

Arts and Entertainment



Photo Courtesy of popblerd.com.

From left to right: Allison Williams, Jemima Kirke, Lena Dunham, and Zosia Mamet.

HBO's *Girls*: Not Just a Show to Hate-Watch

By Domenic Merolla '16
Herald Contributor

With its fifth episode airing on Sunday, the second season of HBO's *Girls* is off to a start that should be called nothing short of mammary.

For anyone who has yet to see any episodes of this show, it is pretty straightforward. It's about a group of best friends in their twenties who come from different backgrounds and all live in New York City. They deal with issues of moving away from home, romance, self-actualization, and all the existential crises therein. The four girls are Hannah Horvath (Lena Dunham), Marnie Michaels (Allison Williams), Jessa Johansson (Jemima Kirke), and Shoshanna Shapiro (Zosia Mamet). It is important to note, that all four of these actresses have been awarded much success thanks to nepotism.

Attracting both many "hate-watchers" and super fans, *Girls* occupies a space on television that many claim to be very unique. According to its creator, director, writer, star, and executive producer Lena Dunham the show is supposed to show a group of girls, living in New York City, that exists outside of those usually portrayed on television. In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, Dunham said, "*Gossip Girl* was teens duking it out on the Upper East Side and *Sex and the*

City was women who figured out work and friends and now want to nail family life. There was this whole in between space that hadn't really been addressed."

While it is able to be argued that, yes, the age range in which the girls of *Girls* belong is different than that of those other two explosively popular NYC shows, I struggle to find a remote difference between the three. Changing a few of the general life circumstances, the premise of evidently all shows about women in New York City is that everyone is rich.

Keeping romance aside for now, I don't really see any other plot point in *Girls* besides the theme - all four girls are wealthy. Fooled by all the talk of money and the necessity of getting jobs? Even without holding the show to a perfectly literal interpretation of the cost of living, it's important to note that the "struggle" any one of these girls goes through is in no way a real one.

Here's an example: Hannah begins the series begging her parents to keep gifting her an allowance. At one point, her allowance was so large it supported all of her living expenses in NYC, including living in a huge apartment. Even when they "cut her off," she still lived there. Sure, her season 1 roommate

often tells her she needs Hannah to pay her portion of rent. Marnie, Hannah's roommate, is ultimately unsuccessful. Marnie's not only unsuccessful, she actually is herself unemployed. Does this not present a real issue in New York City, with its infamously sky high rent? Apparently not if your parents are giving you a reduced allowance.

The second central theme in *Girls* is romance. In this show, "romance" entails someone peeing on you and trying to force anal penetration on you while you vocally object. Then you pine for that person, until eventually you tell him it is rape for him to be in your apartment. Unfortunately, those scenarios all happened to Hannah. Lena Dunham making light of rape seems a little bizarre to appear in show of such high accolades. What that assumption fails to recognize, though, is that Hannah and Lena Dunham are both people who come from lives of insulation and privilege and quite possibly have no way to have learned empathy outside of the self-gratifying kind that comes from living in an up-and-coming neighborhood or going to a good college.

The show is wildly boring, and this can be stated in no other way. The girls don't really do or say anything besides a flurry of young

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Academy Awards: Who Will Take Everything Home?

By Joyee Woodrow '15
Herald Contributor

With awards season coming to an end in the film industry, people are gearing up for the culmination of it all: the 85th annual Academy Awards, also known as the Oscars. Now that the Golden Globes are over, the nominations for the Academy Awards are out for the public to see. Among the nominees for Best Picture are *Argo*, *Lincoln*, and *Django Unchained*, to name a few. Some of the nominees for Best Actor include Bradley Cooper for *Silver Linings Playbook* and Hugh Jackman for *Les Miserables* while the nominees for Best Actress include Jennifer Lawrence for *Silver Linings Playbook* and Jessica Chastain for *Zero Dark Thirty*.

There's a common misconception that the winners

from the Golden Globes are a shoo-in to win at the Academy Awards, but this isn't necessarily true. The voting ceremonies are completely different. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, who judge both film and television, oversees the Golden Globes, while the Academy Awards are overseen by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, who only judge film. In fact, for the last two years, the Golden Globes and Academy Awards groups have disagreed on the winner for Best Picture. In 2012, the Academy gave the award to *The Artist*, while the HFPA gave the award to *The Descendants*, and in 2011 the Academy gave the award to *The King's Speech*, while the HFPA gave it to *The Social Network*.

This year, *Argo* and *Les Miserables* took home many of the awards at the Golden Globes and both have been nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards. *Argo*, starring Ben Affleck, (*The Town*, *Good Will Hunting*) is a drama centered around the story of a secret operation helping six fugitive Americans escape Iran. In this thriller, the CIA devises a plan to create a fake film in order to sneak the Americans out of the country. *Les Miserables* is a musical starring Hugh Jackman (*X-Men*, *The Prestige*) as a man in 19th-century France who breaks his parole and is constantly on the run from a policeman he knew in prison, all while raising the daughter of a factory worker he once knew.

ABC News writer Luchina

Fisher predicts that the Best Picture will go to *Lincoln* despite it only winning one award at the Golden Globes (Daniel Day-Lewis for Best Actor). According to her, since *Argo* and *Zero Dark Thirty* didn't gain as many nominations as expected, *Lincoln* has become the favorite to win the picture. Among Fisher's and many others' predictions, are Daniel Day-Lewis for Best Actor in *Lincoln*, Jessica Chastain for *Zero Dark Thirty*, and *Brave* for Best Animated Feature.

The Academy Awards take place on Sunday, Feb. 24 at 7 PM and will be hosted by Seth MacFarlane. To see a full list of nominees and more, visit www.oscar.go.com.