

## Actresses and Body Image in Hit 2012 Movies

Rachel Prati, staff writer

**Opinion** – You don't know me, I know, so I feel I should admit right here and now that I am completely obsessed with movies; I always have been and I probably always will be. As a complete movie nerd, I dragged my reluctant friends and family to my tiny local movie theater quite a few times over this past winter break. Recently in theaters, there have been just too many great movies to choose from which left me feeling like a little kid in a cinematic candy shop. *Lincoln* and *Les Misérables* dazzled me with the strength of the actor's legendary performances, *Life of Pi* and *The Hobbit* amazed me with rich storytelling and eye-popping CGI, and *Silver Linings Playbook*, hands down, my absolute favorite movie of the year, left me with a "great-movie high," as I have recently dubbed the feeling.

What feeling is that, you might ask? Well, it's that cheery joy you feel deep down when a movie just moves you, speaks to you, makes you both laugh and cry, but most importantly, makes you think, long after the final credits roll.

After proving myself as certifiable cinematic geek, I think I can say this next statement without too much judgment: whenever I amble over-excitedly into a theatre, I get pumped about seeing how women will be portrayed in film. This season's crop of movies appealed to me because the movies were full of actresses I not only adore, but professional women who've been very open about how they want to be perceived in the media.

First, I'd like to talk about Anne Hathaway in *Les Misérables*. Yes, we can all agree, her performance as Fantine was incredible, but so was the message she delivered to girls and women when she refused to disclose her low weight for the film, saying that she didn't want girls emulating the unhealthy look she obtained for the part. Yes, of course I think it's wrong that the woman who just won a Golden Globe as Best Supporting Actress in the role of a lifetime has made more headlines for her weight loss than her award-winning talent, but I can see the bright

side of this sad story.

Careful not to use her celebrity to promote or glamorize anorexia, Hathaway recently said in an interview, "There are so many people out there that will try something unhealthy to lose weight; I don't want to contribute to that." By not broadcasting her weight loss for a role which demanded theatrical accuracy as a starving prostitute dying of tuberculosis, she asserted her control of her how the media disseminate that news to public,

perhaps saving young women from suffering themselves to attain her admittedly unhealthy frame.

Another actress I want to talk about is Jennifer Lawrence, the young up-and-coming actress who just won a Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Comedy. Ask anyone, or just check my JLaw-gif-riddled Tumblr, it is obvious that I love Jennifer Lawrence.

I think she is a brilliant actress and a totally cool, very down-to-earth celebrity chick and I kind of really want to be her when I grow up.

As a young woman with a passion for bettering how women feel about themselves, I also really love her stance on her self-image. In both *Silver Linings Playbook*, where she depicted a girl-next-door dancer and last summer's *The Hunger Games*, where she played a teenager literally fighting for her life, Lawrence has given young women a positive and healthy body role model. She's even said on the topic of body-image issues that she thinks "it's really important for girls to have people to look up to and to feel good about themselves. [I'm] so sick of these young girls with their [crazy] diets." Unlike Anne Hathaway in *Les Mis*, Lawrence claims that she is "never going to starve [her]self for a part," adding that she "[doesn't] want little girls to be like, 'Oh, I want to look like Katniss, so I'm going to skip dinner.' I was trying to get my body to look fit and strong—not thin and underfed." As both characters, Jennifer looks exactly that; fit and strong and ath-



