

Sophie ([00:23](#)):

[inaudible]

Sophie ([00:24](#)):

I'm Sophie and this is She's All Fat, the podcast for fat positivity, radical self love and chill vibes only. In this episode, we're talking about how fatness is portrayed in the disaster genre. We're bringing on friend of the pod, Abi, to talk Lord of the Flies, Wall-E and dietland.

Sophie ([00:42](#)):

But first it's time for our SAF book club. Every week this season we'll be reading a chapter of Fearing the Black Body, the Racial Origins of Fatphobia by Sabrina Strings. First, we had a Hannah who wrote in with responses to our reading questions for part one. I want to share part of what they said here. Quote, "I definitely have not looked at art in a museum through a racial lens. This was probably my first education in that. I think most of my education on Renaissance artwork was usually through a Christian lens, which was hard for me as I was raised Jewish. I always found art analysis difficult for me because I knew there was a story being told, and I had difficulty knowing what was going on." Hannah, thank you for sharing. I would love to hear from other H's and Hannah's who had a personal response to what they read and looked back on their own experiences. And we are working on some more book club resources. So keep an eye out for that last week. We read chapter four, Lynn and I have some exercises for you in the show notes. And as for the rest of the team, Laila, our wonderful editor says, quote, "one aspect of chapter four that gave me pause was the idea of temperance back then, and how I can see it's far reaching effects still exist today." She wrote a whole amazing reflection. So make sure you check it out in the show notes. Yeli wants you to journal about the ways that your industry, workplace, or media, that you consume is complacent and fatphobia and white supremacy. Then brainstorm one concrete way that you will work to dismantle that. I really want to hear some of those responses. For next week, make sure to read chapter five, American Beauty, the Reign of the Slender Aesthetic.

Sophie ([02:26](#)):

A quick note, we recorded this interview before the police murder of George Floyd and successive Black Lives Matter protests, demanding justice for Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other Black lives taken by police violence. Make sure to listen for our call to action at the end of the episode, to do your part to counter anti-Black violence.

Sophie ([02:43](#)):

All right, if you're like me and kind of a scaredy cat about scary movies, please join me in covering your eyes for the rest of this episode. JK, podcasts are mostly an audio medium. Here's the episode.

Sophie ([02:59](#)):

Okay, fatmily. I'm here with Abi to talk about fat representation or misrepresentation in disaster movies and TV. Um, and we came up with this idea because of, uh, the disaster happening around us outside. We wanted to know how, um, fat people are represented in cultural imagination around this, about this kind of time. So Abi, would you please introduce yourself and tell our audience, our family about your work and your connection to fat justice?

Abi ([03:33](#)):

Yeah, Boy, will I. Hey, fatmily. I just said it. I got to say it here on the pod.

Sophie ([03:40](#)):

Yay.

Abi ([03:41](#)):

Woo. So I'm Abi, I'm a PhD student. I live in Glasgow, Scotland. Um, but as you can probably tell from my accent, I am from North Dakota. I have worked on sort of issues of fat justice and, um, wider academic fat studies stuff for about five or six years here in Scotland. I primarily look at images of fat women in British and American television. So I just took two of my favorite things, fat ladies and television, and made a thesis out of it.

Sophie ([04:11](#)):

Hell yeah. That's awesome.

Sophie ([04:12](#)):

Yeah. So I'm just in the middle of that during this insane period of time.

Sophie ([04:16](#)):

My God listeners, you can look forward to our regular season once we get through our COVID season, because we have some really exciting things planned, a little series with Abi, that's going to be pretty fun. So Abby, what's one thing you've been doing to take care of yourself during this time.

Abi ([04:33](#)):

So I've been trying to do a few things. Um, I'm not going to lie and tell you that I go for a walk every day. That's hilarious. Um, yeah, what I've actually been doing is, um, I've been quietly and quite quickly, um, amassing a collection of plants in my home.

Sophie ([04:47](#)):

That's awesome.

Abi ([04:48](#)):

Yeah. I started with a monstera in the winter and I thought, I'll do this for a year. And then once I'm used to taking care of this green son, I will like expand my reach. But with COVID I just feel like I need to bring the outside in.

Sophie ([05:01](#)):

Hell yeah.

Abi ([05:01](#)):

So now I've got six plants on my dining room table.

Sophie ([05:05](#)):

Have you named them? Do you feel protective of them?

Abi ([05:08](#)):

Yes. My beautiful babies. I do. Um, I look at them every day. Like I check all their leaves every day and I like touch their soil. Cause I just found out that's how you keep plants alive. Um, by like paying attention to their needs. It's amazing. My favorite one is Henry.

Sophie ([05:24](#)):

Oh my God.

Abi ([05:25](#)):

He's my Monstera.

Sophie ([05:26](#)):

I'm looking at my plant up here that I have neglected and need to water, like oops. I'm a bad plant parent.

Abi ([05:34](#)):

Well, as I, as I've just learned, apparently it's better to underwater than over-water your plants.

Sophie ([05:39](#)):

That's true. I've overwatered a couple plants and killed them that way.

Abi ([05:43](#)):

Me too.

Sophie ([05:44](#)):

Unfortunately.

Abi ([05:46](#)):

Did you ever watch Tucca and birdie? Did you get into that show?

Sophie ([05:49](#)):

No, but I know a lot of people loved it.

Abi ([05:52](#)):

There's a really beautiful scene where they're trying to explain how anxious birdie is and how much she loves plant. And she just cries all over it and pours like two watering cans into it. Like, will this make you live?

Sophie ([06:03](#)):

That's so cute. Oh my God, you're a good plant mom.

Abi ([06:08](#)):

I'm trying, I'm doing my best.

Sophie (06:10):

Let's move right on to the meat of it.

Abi (06:13):

The meat of it!

