

***The Representation of Drugs in Movies:***

Narrative and Social Functions

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# 1. Introduction

Like all art, movies are saturated with the human mind - they are created by humans, they depict human action, and they are viewed by a human audience. Movies are a particularly vivid art form, making use of striking moving images and vibrant sounds to connect filmmakers to the audience through celluloid and the senses. (Young 2012: 3)

Films are a unique form of narration and they are omnipresent in our society. However, there are certain films, maybe even certain scenes in a film which mesmerize us. We keep watching them and we wonder why a certain scene is so important to us and if others find the same scene as interesting as we do. In that sense, I am personally attracted to several movie and scenes in this sense. I noticed that many of my questions about these movies and scenes revolved around the function and the accuracy of these films. Those which caught my interest deal with the usage and portrayal of drugs in different movies. I could not help but question why the directors show certain scenes in detail and leave out others? What is the message of the film and is the message accurate or just stereotypical? How are the characters portrayed and what is the focus of the portrayal? How is the usage of drugs portrayed in different genres? Does the drug abuse influence the story or is it simply incidental? Are there frequently used techniques to imply drug intoxication through camera work and editing? Who takes drugs in movies and do the protagonists have social problems? Why is the usage of drugs emphasized and what social critiques lie beyond?

To answer the many questions, I decided to analyze three American movies which include drug intoxication scenes and compare them. The first movie which will be examined in this paper is *Thirteen*, a 2003 production which includes several drug intoxication scenes. While the movie does include drug scenes, its main topic of discussion is not drug abuse. The second movie, *Requiem for a Dream*, however, focuses on the issue of drug abuse and highlights the topic of addiction. The third film which caught my interest is *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*. This movie includes only one drug scene. However, this scene is particularly interesting to analyze because the focus of the film is completely different and the mere appearance of drugs in this movie is very surprising.

The main goal of this paper is to compare the different scenes of drug abuse and locate the similarities and differences. The three films are from different genres. The question of whether or not different genres deal differently with drug intoxication scenes arises. I assume that the techniques used to imitate the effects of the drugs on the human mind via camera work, editing and special effects are quite similar across different genres. Therefore, this paper will examine the theory of genre in general to provide an overview of what genre means and how it is used. Furthermore, I will allocate all three films to a specific genre. For the purpose of this paper, it is necessary to distinguish genre in order to find genre-specific differences or similarities. The first chapter of this paper will provide the needed theoretical knowledge about genre theory. Additionally, the knowledge about genre theory will be used to indicate the genre of the sample films in the following subchapters.

Another aim of this paper is to determine why certain scenes are shown and how far these scenes influence the story. The question is how these scenes are presented and what narrative function they have. In order to find out about the narrative function of these scenes it is necessary to examine the narrative as a whole. Therefore, the third chapter of this paper is dedicated to the narrative analysis of stories in general, and more specifically how films use these narrative functions. This includes an observation of how stories are used in our society and what purpose they have. Also, the relationship between films and realism is further examined in a subchapter. The questions of realism and accuracy in movies are highly interlinked. Thus, the theoretical insight gained in this chapter will also be used to analyze the accuracy of drug intoxication scenes. The reliability of drug-related depictions is an essential question in this paper and I argue that the focus of film producers does not lie on accuracy, but rather on creating dramatic illusion through spotlighting recreational drug abuse. I assume that filmmakers are generally more interested in creating a dramatic effect, which heightens the viewers engagement. Still, thrilling the audience may not be the only reason why auteurs prefer drama over accuracy, additionally, it may be the fact that emotionally gripping films earn more money. In that case, dramatic illusion is more lucrative than a focus on accuracy. The question of accuracy also binds in with the question of human behavior and its depiction. How protagonists behave and if such behavior is realistic will also be analyzed in this paper.

The forth chapter focuses on film theory, the usage of cinematic codes and the role of the spectator. In that sense, this chapter addresses various issues which are limited to the medium

of film. Therefore, the role of the producer will be examined in more detail. Furthermore, there will be a discussion of filmic techniques such as the effect of camera angles or lighting. There are also more general techniques which are unique for movies, including issues of sound and music usage but also the importance emotions play in movies. When it comes to the role of the spectator, the questions of movie perception and interpretation are highlighted. As the viewer of the film, the spectator has an essential role. The film is both observed, and o rated by the spectator. Still, the filmmaker is the person who wants to evoke emotions in the spectators and the filmmaker makes the decisions on how the end product will look. In this way, the filmmaker has intentions for the film and these intentions will be analyzed.

The last theoretical chapter is concerned with the general cultural importance of movies and which impact movies can have on the viewer. As drugs are not widely accepted in the American culture, I assume that the drug intoxication scenes are predominantly presented in a negative way. This chapter aims to study the underlying ideologies in which drug abuse is shown. Furthermore, the psychological effects of movies will be discussed. The general assumption is that movies influence our culture to a great extent. In that sense, movies influence our perception of certain topics and shape the way we think about certain issues. Cultural Studies is generally interested in how our culture works and studies the field of films on different levels. One the one hand, movies can have influence on the actions of individuals and on the general acceptance of a topic in society. On the other hand, movies can transmit thoughtless stereotypes and even dangerous ideologies. Historically seen, movies have been used as propaganda tools. However, Cultural Studies is also concerned with the representation of certain groups. Considering this point, it is interesting how the group of drug users will be portrayed in the sample movies. Still, Cultural Studies is concerned with the wider picture. Therefore, this area of study considers the fact that culture is created by humans. This means that not only movies are discussed in this chapter but also what influence the apparatus (Hollywood) has, or how attitude, behavior and belief can be influenced through arts. Additionally, the discussion of accuracy and widespread perceptions is further deepened in this chapter. In summation, this chapter is concerned with the social functions movies can have in real life. The impact movies have on our daily life and how this affects our social life is enormously important. Therefore, the theoretical background for locating social critique in movies is set in this chapter.

In general, I assume that every drug scene has either a narrative or social function, if not both at the same time. More specifically, I want to prove that drug intoxication scenes underlie narrative and social functions that fill the scenes with meaning that goes beyond the actual visual representation. This also means that I argue that drug intoxication scenes can change the meaning and the interpretation of certain films. Furthermore, I assume that there are certain patterns in which drug usage is represented. I believe that only specific protagonists are portrayed as vulnerable for drug use, which means that protagonists who take drugs are mostly presented as labile and emotionally instable. In the case of *Thirteen* and *Requiem for a Dream*, I would even contend that the implied social critique, and thus also the social functions, goes beyond drug abuse and addiction. Generally, I believe that both films examine problems of our society in a wide range and that drug intoxication is only one cultural stigma the films address.

After the theoretical basis is established, I will analyze specific scenes from all three movies. First, I will discuss the movie *Thirteen* and examine if my assumptions are correct. Second, I will analyze *Requiem for a Dream* and last *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*. The aim of this paper is to compare the results of all three movie analyses and contrast it with my research questions.

In order to provide a decent and precise analysis, I included different theoretical approaches. The state of research according the topic of Film Studies and Cultural Studies is constantly expanding which makes it difficult to include all approaches. Moreover, I outline the historical development of Film Theory which started to borrow from different fields of study. Therefore, I have studied widely accepted approaches in the realm of Film Theory such as Monaco's "How to Read a Movie" but also more recent theorists such as Young, who brought in a psychological aspect to film analysis.

However, as a wide range of the analysis depends on the field of Cultural Studies, I gained insight through reading some introductory books, such as "Cultural Studies" by Rojek. In order to expand my knowledge, I continued to read more advanced books such as During's critical introduction to Cultural Studies.

I have the impression that drug intoxication is a topic that is seen in a negative light. In that sense, my personal interest in this topic sprung from the constant negative spin stories put on the drug scenes. I wondered why drugs are represented in a negative way. Are drugs really

only bad, or why does society see drugs in such a negative way? The questions around drug usage concerning our society are numerous, especially because our society differentiates between good/legal drugs and bad/illegal drugs. In that case one could say that my research is driven by the question of whether the differentiation is accurate and how movies try to represent these differences. Movies function as a cultural good and the question is how our culture accepts or rejects the idea of drugs. I am generally interested in how our society sees different issues and find the issue of drugs intriguing. As mentioned, we differentiate between drugs, therefore I assume that film also differentiates between different drugs. Now, the interesting question for me was how films differentiate between drugs. What does our society think the difference between an alcoholic and a heroin addict is? How do films show this difference and most importantly is the representation accurate according to facts, or is it just an urban myth?

I think that my research will contribute to the question of drug acceptance and clarification. My personal goal for this paper is to highlight how society sees drugs and addicts and compare it with facts and representational issues such as narrative or social function. I assume that many drug scenes in movies are not interested in accuracy but more so in maintaining a certain representation.

## 2. Genre

The classification of different films into different genres is a typical analysis feature of film theory. Genre is a topic that usually appears in literary studies, but in order to classify films it was transferred to film theory (Nelmes 2003: 151). The usage of genre and classification of films in general has been criticized a lot in recent years. Since the late 1960s, genre criticism is omnipresent (2003: 152). The key concept that critics question in genre criticism is the fact that the classification system was not built for the medium of film and does therefore not fulfill the requirements needed to analyse a film. Furthermore, researchers criticize the limitations in research and analysis which the classification into genres entails (Kolker 2008: 224 – 225). According to Braudy, genre film has its limitations because it only appeals to a preexisting audience and due to the sameness of genre films it loses its uniqueness (Braudy 1992: 435). In general, the genre definitions overlap and due to numerous subgenres, the

classification is often a bit imprecise. However, the biggest problem with film genres is that the method of classifying a film differs from genre to genre. For instance, there are films whose genre is defined through the narrative (gangster films or detective films), but musical films, on the other hand, are defined through using music, singing and dancing. Therefore, a musical film can have any plot, and still it is a musical, whereas the usage of music and sound does not turn a drama into a comedy. The essential features a film must have to belong to a certain genre are not fixed and every genre watches other features in order to classify the film. This fact makes the concept of genre vulnerable for critics (1992: 429 – 433).

Although genre has been a central point of discussion, the division of films into genres does not only have negative aspects. On the contrary, creating a corpus of movies which share the general plot, stereotypical characters or other characteristics makes these movies comparable. Genre may minimize the uniqueness of a film, but it functions as a security blanket for the industry (i.e. the concept of a romantic comedy worked thousand times, therefore the industry knows that producing a romantic comedy is not very risky), as a set of expectations for the audience and as a critical framework for reviewers (Nelmes 2003: 151).

However, all three movies which were analyzed for this paper belong to different genres. The assumption is that three different genres should produce three different usages of drug scenes. This means that the result of the analysis should provide us with multiple functions of these scenes and multiple techniques to depict the scenes. Unfortunately, the unfixed criteria to differentiate the genres leads to overlapping. This overlapping may also show its effects on functions, forms and techniques of drug scenes. This means that although there are three movies with different genre classifications, the usage and depiction of drug intoxication scenes could be identical.

### 2.1. *Thirteen*

*Thirteen* is a 2003 production and the director's debut of Catherine Hardwicke. It tells the story of the teenager Tracy who is struggling with growing up. She befriends Evie, who already has a troubled past and who seems to fit perfectly into the 'bad girl' box. However, Tracy starts to imitate Evie and her behavior in order to strengthen the relationship with her. While Tracy and Evie celebrate their youth, the relationship between Tracy and her family is crumbling.



Melanie, Tracy's mother, underestimates the influence of Evie and ignores the first warning signals. In the meantime, Tracy and Evie are getting themselves into more and more serious problems. They start to steal, they become sexually active with multiple boys while being underaged and they start to experiment with drugs. Furthermore, Tracy is not able to deal with the pressure of society concerning beauty standards. She refuses to eat and starts to secretly harm herself.

Finally, Melanie notices all the changes her daughter has gone through and tries to intervene. Her attempts to help her daughter fail in the beginning, because Tracy is too influenced by Evie. However, in the end the friendship between Tracy and Evie does not survive and Melanie is able to reconnect with her daughter.

The script for *Thirteen* was written by director Catherine Hardwicke and actress Nikki Reed (who plays the character of Evie in the movie). Hardwicke and Reed claim that the movie is based on true events from Reed's past. The main character Tracy is based on Reed and her experiences with thirteen. Therefore, the movie can be declared as "based on true events". If a movie is based on true events, it automatically claims to be biographical. In the case of *Thirteen* a biographical background cannot be ignored, because according to Oxford Living Dictionary, a biographical film "deals with a particular person's life" (Oxford Dictionary 2018, online). This is certainly the case in *Thirteen*. However, there are numerous forms of biographical film genres, for example biopics, autobiographies or even semi-autobiographies. The difference between these genres is not always very clear and sometimes certain characteristics can overlap, as we already learned in the general discussion of genre. Although the definitions are not always clear cut, it is important for an analysis to define which features the film has. In order to analyze the movie *Thirteen*, it is important to look at its features and decide which genre it belongs to.

According to Oxford Living Dictionaries, an autobiographical movie or book is based on the authors life, whereas a semi-autobiographical book or movie "deals partly with the writer's own life but also containing fictional elements" (Oxford Dictionary 2018, online). Therefore, *Thirteen* must be categorized as a semi-autobiographical movie. The story is based on some events Nikki Reed experienced, but it does not tell her complete story and some events were changed by the director to make the movie more appealing and interesting for the audience.

In fact, Nikki Reed even confesses in an interview with the online magazine *Screener* that the movie is an exaggeration:

As a kid I sometimes saw my Dad like that, but now that I'm older I wonder how I could have done that to him and be swept up on this promo tour sitting in these interviews not realizing how hurtful it was when I said, 'This is autobiographical,'. No! Parts were autobiographical, but everything was exaggerated. That's not my Dad. My Dad is a man that for as long as I can remember has kept a book of favorite things his kids say. (Screener 2012 online)

Therefore, the movie must be categorized as semi-autobiographical. As Reed says herself, some parts of the story and the general plot are based on her experiences as a thirteen-year-old, but some parts are simply exaggerated to make the movie more gripping.

Furthermore, the general story line can be identified as melodramatic. According to Cambridge Dictionary, a melodrama is defined through characters who show more emotions than real people usually do (Cambridge Dictionary 2018: online). The movie *Thirteen* functions as a melodrama because the main characters Tracy, Evie and Melanie react very emotional and are generally portrayed as emotionally instable. Tracy and Evie are teenagers who react in a very excessive way to the changes in their bodies, compared to other teenagers. Melanie on the other hand, is a dry alcoholic and is therefore already classified as a labile person. However, Melanie does not overreact until Tracy and Evie get out of control. Still, emotional scenes with Melanie, such as the showering scene, underline her overextension and her feelings, which again classifies the movie as melodramatic. Additionally, Plantinga argues that "melodramas replay scenarios of social separation, union, and sacrifice among lovers and families generally" (Plantinga 2009: 84). He further describes the melodrama as a genre in which the visual representation of action and movement is consciously underplayed. This lowers the visceral excitement of a melodrama compared to an action movie. However, the focus of a melodrama lies not in visceral excitement but in an emotional and affective response of the audience. In order to achieve a high emotional reaction, it is necessary to underplay action and movement and highlight emotional transmitters such as facial expressions (2009: 84). All of that is true for *Thirteen*, which leaves it a melodramatic semi-autobiography.

## 2.2. *Requiem For A Dream*

*Requiem For A Dream* was produced in 2000 and released in 2001. The film was nominated for a number of international film awards and managed to win twenty awards. Director Darren Aronofsky and writer Hubert Selby produced a movie which gained international fame for its realistic portrayal of drug abuse and addiction. The film tells the story of Sara Goldfarb and her son Harry. Harry already has problems with drugs and financing his addiction, that is why he decides to start dealing drugs with the help of his friend Tyrone. Harry and Tyrone are making money with the drug business and they start to dream big. Harry, for example, starts to dream about a boutique for his girlfriend Marion. In the meantime, Sara wants to lose weight and decides to try appetite suppressants. The pills help her to lose weight, but she starts having problems with the pills and the doctor does not take her condition seriously. Slowly Sara fades into a state of psychological lability and becomes addicted to the pills.

Harry's and Tyrone's ambitions are becoming more and more unrealistic because the business is not as easy as the two had originally thought. Furthermore, they start having problems with the police, which leaves them totally broke with no more money for drugs. This is the moment, when Harry asks Marion to prostitute herself in order to bring home money. Marion follows Harry's advice and their relationship starts to crumble. In the end, all characters have to face their fate and all of their dreams are dead. Harry and Tyrone get arrested and Harry even loses his arm due to an infected needle he used. Marion works as a prostitute and Sara becomes a patient in a psychiatry ward, in which she gets electroshock treatment to cure her addiction.

*Requiem For A Dream* deals with dramatic issues and presents these issues in the same dramatic way. Therefore, *Requiem For A Dream*, can easily be located in the genre of drama which Tim Dirks defines as the following:

Drama Films are serious presentations or stories with settings or life situations that portray realistic characters in conflict with either themselves, others, or forces of nature. A dramatic film shows us human beings at their best, their worst, and everything in-between. Each of the types of subject-matter themes have various kinds of dramatic plots. [...] Dramatic themes often include current issues, societal ills, and problems, concerns or injustices, such as racial prejudice, religious intolerance (such as

anti-Semitism), drug addiction, poverty, political unrest, the corruption of power, alcoholism, class divisions, sexual inequality, mental illness, corrupt societal institutions, violence toward women or other explosive issues of the times. These films have successfully drawn attention to the issues by taking advantage of the topical interest of the subject. Although dramatic films have often dealt frankly and realistically with social problems, the tendency has been for Hollywood, especially during earlier times of censorship, to exonerate society and institutions and to blame problems on an individual, who more often than not, would be punished for his/her transgressions. (Dirk 2017: online)

Drama films try to portray problems and social issues in a realistic way which is also the aim of *Requiem For A Dream*. The main characteristic of drama film is that the addressed issue can normally not be solved within the movie. The general feeling drama films transmit to their audience is depressing and it is unlikely to see a happy-end in a drama. This can also be seen in the choice of issues discussed in drama films, which are unexceptionally negative themes that are seen as problematic for the individual (such as drug abuse) or for the society (for example racism). *Requiem For A Dream* does fulfill the required features of drama film. The discussed problem of drug abuse is harmful for the characters and the viewer does not see a happy-end. On the contrary, all hopes, and dreams are faded when the viewer reaches the end of the movie. Furthermore, Aronofsky tried to keep the movie as realistic as possible. In order to portray the role of an addict perfectly, actor Jaret Leto (who plays Harry) even befriended real heroin addicts. The realistic approach was therefore always a big aim of the movie. (2001 online)

### 2.3. William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet*

*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* is a production of director Baz Luhrmann and was released in 1996. The film is based on William Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* (1596) and tells the well-known story of two star-crossed lovers. Romeo and Juliet fall in love but are unable to live out their feelings for each other due to a family feud. Shakespeare's original script does not include a happy-end for Romeo and Juliet, likewise to Luhrmann's interpretation.

