Hannah Decker



THIRTEEN

It's happening so fast...



thirteen

Thirteen (2003) follows impressionable seventh grader Tracy on a journey of self discovery, sexual exploration, and, ultimately, rebellion against her mother and society itself with the help of bad-girl classmate, Evie Zamora.



THEMES OF TRANSGRESSION



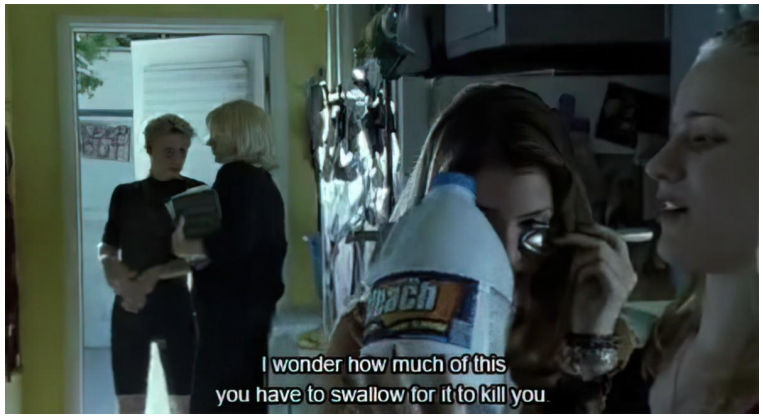
COMING-OF-AGE

SEXUALITY

DRUGS

SELF-HARM

Doe eyed—Tracy Freeland, played by Evan-Rachel Wood, is the good girl looking to upgrade her social status at the beginning of seventh grade. She finds herself desperately seeking to impress and befriend It-Girl Evie Zamora, turning her back on her booksmarts, friends, mother, and herself.







DOWNTOWN CINEMA

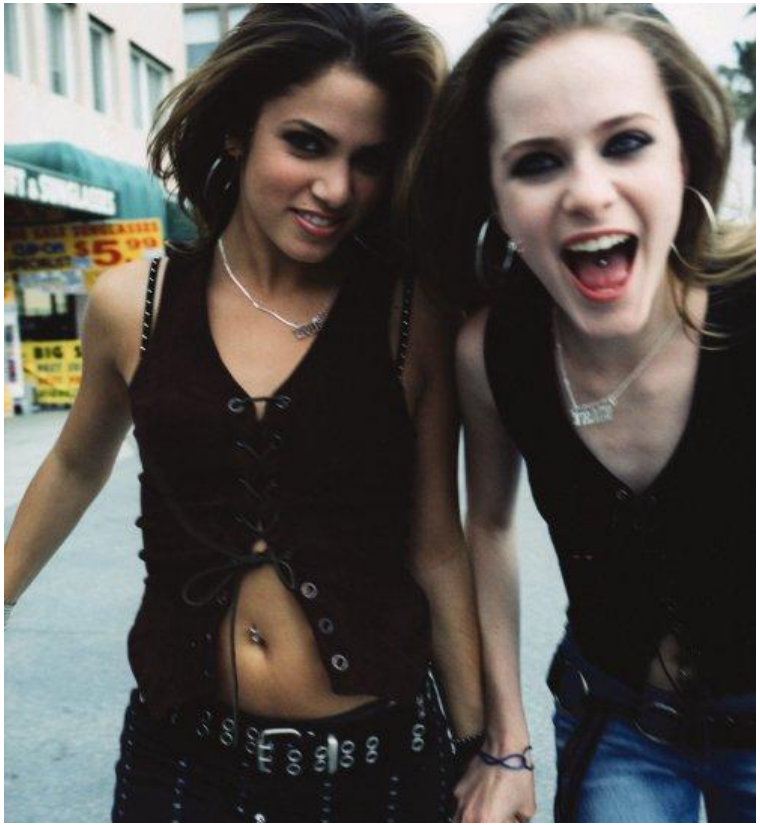
"'the desire to become more of oneself whether in sexual relations, under the influence of chemical substances, and the realm of possibility in shaping the self'' (Hawkins 119)



Similar to the themes of Downtown Cinema, *Thirteen* captures the portrait of a specific person: the figure of independence, the girl out of her element, exploring herself, the girl seeking change. *Variety* (1984) and *Smithereens* (1982) also showcase similar themes.

