Nipplegate and the Effects of Implicit vs. Explicit Sexuality in Pop Music Performance

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Abstract

Janet Jackson's pop career was severely impacted by Justin Timberlake ripping her costume during the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show. The exposure of her nipple was deemed vulgar and became the subject of a heated media backlash, while numerous sexually provocative moments of the show that did not include Jackson were seemingly accepted. This paper analyzes the performance and its aftermath, and explores factors that contributed to the Nipplegate controversy, including race, gender, and the corporate entities that controlled the media reaction.

Keywords

Janet Jackson, Nipplegate, Super Bowl, sexism, sexuality

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In 2005, the video-sharing website YouTube was launched. Jawed Karim, one of the three founders of the site, revealed in an interview that a major televised moment inspired the need for YouTube: Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake’s halftime performance during Super Bowl XXXVIII.¹ The performance remains notorious in pop culture, mostly for a specific moment that only lasted a half-second, dubbed “Nipplegate” by various news outlets.² Jackson performed a medley of her own songs and a duet with Timberlake; at the end of which he tore off part of her costume, exposing her right breast to a potential 89.8 million

1. Jim Hopkins, "Surprise! There's a Third YouTube Co-founder," *USA Today*, October 11, 2006, accessed November 17, 2018, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/news/2006-10-11-youtube-karim_x.htm.

2. This article examines the new language that emerged after the 2004 Super Bowl controversy, including the term ‘Nipplegate’. Nolan Feeny, “The Legacy of Janet Jackson’s Boob,” *The Atlantic*, January 31, 2014, accessed March 23, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/01/the-legacy-of-janet-jacksons-boob/283499/>.

viewers.³ Following the performance, 'Janet Jackson' was the most searched term on Google between 2004 and 2005 due to the high volume of people searching for news and videos of the Super Bowl.⁴ Now, because of sites like YouTube, viral moments like this are replayed and reposted in various forms for decades after their occurrence.

After the halftime performance, a narrative emerged that morality and decency were quickly disappearing from American culture and television. Jackson and her representatives quickly refuted this, stating that the wardrobe malfunction was completely accidental and unrehearsed, but the backlash was already set in motion. In reaction to the halftime show, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) received over 500,000 complaints and fined the Super Bowl broadcaster CBS \$550,000 USD.⁵ During a Senate Commerce Committee meeting, Michael Powell, then chairman of the FCC, condemned the performance:

The now infamous display during the Super Bowl halftime show, which represented a new low in prime-time

3. Joal Ryan, "Kids Watch Super Boob," *E! News*, February 3, 2004, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.eonline.com/news/46764/kids-watch-super-boob>.

4. BBC Staff, "Google Taps into Search Patterns," *BBC News*, December 22, 2005, accessed November 18, 2018, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4551936.stm>.

5. Shira Karsen, "What Happened After Janet Jackson's 2004 Super Bowl 'Nipplegate' Incident," *Billboard*, October 23, 2017, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/super-bowl/8007041/janet-jackson-justin-timberlake-2004-super-bowl-what-happened>.

television, is just the latest example in a growing list of deplorable incidents over the nation's airwaves.⁶

Powell was clearly most concerned with “deplorable incidents” of a sexual in nature, like Nipplegate. In 2003, U2’s frontman Bono uttered an expletive during the live broadcast of the Golden Globe Awards, but the FCC did not fine its broadcaster NBC.⁷ The FCC said it did not violate their rules because Bono did not use the word in a sexual way.⁸ Nicole Richie’s use of the same word during the Billboard Music Awards months later was also unpunished.⁹ In the case of Nipplegate, although Timberlake participated in the wardrobe malfunction, Jackson was ultimately vilified.

The National Football League (NFL) quickly distanced itself from the performance, saying they were embarrassed by and unaware of the performers’ behaviour.¹⁰ Paul Tagliabue, commissioner of the NFL stated, “The show that MTV produced this year fell far short of the NFL's expectations of tasteful, first-class entertainment.”¹¹ Presumably to avoid any wardrobe malfunctions of this nature, the NFL chose only male performers for the next six halftime performances. In 2005, Paul McCartney’s halftime show did not even include a tape delay, since he was

6. Brian Dakks, "Super Bowl an FCC Wake-Up Call," *CBS*, February 12, 2004, accessed November 18, 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/super-bowl-an-fcc-wake-up-call/>.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Julie Hilden, "Bono, Nicole Richie, and the F-word: Broadcast Indecency Law," *CNN*, December 23, 2003, accessed December 5, 2018, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/LAW/12/23/findlaw.analysis.hilden.indecency/>.