Luhrmann stays very close to the original in many aspects. First of all, the characters in his movie use the same language Shakespeare used. This means that nearly all dialogs, monologs and soliloquies used in Luhrmann's film are taken from the original version. Furthermore, Luhrmann stays very accurate to the plot, which is not true for other productions that were based on Shakespeare's classic (for example: *West Side Story*). Taking these factors into account, one can easily say that *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* is a literary adaption. The Chicago School of Media Theory defines a literary adaption as the following: "An altered or amended version of a text, musical composition, etc., (now esp.) one adapted for filming, broadcasting, or production on the stage from a novel or similar literary source" (Brokenshire 2017: online).

Although Luhrmann seems to stay very near to the original, for instance with dialogues or plot, he decided to use a stylistic device: the turn-of-century setting. According to Bourget the turn-of-century setting is a popular method in literary adaption (1992: 470). Shakespeare's original was set in the renaissance while Luhrmann transferred the story in the present. This major change also affects other features of the film, for example the fighting with swords. Sword fights are not very common in our present time, while gun fights are. Therefore, Luhrmann decided to use guns in his film, but he used a gun series which is called "Sword". This trick made it possible to stick to the original script without changing the word 'sword' to 'gun'.

Despite of the turn-of-century setting, Luhrmann's adaption is very close to the original which makes it a typical example of the genre of adaption.

### 3. Narrative Analysis

According to Lapsley and Westlake our culture is saturated in narrative. We have been telling each other myths or creating drama on stage for centuries. Based on our long history with narration, Lapsley and Westlake claim that narration itself is seen as 'natural' as life (1988: 129). Bolter even argues that the viewer has to accept the conventions of filmic narrative as natural, to feel immersed in the story. (Bolter 2008: 27).

In order to analyze these well-known conventions of narration, it is necessary that one is aware of the fact that every 'classical' narration is in a way 'staged'. Therefore, the

conventions are used to unfold a narration. The conscious perception of these conventions allows us to analyze the underlying narrative function of the films. The question is to which extent do the things we see in movie make sense. Especially in film, it is assumed that the things we see must make sense for the whole. Every scene the filmmaker shows us is important for the story (Nelmes 2003: 80). However, to analyze the narrative function of specific scenes of the chosen movies, this chapter will provide the needed theoretical background.

### 3.1. What is a narrative?

According to Nelmes the 'classical narrative' is the most prominent form in film making. The 'classical narrative' is so to speak an absolute term in mainstream cinema and it does follow certain rules which can be found in nearly all film genres. The 'classical narrative' is defined by three acts: the set-up, the confrontation and the resolution (2003: 78). The set-up introduces the audience to a central protagonist, the hero of the story for which the audience is implicitly asked to empathize. This protagonist has a certain goal, but outer circumstances prevent the hero from reaching this goal. Furthermore, a 'classical narrative' is usually presented in a realistic way and is structured and linear. Equally important is that a 'classical narrative' is typically consistent in style and approach (2003: 54).

However, all the features for a 'classical narrative' can be found in the three movies which are going to be analyzed. Furthermore, the characteristics of a 'classical narrative' are not limited to filmic narration but can be found in many cases in literature. Therefore, the question is what differentiates filmic narration from written narration. According to Monaco, the biggest difference is that a film does always "narrate" a scene. The film observer does not only hear a story, as it is the case with the novel, but also sees images. The environment in a novel is only visible when the author describes it, but this is not constantly the case; Whereas we constantly see the environment in film (Monaco: 1981: 172 -178).

In order to analyze a filmic narrative, it is important to understand, that although the audience can see everything, not every image is equally important. A narrative develops on the basis of a chain of cause-and-effect. The viewer makes sense of what is seen and questions the

narrative and the seen images by assuming what could happen next or how the narrative will end. Therefore, "Narrative operates on the tension between our anticipation of likely outcomes from genre conventions and the capacity to surprise or frustrate our expectations." (Nelmes 2003: 80).

However, in narrative analysis 'plot' and 'story' are often distinguished. This means that the term 'story' refers to "the casual, temporal, and spatial relationship between narrative element" (Young 2012: 100). Therefore, the story of a film represents what happens in time and space, whereas the plot refers to how the story is told and how the information is presented to the spectator. The story, in that sense, emerges from how the viewer processes the plot. Hence, the plotting of a movie can be changed, but it would not necessarily change the story. In that sense, the plot belongs to the film but the story belongs to the spectator (2012: 100).

In order to overcome the gap that 'story' and 'plot' leave for the viewer, one must use schemas, which are "mental structures for organizing knowledge" (2012: 100). The schemas are important, especially when watching non-linear movies. Young brings in the example of *Titanic* which shifts between the assumed present time and 1912. In order to make this shifts easier for the audience the filmmaker used schemas like sepia toned pictures that conventionally stand for earlier photography (2012: 101). However, such schemas used to understand the narrative are frequently employed, also in the sample films which are going to be analyzed. *Thirteen*, for example, uses flashbacks which are indeed another schema in the filmic convention to present important events of the past which the spectator would not see without the convention of flashbacks and their meaning.

### 3.2. Narrative Function and Theory

Young argues that narratives are used to understand the world around us. In a way "fiction is a symbolic *simulation* of experience" (Young 2012: 162). In that sense, the narrative functions as a possible guideline for consumers of the narrative:

Dan McAdams argues that not only do we use narratives forms to understand fiction, we use narratives to understand ourselves. The reason people are always telling stories to each

other (in form of conversations, novels, plays, and movies) is because we are always telling stories to ourselves. Our “selves” are nothing but a collection of stories. (2012: 162)

This way of understanding the narrative broadens the discussion. It sees narratives as a tool which prepares us for future challenges and helps us to understand past situations. The key of narratives is that engaging in stories often has an emotional component and depends on identification and empathy. This emotional side of narratives helps us to understand and to empathize with other people, so to speak “real-life characters” (2012: 163).

As Young argues, the fictional medium of movies is particularly suited to evoke emotions. This is due to its reality-effect, which will be discussed in the next chapter. However, cinematic narrations are very vivid and try to simulate reality which is especially fruitful for evoking emotions. The viewer feels as if s/he was there when something happened when watching a movie, which in a result stress the emotional side of the viewer (2012: 163). Plantinga ties in with this thought and argues that fiction thus is in a constant state of paradox. This is due to the emotional response viewers give to a movie although they know it is only a fictional narrative. In that sense every emotional reaction to a movie is irrational and absurd (Plantinga 2009: 64). Nonetheless, Plantinga forms a similar view point to Young that the emotional response is a psychological phenomenon:

The paradox of fiction is not so much a philosophical problem as it is a psychological one, since emotion by my lights is rarely the result of solely conscious deliberation, is sometimes automatic and may result from some mix of contagion, associative memories, and concern-based construals rather than simply deliberative judgments rooted in belief. (2009: 65)

He further argues that although the spectator “unconsciously” reacts with emotions that does not mean that the spectator is not aware of the fictional nature of the story. The spectator in a way adjusts his emotional response to the nature of the story’s status as fiction (2009: 65).

### 3.3. Narrative and Realism

Film is a medium which always tried to be realistic and authentic. The Lumière brothers, which belonged to the first film makers, argued that a film needs to be realistic and authentic.



Of course, a film does not really need to be realistic to be successful, but popular films aim to be realistic and authentic. The aim to tell an authentic and realistic story develops the narrative (Bolter 2008: 22 – 26).

According to Bolter, film defines or mirrors cultural concerns. In order to read a film, it is necessary to accept that certain conventions are used to realistically define cultural concerns. These cinematic conventions need to be accepted as the way to view the unfolding of a visual narrative (Bolter 2008: 22 – 23). All in all, film is a staged narrative, whose reality gets heightened rather than diminished by the fiction and filming conventions (2008: 27).

The importance of reality and transparency should not be neglected. Bolter defines the connection between film and transparency as the following:

Designers [game designers] refer to film because filmic narrative remains irrevocably connected in the popular imagination to the promise of transparent representation. [...] Any stylistic choices by the film maker that threaten transparency also threaten to get in the way of the narrative and therefore make it less emotionally compelling. (2008: 28)

The goal of the filmmaker is to create perceptual immersion, which creates a visual and auditory space that is meant to replace the physical world of the viewer. The filmmaker wants to have the undivided attention from its audience. In order to achieve this attention, the filmmaker controls the viewers gaze. This is a typical feature for film and it provides the opportunity of perceptual immersion (2008: 30).

Lapsley and Westlake claim that film's power to imitate reality has made realism a key concept of cinema. Therefore, film attempts represent things as they are and automatically has a claim to tell the truth. Furthermore, film has the power to effect belief in society and thus creates a suitable medium for politics, which is concerned with promoting a vision of social reality. (Lapsley and Westlake 1988: 156 – 158). Still, film does only claim to tell the truth as Jean-Louis Comolli argues:

The basic deception of direct cinema is really its claim to transcribe truly the truth of life, to begin the position of witness in relation to that truth so that the film is simply records objects and events mechanically. In reality the very fact of filming is of course already a productive intervention which modifies and transforms the material recorded. From the moment the camera intervenes a form of manipulation begins. (1988: 158)

In sum Lapsley and Westlake underline the fact that only spectators took films as transparent and truthful when in reality they only produce a reality effect (1988: 161). Carl Plantinga shares the assumption that films are not “simply photographic and aural records of reality” and that this belief only promotes a naïve realism which is very problematic for the spectator. He argues that “fiction films, with their designed sets, costuming, actors playing roles, and scripted narrative and dialogue” are far away from recording reality (Plantinga 2009: 113). Plantinga notes that “[...] spectators’ experience of a film depends in large part on their real-world perceptual skills developed outside the movie theater” (2009: 113). This makes the spectator a central part in film studies, who’s importance will be further analyzed in the following chapters.

## 4. Film Theory

Film Theory is a field of study which emerged with the birth of the cinema and the moving picture. As the theory of films is palimpsestic, it bears the traces of earlier theories and is impacted by theories which are in a way similar or useful for understanding films. It is in a way “part of a long-standing tradition of theoretical reflections on the arts in general” (Stam 2000: 10). However, there are certain tools which can only be used by movies and not by other art forms. This is called “medium specificity” and explores which features are uniquely to the medium of film (2000: 11).

### 4.1. Cinematic Codes

The filmic narration has several typical features that will be discussed in this section. Because a camera is the story-telling medium, the film viewer always gets a visual narrative. According to Bolter most filmic techniques developed from 1900 to 1920 and defined the mainstream cinema. A typical film is defined through a narrative arc and specific patterns of characterization (Bolter 2008: 27). Furthermore, Bolter claims that typical features in film to provide narration are for instance the camera work or the continuity in editing (2008: 26). Indeed, Nelmes and Monaco see camera work and editing as two major features in film. Both

provide a detailed outline of filmic techniques which are used to install narration. The central techniques, and therefore central to the analysis, are the *mise-en-scène*, the montage (also called: editing) and sound. Monaco defines the cinematic codes of *mise-en-scène* and montage as the following:

Three questions confront the filmmaker: what to shoot, how to shoot it, how to present the shot. The province of the first two questions is *mise en scène*, that of the last, montage. *Mise en scène* is often regarded as static, montage as dynamic. This is not the case. Because we read the shot, we are actively involved with it. The codes of *mise en scène* are the tools with which the filmmaker alters and modifies our reading of the shoot. (Monaco 1981: 148)

According to Jill Nelmes, *mise-en-scène* involves several aspects that all together form the *mise-en-scène*. All visual aspects that appear within a single shot define the *mise-en-scène*. First, the setting functions as a signifier of authenticity, because it is the place where the events happen. The location helps us to place the characters, but the location can even create its own meaning within the film. The use of props is grounded in film making, but props can fulfill certain features. They can function as genre definers, for example the frequent use of guns in action movies, but props can also become unique signifiers. A certain object can frequently appear in the movie and create meaning through it. However, if props become unique signifiers they need to be important for the narrative. Furthermore, props can anchor characters into particular meanings. Nelmes explains it with the example of Hannibal Lector wearing a mouthpiece when his danger comes from his mouth which is now hidden by the prop. Another feature to define *mise-en-scène* is costume. It can signify changes in time, space, status etc. which is a very strong code in most cases. Also, the actors and their performance function as a strong code, because we are used to reading facial expressions or body language. Actors can also bring further meaning to the film from earlier works, for instance if the actor is already known for that genre or has a big fanbase. An often ignored code is the lighting, although it is very important. The lighting highlights aspects in a scene or is used to direct the audience's attention. Light and shade level must be adequate to produce a scene, but there are many ways to do that. Filmmakers can, for example, use a low-key image which means the lighting for the scene comes from only one spot, or high-key image which means full lighting. The last aspect of *mise-en-scène* is the camera and camera work

where filmmakers can work with different angles or change the focus (Nelmes 2003: 63 -72).

The impact certain angles have emotionally on the spectator is described by Young:

Several versions were shot in which the camera angles carried. In one version, Character A was shot from a low angle while Character B was shot from a high angle, and vice versa. Even though every other aspect of the movies were identical, characters shot from low angle (towering above the camera) were perceived as stronger, bolder, more aggressive and less afraid. The opposite was true of the character filmed from a high angle (being looked down on). (Young 2012: 103)

However, not only different angles affect the emotional uptake of a scene. Plantinga stresses the importance of the facial close-up, which indeed delivers lots of emotions through mimicry. Through looking into the faces of other humans we understand their emotions. Indeed, the goal of a successful movie is to evoke emotions in the spectator and therefore the facial close-up is a powerful cinematic tool (Plantinga 2009: 125).

Montage is the second major element which provides the viewer with information. Montage, or editing, means putting together the shots in a form the viewer does understand the story. Montage is specific for film and focuses on the structure and how scenes are linked. According to Nelmes there are different elements in editing which are used for different outcomes, for example a cut indicates a change of space, but the events happen simultaneously (Nelmes 2003: 73). Montage and mise-en-scène are the two twin concepts of cinematic code: mise-en-scène describes the space in which the action occurs, and montage provides temporal setting. Therefore, both concepts are principles of organization (Monaco 1981: 145). Furthermore, montage is in its basics quite simple and can be used in two different ways. The first way is to piece together two shots end to beginning, which is quite common with visual features in film. The second way is to overlap the end and the beginning. The second method is more frequently used when it comes to sound. The more specific meaning montage can generate comes from: “[...] a dialectical process that creates a third meaning out of the original two meanings of the adjacent shots, and a process in which a number of short shots are woven together in order to communicate a great deal of information in a short period of time” (1981: 183).

In addition to montage and mise-en-scène there is a third code that conveys meaning which is sound. According to Metz there are five channels of information in film: the visual image,

print and other graphics, speech, music and noise (sound effects). Speech, music and noise are clearly auditory channels whereas only image and print are visual channels of film. However, only image and noise are continuous and therefore cannot be switched off as the other channels can (Monaco 1981: 179). Sound can be classified as diegetic or non-diegetic. Diegetic sound arises from objects in a scene either inside the frame, or logically related outside the frame. Anything which occurs outside this context is non-diegetic sound (Nelmes 2003: 76).

The soundtrack is probably the most notable sound feature of a film and it is one of the strongest codes. The soundtrack reflects the story, directs the audience and reinforces the mood of the scene. It shows the audience how they should react. Nelmes claims that the soundtrack is a 'sound image', constructed and selected in much the same way as the visual image is created. Furthermore, soundtracks precede the visual image as preparation for what we are about to see, for instance, thrilling music before scary scenes in a horror movie (Nelmes 2003: 77). Indeed, the soundtrack can certainly support greater emphasis, but it cannot easily be deforced from images (Monaco 1981: 181).

The original function of soundtracks, and the predominant form of sound, is the use of non-diegetic music. This music informs the audience of appropriate emotional responses or enhances this response. Plantinga notes that sound and music should always evoke certain emotions and that director and composer often discuss how the music can have the most influence on the viewers (Plantinga 2009: 130). Furthermore, Carroll argues that music modifies or even characterizes a scene, but that music is not the only tool to modify a scene (2009: 134). In general, music has multiple functions:

In sum, film music has a number of affective functions. First, it elicits affect through direct physiological effects on audiences. Second, it elicits moods, which prime audiences for certain kinds of emotions. Third it modifies the scene by suggesting its emotional valence. Music modifies, intensifies, and complicates the affective experience of a scene through polarization, affective congruence, or both simultaneously. In other words, it can move the expressive interpretation of a scene away from the inherent in the nonmusical elements, it can strengthen the scene's existing emotive qualities by adding to them, or it can elicit affect in ambiguous and complicated ways. (2009: 135)

However, sound can also be used to direct the audience through the past through the use of voiceover. Also, the use of sound effects is important because these effects normally are perceived as part of the narrative realism. However, peripheral sound can be used to establish the wider environment. This peripheral sound, or as Monaco calls it 'environmental sound' (Monaco 1981: 180) defines the environment by sound which is heard from outside the frame, for instance, a busy office can be defined by phone rings and typing noise. The last code of sound is the identification of characters, locations and time (Nelmes 2003: 78).

#### 4.2. Semiotics

In general, semiotics is the science that studies the life of signs within society. Film theorists have engaged with Saussure's theory and adapted it for the purpose of film analysis. The concept of semiotics in film theory is very complex and exceeds the analytical purpose of this paper. However, there are certain fields within semiotics which are very useful to examine specific scenes. C. S. Peirce's analysis of the relationship of signs to their object within the movie is one of these useful tools. He differentiates between icon, index and symbol. This means a sign is classified as an icon when it has some physical quality or configuration of qualities that it shares with the object (1988: 32 - 35). Peirce explains the icon as the following: "Anything whatever, be it a quality, existent individual or law, is an icon of anything, insofar as it is like that thing and is used as sign of it." (1988: 35) This means that resemblance is the basis of iconicity and diagrams, paintings or photographs function as examples for an icon. (1988: 35)

The second sign which stands in a certain relationship to the object is the index. While the icon is defined by similarity and the signifier representing the signified, the index measures a quality not because it is identical to it, but because it has an inherent relationship to it. For example, a clock represents time and can therefore function as an index. (Monaco 1981: 133) The index has so to speak a causal relationship to the object. Therefore, a thermometer can signify hotness and function as an index (Lapsley and Westlake 1988: 35).

