlenstein-Stadel, to the predominantly queer subculture that is the furry fandom now.

Within the furry fandom, there has been growing concerns of far-right and fascist tendencies being not only tolerated, but being given voices within the media which has historically failed to showcase a diverse and well-sourced representation of the fandom. As the previous quotation shows us, there is a need to reinforce that our existence helps to uphold capitalist norms. For those of us who are most likely to be affected by these tendencies, this makes the fandom and the spaces around us feel less safe and more threatening than expected. But at the same time, this implies an originally safer space in the fandom via a guise of being non-political. When in reality, we ourselves have become more political and aware. The question however, is the ways in which the fandom, as a predominantly queer subculture has facilitated the rise of political consciousness from across the spectrum alongside its own embracing of capitalist norms reminiscent of the Pink Pound of LGBTQ+ spaces.

From my own personal experiences in the UK. There is generally an issue more to do with right-leaning and right-wing issues being the loudest, rather than a majority. But aside from that, most of the personal experiences come from the reliance of Pink Pound to facilitate spaces for furry meets in gay bars and clubs and the general insistence of being 'non-political', especially if there is a feminist connotation, whilst more conventional centre-right and right-wing topics are seen as just daily banter (although this is not unique to the furry fandom). The ways in which the fandom is a queer space also plays into the ways in which these spaces have evolved and emerged. Class and occupation are things that are noticeable, somewhat drastically. From working class youths escaping from the drudgery and potential abuse of hetero/cis normative nuclear families, to the well-established middle class white cis man who wants to escape the world of tech work by constantly discussing technology and insisting others have a high knowledge on such things as well, or the capitalist enablers/embracers of the fandom. These are also the ones most likely to express and act upon fascistic tendencies, which if left untreated in a 'non-political' space like the furry fandom, can easily evolve into outright fascism. The UK furry subculture is however slightly different. It's similar to the USA/Canada, but there's definitely an added layer of tech superiority that does exist in the US/Canadian furry subcultures, but it's more obvious in the UK, at least from my own experiences. E.g. you're terrible because you didn't work hard getting a STEM degree with a nice job and that's why you're a horrible SJW, unlike me! But in that case, it's because these furies rely on capitalism to make money and have fun at cons/meets and anyone who questions it or its social/cultural systems (racism, sexism, transphobia, etc.) is immediately ostracised as a 'SJW!' To say this is the case for all STEM qualified furies would be ludicrous. However, understanding why elitism like this can emerge is important to consider and how it impacts the safety of furies, especially young working class furies in non-STEM related activities or careers.

Why has this developed in a space like the furry fandom? The Geek Social Fallacies can help explain and understand some of these tendencies or at least, the role the fandom plays in facilitating fascistic tendencies. The first Geek Social Fallacy and the most important is that 'Ostracisers are Evil', nobody wants to actively call out oppressive behaviour in the fandom. Most of us have been bullied and harassed as young people and even now, none of us want to be those doing the bullying:

*'Many geeks have had horrible, humiliating, and formative experiences with ostracism, and the notion of being on the other side of the transaction is repugnant to them...As a result, nearly every geek social group of significant size has at least one member that 80% of the members hate, and the remaining 20% merely tolerate. If GSF<sub>1</sub> exists in sufficient concentration -- and it usually does -- it is impossible to expel a person who actively detracts from every social event. GSF<sub>1</sub> protocol permits you not to invite someone you don't like to a given event, but if someone spills the beans and our hypothetical Cat Piss Man invites himself, there is no recourse. You must put up with him, or you will be an Evil Ostracizer and might as well go out for the football team.'*

This reflects on how a lot of furies get engaged with a community where the majority were ostracised in their youth. But what happens is that because the community is obsessed with positivity and 'no drama!' that it begins to reassert the ideals of the status quo under this disguise of 'anti-SJW' 'non-PC' mindset which is actually the mindset of the majority of capitalist society for hundreds of years. It's trying to be contrarian when you're actually just your average Tory voter.