9. *Ibid.*

10. CNN Staff, "Apologetic Jackson Says 'Costume Reveal' Went Awry," *CNN*, February 3, 2004, accessed December 5, 2018, <http://www.cnn.com/2004/US/02/02/superbowl.jackson/>.

11. Dakks, "Super Bowl an FCC Wake-Up Call," February 12, 2004.

considered a low risk performer.¹² All of these men, with the exception of Prince, were white. This changed nine years later when Destiny's Child headlined the Super Bowl halftime show.

Though this controversial half-second included two people, Jackson and Timberlake, the blame in this incident fell largely on Jackson. In particular, many reports of the incident marketed it as a "publicity stunt" engineered to benefit Jackson. Powell publicly stated, "She probably got what she was looking for," further emphasizing that Jackson was seeking media attention.¹³ The media used language to imply Jackson was solely responsible for exposing her breast, disregarding Timberlake's involvement.¹⁴ Even MTV, the network that produced the show, ran the headline "Janet Jackson Got Nasty at the MTV-Produced Super Bowl Halftime Show," the day after.¹⁵ Similarly, CBS and MTV accepted no responsibility for what happened during the performance.¹⁶ It is not a coincidence that these two particular broadcasters banded together. Viacom, a mass media conglomerate, owned both networks in 2004.¹⁷ In an effort to shift

12. Associated Press Staff, "McCartney the Safe Choice," *The Seattle Times*, February 4, 2005, accessed December 5, 2018, http://old.seattletimes.com/html/seahawks/2002170190_super04.html.

13. CNN Staff, "Apologetic Jackson Says 'Costume Reveal' Went Awry," February 3, 2004.

14. Rob Mancini, "Janet Apologizes, Says Super Bowl Stunt Went Too Far," MTV, February 2, 2004, accessed December 5, 2018, <http://www.mtv.com/news/1484766/janet-apologizes-says-super-bowl-stunt-went-too-far/>.

15. MTV has since deleted the article, but it is cited in Raiford Guins, *Edited Clean Version: Technology and the Culture of Control* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 193.

16. CNN Staff, "Apologetic Jackson Says 'costume Reveal' Went Awry," February 3, 2004.

17. Dakks, "Super Bowl an FCC Wake-Up Call," February 12, 2004.

the blame away from their company, CBS forced Jackson to issue an apology which she gave publicly in writing, and on camera. Despite this, Clear Channel Communications, owner of Viacom and Infinity Broadcasting, blacklisted her songs and music videos for years following the performance.¹⁸ Additionally, CBS forced her to refrain from performing a week later during the Grammys, an event at which Timberlake performed and accepted numerous awards.¹⁹

There are still several unresolved questions concerning this performance. Why was so much of the blame pinned on Jackson? Why was Timberlake not criticized for ripping her costume off? Who and what controlled the narrative of the controversy? In this paper, I explore why Jackson's implied sexual behaviour was accepted in her music and performance, while a moment of explicit sexual imagery was not. I examine the structures that were at play which forced the narrative of blame onto the exposed woman, rather than the man who exposed her. Additionally, I discuss the various intersections of gender, race, and corporate control that allowed the career of one of the most lauded women in pop music to be undermined by a wardrobe malfunction.