Sophie (06:23):

Here's the meat of it. We're in the meat of it. Um, we're talking about disaster movies. So first let's just talk about disaster movies or TV, like as a category, what are they, why do we like them and how do fat people play into them?

Abi (06:39):

Yeah, let's chat about that a little. So I love a good disaster movie. I think what most people get out of them. Well, first of all, a disaster movie usually portrays some version of our current society in a dystopian manner. Right?

Sophie (06:52):

Yeah.

Abi (06:52):

So normally when we watch a disaster film, we're watching something that takes whatever our current conditions are or the conditions of that time period and twist them in some way. Right. But usually in a way that is upsetting and apocalyptic.

Sophie (07:06):

Yes,

Abi (07:06):

Right. Is that a good way to describe what a disaster movie is?

Sophie (07:09):

I think so. Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

Abi (07:12):

So I think what, what, a lot of us who enjoy those kinds of films and TV get out of them is the sense of like a, different versions of what we actually already are experiencing amplified or b, the catharsis that you gain from watching, like having like a real bad guy or a real narrative of something difficult to look at. Like I think for me experiencing COVID right now is especially shocking because it doesn't feel like it has a very strong narrative or beginning and end. It just feels like this big horror, whereas like a disaster movie with a plague or something has a beginning and an end.

Sophie (07:48):

Yeah.

Abi ([07:49](#)):

It's a nice contained thing.

Sophie ([07:50](#)):

I saw somebody tweet the other day that we're in an endless present, which I thought really encapsulated how I feel.

Abi ([07:58](#)):

Man, that gets it. Right. Yeah.

Sophie ([08:01](#)):

Right. Like that's the thing is that it's like, we don't feel like we have many possibilities or anything and it's not because it's like, it'll be this way forever. It's just like, we don't see the end right now. And so we ha and we have no idea what comes next. So it's just very like, yeah, we're just in the now, we're in the, now.

Abi ([08:20](#)):

it's all here and now, we're on the rollercoaster.

Sophie ([08:24](#)):

Yeah. I think also for disaster movies, like I think, I mean specifically disaster movies, because this also bleeds into a discussion of like horror movies as well. Right? Like they play a similar role, I think. But I think in disaster movies, the heroes are more likely to win at the end. That's why they're not like you-tragedies or whatever. They're just like, you know, people come out on top or people get away or whatever, some people die, but the important people don't die. And that's like, what? Or if they do die, it's like a huge sacrifice for their families. And then they're like what a hero.

Abi ([09:00](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And I think like your protagonist in a disaster film is almost always positioned as your hero. Like not every genre. Is that the case where like the protagonist is a straight up capital H, like Sunshine's behind their head when they stand up hero. You know,

Sophie ([09:19](#)):

and that's like a way more comforting way to think about a disaster that you or someone could be a hero. Like, whereas in most like earthquakes, who's going to be a hero. Like what is there to be a hero in an earthquake or tsunami or whatever. But somehow when you watch, you know, uh, San Andreas and the Rock has his daughter who looks way whiter than him for no reason, like he's going to save everyone. She's got fucking blue eyes. Like they could have cast someone else who looks Samoan.

Abi ([09:51](#)):

Like why.

Sophie ([09:53](#)):

They could have cast a Samoan actress.

Abi ([09:56](#)):

It doesn't seem that hard. Yeah.

Sophie ([09:58](#)):

It doesn't, it doesn't say that hard but, whatever. Okay. Before we get deeper into like bad fat rep and these cause it's all going to be bad pretty much. Are there any disaster movies from your childhood that you like remember watching or like ones that had a big impression on you?

Abi ([10:12](#)):

Yeah. I mean, do you, can I throw it back to you while I think about it?

Sophie ([10:15](#)):

I remember watching, what's it called? What's that movie called where like, it's, there's like a huge flood in New York and they're like in saved in the library, like the weather changes or whatever. Do you know what I'm talking about?

Abi ([10:29](#)):

I do.

Sophie ([10:30](#)):

they're like in grand central, like an, or they're in the like New York public library and they have to like burn books to stay warm and there's like,

Abi ([10:41](#)):

yes, that's right. what, what movie is that?

Sophie ([10:43](#)):

Right. And there's, it's like the day after tomorrow. Right. Isn't that the movie, isn't that what that is? I think so.

Abi ([10:51](#)):

Yes. Yeah. Yeah. I think it is.

Sophie ([10:52](#)):

And it's like, no one believes this meteorologist or whatever.

Abi ([10:57](#)):

Yeah. If only they would listen to science.

Sophie ([10:58](#)):

except for his son. Yeah. Yeah. Which is like crazy. Cause now like people are not listening to science.

Abi ([11:05](#)):

Yeah. I guess they were right about us.

Audio Clip from The Day After Tomorrow ([11:07](#)):

With all due respect. Mr. Vice-president, the cost of doing nothing could be even higher. Our climate is fragile. At the rate we're burning fossil fuels and polluting the environment, the ice caps will soon disappear.

Audio Clip from The Day After Tomorrow ([11:20](#)):

Professor Hall. Our economy is every bit as fragile as the environment. Perhaps you should keep that in mind before making sensationalist claims.

Audio Clip from The Day After Tomorrow ([11:32](#)):

Well, the last chunk of ice that broke off was about the size of the state of Rhode Island. Some people might call that pretty sensational.

Sophie ([11:40](#)):

Oh God. Okay. So anyways, what is your, what is a movie that you saw as a kid?