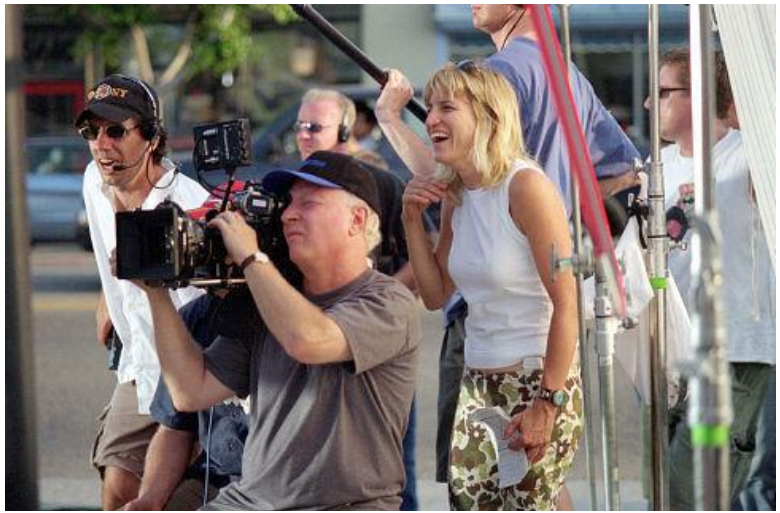


FEMINISM & YOUNG ADULTS



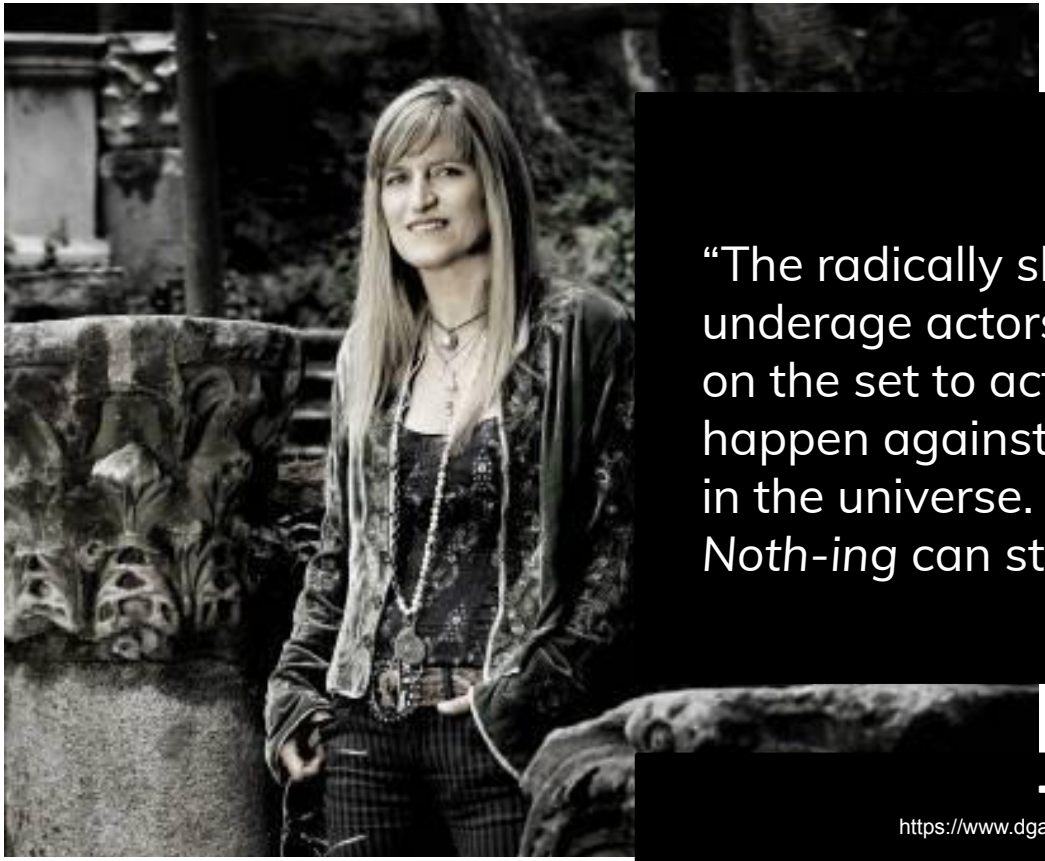
Thirteen explores many feminist and post-feminist themes, while examining teenage characters and stories. The film explores the margins in these ways, featuring women, using an almost all female cast, and telling teenage stories. Feminist films, "featuring young women protagonists and circulating 'empowerment rhetoric' and 'identity paradigms'" (Bleach 26-27) exist on the outside and are not as likely to be featured as a part of a big studio production. The film, while featuring a primarily female cast, was created mostly by women. The film was directed by Catherine Hardwicke and co-written by Hardwicke and Nikki Reed. The lack of boundaries in independent cinema allowed for this film to be made. Its independence allowed its content to be created and its creators to create it. In "The Woman Filmmaker in the New York Avant-garde," Lauren Rabinovitz writes that "women filmmakers played an especially significant role in shaping the avant-garde. Avant-garde, or independent, cinema offered women greater opportunities for artistic success because arts institutions initially accord cinema only marginal status" (74). Had it not been for independent cinema, a filmmaking practice shaped largely by marginal communities like the female filmmakers, *Thirteen* would not be here.