The last object-sign relationship is the symbol. It has a completely arbitrary relationship to the object. The basis of the connection between object and symbol is therefore social convention.

This means that the symbol is neither linked to the object by similarity nor by casual relation. With that information in mind, the symbol can only be defined as a code system that humans have agreed on. For instance, gestures or dressing/costume can function as a symbol. Social conventions tell us which clothing is upper class and which is lower class, so the clothing of a character can be a symbol for his/her social status. (1988: 36)

However, the theory of signs and codes in cinema was extended by Metz. He revised semiotics and invented a complex system of rules underlying the cinematic text. Metz's theory is based on different codes which are unique for the cinema, or in other cases more widely used (1988:42).

[...] he distinguished codes of editing and framing, of lighting, of colour versus black and white, of the articulation of sound and movement, of composition and so on. Non-cinematic codes included costume, gesture, dialogue, characterization and facial expression. A further important distinction was made between cinematic codes and cinematic sub-codes, where the former organise elements potentially or actually common to all films, say lighting, and the latter referred to specific choices made within a particular code, say that of low-key in preference to high-key lighting. (1988: 42)

Another point important to semiotics is the aspect of realism. Some theorists thought that film is the window on the world and that this feature is unique for cinema. However, semioticians see film more as a construction, always within signification. This means that the seeming reality of film is only accepted as such because it coheres with the current ideology's version of reality. Therefore, it is not reality but has a reality effect. "Film is not reproduction and representation of a pre-existing reality but the production and construction of an imaginary one." (1988: 48)

#### 4.3. The Spectator

In more recent film theories, the spectator is seen as active and critical, as opposed to former theories which saw the spectator only as a passive, intaking object. Metz even sees the spectator as a fish, which leaves the spectator as a passive observer who takes in everything with the eyes but without a bodily reaction. Sobchack critiques Metz for his attempt because

“the body and the eyes are not separate [...] and what the eyes take in, the body does also” (Plantinga 2009: 116). For Sabchack the cinema uses “modes of embodied existence and the structure of direct experience” which makes the cinema “a symbolic form of human communication” like no other (2009: 115). In the sense, spectatorship is an active attempt to take in content and the sensual nature of movies demands an automatic response of the spectator (2009: 114). This means that every spectator takes up the film in a different way:

For Hall, mass-mediated texts do not have a univocal meaning but can be read differently by different people. Depending not only on their social location but also on their ideologies and desires. [...] Hall posits three broad reading strategies in relation to dominant ideology: (1) the dominant reading produced by a viewer situated to acquiesce in the dominant ideology and the subjectivity produces; (2) the negotiated reading produced by the viewer who largely acquiesces in dominant ideology but whose real-life situation provokes specific “local” critical inflections; and (3) the resistant reading produced by those whose social situation and consciousness place them in directly oppositional relation to dominant ideology. (Stam 2000: 230)

Stam argues that text, apparatus, discourse and history are all important and shape the viewer’s experience. However, the viewer is not only shaped, but also does in the cinematic experience. In Stam’s view the analysis of spectatorship must explore the tensions among the different levels, which include text, apparatus, discourse and history. These levels construct the spectator, but the spectator also shapes the levels (2000: 231). Especially the historical and contextual dimensions shape the interpretations and should not be underestimated. When analyzing narrations and movies it is important to consider the contemporary and the historical reception of a certain issue or topic (2000: 232).

## 5. Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies found its entrance in film analysis after semiotics were discussed widely. While semiotics was concerned with specific cinematic codes, such as sound, Cultural Studies was more interested in embedding media in a larger cultural and historical context (Stam 2000: 223). This means Cultural Studies was not interested in ‘media specificity’ or ‘film language’, on the contrary, it was interested in the social matrix the film was embedded and which consequences arose for the real world. Cultural Studies “calls attention to the social and institutional conditions under which meaning is produced and received” (2000: 225).



Therefore, the interest in the text per se became more of an interest in the process and the interaction between text, spectator, institution and the ambient culture (2000: 225).

Generally, Cultural Studies analyzes four major components of culture which are “the *observation* of culture (genre), the *manufacture* of culture (production), the *exchange* of culture (consumption) and the *contestation* of culture (cultural politics)” (Rojek 2007: 10). The genre is defined by the patterning of cultural form and context. This means that genre enables us to compare and contrast cultural content, which eventually provides us with the possibility to notice similarities and differences within different cultures. The production clearly refers to the creation of cultural meaning and products. Furthermore, production highlights the interests behind the presentation of cultural content. Consumption, on the other hand, is interested in the various processes of how consumers comprehend cultural meaning. The last point of Cultural politics confronts issues of power, knowledge, values and difference and refers to how cultural meaning is presented, resisted and opposed through the process of cultural exchange (2007: 10 – 11).

Durning defines Cultural Studies as the following:

Culture is not a thing or even a system: it's a set of transactions, processes, mutations, practices, technologies, institutions, out of which things and events (such as movies, poems or world wrestling bouts) are produced, to be experienced, lived out and given meaning and value to in different ways within the unsystematic network of differences and mutations from which the emerged to start with. [...] For cultural studies today, cultural object are simultaneously 'text' (that is, they have meaning) *and* events *and* experiences [...]. (Durning 2005: 6)

In the field of film studies, Cultural Studies was a reaction against screen theory and against quantitative mass communications audience studies. In that case, Cultural Studies does not focus on one medium specifically, “but rather on the larger spectrum of cultural practices” (2000: 226).

In summation, Cultural Studies is more interested in the usage of the text or film and what its effects on society are. Therefore, a key issue is the question of agency within Cultural Studies: “whether resistance and change are possible in a mass-mediated world” (2000: 227).

However, many stereotypes which are represented in movies come from an individualistic approach. This means that individual characters focus on the analysis rather than larger social

categories. Therefore, the individual receives more attention than the larger configurations of power. This focus on the individual misses the ways in which entire cultures can be caricatured or misrepresented without the need of stereotyping an individual character (2000: 276).

### 5.1. Impact of Films

Young defines movies as symbols with meaning. This means that the symbol is created by the auteur and received by the spectators. Therefore, he provides four components which built the framework for films: the symbol which creates meaning and the symbol creator which is connected to the symbol receiver (Young 2012: 13). The symbol creator (auteur) usually decides which topic the movie discusses, and which issues the symbol should depict. However, that does not mean that the auteur solely decides which topics are interesting for filmic purpose. Hollywood and the apparatus behind it function as a technological, institutional, and ideological machine that decides which topics are worth presenting (Stam 2000: 162). Furthermore, Stam distinguishes between 'popular culture' and 'mass-mediated culture'. The differentiation is important because 'popular culture' means that the people decided which artwork is important. On the other hand, 'mass-mediated culture' is directed by the apparatus, which clearly is not interested in people's opinion, but rather in generating profit. Therefore, 'mass-mediated culture' only sees the people (in our case the spectators) as mere objects of manipulation (2000: 308). He adds that "the discourse is further marred by other hidden and not-so-hidden agendas having to do with promotion" (2000: 313) which clearly shows that the focus of the industry is money-centered. This fact makes the analysis of *Thirteen* even more interesting, because it is a low-budget indie-production.

Nevertheless, Young still stresses the importance of the auteur because the film is still created by the filmmaker. Thus, the auteur at least has the power to decide on how the film looks with decisions about lighting, camera angle etc. (Young 2012: 21). When it comes to human behavior in movies and their depiction, which is especially interesting for the purpose of this paper, the cinematic depiction does not "necessarily portray objective reality accurately" (2012: 21). Still, these cinematic depictions "capture widespread perceptions of particular behaviors and even viewers' attitudes toward these behavior" (2012: 21). This means, that movies can influence the spectators' mindset about certain topics, which can be seen in a

study which noted that students' attitudes towards mental illness were more negative after watching *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (2012: 56). Even more importantly, these depictions can reveal the general attitude towards certain topics of the society, or at least of parts of the society. If we keep in mind that a movie can influence the opinion of the publicly discussed topic, it is important to think about the movies accuracy. However, the auteur is not always concerned with accuracy in the movie. Generally, the auteur is concerned with creating a believable dramatic experience, which is also an admirable goal. Apparently, a well-known filmmaker, Alfred Hitchcock, did not seem to be concerned with accuracy in his movie *Psycho* (2012:46-47):

Hitchcock did not seem particularly concerned with accuracy at numerous levels of reality – psychiatric diagnostic criteria; the events in the life of the film's real-life inspiration; or even the routines of late night motel clerks. Therefore, judged against these aspects of reality, *Psycho* could be considered a failure. However, based on Hitchcock's stated goal (to play the audience "like an organ"), the film is a huge success [...]. In movies like *Psycho* there is a trade-off. While these films heighten the *dramatic* reality of psychological disorders, they distort *physical* reality. (2012: 46-47)

To conclude, a movie can both influence the audience's mindset about a topic as well as resemble the public opinion about a topic. Accuracy seems generally not to be as important as creating a dramatic effect/illusion for the spectator.

According to this information, there should be certain patterns in the way drug intoxication scenes are presented to the spectator. The ways of representing drug intake are in a way linked to the ideology and belief system of the society. Of course, movies can also aim to change the social attitude towards a topic by presenting the topic in a contradictory way of the general social believe system. However, a film may aim to not only change the mindsets within a society, but also the general attitude towards a topic can change in society. Young exemplifies this scenario by highlighting the cigarette use in movies, which has changed over the years:

The glamorous black and white images of classical Hollywood stars like Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall seductively puffing on cigarettes as wisps of smoke twirl around them is imprinted in the public imagination. Given change in social attitudes, one might assume that smoking behavior has

decreased in movies. Yet several content analyses indicate that this is not the case; the incidence of smoking in movies was the same in 2002 as it was in 1950, despite a dramatic drop in the proportion of the US population that smokes. The same studies do reveal significant differences in how smoking is portrayed. In recent years, minor characters smoked more often than stars, and smoking is presented in a more negative context (e.g., associated with hostility or tension reduction). This is an interesting example of how Hollywood wants to have its cake/cigarettes (continue to portray visual dramatic behavior) and eat/smoke it too (sympathetically reflect current values). (2012: 24)

This information suggests that all films somehow interlink with a certain ideology. Thus, movies are not merely entertaining, nor simple representations, but in fact “the party line, effectively blinding the masses with false consciousness” (2012:30). In this context, every film follows a certain aim, which is to spread the mindset of a certain ideology. Nonetheless, the term ideology is simply defined as a “a system of representations (images, myths, ideas, or concepts, depending on the case) endowed with a historical existence and role within a given society” (2012: 30). However, there is a strong connection between ideology and propaganda due to its similar purpose which is literally to cause a large number of people to think a certain way (2012: 143). This fact makes Young question if then not all movies are in a way ideological propaganda: “Perhaps all films are propaganda in that they are having a broad and cumulative effect on the way people think about the world? This process has been called cultivation effect of media” (2012: 144). Therefore, the argument that “the medium is the message” is in a way of specific importance when it comes to movies.

In order to look at the social function the drug intoxication scenes have in the chosen movies, it is important to include an analysis of ideological factors in the movies. Cultural psychology, which concentrates on the overlapping between sociology and psychology, is interested in the actions of individuals but does not neglect that actions are constructed by the social environment surrounding the individual. In the case of film studies, the *individual* refers to the protagonist of the movie. In the broadest sense, this form of analysis belongs to Cultural Studies and includes ideological interpretations in film studies. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary field of Cultural Studies uses textual interpretations of cultural products to reveal what is going on in society at a certain historical moment (2012: 31). Young defined it

as follows: “From the perspective of cultural psychology, these textual analyses are one way of revealing the social dimensions of human life.” (2012: 31)

Movies show us the social dimensions of human life, societies attitude towards a certain topic or even influence this attitude in a direction the film wants. Furthermore, movies do not aim to achieve accuracy but more for an ideological approach which should mesmerize the spectator. If we look at these factors a movie can have influence on, it is not surprising that movies can have a massive impact on reality and society. In fact, this is even the most important aim for some ideological movies. However, not all movies aim to change reality but some representations, which heighten dramatic effects, can still do so without attempting to per se:

Representations of psychological disorders and psychological treatment would not attract so much attention from psychologists were it not for concerns about the impact such depictions might have on real-world attitudes towards psychology and whether they may do more harm than good. [...] Psychology is real, so there is the possibility that the public will take such dramatic representations as the truth. (2012: 55)

Young’s focus lies on psychology and mental illness which also includes drug addiction and substance abuse in a modern definition (Chi 2017, online). Therefore, his approach is very useful for this paper. Young is concern is that the representation of mental ill people on screen is particularly worrying because several surveys indicate that most of the public opinion and knowledge regarding mental illness comes from medial representations, which again are not very accurate (Young 2012: 55). Furthermore, we need to note that the general acceptance of drug abuse as a mental illness has not fully entered the public believe system (Chi 2017, online). According to this information, the assumption for this paper must be that drug intake is represented in a negative way to the spectator.

The effect movies can have on their audience is significant, especially when the effects on the behavior of the viewer are outside of the viewers awareness. This means that the viewer is unconscious of the effects the movie has. For example, the viewer does not know that the violent movie causes more aggression in the viewer him/herself (Young 2012: 134). When it comes to substance use the unconscious effect movies can have on their viewers was confirmed. A study looked at the relationship between smoking in films and smoking by children. It turned out that those children who were most exposed to smoking in movies were

more likely to try smoking. This is especially remarkable because smoking in Hollywood has shifted to the more negative characters, as already discussed (2012: 139). However, the copying of behavior shown in movies can even go a step further than starting to smoke. The so called 'Copycat Phenomenon' describes the behavior of copying a certain aspect seen in a movie. The process of copying is mostly a conscious act of the viewer, in contrast to the unconscious effects a movie can have. This means that the person copying something seen in a movie is aware of the impact the movie has on them. They can point to the movie as a sort of inspiration for their copycat behavior. The phenomenon of copycat behavior is located on a scale, which means that copying a haircut seen in a movie is seen as copycat behavior but also the commission of a crime. Young notes that "one study reported that one-fourth of the incarcerated adolescents they interviewed had attempted at least one copycat crime" (2012: 135). The phenomenon occurs because there is a lack of critical reflection and reality testing. Furthermore, the strong influence of the movie is often associated with a strong character identification by the viewer (2012: 135).

It is not only the copycat phenomenon that depends on a strong identification, but also the success of a movie clearly depends on the spectators and how relevant the movie is for them. In that sense, the ideological importance of movies is only conveyed when the spectator relates to the film. There are four major ways a spectator relates to a movie:

*Identification:* Film viewers identify with certain elements (usually a character) of a film and experience the film world as though they were inside it; on another level, they know they are not a part of the film, and that the film is unaware of them.

*Voyeurism:* Because viewers are simultaneously participating in a film at the same time they are separate from it, a distance is created between viewers and film that is both frustrating (because it is incomplete) and pleasurable (because it is contained and safe).

*Fetishism:* The technical qualities of film (a beautifully photographed sunset, or a sweeping pan shot) become cherished objects even though ultimately we cannot possess that which is only being *re-presented* (the sunset itself).

*Suture:* Films present a series of physical spaces that are incomplete in one way or another (the edges to the screen suggest a larger reality to which the viewer is not privy). In order to identify with a film, viewers have to accept its incomplete narrative reality as their reality by "suturing" over the elements that are missing in order to create a unified experience when there is none (e.g., remaining engaged in a film after an edit that

abruptly moves the action from California to New York). Some films try to make suturing easier while others, like *Psycho*, challenge the audience by frequently changing character perspective and refusing to answer questions the film appears to be asking. (2012: 35)

All four concepts are components of the trope of academic film analysis 'the gaze'. The gaze refers to the fact that the camera always captures the visual from a specific point of view. This means that a certain perspective is promoted in the film. How important the concept of gaze is, can be seen in films which highlight a specific point-of-view by using camera shots that recreate the perspective of a character (e.g., by jiggling the camera when a character is running). When auteurs use this method, the spectators can more easily identify with those characters who control the gaze (2012: 36).

The gaze is a powerful tool, but it definitely has its flaws especially when it comes to cultural representation of female characters. Feminism has criticized Hollywood for using the gaze in a gender-biased manner, which means that mostly male characters control the gaze while female characters are only looked at by male characters (2012:37). This usage of the gaze and the stereotypical depiction of male and female characters does impact the reality of the viewers. According to Young, "Survey and experimental research have identified a relationship between media consumption and sex-role stereotyping in how visual narratives get mixed up with the real world" (2012: 142). Furthermore, such representations can have a very negative impact, especially on the youth. The ways in which media represents female bodies is highly unhealthy and features an unattainable look for most women. People are constantly bombarded by images of unhealthy female bodies, which are in the most cases only virtual bodies anyway (see Photoshop and its usage everywhere). Generally, these unrealistic images do have a massive impact on the psyche of women and men, but the vast impact can be seen with adolescent girls. Research has shown that such representations of the media influence the behavior and attitude of young women towards their body. Thus, it is no surprise that a correlation between media and mental illnesses such as eating disorders in young women was found by researchers (2012: 142).

However, media representations do not only impact the gender stereotyping but also racial stereotyping. Again, both forms of stereotyping have a measurable negative impact and the negative impact movies can have is not limited to stereotyping. Young explains that movies can also diminish the emotional response. As an example, he brings up men who often watch

slasher films, which are full of violence paired with sex. The effect of electively exposure to violence in movies made these men number for real violence. When they were asked to witness a videotape of a rape trial, these men showed less emotions and they were less empathetic with the victim in the trial. Young expresses his concern with such findings because “these [findings] raise concerns that people are becoming desensitized to violence and will therefore be less likely to try to prevent it in the real world” (2012: 143).

