

The Monthly Rag

Brought to you by the Feminist and Gender Studies Student Advisory Council

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What I've Learned from Macklemore, David Wright, Classics Major, Class of 2015

Macklemore became one of my favorite artists when I first listened to his album *The Language of My World* (2005). Since then, I have come to love and admire what he has to say, as well as his forthright and direct approach. The first song I listened to on *The Heist* (2012), his most recent studio album with Ryan Lewis, was "Thin Line" featuring Buffalo Madonna. In one of the lines, Macklemore raps: "The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing women that they look better in their makeup." I appreciate this line, because Macklemore subtly recognizes and explores some origins of our habits and insecurities.

For me, the "devil" is something different for every person, but stems from societal pressures as well as external influences; the "devil" is not inside of us, but becomes a part of us when we let others tell us how to live. Here, he acknowledges how so many people wear a mask on a daily basis, while also commenting on the personal dangers

that wearing one possesses by tracing its roots in the symbol of what is evil. It seems as though makeup has become a way to escape from an individual's natural appearance. By giving into outside forces, the power of individual beauty is lost to generalized appearances that slowly eat at one's true complexion.

We as a society put a lot of pressure on young women to look a certain way, dress a certain way, and act a certain way in order for them to appear more attractive to men. One of the reasons I love Macklemore so much is because he tries to explore why we make certain decisions and why some people choose to conform to these societal norms. I sincerely feel for young people that are afraid to be themselves, and it hurts me to see so much individual spirit trumped by something that is not real. The authentic beauty in the individual is what allows them to bring their own light and love to the world. In another song, "Inhale Deep,"

he raps: "Freedom is acknowledging the mask you have on and possessing the strength to take it off." Though it is not an easy thing to accept, coming to terms with who we are and who we are not can help us to more fully experience life. Though wearing some makeup may help empower some young people, I would love if we as a society moved away from compartmentalized views of what is attractive and promoted natural virtue and grace over exhausting facades.



Easy Ways to Get Involved with CC Feminism!

1. **Come to FemCo's book club every third Tuesday at 7pm in the ID House.** Food will be served and all are welcome! We'll discuss short novels, articles, essays, documentaries or short movies. If a movie/documentary is chosen we will view it together. Each block, the chosen "book" will be emailed to FemCo's listserv, but having read it beforehand is not mandatory. Email FemCo co-chair Melissa Barnes at Melissa.Barnes@coloradocollege.edu with any questions.
2. **Join the Monthly Rag facebook group!** Professors, students, and alumni post essays, articles, and videos on a daily basis and members respond and engage with one another in the comments section. It's a great way to participate in a productive, political dialogue.
3. **Get your voice out there and contribute to the Rag!** If you have a different take on a topic than a writer, share it with me. A thought-provoking stance on a political issue? Let me know. An experience you feel the campus should know about? Here's your chance! **Write up a 300-500 word critical piece and email it to me, Tess Gattuso, at Theresa.Gattuso@coloradocollege.edu for the editing process.** We're also happy to accept poems and art (especially if it's your own work). All views are welcome, just send them in.



"I tell my students, 'When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game.'" —Toni Morrison

Hot for GIRLS: Reacting to Lena Dunham's Nudity

Maggie Deadrick, FGS Major & Journalism Minor, Class of 2014

GIRLS is my Sunday. All week, my anticipation for the new episode consumes me. And who can blame me? It's relevant, witty and captivating for a whole convenient 30 minutes.

Who are these GIRLS anyway? Well, they're just like I expect to be in a few years: straight white female Liberal Arts college graduates, trying to make it in New York while surviving off of an allowance from my parents. The show sprinkles these girls with romance and friendship troubles, career-inspired adventures, and lots of insecurity. And it's about time pop culture incorporated our voice.

At this point, Hannah (Lena Dunham's character and the protagonist) and her best friend, Marnie, have diverged down two completely different narratives. Hannah's clothes get drabbier while Marnie's get more fabulous. If I'm more of a Hannah than a Marnie, should I be feeling sorry for myself, too? Because neither Hannah nor I are a size two and rocking fabulous clothing, but the whimsical Marnie is. Which leads me to my point—the role of Lena Dunham's size in the series.

Episode five of season two consists of Hannah's two-day fling with a gorgeous, older, recently separated doctor. If by some

stretch, Dunham intended to prove that big girls can, in fact, score that "perfect guy," critics from *Esquire*, *Entertainment Weekly* and the like tore it apart, citing that someone with such a "disgusting" body would never realistically woo someone as conventionally attractive as the doctor, actor Patrick Wilson.

But anyone who follows Dunham, knows she isn't a fool. She knew full well the kind of statement she would make with her frequent nudity in episode five, not to mention the series. She is smart enough to expect the criticism she received. So why did she do it? Maybe because she knew everyone would talk and the fact that everyone would criticize her body is a big enough statement in itself. Even a woman who has reached a level of success, recognition and respect at age 26 (four Emmy nominations, two Golden Globes, a Directors Guild Award), is getting torn apart for her appearance. Why is this happening? She's trying to play an average girl, not a supermodel.

I'm proud of Lena Dunham for the risks she is taking in consistently being real with GIRLS (well, as real as you can get with two young wasps and two young Jews). Sometimes though—like with the doctor episode and its nasty reviews—I'm overtaken by the

reality of being a girl. I'm scared that Dunham is too right about the ingrained body ideals we have as Americans, and the impact a woman's body will have on her experiences.

But I feel an ounce of hope after reading Tracie Egan's article "What Kind of Guy does a Girl Who Looks Like Lena Dunham 'Deserve'?" on *jezebel.com*, a feminist pop culture blog. She poses this to all body-shamers: "It's not enough to simply acknowledge that, like the [critics], you're prejudiced against the idea of a physically imperfect woman being able to enchant a hunk like [Patrick Wilson]. You should be asking yourself why that is." The general public has exposed their attitude toward women's bodies. It's about time they start questioning it.



Do you have a question, want more info or resources, don't understand something, or want to contribute to our publication?
Contact Editor-in-Chief Tess: Theresa.Gattuso@ColoradoCollege.edu