Abi ([11:47](#)):

Yeah, I um at a sleepover at a friend's house in a side room. Someone was watching. So there were like two rooms. There was like a fun movie or the scary movie and someone was watching twister and I haven't watched it as an adult. So most of my memories of twister are just that it is like terrifying and meant that like every time there was a tornado in the upper Midwest, I assumed that my entire house was going to be lifted up from its foundations in A horrible cycle, like, you know, cycle of dust and, whatever twisters are made out of. So I guess like, it didn't, it didn't scar me for life, but it did. Like, I don't know. It definitely stuck with me I think, because it's a family. Right. I think it's a family who have to like face it together. Yeah. Now I like, I mean, I remember there being children. That doesn't mean that there are, I might've just put myself in the movie as a child.

Sophie ([12:50](#)):

Isn't it funny? The things that stick with you?

Abi ([12:53](#)):

Um, yeah. There's like a specific bit toward the end of that movie where like, I think they kind of think they're okay. And they're like huddled in a basement and they like, look, they like hear a noise. And then the house comes up from like off the ground, above them while they're like huddled together.

Sophie ([13:10](#)):

Oh my God.

Abi ([13:12](#)):

And I like that is an image that is very vivid in my mind, even though I don't really remember the context of like.

Audio Clip from Twister ([13:21](#)):

[Tornado sounds], maybe we should get off of this road.

Sophie ([13:44](#)):

Okay. So now let's broaden the discussion a little bit to talk about some movies and TV shows that were, I mean, they may be also fitting into other categories of movies, but we're going to talk about them as disaster movies or as like post-apocalyptic movies in some way, because those are both things that I think apply to our current time, because we're in a disaster and we're going to have to figure out what to happen afterwards. You know, what's going to happen afterwards. We don't know yet. So, um, it's interesting to look at some of these representations of how people, fat people are seen in those two states during the disaster and after a disaster and see how we're imagining the world and then see how like what's going on right now and see if we can map some stuff onto it. So which one do you want to start with?

Abi ([14:37](#)):

Where to begin? Well, why don't we talk a little bit about, I there's one in particular that I have a lot to say about, so I think I'll save it. I, why don't we start by talking a little bit about, um, something that was trending on Twitter this week, which is Lord of the Flies. Do you remember Lord of the flies?

Sophie ([14:52](#)):

Sure. I know the plot of it, but I've never watched it or read it. I got away with it somehow.

Abi ([14:59](#)):

Oh my god. How did you luck out?

Sophie ([15:02](#)):

I think because I skipped two grades and then was held back a grade and then went to a different grade. Like my elementary schooling was very, uh, like disjointed. And so I missed a lot of the like classic books you read then like,

Abi ([15:18](#)):

Well, you know, no great loss. Most of the Canon is made up by old white people anyway. So the classics are meaningless.

Sophie ([15:24](#)):

True. Tell us about Lord of the flies.

Abi ([15:28](#)):

So in Lord of the flies, um, a cast of British schoolboys end up stranded on an Island and form their own society together. So these are boys who are like 12 to 14 years old. Um, they all go to the same British boarding school. Um, and there's like, we have our, like, you would know things about it. Like they pass a concert around to speak and they try to Institute all these like democratic, uh, ways of living. But everything goes to hell. Um, all the boys turned violent and it's an absolute nightmare. Some boys die. There's a bunch of horrible imagery and then they get saved at the end.

Sophie ([16:05](#)):

Oh My God.

Abi ([16:06](#)):

Yeah. So, uh, Lord of the Flies has come sort of back into cultural consciousness in the middle of all this COVID stuff. Uh, because a book was recently published about a real group of boys, um, who were stranded on an Island. These are Tonga boys. Um, I cannot remember what Island they're from. I'm very sorry about that. I should have written it down.

Sophie ([16:26](#)):

Google it we'll put a link in the show notes about their plight.

Abi ([16:30](#)):

Cheers gal. So these boys were actually stranded for a long time. They were presumed dead. I want to say it was more than six months. Um, and what happened to them was not at all. It's the exact opposite of what Golding said would happen in Lord of the flies, they created a, like a calm and loving society. They made chicken coops. They like built up, like they built out a bunch of like places for themselves to live. And they like made this nice home on the Island. They were excited when they were rescued. Ultimately, they did want to go home and they had tried to get off the Island, but they instituted things like when they would fight, one of the boys would like put another boy in time out.

Sophie ([17:13](#)):

That's so cute.

Abi ([17:15](#)):

But like, that's how they tell what things. Yeah.

Sophie ([17:17](#)):

Yeah. Do you think that's because that's because Lord of the flies was written by an adult or do you think that's because Lord of the flies was written by like a white British adult, or both.

Abi ([17:28](#)):

Ding, ding, ding. I'm definitely the last one. Golding is like a known like domestic abuser.

Sophie ([17:35](#)):

oh, shit!

Abi ([17:35](#)):

who struggled for most of his life with violent urges, went to a British boarding school and live this like very classic, like colonialist, you know, British empire life. And so I think what we're seeing with Lord of the flies and what we see, especially in the way that he writes the fat character in Lord of the flies, who is affectionately, not affectionately called Piggy, our sweet asthmatic bespectacled little boy. I think that like what you end up seeing is like this horrible way, that's, that these British boys in boarding schools already treat each other, like just transposed onto this Island scenario. But it's, I think what people have been saying and like what a lot of us are coming to realize about books, like Lord of the flies that are in the cannon, is that it's reflective of that one kind of upbringing.

Audio from Lord of the Flies ([18:25](#)):

Come here. We came here to try and talk some sense to you.

Abi ([19:00](#)):

It's reflective of the way that these terrible boys would bully and treat their fat classmate on or off this Island.

Sophie ([19:07](#)):

Yes.

Abi ([19:08](#)):

Rather than it being reflective of like innate human nature, which is how the book is often taught.

Sophie ([19:13](#)):

Oh, I love that take that, Like that's a very anti-capitalist anti-colonial take and I really like that. Yeah. I think that's been very clear to me and this in COVID too, that like everything could be way, way better. If we, if leadership was treating this with a little bit more sense of humanity and focus on the least powerful among us. Um, and the fact that we're not is leading to like much more harm than, than it could.