Anne Hathaway in *Les Misérables*

## Ray Lewis: The G.O.A.T. (Greatest of All Time)

Maltlyn Healy, staff writer

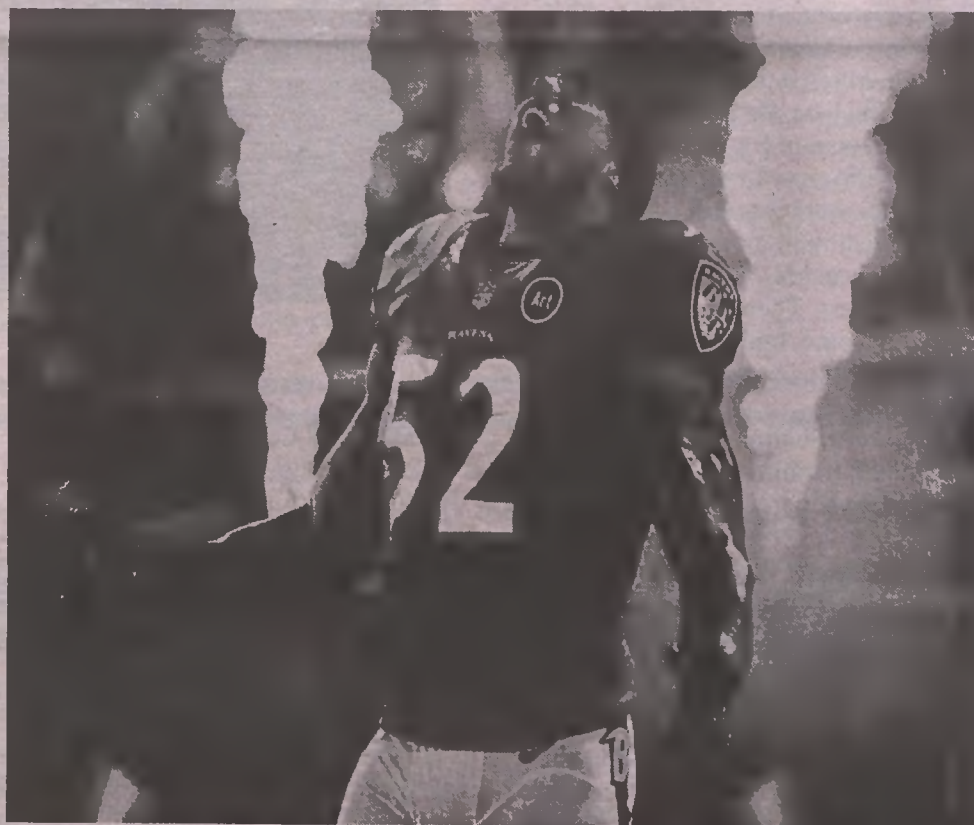
Ray Anthony Lewis has greatly impacted the game of football. He was born on May 15, 1975 in Bartow, Florida and played college football for the University of Miami. He has been with the Ravens from the beginning and has helped to build up that franchise. Ray Lewis has played 17 seasons in the NFL. Unfortunately, the 2012-2013 season will be his last in the National Football League.

In 1996 the Baltimore Ravens drafted Lewis in the first round—the same year that the Ravens were established as an NFL team. Since then, he has set records that surpass any other Middle Linebacker in the game. Lewis has been invited to 13 Pro Bowls in his career, missing only one due to a hand injury. He has won the honorable title of NFL Defensive Player of the year twice, making him only the sixth player all time to win that title more than once in his career. He helped guide the Ravens to their first Super Bowl victory in 2000 against the Giants and won Super Bowl XXXV MVP. Lewis also won the NFLPA Linebacker of the Year in 2007. These honors are just a brief overview of Lewis' impressive career stats. He boasts an impressive 2,643 total tackles in the regular

season from 1996 to the present. Lewis accompanies that with 31 total interceptions, 20 total fumbles recovered, and 41.5 total sacks. Lewis is absolutely a future Hall of Famer.

Ray Lewis has done a lot for the Baltimore Ravens' defensive line, but he has done much more for the character of his teammates. Lewis is a devout Christian despite the murder allegations he faced after his Super Bowl victory in 2000. Lewis' charges were dropped, and he was only charged with obstruction of justice. Lewis wears a t-shirt with the words "Psalm 91" printed on it under his jersey every game. He is known for his pre-game speeches to pump up his teammates and for giving glory to God after every game. Lewis has been quoted on his past mistakes by saying, "I talk to my team and I talk to different players about what I used to be when I was in my 20s, and what God has brought me from [to] now."

Ray Lewis will forever be hailed as one of the greatest linebackers of all time. He has led the Ravens both in tackles and in inspiration throughout the team's franchise history. Lewis will be missed on the field—even by stubborn Steelers fans.



Ray Lewis, the GOAT photo via [nflchick.com](http://nflchick.com)

letic, qualities we rarely see admired in women in the media. Above all, though, she looked real. She looked like me, she looked like my friends, and that made me happy; to see myself and the women I love in my life represented in movies and to feel, for once, like, hey, I'm ok. We're ok.

In my opinion, we need to see more of this in the media. More body-acceptance and body-love, more respect for women of every shape and size, and less glorification of unhealthy ideals. We can help by looking for it, supporting it, and striving for that better place

in the future of all of media genres, where all body types are respected and admired. But, I think that perhaps it starts with celebrities and media execs and realizing that how they are depicted affects their audience which includes children, pre-teens and young men and women (and a pretty impressionable group we are!). It starts with young celebrity women, who know what it is to be harshly criticized by the media, taking a stand and loving their bodies as they really are, so that one day soon, we can get over the "skinny-bitch" thing.