When it comes to the function of movies, the first thing that comes to one’s mind is entertainment. However, as entertainment is mostly linked to a feeling of pleasure, media enjoyment must be explored a bit deeper. In that sense, many people watch movies to adjust their emotions. This means that a person who wants to relax may start to watch a relaxing, lightly humorous movie. If another person wants to feel a kick that person might start watching an action movie. This method is called ‘mood management’ and relates to people using media to achieve an optimal level of arousal. This is especially interesting for this paper, because the way people use movies can thus be paralleled with the reasons why people use drugs (2012: 160). Another function films can have is to educate or to spread a belief as we already discussed with ideology. However, the idea of spreading a belief and is closely linked with education, as both beliefs and knowledge can be spread:

People can learn about African genocide from *Hotel Rwanda*, British history from *The King’s Speech*, or schizophrenia from *A Beautiful Mind*. Experts in particular areas may be concerned about the inaccuracies of cinematic portrayals, but the realistic appearance of movie images creates strong impressions for people who would not know about them any other way. (2012: 161)

As discussed before, inaccuracies in movies can be quite dangerous because the scripted reality in movies can impact the real world, and therefore the reality we all live in, enormously. On the other hand, movies have the power to depict a certain topic in a realistic way which at least brings the chance to learn and to grow from it. Sometimes movies may be the only chance to learn about ‘the other’, especially in an emotional way. Thus, movies also function as connectors and are used to share information cross-culturally and cross-globally (2012: 160 – 161).

However, movies do not only function as connectors when it comes to knowledge and information but also as real connectors in our social environment. Going into the cinema with



friends, for example, clearly has a social function in connecting with other people. Furthermore, watching movies can install a feeling of human contact and can therefore function to reduce loneliness. On the other hand, it can also be used to escape from reality, which again brings a function of mood management with it. Eventually, movies can even help with self-development by functioning as a catalyst for reflection (2012: 161). The functions of movies are numerous, but one should not forget how powerful these functions can be in real life and how big the influence on a viewer might be.

## 6. Analysis 1: *Thirteen*

*Thirteen* received a lot of controversial feedback because it dealt with topics such as alcohol and drug abuse, underaged sexual behavior and self-harm (Sundance TV, online). According to Hardwicke, the script was only realized because she wanted to help her former stepdaughter Nikki Reed (Forrest 2003, online). Hardwicke noticed that Reed was going through a difficult phase and wanted to show her an alternative by giving her something useful to do. According to several interviews, the first draft of the script was finished in six days, which Reed and Hardwicke spent on vacation together. Furthermore, the original script was meant to be a comedy, but Hardwicke took her chance to include a brutal mirror for society. The comedy soon turned into a melodrama, which depicts several social problems of western society.

The first scene of the movie starts with a drug intoxication scene. Two girls are sitting in a girlish bedroom and inhale an unknown substance. At first, the camera only focuses on Tracy. The viewer can see her face and her dizzy look. She is touching her face, while she is getting high from an unknown substance. Presumably the substance is laughing gas, because Tracy soon utters, that she is unable to feel anything. Laughing gas is known to have a numbing effect on the body, cause dizziness and euphoria (Hamilton 2016, online). The movie manages to capture a certain dizziness by slowly moving the camera up and down while focusing on the tripping Tracy. This nearly invisible motion creates a 'tippy' atmosphere and somehow imitates the rush Tracy is experiencing. The used technique is very simple, and therefore cheap to produce. A hand camera was used in the movie, therefore the cameraman only needed to

slowly move the camera up and down in his hand. Although this technique is very simple, it is also very effective. The viewer gets the impression of feeling the impacts of the drug.

However, Tracy ask Evie to hit her as hard as she can because she cannot feel anything. The viewer has not seen Evie yet, but while the camera is still on Tracy, the viewer can see Evie's hand hit Tracy's face. After multiple hits, Tracy's counterpart finally gets a face and the viewer sees Evie who is taking another hit from the laughing gas and then says: "I hear this little 'wah wah wah' in my head." Tracy's response is: "That's your brain cells bobbing" (*Thirteen*, 0:01:50). The answer seems to be reflected when read on paper, but in the movie, it is followed by laughter and hysterical screams, which indicates, that the girls will not stop although the know they are doing damage to their bodies. Right after that utterance, Evie takes another hit and asks Tracy to punch her. They keep hitting each other until they are bleeding, but still the scene ends with hysterical laughter. The first scene is filled with serious and even visible body damage, but the laughing girls, who seem to be really happy, leave the viewer with a mixed feeling. The spectator sees two different perspectives, one of teenaged girls who are taking drugs and hurting each other, and the other as two girls exuding a life-affirming mindset.

The music used in this scene underlines the created feelings and therefore is used as a tool to create a certain atmosphere. The choice of music is very interesting because the scene starts out with relatively aggressive music. There are electronic guitars and a prominent bass in the song, which is played while Tracy and Evie are hitting themselves. The rough and hard sound seem to imitate the hitting. When the introduction scene comes to an end and the girls are laughing, the image freezes and the viewer can see Tracy's face laughing wholeheartedly, while the music changes. The aggressive song fades out and a very harmonic and soft song starts to play. This song functions as a transition and it continues when the viewer gets thrown into a scene, which occurred four months before the initial scene. The song is not only a tool for transition, because it purposely starts while the introduction scene is still shown. It creates a connection between the drug abusing Tracy the viewer has just met in the first scene and the childish and naive Tracy the viewer sees in the second scene. Creating this connection is important for the movie because it makes the viewer interested in how Tracy could become such a 'bad' girl.

However, the introductory scene in *Thirteen* is very well chosen. Hardwicke creates tension and suspense by creating a conflict (Perry 2015, online). She uses this simple technique in a very powerful way because she creates conflict within a character and not a situation. Conflict is mostly created by conflicting situations or conflicting forces in the movie, but Hardwicke manages to create conflict within the character of Tracy right from the beginning. The viewer first sees a stylish young girl taking drugs, celebrating life and physically damaging herself and her friend. The next scene shows Tracy with faded clothes and childish braids at both sides while she is taking her dog for a walk. She then alarms her mother to hurry because she does not want to be late for school. This scene also introduces the relationship between Tracy and Melanie for first time. Melanie, the lovely but chaotic mom, pulls back the blurb into Tracy's jeans to make sure she is not bullied at school. These two images of Tracy are shown right after another and therefore, create a conflict around Tracy from the beginning on. Again, the technique used to create this conflict was simple and cost-effective, but still it was a very effective technique. Hardwicke only used a scene from the middle of the movie in the beginning. She shows Tracy's behavior from the middle of her development in the beginning. This technique could be classified as a flashforward according to Yale University Film Analysis Guide. A flashforward is a scene which does not match the chronological order of the film (Yale University 2017, online). These characteristics apply for the opening scene of the movie. Although the movie starts with this scene, the story starts with the second scene. The hitting scene was therefore only a flashforward on Tracy's development and is meant to arouse the viewers curiosity. However, I would argue that the opening scene is even more than a flashforward because certain features of *in medias res* are fulfilled. Encyclopedia Britannica describes *in medias res* as a technique in narrative telling where the plot starts somewhere in the middle of the story. The story is now out of chronological order and tells previous important events for the story through flashbacks (Encyclopedia Britannica 2017, online). One could argue that it cannot function as *in media res* because there are no flashbacks but in reality, the film indicates a very long flashback at the beginning. After the opening scene is over and the viewer gets to know innocent Tracy, the movie states with a line at the bottom that the following scenes took place four months earlier. This indication can be seen as a link to a long flashback and therefore, the opening scene is not only a flashforward but also in *medias res*.

After the opening scene, Tracy is shown as a normal 'good' girl who walks her dog and seems happy. However, the next scene which indicates drug abuse comes right after, but in that case, it is not Tracy who intoxicates herself. At 0:02:50 of the movie, we see the first cigarette of the film. A female foot depresses a cigarette carefully, then the cigarette butt gets picked up and secretly vanishes into the pocket of her trousers. This is the first time the spectator meets Melanie, the mother of Tracy. The spectator gets the impression that Melanie does not want her children to see her smoking. Overall, I would argue that the first occurrence of Melanie is generally a positive portrayal. She tries to hide her 'bad habit' in front of her children and engages in a friendly and supportive way with her children.

Despite the fact that Melanie tries to hide her 'bad habit', which of course is an addiction as one will see as the movie progresses, the next mentioning of drug related issues also surrounds the character of Melanie. At 0:06:10 the spectator learns that Melanie is a dry alcoholic who regularly attends meetings. Although Melanie is portrayed as an 'addictive' person, she does not leave the impression of an irresponsible mother. On the contrary, Melanie seems to handle everyday life of a single mother very well. She listens to her children and tries to keep everything in tact while she herself is struggling with some issues. The only negative impression that stays is that Melanie does not take Tracy's problems seriously every time and that she seems to rely on Tracy's help and responsibility a lot. The relationship between mother and daughter is in some way more similar to friendship than to typical mother daughter relationships.

In the meanwhile, Tracy tries to befriend Evie, because she is definitely the most popular girl in school. The scene of Evie's and Tracy's first encounter includes an interesting filming technique. Evie goes to the bathroom and Tracy follows her with her new clothes to impress her. When Evie turns around the camera imitates Evie's gaze. First the camera watches Tracy from head to toe and then focuses in a fast past on different elements of Tracy's outfit. After that, the viewer gets a one on one comparison between Tracy and Evie, because the same camera technique is used to highlight Evie's appearance. The camera imitates the gaze of the girls. It imitates how the two see each other and what they notice as important in the opposite's appearance. The differences in appearance are great. While Tracy is wearing a normal shirt, jeans and some cute wristbands, Evie is wearing a belly free top, make up and glittery accessories. By contrasting them one on one, Hardwicke manages to emphasize the

difference between Tracy's world and Evie's world. Evie finally writes down a telephone number for Tracy and leaves the scene. However, when Evie leaves the viewer can only see her silhouette walking away in the shadows of the school. The camera is not held still when Evie walks away. It imitates her walk and films her in a waving and moving way. Evie always stays in the focus of the camera, but the surroundings are blurred. This creates a mystical impression of Evie's leave. The camera manages to film the scene in a way that Evie appears mysterious, interesting and somehow draws a magnetic attention to her. This scene of Tracy's and Evie's first encounter addresses some issues that have been mentioned already. First of all, the contrasting of the clothes makes clear how important it is to wear appropriate clothes if a girl wants to be labeled as cool. Costume, in that sense, does reveal the social class of the characters. Evie is the most popular girl in school and wears sexy clothes. Tracy, on the other hand, is a nobody in the school's hierarchy and her clothes resemble her status.

When Tracy tries to call Evie, she soon finds out that the number was not real. The music during this scene creates initial tension. It underlines Tracy's feeling and her being nervous about calling Evie for the first time. But as it becomes clear that the number was not real, the music switches from positively exited to disappointment. The music stays tense when Tracy is finally realizing that Evie played with her. But not only the music stays tense, also the images are creating further conflict around Tracy. After her defeat, the viewer sees the childish Tracy consuming drugs for the first time. She steals a cigarette from her mother's secret hiding place and smokes it in the garden, while thinking about her next steps. She seems to be restless and the music of the scene underlines this impression. Furthermore, the usage of cigarettes at this point highlights the nervous and disappointed feeling Tracy has. As already mentioned, cigarettes are often used to symbolize tension reduction and that is exactly the case when Tracy lights her cigarette. Additionally, the viewer learns that Melanie's effort to keep it a secret is wasted. Tracy does not only know that her mother smokes, she even knows where her mother hides the cigarettes. The availability of cigarettes and the normalization of dealing with problems through smoking is probably caused by her mother's addiction to cigarettes. This correlation was proven by a study which showed that children of smokers are twice as likely to start smoking than children of non-smokers (Schwarz 2005, online).

This smoking scene is the first time, besides the opening scene, that Tracy's good girl image starts to be questioned by the viewer. Until this scene, Tracy has been portrayed as a nice girl

with good moral standards. However, seeing her smoke is the first indicator of her deviance. Furthermore, the scene explicitly shows how she smokes, and that she is really inhaling it into her lungs without coughing. The movie may not state directly that this was not her first time stealing and smoking cigarettes from her mother, but it is implicitly stated by showing her expertise in inhaling it the right way and by the lack of coughing. This scene is a turning point in the movie, because the viewer realizes, that Tracy is willing to take her health at risk for the temporary rush of a drug.

The next time, drugs and addiction become prominent in the story is when Melanie's boyfriend comes back from rehab. Tracy does not make a secret about her dislike of Brady and confronts him with his rehab experience openly at the dining table. Brady stays calm, but the spectator learns that Brady has already been in rehab at least two times. The viewer gets the impression that Tracy is condemning Brady for his drug abuse and that she wishes her mother would not date him anymore. However, Tracy is quite hypocritic when condemning Brady because only a few scenes later Tracy gets involved in drug issues as well.

Evie and Tracy are friends now and the spectator gets the first glimpse of how big the influence of Evie and the wish for popularity are for Tracy. Evie starts dealing in the park and Tracy does not question her behavior. The movie explicitly shows how easily Evie sells drugs for a few dollars. Furthermore, Tracy does not hesitate to take the drug Evie gave to her. She neither knows what drug it is, nor how it affects her. (It is indicated later by Evie that they took LSD.) Clearly Tracy tries to impress Evie and is afraid to lose her popularity when she neglects taking the drug. The scene shows Evie, Tracy and friends of Evie while they are taking drugs in the park. The technique used to illustrate the rush of the drugs is very interesting. Tracy and Evie are always in the focus of the camera, but sometimes the background seems to vanish, and a feeling of flying is created, while Evie's and Tracy's faces are shown. Their facial expressions are dazed and the feeling of them having a good time is spread. The camera does not seem to follow a pattern when capturing the LSD trip. The people in the scene are celebrating and having fun, they are dancing, laughing and wildly running around and the camera gives the impression to imitate the celebration. The angle switches fast and sometimes the viewer only sees shoes or parts of a messy crowd. Tracy utters that she sees spiders everywhere which indicates hallucinations (*Thirteen*, 0:21:56). Overall, the trip is imitated by the camera work. Angles switch and sometimes the camera does not want to focus but flicks around.

Furthermore, the colors are very prominent and slightly foregrounded. Everything is colorful, interesting and fun. They are dancing in the water of a sprinkler, crawling around and laughing. The music chosen for the LSD scenes is quite 'hippie-like' and provides a slight dreamy atmosphere. It leaves the impression of a trance feeling and sounds quite harmonic, although it represents the psychedelic experience the group is having. Furthermore, LSD is known to provoke a child-like experience in some users. On Reddit, users anonymously describe their experience and the feeling of being childish again is often stated (Reddit 2017, online). This child-like experience was captured very well in the movie which points to an accurate depiction of the drug.

When Tracy and Evie return from the park, Tracy is still portrayed as being high on drugs. The tension between Tracy, Melanie and Brady is becoming more intense. Tracy acts odd and screams that she is a lion (*Thirteen*, 0:23:20). Furthermore, she secretly describes to Evie that she feels like her nose is melting. Hallucinations are very common when it comes to LSD, and I would argue that wide range of the psychedelic drug LSD was captured very accurate in the movie.

The next drug scene which is shown in the movie is a flashback. The childish and funny tone of the LSD trip has faded and the tension between Tracy, her mother and Brady are becoming more intense. In order to make Tracy's opinion about Brady understandable, Hardwicke has included a short flashback scene in which Brady is overdosing on some unnamed drug in their kitchen. Tracy sees again how Brady overdosed and how Melanie helped him. The scene is underlined with Tracy's voice asking what is going on in panic, but she does not get an answer. The flashback does not include music but diegetic background noise which comes mostly from outside the frame. The loud noise adds a dramatic effect to the already dramatic scene of an overdose.

The movie then concentrates on Tracy's condition and how it is getting worse and worse. She is starting to lie and to cheat. The girls are depicted lying to Melanie and getting piercings. They are portrayed smoking a lot, but still Melanie's addiction is also revealed when Evie catches her smoking. Melanie warns Evie to never start smoking, but the warning seems a bit hypocritical when she was just caught smoking out of desperation. The following scenes are very typical for melodrama, because the focus lies on the emotions of the character with nearly no use of music. Tracy and Evie are shown in a very intimate scene, lying in bed and

talking, when Melanie enters the room. Melanie tries to get Tracy's trust back but only gets rejected by her. When Melanie leans over to kiss her daughter good night, Tracy refuses to do so, but Evie takes her chance and kisses Melanie on the lips, telling her that she loves her. Tracy watches the kiss with a jealous look and starts to blame her mother for unimportant things. This bedroom scene includes much emotional tension from all characters. Evie is clearly looking for a person who loves her and sees a mother in Melanie whose attention is fulfilling for her. Melanie on the other hand, is trying to get Tracy's attention and trust back. She starts to worry about Tracy and starts to get suspicious about her behavior. But Melanie is not able to push Evie back, although she knows it would be the best for her daughter.

Tracy, however, has been neglected all day. First, her father cancelled the weekend plans. Afterwards she sees her mother creating an intimate relationship with Evie multiple times on that day, and in the end even Evie neglects her, when leaving her alone because she has a secret date with a boy. In order to illustrate the pure desperation of Tracy, Hardwicke sequenced a self-harm scene after Evie left Tracy. The melodramatic aspects get foregrounded here by using an intense and emotional scene. It is the first time the viewer explicitly sees Tracy's wounds and how she cuts herself. The music which frames the scene is slow and sad, but it is not prominent enough to shift the attention from the images of the movie. On the contrary, the music manages to highlight the emotional and shocking scene and stops on the emotional peak of the scene. When the music stops, typical evening background noise can be heard. According to Yale's film guide, the switch from non-diegetic music to diegetic background sounds makes the scene more realistic and therefore the viewer gets emotionally more attached (Yale University 2017, online). Again, the lack of music creates drama and even a realistic illusion.

The cutting can also be interpreted as drug usage because physical pain releases chemicals in the brain which lead to a certain feeling of being 'high'. When self-harm happens, endorphins are released which function similar to morphine. The endorphins cover the pain and the person who received the pain may feel a 'rush' (Alderman 2009, online). Therefore, self-harm is not very different to 'normal' drugs which release certain chemicals in the brain and get an effect for the user and can definitely be interpreted in the same way. The effects of drugs differ from drug to drug, but the general assumption is that drugs only get us high because the chemicals released force our brain to react in a certain way. In that sense, the division of



drugs in illegal and legal does not make a lot of sense because all drugs function at the same level by releasing chemicals.