Abi ([19:40](#)):

They do things like, uh, one of my favorite phrases from Lord of the Flies that they shout at Piggy, um, is when he, so he doesn't have his inhaler and he has asthma and he's trying to like find his inhaler and the leader of the boys is like sucks to your ass.

Sophie ([19:56](#)):

what's that mean?

Abi ([19:58](#)):

Which means like sucks to your asthma, like screw your asthma. Um, um, and I think that that line is incredibly indicative of how those boys grew up and became British boarding school guys, or like, you know, American prep school boys become the people there.

Sophie ([20:17](#)):

I, okay. Did you ever see, um, that show that I don't know what channel it was on that show where they like put little kids out and had them make their own colonial town and stuff.

Abi ([20:30](#)):

No, I've never seen that.

Sophie ([20:32](#)):

We'll put a little clip. It was called like kid nation or something like that. And it was like, yeah, they just like, let them make their own decisions about what was going to happen. And like, they were pretty

mean to each other too. I think like all these American kids. Yes. Yes. We'll put one of my favorite clips from it right here.

Clip from Kid Nation ([20:48](#)):

Bring the chicken up. You're gonna hold it tight. Pull it straight. Stretch its neck out. Alright guys, you ready? It was flapping around, running in circles.

Sophie ([21:45](#)):

Yeah. We'll put a link to that in the show notes too, that always like was wild to me. That that actually happened. That would never happen now. They would never do that for a TV show. Um, but it was really wild.

Abi ([21:55](#)):

Well, wouldn't they?

Sophie ([21:57](#)):

Yeah. I mean, it's not surprising to me just the way it's, hasn't been that surprising to me that like other countries with more like community-based cultures have been able to follow like guidelines better because like, you know, being super individualistic is not going to help in this kind of situation. I don't know. Yeah. Okay. So that's Lord of the flies. I love talking about this.

Abi ([22:22](#)):

I am so enjoying this. I, so I think like you said about that just there about individualism and community, and that reminded me about dietland.

Clip from Dietland ([22:31](#)):

this season on diet land: Where's my warm lemon vinegarette witnessed the same. His body fell out of the sky. Where are you going?

Sophie ([23:07](#)):

So diet land is a book by Sariah Walker and a show on AMC. They should have done more seasons. They just did one. And um, they it's basically like a fat girl who gets caught up in this like rebel group essentially to change culture. Yeah. So tell me your thoughts about dietland,

Abi ([23:30](#)):

you know, something that's funny. So dietland, like when I watched that show, I watched it. I like, I binged it so fast so quickly because I was completely, I'd never read the book, but I was totally enamored with the show because I just think so it's joy Nash plays the main character plum, and she just does this like really beautiful job of going from like the show opens. And she's like very, she's considering weight loss surgery. She like hates her body. She no longer bakes because she doesn't even want to like make food that she might eat. Like when we meet her, she's cutting carrots and celery and putting them in a little Tupperware. She has like a cafe hangout, but she like hides behind a computer and she writes in a thin woman's voice. She writes for this magazine. Um, she does an advice column, but it's, it's not her. It's the like editor of this magazine whose voice she writes in.

Sophie ([24:21](#)):

Yes.

Abi ([24:22](#)):

So she's literally like acting out the horror of the thin woman within, right? And I think like she does such a good job of like, it's not an immediate change for her. Right? Like which coming out as fat for many of us is not an immediate change. And I think I really, I really like vibed with that. I liked that a lot that it wasn't like denigrating her or like hating her for being fat or for like hating her body. Even it wasn't like, look at this woman who just can't love herself. Like it shows very strongly in the show that like her own sort of like self issues and struggles with like self acceptance and hatred are like, definitely, definitely imposed upon her because of the society that she lives in.

Sophie ([25:09](#)):

Yeah.

Abi ([25:10](#)):

Which I think is something that we do not see enough about fat bodies.

Sophie ([25:14](#)):

I love that because it's not just a, are you strong? And like sometimes like fat narratives, if there ever, if there's any kind of mainstream, like, Oh, she loves herself thing. It's always like, because she like is strong enough to love herself and it never puts any blame on society at all, which it should.

Abi ([25:32](#)):

It absolutely should.

Sophie ([25:34](#)):

Yeah. Wait. So, okay. So what's the disaster in dietland.

Abi ([25:38](#)):

So in Dietland, and I guess actually, like, I don't know, call this a disaster if you'd like to, um, that's a coy way of telling you what my politics are. Um, so in dietland, the disaster is that men are being like, I, a couple of things have happened that I can't remember, but essentially, uh, women are retaliating as part of a group called Jennifer and they're killing men who have sexually abused women, higher up men, like wealthy CEOs, um, and like, uh, senators, politicians and things. So they're, those men are being picked off by this like covert group of women. Which I guess is a disaster cause it's wrong to murder.

Sophie ([26:18](#)):

Sure, sure. Whatever.

Abi ([26:21](#)):

Anyway, now that we said it, so it's great. And so it's sort of like that, that thing that's happening, that's like drastically changed the way that people operate in society. To some extent in this show, is like set up against this woman's journey to like, understanding like how she might fit. Not just into like, not just

like fit into society, but like where she might fit in a different community, like how she might find herself outside of like trying to be normal and be thin, you know, in quotation marks, normal.

Sophie ([26:53](#)):

I love that. I think like, I've been wondering about what fat acceptance or fat justice looks like right now in a pandemic, this pandemic or in a disaster. And like, I think it's interesting. Dietland it's like, Oh, there's this kind of subversive power that she like finds. Right.

Abi ([27:12](#)):

Totally.