However, this notion of being bullied, especially from those most likely to have fascistic tendencies in the fandom, the cis white man, is potentially used more to fuel a justification for their viewpoints and allows these views to flourish in a fandom, which compared to general geek culture, has been important for us in developing and understanding our gender identities and sexual orientations due to the tolerance towards it. Osterweil brings this up and the culture of nerd oppression being a manufactured product from the 1980s and the Reagan years following the previous decades of significant political upheaval, arguing that 'The films celebrated as 1980s camp colluded in the Reaganite project: Hollywood worked hard to project a stable white suburban America whose travails were largely due to bureaucratic interference.'<sup>4</sup> Whilst the furry fandom has another layer of difficulty due to its presence as a queer subculture, as a safe space and supposedly known for tolerance we must understand that those with fascistic tendencies may have been bullied and ostracised, but so were we. Even in the 80s world of the nerd being a hero, anything that deviates outside of the capitalist and patriarchal norms of cis/hetero normativity, are doomed to be below even the nerds who rise in a fandom of tolerance, much to the dismay of many who rely on the fandom for safety and a sense of worth.

In a way, the growth of the subculture and its diversity is seen as a threat to those who have established themselves with this false sense of 'bullied white outcast loner' which was more a product enforced by marketing in the 1980s to try and avoid the issues of marginalised people. Since they 'got over it!' when really, they never got over any structural and systematic discrimination and oppression and whilst we, have no choice but to make ourselves political in furry spaces.

Whilst not used here, I would recommend 'Popular Culture and Revolutionary Theory: Understanding Punk Rock' (<https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-6/punk.htm>) by Neil Eriksen. Despite the text discussing punk rock in the 1970s and 80s, it has been a useful starting point for me in writing this and thinking of how ideology and culture shape and play a role within the fandom. Hopefully this and other pieces here will bring about more discussions on the ways in which our spaces are constructed and the context of the rise of certain oppressive behaviours within the fandom. Despite the academic tone of this essay, we live in a changing world and looking beyond our usual conceptions of the fandom can bring about some surprising things which I would encourage everyone, even those who may have struggled reading this article to consider more.

1 <http://www.npr.org/2015/07/12/422311437/the-furries-have-landed-and-pittsburgh-is-giving-them-a-bear-hug>

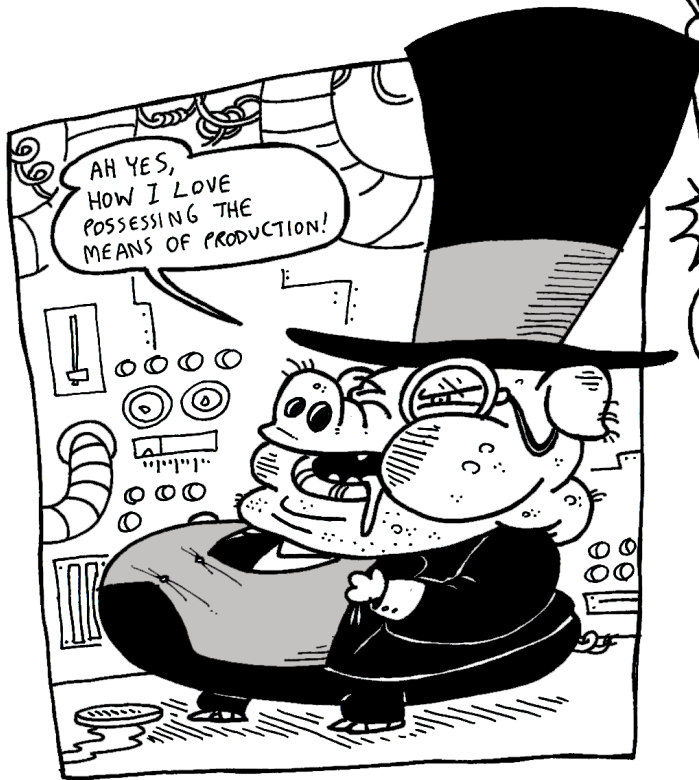
2 'Of animals used and killed by humans in the United States, over 99.6% are farmed animals, about 0.2% are animals used in laboratories, 0.07% are used for clothing, and 0.03% are killed in companion animal shelters. However, about 66% of donations to animal charities in the United States go to companion animal shelters, 32% go to groups with mixed or other activities, and just 0.8% of donations go specifically to farmed animal organizations, while 0.7% go to laboratory animal organizations.' (source: <https://animalcharityevaluators.org/donation-advice/why-farmed-animals/>)