Generally, the depiction of legal drugs is not a positive one. Melanie is a dry alcoholic which indicates the problems alcohol can cause. Furthermore, the widespread acceptance of alcohol is depicted when Broke, Evie's guardian, gives beer to the girls knowing that both are underaged. The spectator gets the impression that society does not view alcohol as a very dangerous drug, although the character of Melanie is the personification of its dangers. The second legal drug which is represented a lot in *Thirteen* is tobacco. Nearly all characters are shown smoking cigarettes at one point. It is interesting that cigarettes are the most prominent drug in the film, especially because it is legal and therefore age restricted. This means that Evie and Tracy should not be able to purchase cigarettes as easy as it seems. It leaves the impression that the girls are getting whatever they want, no matter if it is legal or illegal.

It is interesting that the use of legal drugs is so prominent in the movie, because the legal drugs shown are in many cases more dangerous than illegal drugs. For example, at 0:46:20 of the movie, the girls and two male friends of them are shown smoking cannabis. Cannabis definitely was an illegal drug all over America in 2003. Still, cannabis is not toxic and there are no documented cases of death caused by its use. On the other hand, the movie shows tobacco a lot, which is toxic and leads to over seven million smoke-related deaths annually (The Tobacco Atlas, online). Similar numbers are true for alcohol which also is toxic and functions as a neurotoxin. The scene which features cannabis is very short. The mise-en-scène shows a small bedroom which is lit by a number of candles. The kids are smoking cannabis with different utensils. Tracy is using a small pipe which she lights in the front and Evie is using a rolled joint. Furthermore, the scene includes some beer bottles which stand on the table. Eventually, Tracy takes a sip from the beer which informs the spectator that the teenagers have practiced poly drug use. Evie talks about smoking cannabis with some other friends which also implies that it is not their first experience with the drug.

Only a few scenes later, the spectator learns how familiar the girls really are with alcohol and cannabis. Evie and Tracy invent themselves to Luke, an older neighbor of Tracy. Before they are even in the house, Evie yells in Luke's direction, asking if he has any beer for them. When they are finally in the house, Evie asks very soon where Luke stows his bong. The scene can be seen as another turning point to the story. Tracy and Evie try to convince Luke off having sex

with them. The scene was filmed in a house, using a 200° camera angle. According to Hardwicke, it was a challenging scene to shoot, because the scene was filmed in one shot and at a very wide angle (Fuchs, online). Indeed, the experimental angle creates a realistic atmosphere by showing nearly all angles of the room but without cutting the scene. The wide angle and the wavy handheld camera create the impression of a homemade video. The girls, especially Evie, already know how to 'drug' themselves. They start their visit by drinking a shot together and trying to seduce Luke, who is not interested because the girls are underaged. Still, he gets into kissing first Evie and then Tracy.

However, the scene ends with Luke rejecting the sexual offer from the girls. This is the first time the girls do not get what they want and furthermore, the girls start to become too self-confident with their lies. When they run home from Luke, Melanie notices for the first time, that Tracy has been drinking. When she follows the girls to ask them about the alcohol, she finally sees all the stolen goods in Tracy's room, which added up over the time the two girls were friends. This is why the rejection scene can be identified as a turning point. Melanie now really notices the changes Tracy is going through and the vast extent of her downfall is now presented to Melanie. This fact leaves her unable to ignore Tracy's development. Tracy and Evie on the other hand, have now faced rejection for the first time and they cannot cope with it. It is only logical that the situation at home starts to escalate and even Mason, Tracy's brother, starts turning against Tracy and accuses her of drinking all the time. Furthermore, Melanie starts to take action against Tracy and tries to find help to cope with her behavior. This is the first time in the movie that the drug abuse of the girls becomes noticed by adults, which is interesting, because they have already consumed drugs which are culturally condemned 'harder' than alcohol. Still, their alcohol abuse is the first issue that gets noticed. This information binds in with social expectations and social acceptance. The adults expect the young to experiment with alcohol one time in their life. This practice is socially accepted, and the visible effects of drunkenness are noticeable for everybody, because everybody knows what it looks like to be drunk. However, nobody expects the young to experiment with LSD and only few people know what a person on LSD looks like. Therefore, it is only logical that alcohol abuse is the first that gets noticed, especially by a dry alcoholic.

In order to calm the waves, Tracy and Evie plan a family night in the cinema with Brady and Melanie. Indeed, Tracy and Evie are lying to Melanie and spend the night in the city while

Melanie and Brady are in the cinema. Soon the situation escalates again. Tracy is portrayed standing in a shop while heavily flirting with the shop keeper. Mason comes in and only sees the back of his sister and drops a comment about her bottom being nice. When Tracy turns around, the shock is nearly tangible in the eyes of Mason and Tracy. However, Tracy lost Evie and is looking for her with an unknown man who gives her drugs. This drug taking scene is probably the most powerful in the movie. The camera is very wavy, colors are changing during Tracy's trip and her facial expressions leave the impression of her being completely wasted. The drug Tracy took is referred to as 'Voodoo-Juice'. Urban Dictionary describes the substance as a mixture of many different liquors (Urban Dictionary 2018, online). In that sense, alcohol is again portrayed in a negative way by dedicating the most powerful drug representation to it. The music which underlines the scene of intoxication accomplishes to imitate a certain feeling of being wasted and confused. These feelings are exactly what Tracy resembles when she looks for Evie completely drunk.

When they finally get home, Mason wants to talk to Melanie about his sister. Tracy is not happy about it and Mason and Tracy begin to argue. The camera angle stays the same throughout the scene and the camera moves synchronically to the fight. Hardwicke uses this simple technique to create an illusion of reality. Again, no music is used in the scene and the focus lies on the emotional level. The emotional meltdown of the family is even portrayed further, when Melanie collapses and Brady puts her under the shower to secretly pack his things. He leaves Melanie alone, stating that he is very close to using drugs again. The entire sequence of scenes is not using non-diegetic sound to contain the illusion of reality. Also, the lack of music in emotional scenes is frequently used in melodrama to create tension, but Hardwicke definitely leaves out music in these scenes because she wants the movie to appear authentic and real. When Brady finally leaves the house his leaving only appears in the background because the girls and their behavior is foregrounded by Hardwick. They are lying in the bed and are sniffing some unknown prescription drug with straws. There is no rush indicated but they notice that Brady is leaving. The girls smile in triumph at each other when they see Brady is leaving.

Although Melanie and her friend Cynthia try to entangle the situation on the next day, Tracy and Evie continue doing what they want, and they even stop caring about telling lies in order to cover up their behavior. They become careless and Melanie finally sees one of Tracy's

piercings. Tracy completely loses her temper and tells her mom: “No bra, no panties” (*Thirteen*, 1:09:05). She repeats the phrase several times to indicate, that she does not need a bra or panties because she immediately undresses both for any boy.

Melanie now takes action and calls her ex-husband whom she asks to take Tracy. He refuses and the downward spiral continues. Finally, the movie reaches its starting point and the viewer sees how Tracy and Evie try to conceal their wounds from hitting each other. Therefore, they paint each other with heavy make-up and set up a spontaneous drag queen show for the family. This scene illustrates perfectly how fed up with life the two of them have become and how shocked the rest of the family is by their ‘over-the-top attitude’. Their carelessness for school finally has negative consequences and Tracy has to face her demons. The movie portrays her downfall by letting her meet Astrid, Evie’s former best friend, in the bathroom. Tracy has just heard bad news about her school report and browses into the bathroom. Astrid stands there fixing her make up in the mirror when Tracy asks her if she wanted to sell some ‘shit’ on the beach. Astrid declines the offer, explaining that she is doing a course where she is playing the mermaid and leaves Tracy alone. She now stands there trying to cover her cut on the lip from the laughing gas scene. Hardwicke decided to build in a very melancholic and still dramatic song while Tracy sees her depleted face in the mirror. The song continues to play but the image changes to Tracy sitting in the back of a car. Her look is empty, and she says more to herself than to anyone else: “I can’t even remember how to spell ‘photographer’” (*Thirteen*, 1:18:40). The camera angle suddenly switches to Melanie, imitating the way the co-driver might look from Tracy to Melanie. Tracy shows nearly zero facial expressions and therefore, emotions, when she utters the sentence. Melanie seems to be confused by her daughter’s statement, but the viewer has little time to interpret Melanie’s facial expressions. The camera angle switches again and the viewer now sees Tracy’s reflection in the mirror of the car, imitating the way Melanie might be looking back towards Tracy. After the focus was on Tracy’s face for a few seconds, the camera angle gets wider and the viewer can see Tracy’s and Evie’s reflection in the mirror. This powerful image highlights the impact Evie had on Tracy, but also indicates, that there needs to be an end. Melanie also realizes through this image, that she must intervene now, or it might be too late.

When Tracy realizes that Melanie is going to take Evie home to Brooke, her facial expressions are very hard to determine. There is shock in her eyes, but also there is some kind of relief in

her face. It turns out that Brooke had a plastic surgery that went wrong and that she did not answer any calls because she felt so ugly. Melanie now insists that Evie stays with Brooke, and even Tracy tries to persuade Evie to stay with Brook. Evie then runs out and Tracy follows her. Evie leans against a wall and cries and Tracy hesitates to go over to her. Emotionally the scene is supported by the single use of diegetic sounds until Tracy decides to leave Evie. Then Tracy makes her decision, an oppressive song starts to play and the focus of the camera switches to the now bitterly crying Evie.

The spectator is presented with a scene in which Tracy seems to be happy with her decision and is making progress. But this illusion gets destroyed immediately. Evie leaves Tracy in front of the school and Tracy calls her to pick her up. Tracy still wants to belong to the popular clique although she has now seen its dark sides. Popularity still means more to her than good grades. How much it actually affects Tracy is shown through a final intense cutting scene. The viewer sees how eager Tracy is to cut herself. She is desperately searching for her scissors, but she cannot find them. Instead she finds a razor blade. She is now desperate enough to use the razor blade, but she cuts too deep and the wound is bleeding a lot. Someone else wants to come into the bathroom and Tracy is getting nervous because there is a lot of blood. Furthermore, she seems to be in real pain and therefore Hardwicke highlights how uncontrollable self-harm can be, such as any other addiction. By portraying Tracy's eagerness to come into the bathroom, Hardwicke illustrates how addictive self-harm can be. This definitely links with the idea of self-harm functioning similar to classical drugs.

However, Tracy gets bad news from her teacher, that they are going to hold her back. She then wanders home desperate, but Brady appears to drive Tracy home. Again, Hardwicke forgoes the use of music in these scenes and creates a very real picture. In fact, Hardwicke does not use background music for ten minutes. The entire break-down scenes relinquish the use of music to create dramatic illusion.

During Tracy's ride home, there are several signs which are presented to the viewer. First, Brady and Tracy drive by Luke's house which now has a big 'For Sale' sign on it. According to Monaco, this can be identified as a classical symbol in a movie. A symbol is characterized by an arbitrary sign which represents the signified through convention (Monaco 1981: 133). Therefore, a 'For Sale' sign is a symbol because the meaning is only conveyed through convention. People can read and know what these words mean, they might also know what a

sign in front of a house means, but they do not know it because the sign represents the sale in any means. After driving by Luke's house, Tracy waves to one of her neighbors, but the lady ignores her and disappears after she has seen Tracy. This symbolizes how Tracy has become the black sheep of the neighborhood. She is not the little girl anymore, who was loved by everybody. The lady's unwillingness to greet Tracy represents her development and how people see her now. The unforgiving nature of society is portrayed and even manages to show how confused Tracy is about it. In her mind she is still Tracy, who may have faced a few struggles while growing up, but for society she is now labeled with a label no one wants to have.

When Tracy gets home Brooke, Melanie and Evie are waiting for Tracy. Evie tries to warn Tracy. She tells her that they have found everything, but neither the viewer nor Tracy knows what exactly Evie means with it. Finally, a talk between all protagonists takes place. Brooke and Melanie tell Tracy that they have found all of her hiding places for drugs in her room. Hardwicke chooses to present the hiding places in Tracy's room with a short but effective flashback. The image she presents with this flashback is very vivid; little portions of drugs filled in Kinder egg plastic tubes, hidden between stuffed animals and dolls. The image of drugs between toys creates conflict and shows something that should not happen but has happened with Tracy and Evie. Tracy claims that she did not own the drugs and realizes in the same moment, that Evie has secretly used her bedroom as a drug storage. Evie answers that she had to hide drugs in her room, but although she indirectly admits to owning these drugs, Brooke does not want to hear it and ignores this statement from Evie. Melanie on the other hand, stays calm in the beginning but silently cries a lot. She asks Tracy in a very silent voice how \$ 860 appeared in her purse and Tracy's answer is: "What do you expect me to say, Mom? We jacked it, okay. It's not like your broke ass ever has any money to give me." Melanie is in shock and does not understand why her daughter was stealing. Tracy's response is: "Oh, Mom, you knew what was going on with all these clothes and shit. Christ, you are not that dumb, are you?" (*Thirteen*, 1:29:13). Tracy is in rage and her mother admits that she knew where all the clothes come from, but that she did not think that it would go that far. The emotions are highlighted by Hardwicke by using many facial close-ups. Still, Hardwicke does not use music and the focus on the faces of the characters in a narrow angle. The lack of music and the handhold camera with the focus on the facial expression again draws a line between reality and fiction. The scene creates an illusion of reality and navigates on the emotional level of the

viewer, leading the viewer to believe that the scene was filmed in a real environment. This illusion creates the strength of this scene. The viewer sees the dramatic meltdown of a family without any stylistic devices, such as music, and therefore imitates reality.

The scene finally escalates when Brooke blames Tracy for being a bad influence on Evie. Melanie now interferes, defending her daughter. When Brooke refers to the bruises Evie had from the laughing gas scene, Tracy completely loses her temper. The constellation of the two scenes is very interesting. Before Brooke blamed Tracy, Melanie and Brooke were sitting on the same side, but afterwards Melanie is shown standing directly next to Tracy and she does not move from her side. Brooke even goes one step further and forces Tracy to show her arms to Melanie. A close-up from Melanie's shocked faces follows the explicitly shown wounds. However, Melanie quickly regains her poise and stands up for Tracy, telling Brooke and Evie to leave. When they are gone, Melanie tries to hug Tracy, but she fights back. The final scene between Melanie and Tracy shows how Melanie lies down with her child and they both fall asleep. The passing of time is imitated with a fast-forward scene, in which the camera focuses the bed. The camera does not move, and the passing of time is symbolized through fast motion.

The last scene shows Tracy on the playground swinging around with a rope. The camera imitates Tracy's point of view by showing quick and rotating pictures of her surroundings. Happy music is played, and the movie ends with a freeze image of Tracy screaming as loud as she can. Both, the music and the scream underline and even symbolize Tracy's breaking free from Evie and her bad influence on her. But on the other hand, the viewer can see the stigma Tracy now has to live with. The experiences she has made with Evie will never be forgotten and Tracy knows that. She even says that it will never be okay again, and somehow the viewer gets the impression from the last shot, that she is right.

Although the movie ends with Tracy breaking free from Evie, the movie does not portray Evie as the evil girl. Although Evie acts as the catalyst for Tracy's involvement in such activities, the film does not fall into the trap of painting Tracy as a 'good-girl-gone-bad' with Evie serving as the evil temptress. Tracy had her own demons before meeting Evie. Yet her relationship with Evie provides her with new ways to express them (Teufel and Greytak: online). This analysis of Teufel and Greytak is very accurate and indicates the difficulties in portraying round, and therefore realistic, characters. Evie may be the catalyst for Tracy, but her inner conflicts are

visible for the viewer before she meets Evie. Therefore, Teufel and Greytak are right to say, that Evie is not the reason for Tracy's development, but rather gives her new options to cope with her inner conflict.

Another strong stylistic element, which Hardwicke decided to use was a very strong color scheme in the movie, which imitates the dramatic fall of Tracy. The movie starts out with bright colors and is very light and sunny in the beginning. However, as the movie progresses, the colors start to fade out.

Scenes in the beginning of the movie are colorful and bright. Sunlight is used to illuminate the scenes. The colors mirror the portrayed feeling of the movie. In the beginning everything is happy and good. Tracy has found a new friend and belongs to the popular clique. The girls feel happy and Tracy is still very enthusiastic about her friendship with Evie. The same emotions get conveyed through the use of bright colors and a sunny atmosphere.

The first shift in color code is noticeable after a turning point in the story. After Tracy and Evie were rejected by Luke, the color slowly starts to fade out. Especially, the surroundings and the secondary characters have lost their color. Tracy and Evie, on the other hand, are still shown in brighter colors. Again, the color scheme imitates the plot development and the emotions of the characters. The secondary characters have not only lost their bright colors, they have also lost their trust in the girls. The colorless characters are anxious about Tracy's development and they are intimidated by Tracy's and Evie's manipulations. However, Tracy and Evie are still presented in a colorful way, mirroring their feelings for each other. Both are still best friends and both of them work together against the secondary character. The color scheme mirrors the entire plot situation. Evie and Tracy are still in charge and therefore in color. While the influence of Melanie and Mason on the girls is fading, their color are fading as well.

The third color pattern is introduced when Tracy tries to find Evie in the city under the influence of drugs. During the representation of her drug trip, the background color shifts multiple times, but it stays with a very dark color pattern when the trip is over. The color does not shift back and therefore highlights another turning point of the story. When the family comes home from the cinema, Mason tries to talk to Melanie about Tracy's behavior. This is the first time during the story that the situation starts to get out of control. The dramatic element of the movie is now in focus and is underlined by a color pattern which seems almost black and white. Again, the complete fading of colors mirrors the emotions of the characters.



All protagonists are now unhappy with the situation and most of the characters know by this time that this story will not have a happy end. Tracy and all characters around her have lost their happiness, vitality and also their color.

When Tracy finally awakes in her bed after the emotional break down the day before, the color is back. Hardwicke manages to increase the dramatic effect of the movie by letting the colors mirror the feelings of the characters. In this specific scene, Tracy awakes after she has broken with Evie and the color is finally back. The color is not only back in the movie, but also in Tracy's life. Her cut with Evie has an enormous impact on her life and her feelings. By making the movie colorful again at this specific plot point, Hardwicke underlines that Tracy broke free from Evie's bad influence and may become happy again.