Sophie ([27:13](#)):

Um, because she's still fighting against like the same society, because I think a lot of times we think like, Oh, if society changed in some way then maybe all these other things would change as well.

Abi ([27:23](#)):

Right.

Sophie ([27:24](#)):

But what we've seen right now is like, society is like still the same. Like people are still doing all their bullshit about like fat people are going to get it more or whatever.

Abi ([27:34](#)):

Yeah.

Sophie ([27:35](#)):

You know, like fat acceptance still is like even more necessary in this pandemic like, because, uh, people are still being shitty. And like, I think it's even harder right now to be fat accepting, like, or even just body neutral, honestly, because everyone has had like so many weird body changes and like everything different during this. Does that make sense?

Abi ([27:59](#)):

That's such a great point. It makes so much sense. I mean, it speaks to me a lot too, as someone who like, I sort of like, I feel like I, my journey has been what I think I've seen mirrored in some of my other fat friends is like an immediate rush of like, Oh my God, this is amazing. Like fatness is so exciting. It's so wonderful and beautiful. And like for the first time I can like, love my own body and appreciate it. And I'm like, wow, you know, colors, rainbows, like colorful t-shirts and crop tops, which is a great phase. But then like, I think it is, it is a phase of discovering that identity because you also then like some of us feel a responsibility then from having that rush of excitement to like educate others. And when that part, like when educating others or,

Sophie ([28:48](#)):

Or you run into the stuff that society is going to be mean to you, like still, even if you believe in yourself, like.

Abi (28:55):
definitely that.

Sophie (28:56):
you run into having to go to the doctor or you run into going somewhere with a seat that doesn't fit you. And then you're like, Oh, I can't, it doesn't matter how happy I am with myself. I still have to deal with this other shit. And then you have to come up with a whole other set of skills to deal with that.

Abi (29:12):
Yeah. And there's like this constant, like, relearning, how to cope with these things that like keep arising or like things that you thought were done because now you're an adult. Cause you're like, well, when I was a fat kid, it hurt my feelings when like I went shopping with my friends, but now I'm a fat adult. So it shouldn't hurt my feelings to go to the store with my friends, you know?

Sophie (29:35):
Right,

Abi (29:36):
right. Why wouldn't it? Like, you know? Yeah.

Sophie (29:40):
But like I was trying to think about what the equivalent of like an awakening could be right now. And I wonder if there are some people who are just like, you know what, this is the, like the last straw for me, fuck this shit. Like I'm not listening. You know what I mean? I think like an individualistic view of what fat liberation is right now is like, there's a hero who will come and like, be like, no, but like maybe a more community based view is that like, we can all be supporting our like fat community a little bit harder during this time, you know?

Abi (30:15):
Yeah. Which it's hard because support is such an ephemeral thing. Right. Like it's so it's so hard to grasp what that means in practice. I think like, I mean, we all know that like, okay, we can like make extra efforts to not talk about food and eating with our friends who we know have eating disorders, for example, like to not complain about those things, which like, you know, I, or try to be kind to ourselves as well while we like, yeah, I don't know. I struggled with some of that.

Sophie (30:45):
Or even just like, I think like solidarity is pretty big for me and all this, like being like, okay, fat people, like Black people, Brown people, like disabled people, people who are low wage earners, like what can I be doing to uplift and support the people who I know are needing stuff right now, you know? Like thinking of us more as part of that group than like, as like, which the other stuff's important to me too. Like, it's, it's important to do stuff like have like, it's important to me to have like a fat whatever, like somebody more prominent celebrity who's fat or something, you know what I mean? Like. But like that seems less and less close to me right now than really doing more grassroots stuff. And so that's like part of the reason why I was like, I like thinking about dietland is like the whole Jennifer collective.

Abi ([31:45](#)):

I think that that's such a beautiful point that you make and that dial-in does echo that so much because it goes from like, you know, she, I, what I also like about dietland is that she makes mistakes or like, yes, she has a lot of missteps or setbacks where she feels like she can't do it. Or she feels like she can't like cope with it. Um, there's a, there's a bit where she like reveals the location of vulnerable women on television. Um, and, and they're women that she's living with and like benefiting from, and she goes back and they sort of sit her down and give her this, talk about how she, like, they're happy for her that she's found herself, but she's revealed the location of people who are in danger. And when you think about like, I mean, many of us will not be in a position where we could accidentally reveal the location of a, you know, of someone who's vulnerable, but it's also like, Oh, like she chooses in that moment not to learn from that experience. And then she learns from it later when she understands the magnitude of it as she continues on her journey. And I think it's nice to see that because you think, yeah, like there have been plenty of times, like I think Sofie Hagen talks about this a lot, like how she feels like bad about how her politics used to such a different place than they are now. And I think it's nice to remember that too, where it's like, I can still, I may have made mistakes or said something in the past that like, I don't stand by anymore, but I can still be in solidarity and support people.

Sophie ([33:07](#)):

OH same, dude. That's why, that's why that is why you gotta set your tweets to delete.

Clip from Wall-E ([33:18](#)):

Everything you need to be happy. It's very important to remain stationary. A service bot will be here to assist you momentarily.

Sophie ([34:09](#)):

Okay. So if you haven't seen Wall-E it's about, it's a Pixar movie about a robot who lives alone and then on a planet on our planet, cleaning up the planet that we've turned to trash, and then he meets another robot. Who's a new model and falls in love with her and goes on the space ship where she lives with all the people and everyone on the spaceship is super fat. And I wrote a paper about Wall-E senior, No, my extra quarter that I had to do after senior year. Um, and I didn't even talk about that then, I wasn't even into it. Then I remember, I remember it's funny cause I remember it upsetting me, but I didn't have the like words or like theory base. You know what I mean? I hadn't really thought about fat acceptance yet. And so I didn't have the framework to think about it. And I just remember being like, I only like the first half of the movie, I don't know why.