“Miss Jackson, if you're nasty”

I begin this section with the lyrics from one of Jackson's most iconic songs, “Nasty.” The song is representative of a change in Jackson's public image in the 1980s, and the direction her music has followed since. The style of the song is rooted in 1980s hip hop and pop with its heavy use of drum machines, synthesizer, and

18. Karsen, "What Happened After Janet Jackson's 2004 Super Bowl 'Nipplegate' Incident," October 23, 2017.

19. Ibid.

a steadily repeating beat and metre. The listener expects that Jackson is about to rap when she yells “Give me a beat” in the first few seconds. Similarly, the fills that feature no vocals imply dance breaks, which she incorporates throughout her music video. As she says in the song, “The only nasty thing I like is the nasty groove.” Melodically, Jackson stays low in register and delivers lyrics mostly in her speaking voice, occasionally in a growly yell. Her lyrics tell the story of all the “nasty boys” who will never change, and how she deals with them. Stylistically, it completely diverges from her earlier work on *The Jacksons* and her previous solo albums. This song highlights the themes of autonomy and sexuality that she became well-known for.

Growing up in the spotlight, Jackson transformed from a girl to a woman entirely in the public eye. Despite the incredible talent and media attention of her siblings, Janet appeared to create a career largely on her own terms, an impressive feat for a young Black woman whose family image was clearly defined before her solo musical debut. Her first album to hit No. 1 on the *Billboard* 200 was *Control* which featured “Nasty” and other chart-topping songs.²⁰ It was also the first album she created after severing ties from her family’s management, opting instead to use new producers. It is songs like “Nasty” that enabled Jackson to express her individuality and exert “control” on her public image as a young woman. Some may argue that this exploration of identity may not have been wholly on Jackson’s own terms. As Diane Railton and Paul Watson identify, Black women’s images are often

20. Trevor Anderson, “Janet Jackson’s Billboard Chart Accomplishments,” *Billboard*, May 16, 2018. <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/chart-beat/8456431/janet-jackson-billboard-hot-100-200-chart-accomplishments>.

produced and controlled by corporate entities that seek to commodify Black women's bodies.²¹ Similarly, Murali Balaji highlights the difficulty in identifying an artist's agency over their own depictions in the media, specifically through the medium of music videos.²² Since Jackson has an entire team of producers and personnel tasked with managing her public image, their influence is quite possibly at play in marketing her music and her artistic choices. Balaji points out that for this reason, it is important to analyze the subtext of performances in terms of both the performers and background dancers when regarding Black women's resistance to objectification.²³ She grounds her arguments by analyzing specific music videos of Black women performers and backup dancers. I use this approach to analyze the first song in Jackson's portion of the Super Bowl performance.

From the beginning of Jackson's set, she situated herself as the one calling the shots in "All for You." Lyrically, her feathery vocals intone to her male romantic prospect that she is only his, but her soft voice juxtaposes her clearly outlined conditions to this potential love affair. Phrases such as "I'll let you sit right next to me" and "Yes, I'm in the mood" express her desire and command of the situation, but only if he "makes a move." Jackson is trying to root him out from the "other fools" who have wasted her time. Firmly centre stage for the majority of the song, Jackson and the female backup dancers dominated the higher platform and commanded the attention of the male dancers scattered around below them. Jackson emphasized the terms of the romance she

21. Diane Railton and Paul Watson, "Naughty Girls and Red Blooded Women: Representations of female heterosexuality in music video." *Feminist Media Studies* 5, no.1 (2005): 51-63.

22. Murali Balaji, "Vixen Resistin': Redefining Black Womanhood in Hip-Hop Music Videos," *Journal of Black Studies* 41, no. 1 (2010): 7.

23. Balaji, "Vixen Resistin'," 10.

desired as the dancers grouped together. Using her male backup dancers as props, she batted away their wandering hands and outlined the behaviour that she will not tolerate from her lovers. She then dismissed them entirely, and returned to dancing with her girls at the party. The subtext she created defined herself as an object of male desire while expressing control and autonomy over her own pleasure.

Entering into the Super Bowl halftime performance, Jackson was at the height of her career. She was publicly lauded for her showmanship, her iconic style, and the intense choreography of her music videos. Songs like “Nasty” and “All for You,” in which Jackson is open and vocal about her sexual desires, received praise and attention. Jackson engaged with sexual imagery in her lyrics, album themes, and performances, and continues to be a critically and financially successful artist for it. As such, it was striking when NFL commissioner Tagliabue said the league had an expectation of “tasteful, first-class entertainment.”²⁴ Jackson had established herself as an artist willing to be raw, vulnerable, and sexual in her musical performances. She does not make any allusions to being family-friendly, and her provocative performances would not be described as “tasteful” by all. If CBS and the NFL did not want sexuality to be a part of the performance, why would they hire Jackson? If a visible female nipple was the major issue of the performance, would that imply that the other sexual imagery in the performance qualifies as the ‘tasteful’ content they endorse? After all, Viacom claimed that they were proud of ninety nine percent of the halftime performance.²⁵

24. Dakks, “Super Bowl an FCC Wake-Up Call,” February 12, 2004.

25. Ibid.

What made Jackson's nipple cross a line, when her sexually suggestive lyrics were pre-established?

