

Hello, I'm Fat: An Autoethnographic Analysis of the Fat Experience in *Shrill*

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Figure 1. Annie Easton in *Shrill*

1. INTRODUCTION

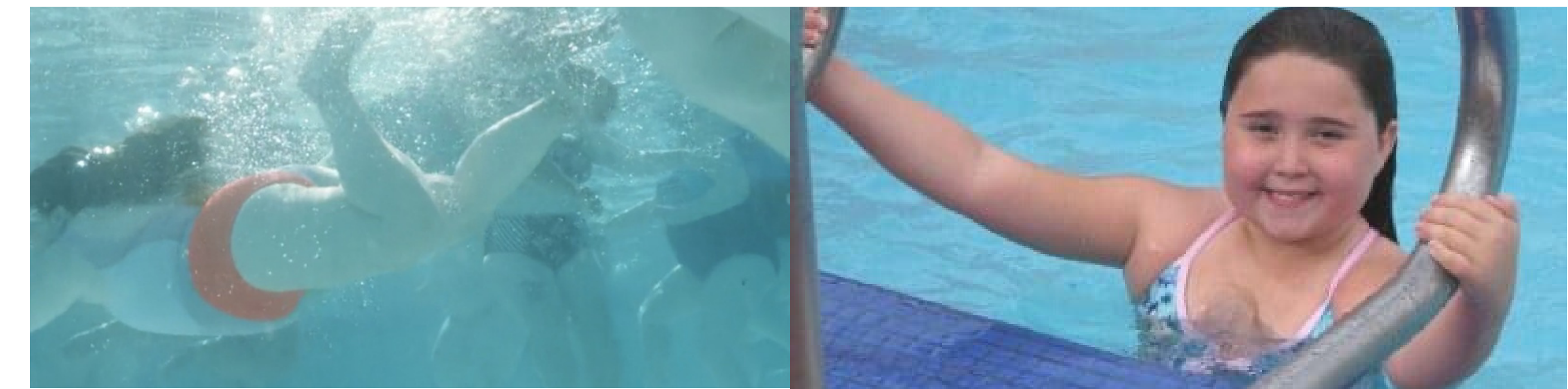


Figure 2. Top to bottom: Fat Monica in *Friends*, Annie in *Shrill*, Fran in *Shrill*.

- **Fat women feel enormous pressure to be thin.** This pressure is intensified by media portrayals of fat women that show characters who are unruly, miserable, or comical.
- The series *Shrill* (2019-2021) combats fatphobic representations by offering Annie, a fat woman, as a lead character. ***Shrill* shows the societal stigmas of being fat without victimizing its main character. However, the series' focus on self-love and reliance on a Black character to facilitate that self-love mirror the real-life dependency on and erasure of Black women in the Body Positivity movement**
- **In my essay, I offer an autoethnographic critical media analysis of *Shrill*.** I explore the Western Body Positivity movement, the effects of the United States' hegemonic beauty ideologies, and my experiences as a white, fat woman alongside *Shrill*

2. METHODS

Figure 3. (L) Annie at the "Fat Babe Pool Party" (R) Author in the second grade, swimming



- According to Stocchetti & Kukkonen (2011), critical media analysis involves “thinking critically about the impact of the media on the distribution of power in society” (p. 13). As a result, **I realized *Shrill* did more than positively portray a fat woman, it was one of the first media texts to establish fatphobia as a systemic problem rather than a personal issue.**
- Though my work began as a way to explore the cultural impact of *Shrill*, like Manning (2015), I “couldn’t get past me” while analyzing the series (p. 56). **I found myself relating to virtually all Annie’s experiences, and it became apparent that by incorporating my own stories, the analysis would be deeper and richer than without.**
- Analyzing myself with Annie **allowed me to examine my life through *Shrill* while studying the impact of fatphobia on culture**

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Figure 4. Left to right: Annie at work, Fran and Annie at a wedding, Annie dancing at the "Fat Babe Pool Party"



***Shrill's* representation of fat characters is groundbreaking.**



Despite *Shrill* eventually addressing Annie’s white privilege, the realization is too little too late, proving even some of the best fat representation has significant flaws.



Even with its problematic elements, *Shrill* continues to empower me on a journey to accepting my fat body.

After analyzing *Shrill*, the modern Body Positivity movement, Western beauty standards, and my own experiences as a fat woman, **I've discovered a passion for examining media with culture.** As such, I hope to **further investigate representations of fat women on screen, especially those with intersecting marginalized identities**, such as Kat in *Euphoria*, Kim in *Special*, or Carrie in *The L Word: Generation Q*.

4. REFERENCES

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