Abi ([35:08](#)):

For some reason I feel like sheer joy at the beginning and just like devastation at the end?

Sophie ([35:13](#)):

Yes. Literally. I was like, I don't know why though. Weird. Anyways, isn't that funny?

Abi ([35:18](#)):

Yeah, that is so funny. It's amazing what having like critical theory language can do for your understanding of something like, even just a piece of it, like any amount of like fat acceptance or justice or any language of activism at all, but no one was talking about it at the time either. Like,

Sophie ([35:34](#)):

I mean, I'm sure some people were, but I was not. I mean, a lot of people were like a lot of people who we have on our resource page were talking about it, but I didn't know them. I didn't have access to them because I was still, I wasn't looking for them and they weren't as mainstream. Like I really think even though there's still a long, long way to go, I think body positivity and fat activism is much more of a mainstream idea than it was like even five years ago.

Abi ([36:01](#)):

Definitely.

Sophie ([36:02](#)):

Tell me what you have to say about Wall-E.

Abi ([36:04](#)):

So, there's a couple of things I want to talk about. And one of them is the trick of Disney. I want to talk about how it's okay to walk away from a movie like Wall-E as a fat person and be like, I w- so first I thought the fatties in Wall-E don't make me that mad. I thought actually, you know, there are some issues with it. There's this issue with fatness being equated with the decay of democracy and the ruination of the planet and a misstep and evolution. That's a problem. I guess there's a problem with the like weirdly infantilized, hands and feet that these people have.

Sophie ([36:39](#)):

Yes. But they can't like walk at all, but they're lazy.

Abi ([36:42](#)):

And their like creepy baby toes. Yeah. And my initial argument was like, well, they're not lazy. They live in luxury space, communism. Like they haven't, this is a utopia. Like I want to live on this nice place, full of nice fat people who like, hang out together.

Sophie ([36:57](#)):

Can you imagine zooming around on your chair to watch a movie with your other fat friends? That'd be so fun.

Abi ([37:02](#)):

So fun. But of course it isn't positioned like that. And so, so the trick of Disney got to me, which it often does, which is that like the cuteness and sweetness and like the, the like lovely moments that they do have, and the nice moments that some of these fat characters do have. Occasionally they have like really good character moments that are like, kind of like, let you forget about how they're pretending like fatness comes from propaganda. Um, and like laziness. Uh, I felt like I was like, at first it was like, yeah, actually, you know what? I thought I was going to be more mad at this film, but like, my body does feel a little bit like a tool of the state and propaganda, is real. And also like, we are all subject to the conditions that we blah, blah, blah. And then I fell asleep and then I woke up and I was like, no, no, that's wrong. A cart-. This cartoon fooled me.

Sophie ([37:54](#)):

Yes, it did. Oh my God,

Abi (37:56):

Cute, stupid cartoon tricked me. And it made me so angry that I could still be tricked by Wall-E, even though what I went into it, I knew what it was. I've seen it before. I, it made me so mad,

Sophie (38:10):

That's so funny. I love that. Actually. I love that whole process. Oh my God.

Abi (38:17):

Just No.

Sophie (38:18):

Yeah. I mean, it is really like, once you come down to it, it's like the portrayal of fat people is definitely like, Oh, the implication of the survivors of the apocalypse is that being fat is the worst thing you can be. And that everyone's going to be fat because they, because they've become disconnected from nature.

Abi (38:37):

Right?

Sophie (38:37):

Like the implication is that being thin is natural and being fat is unnatural. And we've done that to ourselves.

Abi (38:46):

What a great point.

Sophie (38:48):

or something.

Abi (38:49):

Yeah, yeah. Or something. It doesn't really complete the thought either. Does that? Cause it like, you know, there's this bit in the, actually, there's a couple of bits. There's one bit where, so the captain has found out about earth and he seen that there's this plant that Wall-E has, that he's brought along and the mission of this luxury space, communism cruise is to go off Earth and then come back when life can be sustained there again. So there's this moment where he, for the first time, clearly in his life, walks, even though it doesn't make sense with the logic of the show that it's presented us, that this man should be able to walk because everyone uses assistive technology and floaty chairs and they seem okay with it.

Sophie (39:30):

Yes.

Abi (39:31):

And they seem to have never walked before, he, uh, that song also Sprach Zarathustra from 2001, a space Odyssey plays.

Sophie ([39:44](#)):

Yes. Yes.

Abi ([39:45](#)):

As he climbs out of his chair for the first time and walks across the room, when that song plays in 2001, a space Odyssey, it's when the monkey, like the ape learns how to use a leg bone as a tool.

Sophie ([39:58](#)):

Oh.

Abi ([39:59](#)):

And he's like pounding the bone against other bones. And cause I went back to look, I was like, why is this so exact? It's that theme of like evolution like evolving back to thin and useful.

Sophie ([40:09](#)):

Yes. I mean, it's also insulting for disability, honestly like that.

Abi ([40:13](#)):

So insulting.

Sophie ([40:15](#)):

right? that, like if you use mobility tools or whatever that like, you know, you're not evolved or something like that. And I think they get thin in the credits now that I'm thinking about it,

Abi ([40:25](#)):

they do, it made me furious. Um also the assistant, like the, it's offensive in terms of disability as well. Because like one of the main themes of the movie is that to be human is to dance. And that's a theme that comes up again and again, cause like Wall-E and his like cute Apple Mac girlfriend, like they like dance out in space together, which makes no sense, but it's fine. And like two of the fat people who've like who have, Wall-E has accidentally jostled about who have now noticed their surroundings, unlike all the other fat people who are on their phones all the time, they like see a clip of dancing and get really excited by it. Like, what's this, you know, it's, it's like, well, okay, to be human isn't to stand up and like dance like in hello Dolly,

Sophie ([41:10](#)):

by the way, you could also dance in a wheelchair. I've seen lots of people do that.