“Better have you naked by the end of this song”

In the aftermath of the performance, it was Jackson's name that appeared in the news. Her fellow headliners were almost completely left out of the controversy. While Timberlake was only a surprise addition to Jackson's set, P. Diddy, Nelly, and Kid Rock were other notable celebrity performers. After “All for You,” P. Diddy appeared on a different stage and rapped the opening verse from his song “Bad Boys for Life.” As he was gliding across the stage spouting proof of his bad reputation, the song abruptly stopped and a contrafactum of the football stadium classic, Toni Basil's “Hey Mickey” started playing; a group of cheerleaders chanting “Oh Diddy, you're so fine/You're so fine you blow my mind” danced around him. The women then added in Nelly's name to the chant as he joined the stage and began his rendition of “Hot in Herre.” Both men reveled in the dancers' attention. “I was like, good gracious, ass is bodacious” Nelly sang as he pointed generally to one of his backup dancers' bodies. During the whole performance, the camera angles rarely showed the faces of anyone but P. Diddy and Nelly. Dancers were highlighted only when they caressed their bodies and pulled at their clothes when Nelly sang the iconic line “It's gettin hot in here/So take off all your clothes.” In an ironically foreshadowing moment, all of the cheerleaders ripped off their uniforms in unison as Dani Stevenson's pre-recorded voice sang “I am getting so hot/I wanna take my clothes off.” It is a striking contrast to the imagery from Jackson's portion of the performance. Almost all of the backup dancers appear to be Black women from the limited camera angles they are given. This

does not seem to be a coincidence, as the choreography employed dance moves that directly reference hip hop technique. The performance objectified and sexualized the dancers at the hands of the Black men performing. Balaji explores this in her piece, stating that, "Black women who appear in music videos as models are sexual commodities, represented as affirmations of a male rapper's hypersexualized manhood."²⁶ Both Nelly and Diddy illustrated this behaviour, yet did not receive media backlash for their portion of the halftime show.

Though Kid Rock's performance of "Bawitdaba" did not objectify backup dancers, it again poses the question of what kind of "first-class" expectations the NFL had for this performance. As Robert Thomson, founding director of the Center for the Study of Popular Television at Syracuse University argues, "Michael Powell is representing the Super bowl like everybody in the family sits around knitting booties... Come on. There's gambling, there's a lot of drinking, partying, a carnival atmosphere."²⁷ When the FCC cites the amount of complaints regarding the performance, they focus on those pertaining to Jackson's body and performance rather than those concerning Kid Rock swearing about "All you bastards at the I.R.S" and wearing the American flag as a shirt. For the men performing that night, the various provocative natures of their performances were not questioned in the same way Jackson's exposed breast was. Justin Timberlake is perhaps the greatest example of this.

After Kid Rock's performance, Jackson took to the stage again with "Rhythm Nation." Shortly after, Timberlake began beatboxing off-stage and then appeared amongst Jackson's backup