STYLES & CAMERA TECHNIQUE



Primarily shot in tight locations and in between four walls, *Thirteen* captures the essence of guerilla filmmaking. It is mostly steadicam and hand-held, largely due to its set restrictions, but also due to the aesthetic direction of the film's director Catherine Hardwicke. Hardwicke wanted the environment to exude grittiness and tension, relying on shaky cameras, low-lighting, and tight close-ups to do so.

"We had no money and we had no time, it was really like a race to get the film done. So part of it, you've got to be hand-held to move fast and we had a little camera, and we knew we wanted to film it so that you could just feel like, what is it like to be Thirteen? One minute you're having like the best time of your life, 'we're going out with Havey!' And the next minute, 'I'm going to fucking kill my mother!' You know – that doesn't work, that idea with a static camera, that's not how you feel when you're going through that. Now it's tough for [Elliot], cause a lot of times he'd be crashing into walls," she laughs. "And sometimes when we're editing we had to edit out the, 'Ouch!' It was just, you know, run and gun, and really just guerilla style, but that was the energy of the film." https://chrisjonesblog.com/2015/07/catherine-hardwicke-twilight-interview.html



“The radically short schedule, working with underage actors, and harnessing the energy on the set to actually make the scenes happen against all rules of chaos that exist in the universe. How do you keep on with it? *Noth-ing* can stop me.”

—CATHERINE HARDWICKE,

https://www.dga.org/Craft/DGAQ/All-Articles/0704-Winter-2007-08/Independent-Voice-Catherine-Hardwicke.aspx.

CATHERINE HARDWICKE

"Catherine Hardwicke was paid $3 on Thirteen — $2 for the screenplay, which she co-wrote with actress Nikki Reed (then 13), and $1 for directing... Since then, the film has turned a profit — Hardwicke says she received a check for $18,000 two months ago [in 2018]" (https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2018/08/207451/thirteen-movie-cast-anniversary-evan-rachel-wood)

- **Biography**:
  - Born and raised in Texas along the US-Mexican border, where her family owned a farm
- **Credentials**:
  - University of Texas at Austin
    - Degree in Architecture
  - University of California Film School
- **Filmwork**:
  - Production designer on sets of directors like Cameron Crowe, Richard Linklater, Lisa Cholodenko, David O. Russel, and Roger Corman
  - Prior to *Thirteen*, Hardwicke had no professional directing experience.

"And then I worked for Roger Corman where they had me doing everything. I did stunts, I did weapons — I didn't know anything about weapons. I was out in the middle of the desert, riding motorcycles, handing out Uzis to people. And doing art department [work]. So I've really started out on the most crazy, low-budget movies."
https://www.bustle.com/entertainment/catherine-hardwicke-28-interview-thirteen-twilight-tim-burton-puppets

Making *Thirteen*

Screenplay & Inspiration

- Co-written by Hardwicke and thirteen year old Nikki Reed (Evie) in six days in January 2002.
- Hardwicke and Reed's relationship is a unique one. Hardwicke has known Reed since the younger actress was five, as Hardwicke was Reed's father's former girlfriend.
- The screenplay is a semi-autobiographical retelling of Reed's own experiences. Hardwicke noticed Reed's angst as an adolescent and encouraged her to channel it in a creative, non-destructive way. Together, they created *Thirteen*.
- "...every time I wrote a scene, I'd go, 'come over here and act it out with me'. So we'd read it all out loud and change the words and improve it, so that was the writing process with her. I was at the computer, but she would fly in with input and the voice of her character."
  https://chrisjonesblog.com/2015/07/catherine-hardwicke-twilight-interview.html
- Pitching the film to studios was not successful. "I was a first time director. All the characters are women, and it was going to be rated R and about a teenager. That does not check the boxes for any studio," Hardwicke tells Refinery29.



Making *Thirteen*

Female Filmmaker

- Hardwicke found great difficulty finding a studio interested the film. She was a first time director, writing a film with an almost entirely female cast about heavily controversial subject matter.
- *So, she did it herself.*

Budget & Schedule

- Budget: $1.5 Million
- Budget was independently funded by Hardwicke, and several investors found by producers Michael London and Jeffrey Levy-Hinte
- Shoot Length: 17 days, up to only 8 hours per day due to child labor laws

Costume & Set

- To maintain a realist style, Hardwicke had Reed and Wood dress in their own clothing, and the film was shot in a real home in California's San Fernando Valley, rented by Hardwicke. Hardwicke and the cast slept in a rented house, sometimes in the same bed.