3 <http://plausiblydeniable.com/opinion/gsf.html>

4 <http://reallifemag.com/what-was-the-nerd/>

THE PLUTOCRAT RESTS SECURE IN HIS EXPLOITATION OF THE PROLETARIAT.

BUT...



# SABO-TABBY!

BOSSSES KNOW TO FEAR HER!

TIME FOR A GENERAL STRIKE!



FOR THE BLACK CAT ALWAYS BRINGS BAD LUCK TO ROBBER BARONS!



## A History of Hate by @thenewmeat

There was a time when furies were universally reviled by all other classes of nerd. In the primordial days of Internet nerdism from the late 90s through the early 00s, a dork could openly admit to being a Trekkie or an Otaku or an X-Phile\*, but to be a furry was to risk ridicule and ostracism from fellow nerds. It was common wisdom that an association with furry was the kiss of death for any artist seeking professional employment in comics, animation or illustration. Furry's status as Internet whipping boy was codified in the "Geek hierarchy chart," a 2002 proto-meme by early Internet micro-celebrity Lore Sjöberg, which placed furies at rock bottom beneath Pokeman fans, LARPers, and Trekkies who get married in full Klingon garb. Sites like Something Awful, Portal of Evil, and a fledgling 4chan used mockery of a furry outgroup to help shape cohesive site identities. Something Awful CEO Rich "Low-tax" Kyanka built his comedy brand in large by encouraging harassment of furies outside the site and witch hunts to expose site users who also maintained furry side identities.\*\*

But where did all this hate come from? The easy answer, claimed by most anti-furry voices of the day, was that furry was uniquely sexual, its devotion to a general concept rather than to a single specific media property making it more a fetish community than a fandom. But this answer is only half-right. Even a cursory glance across the Internet will reveal that sexual obsession is a hallmark of all nerd communities. So the true answer must be something deeper. In fact, it's something inherent in the very organization at the root of furry.

As mentioned, furry didn't form around a single media property. Trekkies are defined by their devotion to Star Trek, bronies to My Little Pony, potterheads to Harry Potter. But there is no single TV series, film or book that is central to the furry experience, and this is fairly unique among nerd fandoms. Furies had no single corporate sponsor, no single company encouraging furry fandom with the aim of cultivating a rabid consumer base.\*\*\* There are, of course, plenty of commercial media properties beloved by individual furies but there's no single unifying property that all furies must like to be considered part of the in-group. And as many furies that do worship commercial properties, there are just as many who come to furry exclusively for the original art and ideas created by fellow fans.

That means that the furry ethos is noticeably different from that of other fandoms. Because the corporations that controlled the media properties central to most nerd fandoms wanted to continue selling merchandise, they had a vested interest in not alienating what they saw as their core cis-het male nerd audience. As such, official pronouncements from on high would generally ignore a female audience and actively avoid any acknowledgement of alternative sexualities. Fans themselves would establish their own rank in the fandom by acting as police to protect and enforce official canon. LGBTQ fan characters and interpretations could more easily be excluded from, say, Trek fandom by claims that such ideas were not canon and would not fit with the official views of Trek's corporate owners. But in furry, where the fandom was uniquely focused on giving free reign to individual expression and where there's no one single corporate canon, these same anti-LGBTQ arguments were a harder sell. Without the psychological divide between creators and consumers, no official gatekeeper could declare something to be incompatible with "furry canon." A major cornerstone of furry culture is the fursona – a unique original character that gives free expression to the creator's self-identity. This stands in stark contrast to the attitude of other nerd fandoms toward original characters, where such creations are often derided as wish fulfillment Mary Sues. As a result of this freedom, furry for a long time had a more visible population of women and LGBTQ creators and fans than did many other nerd fandoms.