26. Balaji, "Vixen Resistin'," 9.

27. Bill Holland, "Jackson's Stunt Shoves the Envelope of TV Content," *Billboard Newspaper*, February 14, 2004, 69.

dancers. In an attempt to establish his relatively new solo career, he broke into a rendition of his hit song “Rock Your Body” with Jackson. Backup dancers filtered off the stage, leaving Jackson and Timberlake to close the halftime show. It was not really a duet, as Jackson was reduced to a prop expressing desire for Timberlake as he crooned phrases such as “I like the way you move/... That ass-shaking thing you do.” Jackson pranced and played a game of cat and mouse with Timberlake across the stage. She occasionally paused to let Timberlake catch up, dance, and grab her when he sang “Don’t be so quick to walk away.” She only contributed vocally by singing “Talk to me boy,” highlighting her feminine vocals and implying a submissive role during their interaction. This whole portion of the performance was a contrast to the pre-established command and autonomy Jackson displayed in her solo portions of the show. This came to a climax when both performers moved to the raised centre stage, Timberlake said his famous last words “Better have you naked by the end of this song,” and ripped off a portion of Jackson’s costume. From the moment Timberlake exposed her, Jackson was in clear distress and confusion. Though the live video cut away from Jackson’s face as soon as her costume was torn, numerous photos captured her surprise and coverage of her chest.²⁸

While some perspectives point to the whole performance as being deplorable, most of the language used blames Jackson for the immoral behaviour. The audience was conditioned to readily accept all of the implied sexuality and blatant objectification, particularly of Black women, at the hands of male artists. In particular, Timberlake’s performance reduced Jackson’s singing and presence to a sexual object of his desire before he ripped her clothes off. Due to Timberlake’s objectifying performance,

28. Feeny, “The Legacy of Janet Jackson’s Boob,” January 31, 2004.

Jackson was used as a prop to enact his lyrics literally. Jackson's image was tarnished in the same way Nelly's backup dancers were in "Hot in Herre," the same way women, especially Black women and other racialized women, are frequently objectified in pop culture.

"This is a story about control"

In many ways, the outrage regarding the wardrobe malfunction that rocked the world bears similarities to the metaphor of how to boil a frog. Offended viewers of the Super Bowl were like frogs sitting in a pot of water that is on the verge of boiling. The water is sexualized and pornographic imagery appearing in the media, and the increase in exposure to the images is the increase in heat. The exposure of Jackson's nipple was, to some, like being dropped into a pot of piping hot water. Suddenly, pop music performances were being advertised as overtly sexual and against family values. Nipplegate was branded as a performance that crossed the line of 'tasteful' content in pop performance, despite the fact that sexual imagery had become increasingly normalized; particularly through technological innovations which allowed easier access to pornography. Meredith Levande points out that both factors influenced each other in her paper "Women, Pop Music, and Pornography":

Pay-per-view television and the internet removed the final barriers between consumer and product. Once these barriers were removed, images of women in popular media not only grew increasingly suggestive, but they began to

mirror attitudes, body language, and behaviors seen in actual pornographic fare.²⁹

This is a starting point for Levande to discuss the hypocrisy of media's control of sexuality. She writes, "Ironically, it is the broadcasting of obscene material that is the current taboo; yet web, satellite, and cable television have made obscene material ubiquitous."³⁰ Relating this to the Super Bowl performance, it is very applicable to one key player in the Nipplegate debacle: Viacom.

As a mass media conglomerate, Viacom directly profits from distributing sexual imagery through their various broadcasters. Levande points out the example of Viacom's acquisition of BET and how that changed "Uncut," a show focusing on lesser-known and sexually explicit music videos. She states, "Although *Uncut* started in September 2000 and depicted women of color as oversexed, these images intensified under Viacom."³¹ Under Viacom, broadcasters such as MTV, BET, and CBS produced increasingly sexually explicit material and desensitized the public to pornographic imagery. Given Levande's specific example, it is extremely telling that Viacom was willing to produce and disseminate the sexual objectification of Black women, then blacklist a woman such as Jackson who went too far by their standards. In Levande's words, "Women's bodies that deviate from the pornographic agenda spark the censorship that occurs as a result of media consolidation."³² The image of Jackson's nipple deviated from the sexual imagery Viacom had

29. Meredith Levande, "Women, Pop Music, and Pornography," *Meridians* 8, no. 1 (2008): 296, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40338921>.