- "We somewhat had permits, but on Hollywood Boulevard we might have a permit for this thing and this place, but when we went from this location to another one, we just left the camera on and let the actors walk along and when police came along, Elliot would just put the camera down. We didn't have a permit for the scene on the bus. I just went up to Evan and gave her $1.50 in change. She said, 'What's this for?' I said, 'You're going to pay the bus driver.' She had only been on a studio movie and a TV show and had never done a guerrilla movie, so she was in shock. I said, 'Come on, it's going to be fine, it's guerrilla filmmaking, you're going to love it'. So we got her to the back of the bus and the AD blocked the bus drivers view. He stood in the rear view mirror and with the little camera we would shoot. I asked people to move seats."

CATHERINE VS CASSAVETES

JOHN CASSAVETES

“Cassavetes represented the American auteur in its most pure and unadulterated form: the filmmaker who writes their own scripts, arranges their own financing, organises the whole project on their own, works with a small circle of dedicated friends who are willing to work for very little or even for nothing, edits their own work, arranges distribution after the film is completed and, in the case of Cassavetes, even ‘writes his own press pack and does the layouts for many of the posters and newspaper ads’” (Tzioumakis 165)

CATHERINE HARDWICKE

Hardwicke, along with thirteen year old Nikki Reed, wrote the film themselves. Hardwicke found producer Michael London through a therapist, who was married to London. Most of the music in the film was made by friends of Hardwicke. Hardwicke participated in editing, which took place over the course of eight weeks in an editing suite at Hardwicke’s alma mater, UCLA.







TWILIGHT

Hardwicke would go on to direct larger budget films, including the very distinct, blue-tinted debut film of the *Twilight Saga* franchise. *Twilight*(2009) is largely recognized for its distinct “indie” feel, crediting its camera work and color grading to Hardwicke’s indie oeuvre. This was the only film of the franchise Hardwicke directed, before she was replaced by a slew of white males, who abandoned the first film’s aesthetic. This artistic decision was an act that many fans were disappointed by. *Twilight* is also the third film Hardwicke has worked on with Reed, who was cast as Rosalie Hale, a member of the Cullen clan.

SUNDANCE & ACHIEVEMENTS



Thirteen was presented at Sundance in 2003, where it blew audiences away and gained major traction. The film gained Hardwicke a win for Directing in the Drama category.

At the Independent Spirit Awards, Reed won for Best Debut Performance.

Holly Hunter was nominated at the Academy Awards, BAFTAs, and Golden Globes for her supporting role as Melanie. Evan-Rachel Wood saw a nomination for Best Actress in a Drama at the Golden Globes.

BOX OFFICE & DISTRIBUTION

After Sundance, the film was picked up by Fox Searchlight Pictures. *Thirteen* was released in five theaters in August 2003, grossing $116,260 opening weekend. Later, *Thirteen* would gross up to 622%. The film went on to screen in 73 theaters, then 243. It saw a total domestic gross of $4.6 million.



THIRTEEN IS A FILM EXEMPLARY OF INDEPENDENT CINEMA FOR VARIOUS REASONS:

CREATING *THIRTEEN* INDEPENDENTLY ALLOWED A FEMALE DIRECTOR TO PRODUCE A FILM ABOUT TEENAGE GIRLS EXPERIENCING A BILDUNGSROMAN THAT OCCURS ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE MARGINS. THIS FILM IS TRANSGRESSIVE IN ITS THEMES, USING ABUSE, SELF-MUTILATION, TROUBLED PASTS, DRUGS, SEX, AND TEENAGE REBELLION AT ITS CENTER. IT IS INDEPENDENT IN ITS STYLE AND AESTHETICS, SHAKING CAMERAS, TILTED ANGLES, AVANT-GARDE COLORING, AND INDEPENDENT IN ITS FUNDING: MONEY COMING FROM INDEPENDENT SOURCES, NON-STUDIO BACKED, AND OFTEN OUT OF POCKET. ITS LACK OF FUNDING CREATED A VERY RESTRICTIVE, FAST-PACED SHOOTING SCHEDULE THAT OCCURRED ON LOCATION OVER THE COURSE OF 17 DAYS.

HARDWICKE WENT ON TO FILM *TWILIGHT*, WHICH WAS STUDIO-BACKED, BUT WAS LATER REPLACED BY A SERIES OF MEN FOR THE SUBSEQUENT FILMS, SHOWCASING THAT WOMEN ARE NOT GRANTED THE SAME FAIRNESS AS MEN WHEN IT COMES TO STUDIO-BACKED FILMMAKING, THUS PROVING INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING A SAFER SPACE FOR FEMALE DIRECTORS.

I DISCOVERED THIS FILM ON YOUTUBE WHEN I WAS IN 7TH GRADE, WATCHING IT ON MY IPOD TOUCH IN A SERIES OF 30 PARTS LATE AT NIGHT IN MY TWIN-SIZED BED, WHEN I SHOULD HAVE BEEN SLEEPING. I SUPPOSE THIS ITSELF IS AN ACT OF TEENAGE REBELLION...

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