The movie manages to raise multiple questions about our society. The most prominent issues the film concerns itself with are the questions of beauty, adolescence and drug abuse. Hardwicke stated in an interview, that she was shocked about Reed's obsession with beauty at the young age of thirteen (Todd 2003: online). According to Reed, she woke up at 4:30 am in the morning, in order to look perfect for school. She claims that she even had a journal in which she wrote possible outfit combinations, but even more so, the journal should help her prevent wearing the same clothes two times (Forrest 2003: online). This obsession was observed critically by Hardwicke and she decided to make the problem of beauty standards visible in her movie. She used several techniques to emphasize the impact of beauty on the girls, for instance, the topic of food and eating occurs multiple times in the movie. Melanie frequently asks Tracy about her eating habits, but she is annoyed by her mother and obviously develops an eating disorder. This binds in with feminist theories according to the representation of female bodies, which was addressed in the fifth chapter. The constant representation of an unattainable body and the massive importance of being beautiful in our society leads to an unhealthy relationship between girls and their bodies, as wonderfully represented in *Thirteen*. Furthermore, the movie features beauty tips from Evie. There are multiple occasions where Evie tells Tracy or someone else how to become more beautiful. For example, Evie tells Tracy to hold cold spoons under her eyes to get rid of bags or she tells Melanie how much calories you burn when you drink a certain amount of ice water. Still, Evie is a thirteen years old character but knows an alarming amount about diets and calories. Hardwicke even develops the critique on beauty further by including a symbol which emphasises the question of beauty.

The symbol is a simple advertisement which is seen multiple times in the movie. However, the symbol changes as the movie progresses. At first, the advertisement is clean and states: "Beauty is Truth". The same advertisement is seen at the end of the movie. The conveyed message is very strong and fits in neatly with the plot. Tracy always admires beauty and wants to be beautiful herself, but as she gets beautiful on the outside, she loses her inner beauty. The advertisement functions as a signifier and symbolizes the unprofitable obsession with beauty many young girls have. Interestingly, the used picture was produced in a typical procedure of twenty-first century advertisement. According to Hardwicke, the picture is a mixture of different people, combined with the perfect face with photoshop (Fuchs: online). Again, this relates with feminist theories which claim that the beauty ideal is not real, but virtual nowadays. In that sense, the beauty ideal cannot be reached by any natural girl or women, because the standard is not located in the spectrum natural, obviously not even in the spectrum of reality. Therefore, the beauty standard can only be reached through make-up, beauty surgeries like those of Broke, photoshop or body modification.

In summation, the movie paints a fairly realistic picture when it comes to adolescence problems, but also concerning drug usage. The depiction of the different drugs is quite accurate according to addictiveness and the action spectrum. When it comes to addictedness *Thirteen* features alcohol and tobacco as being riskier than for example LSD. While LSD and other illegal drugs are only consumed once in the movie, alcohol and cigarettes are used numerous times by adults and by the teenagers. Furthermore, the danger of alcohol is personified in Melanie, but illegal drugs are also represented as dangers to life through the character of Brady. However, Brady is called a "coke-head" by Tracy which indicates that he is consuming a specific type of drug (*Thirteen*, 1:03:45). The depiction of LSD and cannabis as being less dangerous than alcohol and cocaine is legitimate because this representation can be backed with science. Professor David Nutt run a big study on all kinds of different drugs and he came to the conclusion that alcohol is the most dangerous drug for society. While tobacco, cocaine and heroin were also high-scorers in the rating, psychedelic drugs and ecstasy were found to be at the bottom of the pile (Lopez 2015: online). However, when drug intoxication is vividly presented by the usage of film techniques the representation can also be seen as accurate. The LSD intoxication is portrayed as being more childish, the laughing gas as numbing and the alcohol as a loss of control. All three intoxications are represented by

similar techniques such as a wavy hand camera, a change of colors and images changing with a fast paste.

Hardwicks intention was to create a movie which depicts the problems of young girls. The movie was controversially received and claims were made that the movie exaggerated on nearly all aspects. However, Hardwick used the drug topic as a secondary topic. The main story was not about a girl becoming a drug addict but more on a girl struggling to become a woman. The question arises why Hardwicke has included drugs when it was not her main point of social critique. Therefore, we must ask why is the drug usage emphasized? What is the narrative function of drugs scenes in *Thirteen*? I assume that drug scenes were included to emphasis some social issues around adolescences which continue to affect the adult society as well. Adults are consuming drugs; therefore, it is only a question of time that the youth is copying the behavior. In the case of *Thirteen*, the narrative function and the social function of the drug scenes is not too far apart. Drugs are shown in the movie to emphasis that the youth does have problems, that the youth is copying adult problems and that drugs are just the symptom not the problem itself. The girls do have a lot of social anxieties, they need to cope with a lot of pressure according to school performance, peer pressure and beauty standards. The drug scenes in *Thirteen* function as an escape mechanism for the girls, but also for the adults as we can see in Melanie's secret smoking habit. The problems which cause the girls to engage in risky behavior are deeply rooted in bad social interactions and neglected responsibility, a lack of communication between children and adults and unreachable standards imposed by society. The risky behavior of the girls is in that way only a coping mechanism to handle with the hypocritic expectations of society. In that sense the narrative and the social function of the drug intoxication scenes is to identify drug abuse as a by-product of much deeper social problems. However, the film does include many forms of social critique which broadens its social function to a point which not only blames individuals for their downfall but also holds up a mirror to society and its toxic expectations young girls have to live with.

## 7. Analysis 2: Requiem for a Dream

*Requiem for a Dream* is on the one hand a classical drug abuse movie which focuses on the downfall of four individuals who are addicted to heroin, cocaine and speed. On the other hand, this film brings a new perspective on drugs and addiction into the discussion by portraying the downfall of Sara Goldfarm, an elderly woman who would not fall into the classical risk group. Aronofsky questions the definition of drugs by showing that nearly everything can lead to a sort of addiction and craving even if it is just watching TV or eating sugar. He demonstrates quite nicely that the need to fill a void is not specific to heroin junkies, but also other people who feel lonely or unhappy, even if these people live a quite ordinary life. The feeling of a need, a craving or even the feeling that one cannot resist is dominant in his movie but foregoes the urge to limit negative experiences to illegal drugs. More so, he tries to highlight the underlying causes which eventually lead to addiction. The individuals are the center of his movie, but also their individual dreams, their individual circumstances, their individual relationships and their individual downfall. In general, the movie is segmented into 3 acts, which is very common for a 'classical narrative'. The film starts in summer, which is the first act and concentrates on the dreams and hopes of the individuals. This act is equitable with the set-up. The viewer gets to know the characters, their dreams and their relationships. The second chapter is called 'Fall' and functions as a pun because it not only refers to autumn but also the beginning of the downfall of the individuals. This act clearly functions as the confrontation, in which the individuals have to face their demons for the first time. The last act 'Winter' then portrays the complete collapse of the individuals and the burial of all their dreams. In that sense, 'Winter' symbolizes the resolution, even though the resolution is not positive for the characters.

The first scene of the movie sets the tone for the rest of the film and introduces the spectator to the split screen. This technique is used multiple times in the movie and highlights that although the characters are in the same room every character experiences the situation differently. In the first scene the spectator gets to know Harry who steals the TV of his mother. It is indicated that it is not the first time and furthermore, it shows that Sara, the mother of Harry is dependent on the TV as it is her only source of entertainment. Harry and Sara are shown by individual cameras and the spectator can see both of their experiences

simultaneously. Harry tries to get the TV and Sara locks herself up in the wardrobe watching her son through the keyhole. This means the spectator sees two different angles of the same event happening simultaneously, underlining the fact that every character is an individual.

At first it is not clear why Harry steals the TV, but the viewer soon learns that Harry and his friend Tyrone are selling the TV to get money for drugs. Both are shown to consume a number of different drugs, but as already mentioned their drug of choice is heroin and that is also the first drug that gets consummated in the movie. Furthermore, the first drug consumption scene is the first scene in which the spectator is introduced to 'hip-hop montage'. Darren Aronofsky and other auteurs have coined the term and it is a relatively new form of montage. Urban dictionary describes the term as the following: "A short sequence of clipped images or actions shown in fast motion, accompanied by sound effects" (Urban Dictionary 2005: Online). Aronofsky uses hip-hop montage to show repetitive behavior and passing of time. Most of the time his usage of hip-hop montage refers to drug scenes either in consumption or selling. The first hip-hop montage of the films presents the pictures of someone biting open a package, cells which get wider, a lighter heating something, a bubbling liquid, an injection, the widening of pupils, a person ripping open a package, a bottle cap with liquid, a cotton which is thrown into the bottle cap, another injection, blood vessels and another shot of widening pupils. All of this happens from minute 5:45 to 5:50 and every short clip contains non-diegetic sound elements. Afterwards the spectator sees Tyrone and Harry hanging out in a living room dancing and laughing. Montage, in that sense, does not only function as an editing device, but creates its own meaning. The way that Aronofsky uses hip-hop montage, is conveys meaning beyond the short images and sound effects. As it describes repetitive behavior in a vivid way, the montage of the film is probably one of the most meaningful features of the film.

In terms accuracy the first drug scene in the movie is not quite accurate. Most of the images shown in the hip-hop montage are true for a heroin user who injects the drug, but one image portrays the opposite of a heroin intoxication. The widening of the pupils is a side effect for many drugs, but it is not one heroin, as exactly the opposite happens. According to Get Smart About Drugs, a DEA resource website, the pupils constrict rather than grow wider. This major mistake occurs numerous times in the movie and reveals a lack of research according the heroin topic. Furthermore, the first heroin rush which is presented to the viewer after the hip-hop montage, also lacks accuracy. Tyrone and Harry are shown to dance and to laugh a lot,

however heroin is an opioid which makes its effects sedative rather than energizing. Therefore, the portrayal of heroin's main effects as a drug are not quite accurate. On the other hand, the portrayal of problems of long-term consumers, addiction and unwished side effects is relatively good researched. This leaves the impression, that society is only interested in the negative effects of drug. Still, this is just an impression because *Requiem for a Dream* portrays addiction in general rather than specifically drug addiction, and addiction generally has negative consequences.

After their trip Tyrone and Harry eat something at a sandwich bar, exchanging dreams about making a lot of money in the drug business. However, the spectator not only learns of their dream of making it big, but also gets to rethink the concept of dreams. A police officer joins them at the sandwich bar and Harry sees his pistol and secretly steals it from the officer in order to throw it around. At first the viewer is trapped into believing that Harry actually has done it, but soon finds out that Aronofsky has only played with a dream sequence. The dream of becoming wealthy compared with the daydream of fooling an officer makes clear how diverse dreams can be. It underlines that every human being has dreams, either big or small, and that not all dreams are meant to come true.

The film then switches to Sara who gets back her TV. Aronofsky effortlessly shows the spectator that even the innocent, loving mother Sara has her addictions and manages to unsettle the viewer about the definition of drugs. Sara makes herself comfortable, switches on her favorite TV show and opens a box of chocolate. Delighted, Sara eats the chocolate and allows herself to flee reality through sugar and TV. Meanwhile, the viewer gets introduced to the relationship of Harry and his girlfriend Marion. It seems they engage in a romantic but also action-packed relationship, which is portrayed through them gaining unauthorized entrance into a building, wild kissing in the elevator and mocking the security service of the building. They are engaging in some sort of deep conversation explaining why Marion is not fond of her parents although they always provide money for her. Furthermore, Harry and Marion start to dream about their own store which sells Marion's designs.

Simultaneously, Sara gets a call informing her that she will be on television. Thus, one of Sara's biggest dreams becomes true which makes her nervous and excited at the same time. However, one of her first concerns is what to wear on the show and how to look good when she is on television. Sara informs her neighbor about what happened and asks her to help her fit into a

red dress, which Sara wore at Harry's high school graduation. Sara does not fit into the dress anymore, but her neighbor advises her to borrow a diet book. The book firstly confronts Sara with her massive sugar consumption by pointing out that no sugar is allowed in this diet. Furthermore, Sara's reaction to the limited diet shows the spectator that food, especially unhealthy food, can also cause a longing and craving. Aronofsky manages to highlight that food can fill the void in the same way that drugs can. Furthermore, it is interesting that Sara, an elderly woman, can still not dodge beauty standards. The impact of such ideals on young girls has been discussed deeply in *Thirteen*. Therefore, it is to mention that even Sara is obsessed with her looks and losing weight, which only illustrates how deeply these unhealthy beauty standards are rooted in the female mind. The pressure of being young, admirable and thin is so prominent that it eventually leads to self-objectification by the women who only see themselves as the body that needs to be beautiful.

While Sara tries to change her appearance and dyes her hair, the other three individuals are "wasting some time" (*Requiem for a Dream*, 0:15:30). This is the first time in the movie that uppers are consumed. Again, Aronofsky uses hip-hop montage to indicate that all three individuals took an orange 100 mg pill. After the consumption the events are speed up and the spectator gets to view a house party with dancing, music and drugs. It is not exactly mentioned what sort of upper they consumed. However, all uppers share some effects and characteristics:

Uppers are central nervous system stimulants that temporarily increase mental or physical function or both. The word "uppers" is a colloquial term for stimulants that make you alert and enhance locomotion. Amphetamines, one type of "uppers," are widely used as prescription medication and commonly prescribed to treat Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Cocaine, amphetamines and methamphetamine, all uppers, produce wide ranging effects by enhancing the activity of the central and peripheral nervous system. Effects vary according to the type of substance. While some can reduce anxiety and elevate moods, others lead to euphoria. At the same time, these can also cause anxiety and other psychological disorders, conditions that they are meant to treat. The primary effect of uppers is due to the interference they create with levels of neurotransmitters that carry signals from and to the brain. (Hamilton 2018, online)

In addition to psychological disorders and other long-term effects, there are more negative side effects uppers can have, especially more temporal side effects. For instance, most uppers suppress the sensation of hunger and lead to teeth grinding. None of these side-effects is addressed by the first upper scene in the movie but will be addressed later on within the character of Sara.

Another important scene which characterizes Harry and Marion is located after the upper scene. Aronofsky presents Harry and Marion who lie besides each other, having a deep conversation and touching each other's skin. However, the scene is not presented in the traditional style but includes the split screen which was already used in the first scene. It highlights that although the characters are communicating and seem to be very close, Harry and Marion are still individuals captured in their own version of reality. Both have a unique perspective on life and both experience the same event in different terms. However, the scene also indicates that Harry and Marion are not that close after all. They may be in love with each other but in the end, they are split from each other. This scene does not only function as an indicator of their individuality but also as a foreshadowing mechanism, which already predicts the end of the movie.

Meanwhile Sara is struggling with her first day of the 'grapefruit diet'. Her struggle is stylistically portrayed through another form of hip-hop montage. First, the food Sara is allowed to eat is in the camera focus and then the spectator sees a close-up of Sara's face while she examines her small breakfast. Then the camera focuses on the food again and within one second the half grapefruit is eaten up. This change is underlined with non-diegetic sound and followed by another close-up of Sara's face who unbelievably looks at the already eaten up grapefruit. This technique is repeated with the boiled egg and the coffee, whereby Sara's facial expression gets increasingly unsatisfied. The technique illustrates how fast the food is eaten and how little satisfaction it provides for Sara. Then the viewer gets presented a close-up from a clock slowly moving its hand. Sara then looks with demand to the refrigerator which makes a humming sound that almost appears hypnotic to Sara. Her belly is grumbling although she has already eaten. The sum of this scenes implies that Sara has real difficulties with her addiction to food, especially unhealthy food as Sara mentions her hunger for 'cheese Danish'. Like any addiction, Sara feels the need for sugary food to cover the demand which rose over



the years. The longing which is shown in the movie corresponds with scientific research that proved that sugar is toxic and functions similarly to cocaine (Conason 2012, online).

The fact that sugar and cocaine function very similarly in the brain is very interesting, especially when the next scene of the movie is considered. After Sara's problems with sugar withdrawal the spectator sees Marion standing in front of her mirror and consuming some cocaine. The consumption again is shown through hip-hop montage, but the rush is not further highlighted. All the spectator sees is Marion staring at her reflection, at first a bit shy but after consumption she stretches her arms in the air and seems to be much more confident than before. Then the screen fades to white. Cocaine is the drug of choice for Marion which later on is only visible through exact analysis of the hip-hop montage. Most of the time when Marion consumes drugs, the pictures of the hip-hop montage are slightly different to those when heroin is consumed. It is not a shot, but a dollar bill and a snort. However, Marion seems not to be choosy when it comes to drugs anyway. It is never clearly stated what the individuals consume, but Marion consumes the widest variety in the movie.

Meanwhile, Sara really has a hard time and constantly thinks about food. This constant distraction is stylistically portrayed through the split screen again. Sara tries to distract herself from her hunger through watching television, which again is underlined as a repetitive behavior by the use of hip-hop montage. However, the TV does not function as a distraction and the screen shows Sara trying to focus on the TV and on the other half it shows the refrigerator humming in the hypnotic way that gets Sara's attention. The camera zooms in on both sides of the screen intensifying the compulsion that Sara feels. On the one hand, the extreme close-up to Sara's face highlights her inner conflict of want and need, whereas the close-up of the refrigerator underlines how hypnotic the need can be although Sara does really want to lose weight. Finally, Sara goes out to sit with her neighbors in order to distract herself as much as possible. However, the only topic the neighbors talk about is diet, food and getting thin. The idea of becoming skinny and beautiful again is manifested in Sara and lies bare the beauty standard for women in western communities. Being skinny seems to be the ultimate goal for becoming beautiful and this idea that only thin is beautiful does not stop at a certain age. In Sara's case, the spectator gets to know that beauty standards do affect everybody and what extend this 'beauty sickness' can reach. When a neighbor tells Sara, that pills can help to lose weight it becomes clear that there are no limits for achieving the ideal of a thin silhouette.

In the meantime, Tyrone and Harry are implementing their plan and buy some uncut heroin from Tyrone's dealer. While they are discussing how to do it right the background music slowly starts. The song played has the same title as the movie and is a quite dramatic. It is played by classical instruments and does not contain vocals. The song starts more slowly and quiet but build up and becomes more and more dramatic. Therefore, the song simulates the downfall of the individuals in the movie. The song does not reach its climax and only the beginning of the song is used to highlight the beginning of the end for a number of characters. While the song plays the spectator sees Harry and Tyrone starting their drug business and Sara who finally mails the required data to the TV station.