30. Ibid.

31. Levande, "Women, Pop Music, and Pornography," 298.

32. Levande, "Women, Pop Music, and Pornography," 311.

control over. George Lipsitz makes a similar reference to this form of control within companies in his book *Dangerous Crossroads*, stating that, “Governments sustain or suppress artistic expression out of self-interest, out of recognition of the complex connections linking “the nation” with the imagi-nation.”³³ Viacom and the FCC reacted negatively after the Super Bowl performance because the wardrobe malfunction was not a form of artistic expression that they could capitalize on. After all, women were already ripping their clothes off earlier in the performance. The only issue with Timberlake’s costume grabbing is that it went wrong. As Levande points out, “The act of tearing women's clothing off, that of black women in particular, is at this point run of the mill.”³⁴

Conclusions

Over a decade later, American culture has seen the rise of movements such as #MeToo and Free the Nipple. This has created a noticeable change in how media outlets respond to the belittlement, abuse, and harassment of women. While these movements have helped to address systemic issues, they only aid a specific type of woman. Emily Stauffer points to Free the Nipple’s focus on “white feminism” and the agency of white women’s freedom of expression with their bodies in her paper “Free The Nipple: A White Feminist Movement.”³⁵ Similarly, as #MeToo gained attention and endorsement from white celebrities, the Black woman that founded it, Tarana Burke was largely

33. George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (New York, NY: Verso, 1997), 176.

34. Levande, “Women, Pop Music, and Pornography,” 310.

35. Emily Stauffer, “Free The Nipple: A White Feminist Movement” (2016). *Essay Contest 2017*. 1. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/essay-contest-2017/1>.

uncredited.³⁶ Black women in particular have always been held to different standards than other women, and have to combat the sexualization of their bodies from girlhood and beyond.³⁷

Through these influences of racism and sexism, Jackson's career was severely damaged in less than a second by Timberlake's hand. Jackson's album immediately following the performance, *Damita Jo*, was underplayed due to her blacklisting, yet still managed to make it to No. 2 on the Billboard 200.³⁸ Under different circumstances, the album likely would have been one of the most successful of the year, based on Jackson's previous trajectory. Meanwhile, Timberlake has gone on to enjoy massive critical and financial success while only giving minimal allusions to understanding the impact of his actions on Jackson's career.³⁹ Powell has since pointed out the unfair negative bias towards Jackson, but it took him ten years to share that opinion.⁴⁰

36. Hari Ziyad, "Tarana Burke was Omitted from the Time Magazine Cover, so let's Celebrate the Sh*t out of Her Today!" *Afropunk*, December 7, 2017, accessed December 5, 2018, <http://afropunk.com/2017/12/tarana-burke-omitted-time-magazine-cover-lets-celebrate-sht-today/>.

37. Susan Fast, "Bold Soul Trickster: The 60s Tina Signifies," in *She's So Fine: Reflections on Whiteness, Femininity Adolescence, and Class in 1960s Music* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 208.

38. Daniel Kreps, "Nipple Ripples: 10 Years of Fallout from Janet Jackson's Halftime Show," *Rolling Stone*, January 30, 2014, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/nipple-ripples-10-years-of-fallout-from-janet-jacksons-halftime-show-122792/>.

39. Nina Braca, "Everything Justin Timberlake Has Said About the 2004 Super Bowl Controversy," *Billboard*, January 18, 2018, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/super-bowl/8094956/justin-timberlake-2004-super-bowl-controversy-statements>.

40. Marin Cogan, "In the Beginning, There Was a Nipple," *ESPN*, January 28, 2014, http://www.espn.com/espn/feature/story/_/id/10333439/wardrobe-malfunction-beginning-there-was-nipple.

The lingering question is: so what? Say Jackson did completely organize the event as a publicity stunt, ignoring the mass of evidence that suggests it was an accidental occurrence. The treatment she received for someone else exposing her partially covered nipple is not equal to the damage caused by the aftermath of the event. While Timberlake was able to perform at the 2018 Super Bowl with minimal questioning about Nipplegate, Jackson did not even receive an invitation. Who is really at fault? If Jackson needs to be part of this media blame game, Timberlake should receive part if not more of the blame for being the main instigator of the wardrobe malfunction. The NFL should be held responsible for hiring performers that featured sexuality and non-family-friendly imagery in their performances. Viacom should be blamed as the source for both the production and the broadcast of the show, and not have been able to shift blame onto performers once viewers were offended. Jackson deserves the same chance at success post-Nipplegate that Timberlake has received, and should be able to participate in more career-defining performances that do not involve others exposing her body.

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