Abi ([41:13](#)):

It's true.

Sophie ([41:14](#)):

That would be fine. Think about how beautiful, right? Like a wheelchair ballet would be beautiful. Like, you know yeah. So canceled, Wall-E's canceled.

Abi ([41:24](#)):

Wall-E's canceled guys.

Sophie ([41:27](#)):

Wall-E's canceled.

Abi ([41:27](#)):

It's over for Wall-E.

Sophie ([41:29](#)):

I think the cultural anxiety that, about disasters that Wall-E shows is like, Oh, destruction of nature. Meaning like, you know, whatever, like, um, uh, what's it called? What we're doing to the planet right now. Just like killing the planet will lead to everyone being fat because we're killing nature, which is like that opposition of fat and nature. When, you know, obviously like lots of fat people exist in nature and like our normal quote unquote, you know what I mean? Like bodies are all normal and natural

Abi ([42:05](#)):

Because yeah, because they come from this earth, like there's not one that doesn't belong here.

Sophie ([42:10](#)):

Yes. Yeah, exactly. And like there are fat people who have always existed like back in. People will sometimes say like back in prehistoric times there were no fat people and I'm like, that's just not true. Like that's.

Abi ([42:22](#)):

just doesn't even make sense.

Sophie ([42:24](#)):

Like also, have you seen this fertility statues? Like they were hella fat. Like I don't get it, you know?

Abi ([42:31](#)):

Yeah. So like fatness is not brand new and it's so lame to pretend it's like, because of McDonald's, which is what this movie posits.

Sophie ([42:40](#)):

Yes. And it's also not because we've like made things easier for people with mobility issues at all.

Abi ([42:46](#)):

Oh my God. Right. And that has laziness has also, laziness is fake. It's not real. It isn't a real thing. Right. People aren't actually like, yes. There's laziness, is just like the straw man of real issues.

Sophie ([42:58](#)):

Well, yeah, because laziness is an idea that comes from the idea that only productivity is good. And so once you don't believe that only productivity for the boss is good, then you realize like, what is laziness, it's like rest,

Abi ([43:13](#)):

right.

Sophie ([43:14](#)):

You know, or like doing things for yourself, right.

Abi ([43:16](#)):

Enjoying your life that you only have one of.

Sophie ([43:19](#)):

Exactly. Maybe laziness is real in the sense of like, if you're not doing something to help your community and you could be, but that's more like, honestly I think of that is selfish, not as lazy, you know?

Abi ([43:30](#)):

Yeah. Cause I, I think like we just throw out that term to mean other things like you're saying like, cause I think it's easier to be like, well I'm just kind of a lazy person. It's like, well, okay, if that's the approach, then that is selfishness. If that's what it's about. Right?

Sophie ([43:43](#)):

Exactly.

Abi ([43:44](#)):

I agree with you.

Sophie ([43:45](#)):

Yeah. Instead of like, people don't need to self punish for feeling quote unquote lazy when it's like, no, sorry, you don't want to work 80 hours a week. Like who wants to do that? Right? No one.

Sophie ([43:57](#)):

Okay. I want to do some wrap up conversations. So what is the harm and only portraying disaster movies with thin heroes. How can we make space for fat, disabled, queer people of color, Black people to save the world? I love that.

Abi ([44:12](#)):

Um, I want to do that one.

Sophie ([44:14](#)):

Yeah, I know. Right.

Abi ([44:16](#)):

I mean I want to save the world,

Sophie ([44:19](#)):

Yeah, right? Yeah.

Abi ([44:20](#)):

So the question of like, what is the harm or danger of only portraying disaster movies with thin heroes? Like the part one that question I think is like, I mean, there's the obvious bit of like, well, we all want to see ourselves represented in, you know, in these roles, which as we've discussed are like capital H hero in these roles that are like, that really like do save the world in the movie or like do affect some great change. Like why should I, as a viewer feel that it's impossible for me to create any kind of change. I think that like never seeing, never seeing a fat body or queer body or disabled body or literally anything other than like a buff dude, be a hero in a disaster, from an occasionally a woman, I guess if, when they're nice to us. To me, it just, it means that like, it sort of feels, I've been thinking a lot lately about propaganda and how more things than we like to admit, act as propaganda in our lives. And I think that often these films act as sort of like nationalist creeds to like American or like Western values. And so that's partially, that's why we only see these than heroes, but it's also like, it's, it means it's very effective at making your, you yourself feel that you cannot actually affect any change and it would be useless to try.

Sophie ([45:41](#)):

Dang. I also think, yeah, I was also thinking about how a lot of times they heroes, you know, it's like the heroes, are you a lot of times white men who are very strong or like more, not more than more strong than the average person or more physically capable. Sometimes there are Black men who are heroes, like Will Smith has a lot of action roles. Denzel Washington has a lot of action roles. The Rock, like the Rock is Black and Samoan. But, um, I also think that that has to do with like American's racism towards like Black men as like, you know, super strong or whatever, like the same weird ways people talk about Black men in sports. Do you know what I mean?

Abi ([46:25](#)):

Oh, it's, which is so gross as like that like workhorse mentality.

Sophie ([46:29](#)):

Yes, exactly. Like, I think there's like, I'm not educated enough about that to make a big statement on it, but I'm sure that that has to do with like, there's like a weird like, Oh, it's okay for Will Smith to be like the superstar in this movie or whatever, because like blah, blah, blah. Something about slavery I'm sure is in there somewhere. So sometimes Black men get to star in them as well, but not as often. And a lot of times if you watch these movies, it's just like any other, it's like a horror movie where a lot of times the Black character will get killed or like sacrifice themselves or something like that. But like, imagine if like, I would really love to watch a movie where not only is the disaster not solved just by one person or one man being strong enough, physically, that it was through like a disabled queer person, like doing something for their community. You know what I mean?