And that's where the furry hate of the proto-Internet comes from.

By the late 90s, homophobic ideas were beginning to become less palatable; much of the cis-het hegemony still held tightly to these attitudes, but it was just reaching the cultural tipping point where it was less acceptable to articulate them in polite company. Many dedicated trolls prior to the dominance of anon-style trolling felt uncomfortable outright attacking LGBTQ people, so it became necessary to disguise these impulses. The mere presence of women and LGBTQ in furry were seen as making furry "inherently sexual" whereas other fandoms' sexual exploits were invisible since they were seen through the lens of the cis-het male gaze.



Within 90s/00s furry, a large contingent of older furrries, raised in the more mainstream sci-fi and fantasy fandoms, were obsessed with achieving respectability in the eyes of outside nerds and a wider public, hoping to regain the lost status they once held as an off-shoot of sci fi. Achieving respectability was always understood to mean excising elements that would conflict with the inoffensive corporate image projected by other fandoms' sponsors. The furrries most adamantly pushing for mainstream acceptance also happened to be those who would, absent their association with "furry filth", be most easily accepted back into other nerd groups. Many women and LGBTQ furry creators were resigned to toiling in the furry salt mines with the knowledge that they would never be welcome in other nerd fandoms, but many cis-het male furrries were convinced that they could achieve mainstream acceptance if furry could shed its reputation as a sexual subculture.

Posters on furry critical forums like Crush Yiff Destroy were desperate to find a way to rationalize furry hate in a way that didn't lend itself to accusations of homophobia; posters frequently floated the idea that the lack of an arbitrary divide between creators and consumers was the root of the problem since it made furry an "incestuous" fandom rather than a pure one like Trek or anime. An anti-pornography movement in 1998 called the Burned Furs explicitly tried to distance itself from accusations of homophobia in a manifesto succinctly titled "Anthropomorphics fandom is being overrun by sexually dysfunctional, socially stunted and creatively bankrupt hacks and perverts," instead insisting that the non-hierarchical structure of furry made it too open to infiltration by dog fuckers, plushophiles, and, for some reason, vegans. Even so, prominent members included Nazi enthusiast Eric Blumrich and current alt-furry stooge Calbeck, and co-founder Hangdog was known for his anti-gay slurs on Usenet.\*\*\*\* For years a persistent urban legend held that the "ruin" of furry came from Confurence co-founder Mark Merlino advertising the convention in gay interest magazines (notably spread by above mentioned Calbeck) and that prior to that furry was a squeaky-clean group of chums who just really liked watching totally 90s cartoons like Tiny Toons Road Rovers in a totally non-boner-having way. To this day, older cis-het furrries still point to Merlino's alleged "recruitment drive" (still debunked by Dogpatch news) as the moment furry became the pariah fandom.

Looking at the history, it seems that other nerds never had a problem with cartoon animals at all. Instead, the late 90s/early 00s hate directed at furry from other nerd fandoms came in part from sublimated sexist and anti-queer sentiment – these prejudices were instead disguised as a generalized worry about furry being "too sexualized" – and in part because furry's lack of a central corporate sponsor made it seem too free-wheeling, too chaotic, and, above all, too accepting.

\*No, really, that's what they called X-Files fans back then. It was the 90s.

\*\*Actual enmity played less of a role in this decision than did business considerations, as Lowtax did allow exceptions for furrries who could personally benefit him or the Something Awful site brand. Thus web cartoonist and animator Schmorky was a tolerated presence despite his furry proclivities being an open secret on the Something Awful forums.

\*\*\*In recent years, other nerd groups have begun to view furry as just another nerd group rather than degenerates to be avoided or harassed. It's no accident that this sea change comes at the same time that major media corporations have finally begun to see furrries as a potential cash source and begin directly wooing them with calculated films like Zootopia. With corporate recognition comes respectability.

\*\*\*\* Usenet is a very old Internet thing. Ask your parents.



literally just  
shut up

*A message by everyone else.*