The next scene starts with a hip-hop montage letting the spectator know that Harry consumes cannabis. After the consumption, time is sped up and Harry is even portrayed having a hallucination. He sees Marion standing on the beach wearing a red dress, which is very interesting because Harry's mother tries to fit into a red dress. However, the dream sequence is interrupted by Tyrone who comes home with the heroin. Tyrone immediately want to try the heroin, but Harry utters concerns because he does not want to mess up. Still, in the end they consume the drug and they justify their decision by saying that they need to know how much to cut the heroin with. The consumption combines the cinematic codes of hip-hop montage and the split screen to amplify that both are doing the same thing, but the experiences are not equal but always subjective and unique. Then we see them laughing and the screen fades to white which was already the case after Marion consumed cocaine.

The viewer sees Sara again who still tries to distract herself from food with her favorite TV show. Again, it does not work very well, and Sara even begins to hallucinate about food, especially sugary or fatty food. The craving becomes so intense that Sara is not able to sleep anymore. This makes her so desperate that she calls her neighbor who told her about the pills to ask for the doctor's number. When she is finally in the doctor's office for medical examination, the doctor does not even look at her. He starts the examination by noticing that Sara is overweight but for that diagnose he only looks at his clipboard. He promises that they will get the weight under control while looking at his watch and noting something on the clipboard. Then he leaves the room leaving the examination at a duration of under twenty seconds, but still prescribes the drugs.

The next scenes are edited as longer hip-hop montage. All scenes in this longer montage relate to the dreams of the individuals. The spectator sees Tyrone and Harry on the streets selling drugs and they are making a lot of money. It seems as if their plan works out. Also included in the montage is Marion who works on her designs and consumes cocaine while doing so. Furthermore, the viewer sees how the three are cutting the drug and how they are making even more money. Harry and Marion are working on their shop and it seems as if everything will work out as planned. The stack of money is growing, and the first clothes are sewed. But not only the youth's dreams seem to work out. Sara gets to know her medication which consists of four pills. While Sara becomes acquainted with her drugs the screen is again split. The viewer sees Sara's face reacting to the pills and the pills are shown isolated by a close-up. The pills work with a simple color code: purple in the morning, blue in the afternoon, orange in the evening and green at night. She then swallows her first purple pill and immediately allows herself a fatty breakfast. Again, Aronofsky decided to keep the split screen while Sara has her breakfast. As with the pills, we see Sara's face in a close-up on the one side, and on the other side we see a close-up of the food. This indicates that the drugs and food share commonalities in terms of addiction. The pills have an effect, but the food also has an effect as shown when Sara bites in her breakfast. She smiles widely, and happy music is played in the background. While she bits in her food she stares at the refrigerator with triumph in her eyes. She then even starts to dance around while eating as the effects of the pills become visible. Sara starts to repeat habits like drinking coffee or watching TV but she cannot hold still for long. Even the voices coming from the TV are sped up and everything appears faster. She seems hyperactive and finally goes downstairs to the neighbors.

Tyrone is shown to consume some cannabis and a naked woman waits in bed for him. However, Tyrone cannot focus on the woman because he is overwhelmed by a flashback. He sees himself running home to his mother when he was a little boy. It seems as if he and his mother had a very strong relationship and he misses her more than he is willing to admit. After the flashback he appears confused, but he soon covers up his experience and joins the woman telling her that he does not want to scare anybody and that he just wants to have some peace. Meanwhile, Marion and Harry are sitting on the beach and are engaging in another deep conversation. This time they talk about Sara and how Harry could make up the mistakes he has made. Similar to Marion's parents his only idea is to buy something for his mother. In fact, he thought for quite some time about the idea to buy her a new TV and it may even be a good

idea because Sara is really into her TV. Still, Harry does not think about what she really needs and prefers to feed her addiction instead of spending time with her. This is especially interesting because Harry mentions that he only wants his mother to be happy, and then on the other hand he thinks the only way to make her happy is to give the addict more of the stuff. Marion suggest that they get the TV immediately, but Harry wants to get high first. This reveals how deep Harry's thoughts revolve around addiction already. The only thing he wants is more of the stuff he is addicted to and he assumes that his mother does not function any differently. He has lost the focus of what makes him happy sustainably and what only fills the void temporarily.

When the film flips back to Sara the spectator now sees the effects and side-effects of uppers. As already discussed, the representation of uppers is quite accurate in the case of Sara. The viewer sees how active Sara is when she cleans her flat in high speed or how difficult it is for her to sit still. Aronofsky has mirrored the activating effect that uppers have with the camera by speeding everything up. The images are presented in a fast paste and the sounds from the TV are higher and faster. Even the clock, that moved so slow when Sara tried to stick to her diet, is now moving with enormous speed. Time is literary flying by. While the spectator sees the hyperactive Sara, the scenes are accompanied with the theme song which gives the scenes the required suspense. Although it seems as if Sara has everything under control the viewer gets to know that some things are indeed worrying. For example, the viewer sees that Sara is becoming some problems with her jawbone because she is constantly grinding her teeth's which is a common side-effect with uppers. Even Sara herself does not look like she is totally happy with all the side effects and she seems to be a bit overwhelmed by the upper effects when she watches TV. The song really imitates the uncertainty and the queasy feeling that this is not going to end well, although the climax has not been reached yet. Furthermore, the viewer sees the first time how the green pill at night really works. Everything is sped up and Sara does not look like sleeping would be an option for her, but after she took the green pill everything starts to become slower and slower. Her eyes start to close involuntarily, and she has a hard time staying up. The voices from the TV become slower and deeper until the moment when Sara finally falls asleep. This shows exactly how contradictory the uppers work from the green pill, which definitely can be classified as a downer that has the complete opposite effects of the uppers she takes at day. Without the downer in the night she would

not be able to sleep at all and this realization leaves the viewer with an uneasy feeling for Sara's future.

Sara's storyline continues with a longer hip-hop montage providing the viewer with the knowledge that Sara's plan of losing weight actually functions. The montage consists of many reoccurring images of Sara taking pills, checking the mail for the expected documents of the TV station, weighing herself and the zipper of the red dress getting higher and higher up. After the montage, the spectator sees Sara in front of her neighbors who now compliment her about her looks when Harry comes to visit her. Harry's visit functions as the first turning point in the story. Sara is restless, which makes Harry wonder why his mother is so hyperactive when she was not for all the years before. Sara, on the other hand, is obsessed with her weight and informs Harry proudly about her lost pounds. She claims that she lost twenty-five pounds and that this is only the beginning for her. The obsession with weight and the red dress become more and more prominent and it becomes more and more noticeable that this obsession develops in an unhealthy direction. While Harry wants to oblige his mother with the TV, it becomes very clear that Sara is not interested in money but more so in Harry's well-being, his love life and him fulfilling her expectations of what a 'good son' should be. Sara just wants her son to be happy and Harry definitely wants the same for his mother. Still, both want their counterpart happy, but do not ask what makes the counterpart happy. Both use their own expectations of happiness to define what happiness should look like for the other. They have serious problems with delivering what the other person needs from the relationship. Sara cannot help but burden her son with expectations. She wants to have grandchildren and a daughter-in-law, but she never asks if Harry wants such a life. She has her beliefs in what makes a happy life for her son, and she does not care if Harry has other dreams. The same is true for Harry. He wants to make his mother happy but tries to purchase her happiness with money, although he might not even know what his mother would need to become happy. Anyhow, the situation between them two escalates and lies bare how broken their relationship is and how unhealthy Sara's obsession is. When Harry hears his mother grinding her teeth he asks her about it. He has a lot of questions and concerns, but Sara is not willing to listen because in her view nothing can happen because she gets the pills from a doctor. Harry's concerns are all wiped away with the doctor argument by Sara and she even exposes Harry when she asks him why he know more about medication than a doctor. Furthermore, this scene shows how little Sara really knows about the pills she eats like candy every day. She

does not even know how the pills function, all she knows concerns the color of the pills and that the green one helps her sleep. Harry brings in valid critique, but Sara does not take him seriously. The only thing she cares about is the twenty-five pounds she lost and that she nearly fits in the red dress. It is very obvious that Harry only wishes Sara well, but he has not yet understood how deeply rooted the problems are. Finally, Sara comes out and tells her son how terrible she feels sometimes. She confesses that the red dress is a reason to get up and that she feels very lonely. The problem is not their drug addiction, the problem lies within their relationships and the drugs fill the void the relationships leave. This last reunion of Harry and his mother precisely addresses this issue. Even after Sara's confession, Harry is not able to give her what she really needs, and this is not diet pills but a stable relationship which frees her from loneliness. He notices that company is what she really needs and offers to visit with Marion, although it is clear that it will never happen. Harry knows he cannot give his mother what she needs because he is not able to live the life she expects from him. Sara, on the other hand, is not able to accept that her son does not follow the social conventions and constantly expects something that Harry cannot provide. Therefore, both of them are captured in a doom loop, unable to connect and drifting further and further into an unhealthy lifestyle living more in the illusion than in reality. How big the void is that the superficiality of their relationship leaves, is demonstrated beautifully after Harry leaves his mother. Sara stands alone, and her smile slowly fades. How deep the wounds are becoming even more obvious when Harry starts to cry in the taxi. He is visibly uncomfortable with the whole situation and feels with his mother, but the sad feeling is quickly treated with Harry's drug of choice. While he is still in the taxi he shoots heroin and immediately stops crying. The pain is not as prominent anymore and the void the meeting left is filled.

While this last meeting foreshadows the downfall of Sara and maybe even Harry, the following scene functions as the turning point for Tyrone, Marion and Harry. It foreshadows their downfall and marks the end of the first act. Tyrone meets his dealer, who is happy with his work and is interested in a further collaboration. However, it will never come to a further collaboration because the dealer is shot. Tyrone unintentionally gets into a shooting of the rivaling drug gangs which kills his dealer. Exactly when the dealer is killed, and Tyrone ends up with blood all over his face, the second act which is called "Fall" starts and the spectator sees how Tyrone flees from the scenery. *Requiem for a Dream* often uses the camera in a very individualistic way, focusing on the uniqueness of the experience by using many close-ups.

The gaze is highlighted by representing the point of view of a particular character. In the case of Tyrone, the camera imitates his running but still focuses on the facial expressions with close-ups during the run. The camera is attached to the actor, which makes the camera jiggle when the character runs. This provides an interesting effect that mixes increased realism but also character identification (Young 2012: 36) Tyrone runs away in terror, but in the end the police have already arrived at the scenery and take Tyrone with them. All of this is underlined with the theme song which now indicates unmistakable that the good time is over and that the downfall begins with the chapter of "Fall".

In the meantime, Sara has got her new TV but she is not actively engaging with it. She only sits in her chair taking one pill after another, staring at her new TV set. Harry and Marion are constantly getting high and Tyrone waits in prison showing signs of withdrawal. In order to get Tyrone out of prison Harry invests the rest of their money in order to pay his bail. Still, the situation for the three youngsters is getting worse and worse because the only one left with some heroin is Big Tim who is not selling but only gives drugs for sex.

Sara starts to feel that something is not okay with her medication and she calls her doctor for help. Interestingly, Sara feels as if the pills have lost some of their effects which means Sara is building a tolerance and shows the first signs of addiction. This is probably the most shocking part of Sara's storyline, because the doctor is not interested in helping her at all. The nurse tells Sara on the telephone that she does not need to worry and should continue to take her pills. Sara does not seem convinced after the call and hesitates to take another pill, but in the end, she swallows two pills. Right after taking the drug Sara starts to hallucinate. She sees herself in the TV which flatters her, but she gets distracted by the refrigerator that seems to be angry at Sara. She hallucinates and imagines that the refrigerator moves and makes noises which really scares her, but she tries to go back to her flattering fantasy of being on TV. She tries to concentrate on the good side, but she has a really hard time. Her hallucinations get worse as well as her addiction. According to Young, *Requiem for a Dream* manages to portray Amphetamine-Induced Psychotic Disorder in a very accurate way:

[...] Sara gets hooked on speed (in the form of diet pills) so that she can fit into a thigh dress for an upcoming game show appearance. Her increasing reliance on the pills has devastating consequences on her physical and mental health. Her downward spiral of addiction is vividly captured in a scene in

which the appliances in her home come to horrific life and attack her. (Young 2012: 48)

These scenes indicate that Sara has become a high-risk patient who already shows the first signs of an Amphetamine-Induced Psychotic Disorder. Still, her doctor is not interested in her well-being. She finally visits the doctor, already drifting away from reality, and tries to explain that she does not feel well. Again, the doctor does not deign to look at her but still manages to notice that the weight is doing fine. Sara tries to express herself that the weight is not the problem, but the doctor does not listen and only prescribes her another weekly ration of pills.

Meanwhile, the spectator gets to know that the other individuals are falling deeper and deeper into their addictions. Marion is shown to suffer from withdrawal at night and Harry's arm is infected by the frequent use of injections. Furthermore, their savings come to an end and the heroin supply in town is very low and the prices have doubled. However, Harry does not lose his faith and still believes that they will gain back their money. Tyrone and Harry are making plans to get the heroin, but they do not have the money to buy it in the first place. This is the time when Harry asks Marion to sleep with her therapist to get some money for the sex. Marion is not convinced but she agrees to prostitute herself one time, in order to get the money and get back into business.

When Marion finally meets Arnold, her therapist, Aronofsky squeezes in another dream sequence. Marion imagines herself severely hurting Arnold, but in reality, she depends on Arnold and his money, so it only stays a dream. Harry, on the other hand, also sees dream sequences of Marion enjoying the sex with Arnold. He obviously feels uncomfortable with it, but he already has a mechanism to make the uncomfortable feeling vanish. Thus, Harry injects a bit of heroin and the images he does not want to see fade away. Marion, on the other hand, suffers through the sexual intercourse and then leaves with quick steps. Aronofsky used the same technique as with Tyrone's flight scene. The camera is attached to Jennifer Connelly, who plays Marion. The spectator always sees Marion's face and how desperate she becomes to get further away from Arnold. As soon as she leaves the building she throws up. The whole scenery is underpinned by the theme song which reaches even more dramatic levels. The bitter imagery of heavy rain falling on the fallen Marion foretells the unhappy ending of this movie. The song continues to build up but the story perspective changes multiple times. It starts with Marion running away and how Harry reacts to her coming home. Then the images overlap, and Sara appears in a dreamy imagery painting her lips red and finally, Tyrone sits



alone in his bed staring at a photo of his mother. While the song slowly loses aggression, the image of Sara appears again. She is completely unhinged and disconnected from reality. She dances in her bedroom, finally wearing her red dress.

The young characters now have the money to buy drugs again, but as Harry and Tyrone try to get some heroin at a big street deal the situation escalates before they can purchase the drug. Marion is desperate to get something that makes her high and she searches the whole apartment in rage. Harry and Tyrone speculate about options and Florida is mentioned. However, Tyrone says something very interesting at that point that indicates a strong sense of self-reference: "It just seems like a thousand years ago since last summer, man." (*Requiem for a Dream* 1:05:46) Summer, in that case, does not only refer to the time when everything went good for them, but it also refers to the act of summer, which really seems a thousand years ago at that stage of the film. When Harry comes home to Marion and confesses that they were not able to purchase heroin, the two of them get into a big fight. Eventually, Harry gives Marion the number of Big Tim, who only trades drugs for sex, and leaves her. Again, the film manages to refer back to the time when everything was alright. Harry writes down the number on a photo of Harry and Marion which was made in summer, in front of the shop.

In the meantime, Sara completely collapses. She does not follow any regular doses anymore and literally eats the colorful pills like candy. She looks incredibly thin and unkempt. The spectator has now reached the scene which was previously described in a quote from Young. Sara is psychotic and hallucinates that the TV characters become real and that her refrigerator attacks her. It is extremely interesting that Sara's paranoia has developed around her former addictions. Food and TV have become Sara's nightmare. Ultimately, Sara runs out of her flat in panic and the last act of "winter" begins.

"Winter" starts with dramatic music and blurred images of Sara wondering through the wintery city in her red dress. She gets on a subway and randomly asks strangers if this train would bring her to the TV station, because she will be on television. The people in the subway seem annoyed or make fun of Sara's confusion. Harry and Tyrone are on their way to Florida and Marion sinks in pure desperation because she was completely dependent on Harry and his supply. She begs a friend to help her out and stresses that money is not an issue, but there is nothing on the streets. The scenes now switch faster and faster between the individuals. Sara, on the other hand, has reached the TV station and politely asks when her appointment

is. This interaction with reality makes clear how psychotic Sara appears. However, given the fact that the spectator knows her story it hard not to feel empathy with her. What she says may not mean anything to the paramedics that are bringing her to hospital, but the spectator knows that she is not talking complete non-sense. Given all the links of how her meltdown ensued, it is not easy to blame her as society normally does with addicts. Sara's case brings in a new perspective on addiction, shame and guilt, especially because she always followed the instructions of a doctor and that is socially accepted. Therefore, Sara's addiction is socially acceptable, while it is easy to blame the other characters. However, technically society is partly at fault not only with Sara, but with all addicts because society did not provide what the characters needed.

Harry and Tyrone inject heroin on their way to Florida and Tyrone notices Harry's infected arm. The infection got worse since it was last presented to the viewer, but Harry still plans to inject the drug into the infected arm. Tyrone warns him, but Harry is afraid he would blow the injection if he does not inject it into the wound. Thus, he ignores his infection and injects the heroin which lies bare the deep craving Harry feels. At the same time, Marion is also desperate to get high and even calls Big Tim. When she visits him, he uses his power in form of drugs to get Marion to perform sexual favors. The music is very dramatic and intensifies with every scene the spectator sees from the different individuals and every scene lies bare how desperate the characters have become. They accept humiliation and horrific pain in order to get their drug. They ignored all warning signs and still ignore all consequences their addiction has. Furthermore, the medical system of the United States is not represented in a positive light. Sara is treated in a hospital, but the methods used are overwhelmingly cruel or legally questionable. Sara was not well advised by her former doctor and the psychiatric clinic seems to make things worse. She is medicated without her permission with a sedative which is stylistically portrayed identical to the green pill. Because Sara does not want to eat, the nurses force her to eat although Sara tries to fight them. Harry and Tyrone also end up in hospital because Harry's infection is spreading. Anyway, the doctor does not bother to help Harry but only manages to get the opioids out of the treatment room. Meanwhile, Tyrone uncomfortably waits for Harry but eventually both get arrested by the police.