Abi ([47:23](#)):

I do. I do know what you mean,

Sophie ([47:25](#)):

which is like, which is more realistic. I think, I think that's more realistic to what would actually happen.

Abi ([47:29](#)):

I think so. And I think like, of course, like it's the onus isn't on like disaster movies to be like completely realistic, but it also would be nice to see like any other value depicted, any other value that isn't like that sort of like straight down the line. Yeah. Like I agree. I don't know. That's why I like the, you know, dietland so much is, cause she like does eventually join this community. And then she like has to choose if she's going to like push herself and continue to work for them as part of their community, which is like awesome and rare.

Sophie ([48:01](#)):

Yes. What would a movie like, what would be your ideal? Can we make up a fake disaster movie? Like.

Abi ([48:08](#)):

open on living room day, interior living her day.

Sophie ([48:14](#)):

Yes, exactly. Oh my God.

Abi ([48:16](#)):

Yeah. I guess like I, so I agree with you. I think maybe it would be fun to see like, like I love a good on the road disa-, like we have to run away from this imminent threat movie, and I feel like we don't see like running is something that we often see reserved for like very fit bodies. So like conceptually and in the actual action of like moving quickly. And so I think it would be neat to see like a group of people who like sort of span a range of like fat, queer, disabled, person of color, whatever, like a variety of bodies, shapes, sizes, colors, creeds have to like move together as a group and take care of one another as they try to like get out of a city or something that's under siege. Right.

Sophie ([48:59](#)):

Ooh. I love that. I love that.

Abi ([49:01](#)):

So good.

Sophie ([49:02](#)):

Yeah. I think some of the walking dead, it can be like that sometimes or their spinoff show or whatever it is. I haven't watched it that closely to know if that's really, really true, but I think that's a little bit of that. I would like to see a horror or not a horror, a comedy disaster movie, um, starring Nicole Byer, where she has to like get a Motley crew to the end of something.

Abi ([49:29](#)):

that would be so fun.

Sophie (49:31):

Like that would be so fun. It would be an awesome place for actually funny fat jokes. Right. Like she gets like, winded, because she doesn't like usually work out, but she like lifts kettlebells so she can like punch zombies or whatever. You know what I mean?

Abi (49:44):

Yes. So good. So she doesn't have to run cause she has a different skill that like,

Sophie (49:48):

cause she could yeah, exactly. Like something like that. That's like th- there would be so much fun. Like I want to watch that.

Abi (49:55):

I can like perfectly picture the scene where she like suits up as well, you know?

Sophie (49:59):

Right. Wouldn't that be so fun?

Abi (50:01):

Oh, it'd be such a good time. And that's another opportunity for a fat joke where she like has to lie like a nice fat joke where she's got like, you know, someone's little like army fuckin thing. And she has to like,

Sophie (50:11):

she's like, why doesn't the army have any clothes for fat people? Like that'd be really funny, Oh I'd watch that,

Abi (50:18):

Oh, it'd be funny. Do we need to write this movie?

Sophie (50:21):

I'd totally watch it. I'm gonna tell April to write it.

Sophie (50:25):

I want you to tell people where they can follow you if you want them to, or get updates on you.

Abi (50:30):

I can be found on ye old Instagram at abinormalcy. my content is fun, but not particularly exciting. You'll mostly see images of me standing outside as though I'm always there and pictures of my husband that I've edited in odd ways.

Sophie (50:50):

How can people learn more about your work if they want to?

Abi ([50:54](#)):

Yeah. So I'm, I'm in the process of setting up, resetting up my little website. So that's under construction at the moment. If you do want to see some little other stuff I've done, I for a while wrote for the big bride club, which I believe was briefly featured on she's all fat in the past.

Sophie ([51:10](#)):

We'll put that in the show notes. We'll link your stuff.

Abi ([51:13](#)):

Yeah. We're on hiatus. Cause all of us are grad students. So, but there's still plenty to go look at there. And I have some really exciting upcoming projects in film and television. So if you would like to wait around and hang out and see, follow me on Instagram and eventually I'll accomplish them.

Sophie ([51:31](#)):

Yay. Yay. Okay. Thank you so much for being here with us. We are off to record our Patreon episode. If you're a patron, you'll hear some of Abi's obsessions as well as our normal sleepover questions for this season on patreon episodes. Um, thank you so much for being here and for talking about this with us, it's always a joy to talk to an expert and I love talking about movies and TV. So this is really fun.

Abi ([51:57](#)):

Thank you so much for having me. It's so exciting to chat with you.

Sophie ([52:01](#)):

Yay, okay. Bye bye.

Sophie ([52:09](#)):

And that's our show. This week your call to action is to learn about Black women in film history. We've even got an Instagram graphic to point you to from [@thepowerthread](#) and [@bysahra](#). So first go give them each a follow. The graphic introduces you to four Black women directors. I'm going to tell you about a fifth. Ava DuVernay is an incredible filmmaker who you probably have heard of for her documentary 13th about anti-Black racism and prisons in the US, or maybe you know her as the creator of the miniseries When They See Us about five Black boys, falsely accused of assault and the violence done to them. These are both important, pretty necessary viewings, most especially for non Black folk. But I want you to learn more about Ava DuVernay beyond her incredible talent. I want you to watch her indie film, I Will Follow. you can get it on Netflix. It's about this woman moving out of her home, dealing with the grief over her aunt's recent death. I know we have our book club going too, but watch I Will Follow. Watch it with a friend on Netflix party. We'll link that in the show notes. Maybe we'll have a live stream or a watch with us Twitter, Insta story threads. So check back in on our socials.

Sophie ([53:46](#)):

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