Harry calls Marion from the police station. It is the last time that they interact. Harry is unbelievably sorry that he could not provide the life he wished for Marion. Harry interrupted

Marion while she was styling herself for a sex party Big Tim has invited her. He promised to pay her with drugs and as Marion realizes that Harry will not come to 'rescue' her, tears run down her face. The close-up of Marion's face, with the heavily painted eyes which fill with tears as she realizes that humiliation is the only chance she can get drugs, impacts the spectator on a deep emotional level. The change from dramatic music to almost romantic music makes the scene so outstanding.

After this last moments of melancholic romance, the negative atmosphere becomes more and more tangible. Aronofsky uses distorted images and painful noise to demonstrate the difficulty of withdrawal. The music comes closer and closer to a dramatic climax while the images start to switch faster and faster. The individual clips of the characters get shorter and shorter and sound starts to overlap the scenes. The hip-hop montage is intentionally overused in the end of the movie to create the effect of a complete collapse. The images switch so fast that nearly all four stories are told simultaneously. Indeed, for all four characters their dreams have turned into their nightmares and their story ends in exactly that collapse the same is mirrored by the excessive use of hip-hop montage. Tyrone's personal nightmare is the withdrawal in prison, completely alone and facing massive bodily symptoms of withdrawal. Marion's nightmare is the complete loss of herself. She once uttered that she feels like a person when she is with Harry and that most people in her life just care about money. However, in the end Marion is just a commodity. She sells her body for drugs, although the practices are more than humiliating with a large group of men giving commands to a few women who are forced to perform on a table. The men are objectifying and harassing the addicted women in every possible way, but Marion continues. She now has become what so many people saw in her and what she always feared. She is only the beautiful object used to make other people feel good. Her feelings are uninteresting, and her contribution easily purchased, because in the end her nightmare became true, it is all just about money. The picture of being a commodity and the importance of money, which can buy everything, is incredibly woven together in a short image of the hip-hop montage collapse. At 1:33:10 the spectator sees how Marion gets 'fed' by one of those men who sticks five dollars in her mouth. Meanwhile, Harry is transported to hospital and loses his arm, but probably the biggest nightmare for him is knowing that he lost Marion. He did not only lose her, he also failed her in a way. Both of them were labile persons, who were dependent on each other, but Harry feels as if he had completely let Marion down. The biggest nightmare of all is that which Sara

has to face. She is a patient in a psychiatric clinic, but she is not treated like a human being. They exploit her confused state of mind and use her as a laboratory rat. Sara has to bear electro shock treatment, without really knowing what happens to her.

Harry hallucinates one last time and sees the image of Marion in the red dress again, but Marion fades away. When he realizes that Marion is gone, Harry falls down a high building but wakes up before he reaches the ground. He is in hospital and a nurse tells him that they will send for Marion. However, Harry knows that she will not come and starts to cry heavily. He lays himself to fetal position and the angle of the camera, which gets wider and wider, shows the spectator without a doubt that Harry's arm is amputated. Slowly, the theme song starts to play to symbolize that the requiem is now needed and that the dreams are now dead and buried. In the end, everybody is alone and has nobody to lean on. The viewer sees how Tyrone lies down on his bed in prison, thinking of his mother and showing severe signs of withdrawal. He turns around and ends in fetal position while the nightmare of prison still is reality. Marion comes home to her lonely apartment. Her make-up is blurred and her gaze empty. She looks depleted, but she got what she wanted and cuddles with a package of drugs. She has a slight smile in her face, but the smile does not seem happy, but more so, it looks hallow. When she finally lies on her couch, cuddling with the drug, she also turns around and stays in the fetal position. Sara gets a visit from two of her neighbors, but the two neighbors cannot control their desperation when they see what has become of Sara. She looks like an anxious animal and the shock is portrayed in the eyes of her visitors. After the visit the two neighbors start to cry heavily, but the reality for Sara stays the same. She stays a patient at the mental hospital, lying in her bed in fetal position, nodding herself into sleep. She hallucinates about the TV show and about her being a contestant who won the big price. In her imagination the big price is not any expensive price, but that Harry comes to visit her with trim and proper hair and tells her that he loves her. In the end, everybody wanted to be loved but nobody managed to get it. Partly because they tried to find the love in drugs and partly because none of the individuals was able to give that what they eventually needed. Everybody wanted to be loved unconditionally, but nobody was able to love unconditionally.

In sum, *Requiem for a Dream* is probably one of the best movies revolving around the topic of addiction. Its strength lies in the fact that addiction is seen in a much broader context which creates a feeling of empathy for the addicts in the film. In particular, heroin addict story is

quite stereotypical, but Aronofsky manages to tell the story with deep emotions, meaningful images and an emotion-simulating montage that crashes the reality effect and heightens it at the same time. According to the techniques used to represent the topic of drugs, Aronofsky mainly uses hip-hop montage to convey a lot of meaning in a short time. However, in addition to the hip-hop montage Aronofsky uses some well-known techniques to simulate the intoxication. For example, speeding up the images to mirror the effects amphetamines have, or the use of colors in Sara's storyline. When Sara experiences a down after already taking the pills for a longer time, the colors become much darker and when she finally snaps the reality she experiences is colorful but also dark at the same time. The play with colors was also used by Hardwick in *Thirteen* to underline drug intoxications and therefore is used in both genres. When it comes to accuracy, Aronofsky and his actors invested time in research, although there are a few minor mistakes in the movie. Especially, the representation of heroin is a bit to 'pushy' when it is actually very sedative. The biggest mistake surely was the representation of widening pupils because it reoccurred numerous times and would have been prevented easily. Still, the other drugs shown in the movie are represented in a very accurate way. The background information that is woven into the film according amphetamine use is outstanding and very accurate. Not only were the effects described in a believable way, but also the side-effects were addressed accurately. Even the representation of long-term effects was very accurately and deserves to be mentioned as one of the most realistic portrays of amphetamine caused psychosis. The excessive use of close-ups gives the movie a more realistic, but also a more dramatic effect and can be compared with the use of close-ups in *Thirteen*. Still, *Requiem for a Dream* uses close-ups even more comprehensively and therefore, more meaning is drawn from it. Especially, scenes in which the camera was attached to the actors created an extraordinary emotional atmosphere in which the identification process reached a new level. The bonding and empathy felt for the characters helps to fully grasp the dramatic downfall of the individuals.

## 8. William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet

In contrast to *Requiem for a Dream* and *Thirteen*, this film only features one drug intoxication scene. However, this is especially interesting because this film is a literary adaption from a

drama written centuries ago. The drug used in this movie interpretation was definitely not invented when Shakespeare wrote his epic drama of two star-crossed lovers. Still, the story of Romeo and Juliet is quite commonly known, therefore, the analysis will not be as deep according to the story as the previous were. In fact, only the drug related scenes will be examined for the purpose of this paper.

*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* is Luhrmann's interpretation of the classic drama. The entire film is constructed in a comic-like way with bright colors, quick movements and expressionistic elements. Furthermore, the film uses a modern perspective on the drama which allows Luhrmann to play with the comic-like montages and sound effects. In fact, the modern perspective made it possible for Luhrmann to even include the drug scene. In general, the movie does include fast paste cutting a lot, but still manages to implement romanticizing scenes and give them the needed credit in slowing things down. However, the film does have its negative sides and there are probably better movie adaptations that focus more on the original. Although there are better adaptations, this film delivers its very unique interpretation and flips the story around by including little details. The drug intoxication scene for instance opens up the room for many interpretations and definitely changes the meaning of the movie.

The importance of the drug scene becomes obvious when the point in time when the drug is taken in the film is observed. Romeo takes a pill of ecstasy before meeting Juliet at the party. How much this changes the meaning of the film becomes clear when one engages in the effects drugs can have. The pill Romeo takes is a little, white pill with a red heart on it which already indicates how ecstasy works. Ecstasy, which is actually the substance MDMA, was known as the 'love drug' in the 1960's and enjoyed a great popularity. The effects MDMA has on the user last between 4 to 6 hours and it is considered to be an upper. As other uppers it has the same short time side effects which were already discussed in *Requiem for a Dream*, but the main effect of the drug is not to energize like it is with amphetamine. MDMA users describe feeling very empathic for others and an increased need to socialize. Furthermore, they report feeling peace and love combined with a higher desire for touches. Also, the pleasure received by touches is reported to be greater and the same is true for the visual experience of colors and beauty. The user feels more connected to people and more receptive for visual stimuli. Another effect which is reported by users is an increased level of sexuality and sexual arousal, combined with a better focus and more energy. In order to function in

such a complex way, MDMA allows the neurotransmitter serotonin to be released in the brain. Serotonin is known as the 'happy hormone' and is naturally released when humans feel love and empathy (Patterson 2018, Online). When we look at the effects MDMA has on the user it becomes clear why it was called the 'love drug', because it literally changes the way people feel about love, sex and emotions.

This is extremely interesting because the drug scene is used to initiate the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet. Therefore, it is likely that Romeo still feels the effects of the drug which would then indicate that the 'love at the first sight' Romeo and Juliet have experienced is artificially made. Romeo's brain is likely on an overdose of serotonin which literally makes him feel love, because serotonin exactly works in that way. Knowing this fact, the whole follow-up story of immediately marrying and dying for each other appears at least a bit more realistic for present time. In that sense, the drug scene serves more meaning than the viewer might assume at first and definitely functions as a catalysator in the plotting. Therefore, I would argue that the drug scene has an undeniable narrative function in Luhrmann's interpretation.

However, let's look at the scenes which indicate drug use a bit more closely. The first time that the spectator sees the ecstasy pill is when Mercutio starts his famous Queen Mab monologue. While he explains how big Queen Mab is, he pulls out the pill of a small box. The pill sticks to his finger and the viewer can see a small white pill with a red heart on it. Mercutio continues to play with the pill and uses it to highlight certain elements of his speech. When he speaks of love, for example, he points the little red heart towards Romeo to illustrate his point. Still, it is Romeo who finally takes the pill. Before he swallows it, he correctly foreshadows that this night might have dramatic consequences for him. He talks about having an intuition that this will not end well, but he takes the drug anyway. Immediately after he swallowed the pill, the effects of the pill kick in, or at least it is represented in this way. Although everybody should be aware of the fact that no substance or medicine shows immediate effects when taken orally. Therefore, this is a major mistake in the representation of substances because it is physically impossible.

The effects which are portrayed by Luhrmann differ from those which are typical for MDMA. However, he still portrays effects that can be very true to users although they are uncommon. In fact, Luhrmann visually portrays a bad trip on MDMA which mostly is caused by an overdose. (Project Know 2018, Online) The effects of an overdose are dizziness, confusion,

panic attacks and a high body temperature. Compared to what Romeo is experiencing and to how dizzy he looks, chances are high he did not have a nice time at first. Visually, Luhrmann presents the trip with the use of colors, fireworks, unusual camera angles and slow-motion recordings. When Romeo arrives at the party, the MDMA rush has probably reached his peak. This peak is symbolically shown in the peak of the party. Everybody is dancing and having fun, and Romeo experiences this extraordinary party in which everything is a bit exaggerated in an unpleasant state. He already feels overwhelmed and the sensual overcharging does not make his situation better. Romeo then utters: "Drugs are quick" (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* 0:24:35) and stumbles around with a dizzy look. The dramatic effect of Romeo's overextension is underlined with the use of non-diegetic sound effects. Romeo somehow manages to get into the bathroom and cools down his face with water. He finally calms down a bit and the background music switches to a nice slow song. Romeo starts to watch fish in a tank and suddenly sees Juliet through the water. Juliet smiles at him and Romeo immediately falls in love with her.

The story of Romeo and Juliet, especially the trope of love at first sight, is very famous. However, seen under these circumstances the experience of love at first sight becomes more realistic. Even if Romeo was not under the influence of the 'love drug' anymore, a common side-effect of the come down of MDMA is a so called 'after glow'. This means that the primary effects of the drug are over, but the user still feels the effects the serotonin released had. These effects can be compared to a generally cozy and happy feeling, in which connecting with other people is still easier and the empathy level is still high (Henry Fisher 2017, online). According to this information, there is a high chance that Romeo in Luhrmann's adaption did only fall so fast for Juliet because of the effects a drug can have. Of course, love is only a chemical reaction in the brain, but in Romeo's case the chemical reaction of the drug could have definitely enhanced the sensation of falling in love.

In conclusion, the drug scene in *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* is not designed differently than the drug scenes from the other genres, although the MDMA scene is the only drug scene included. Generally, the trip is not portrayed to be very pleasant but still, it changes the interpretation for the rest of the film. Taking into account what MDMA chemically does in the brain changes the intake of the film. According to accuracy, Luhrmann did not obtain the quality of the previously analyzed movies. He did not portray any typical side-effects such as



widening of the pupils or teeth grinding and the visually presented effects are also quite uncommon with MDMA. He did not really address the effect of the drug on the empathic level, which actually is the main effect of MDMA. Furthermore, the effects of the drugs started right after oral consumption which is just not possible and therefore very unrealistic. However, the importance of the scene lies in its narrative function which discusses love, artificial love and headless decisions.

## 9. Conclusion

Generally, I would argue that my assumption that drug intoxication scenes underly narrative and social functions that fill scenes with meaning beyond the actual visual representation, is very much true. The exemplary films and scenes do work with strong meaning that goes beyond the mere representation and includes more so a strong social critique. This is especially true for the movies *Thirteen* and *Requiem for a Dream*, which both address server issues our society has to face. Both movies indicate that drug abuse is only the symptom and not the diagnosis. This means that both films portray drug abuse as a coping mechanism that fights a problem that lies much deeper. In that sense, drug abuse is the symptom of other mental, social and personal problems every individual can have. This leads to the question if drug users are portrayed as labile and instable and I would say that this is not always the case. Especially, *Requiem for a Dream* shows the spectator a different picture of addiction and how one can get hooked. Furthermore, *Thirteen* portrays characters which were prone to drugs in the past but seem to manage life now without. Melanie does not start drinking again although her daughter is out of control, Brady seems to develop new coping mechanisms and Mason is able to handle drugs without losing control. Therefore, not all drug consumers are portrayed as labile but mostly they are portrayed as a person in crisis. Romeo is lovesick, Tracy struggles with growing up, Evie and Marion have no loving family to support them, Harry is unhappy and Tyrone misses his mother. Therefore, drug users are portrayed as people who are willing to take risks in order to feel better but with the case of Sara it becomes clear, that nobody is immune to addiction.

Interestingly, all characters that consume drugs or have in the past, are portrayed as coming from a lower social class. *Thirteen* and *Requiem for a Dream* mostly feature low-income family members that do drugs. However, Marion and Romeo are the exceptions who come from wealthy families, although Marion loses her family income which makes her low-income as well. In letting them consume drugs, the message is spread that drug abuse is not a matter only for poor people. Still, the social critique on drugs is generally there no matter who consumes it. Even *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* includes implicit critique around drugs with portraying a negative trip and that eventually leads to death. In that sense, all three movies include some sort of critique on drugs. *Requiem for a Dream* is undoubtedly the biggest critique on drug usage and addiction and it conveys its critique quite explicitly. Furthermore, this movie portrays drugs in the most negative way, although the negative connotation is not limited to classical drugs but lies bare how vulnerable people can be to these sorts of coping mechanisms. This is very important, when we consider that films frame our understanding of the world, because *Requiem for a Dream* somehow takes away the notion that every drug addict is only to blame him or herself and shows that everybody can lose control. *Thirteen*, on the other hand, portrays drugs in a more neutral way. Both films highlight that drugs are not the problem per se, but that many aspects of our society and culture make people vulnerable, unhappy and unstable. *Thirteen* probably has the most realistic and accurate depiction of different drugs and their effects. Not only the effects are stylistically depicted in a realistic way, but also the difference between substances is noted. Generally, both films make the spectator question what a drug is and why the differentiation between illegal and legal is arbitrary. Therefore, I would argue that the messages from *Thirteen* and *Requiem for a Dream* are not stereotypical, but more so, very accurate.

When it comes to the visual representation of drug intoxication one can indeed notice some patterns. All three movies work with colors and lighting when a drug intoxication is depicted visually. Furthermore, the use of fast and slow motion is used to differentiate between the effects different drugs can have. Other features that all movies use are a wavy and shaky camera work, the use of unusual camera angles and a very fast switch between images. *Requiem for a Dream* stands out when it comes to visual representation because the use of hip-hop montage is very much suited for the topic. Not only does Aronofsky create meaning through the hip-hop montage, it also makes the movie very unique while vividly catching the repetitive nature of addiction. However, in general all three movies work with very similar

techniques which means that there is no difference in visual representation of drugs in different genres. On the contrary, although the films are located in different genres drug usage and the drugs used do not differ widely. Uppers are shown in all movies, psychedelics are portrayed through LSD and cannabis in two movies and downers are represented through heroin and other opioids.

This leaves the question of why directors show explicit drug scenes open. Generally, the topic of drugs is controversial and therefore already contains social critique and a social function in a way. Drugs do fulfill a social function in our society which means that representations of such in movies do only portray the social function drugs can have in real life. For instance, the spectator sees that a character smokes a cigarette while being stressed. This picture occurred numerous times in the analyzed movies and carries the trope of tension reduction through nicotine. In that sense, the social function of nicotine is linked to tension reduction and is universally understood by the audience. Therefore, the director shows drug scenes to communicate social and narrative aspects with the viewer. The exact social function differs from movie to movie, but in general the social function of showing such scenes can be located in offering criticism to social conventions, addiction and human behavior in the context of relationships and society norms. Furthermore, the director shows these scenes to influence the narrative. Especially in *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* it becomes clear, that drug scenes do not always serve a social function, but sometimes only a narrative function. Luhrmann shows the intake of drugs to influence the interpretation of his adaption. Hardwick uses drug scenes to implement social critique, but also to expedite the narrative. This means she uses the drug scenes with a narrative function. She portrays how the girls are getting more and more careless about drugs in order to highlight the inner conflicts and psychological problems of the girl in a relatable way. Aronofsky uses drugs in order to start a rethinking of addiction, medication and pleasure in general. However, he still uses drug scenes within the narrative function which becomes visible by the use of hip-hop montage. Even the montage style delivers meaning to the narrative though mirroring the repetitive effects of addiction.

To conclude, all three movies portray drug intoxication in a similar way. The scenes which show drug consummation influence the story and they underlie social and narrative functions. There is no difference between genres and the overall perception of drugs is slightly negative.

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