

TEENAGE FLICKS

Week 2: Troubled Kids - An exploration of the 'monstrous child' and a disaffected youth

The Monstrous Child

- The overly sexualized temptress
- The demon or possessed child
- The rebellious mob
- The misfit or outsider
- The delinquent
- The criminal

Who Can Kill a Child? (1976)

Narciso Ibáñez Serrador

- Directed by Narciso Ibáñez Serrador
- Produced by Manuel Salvador
- Written by Juan José Plans and Luis Peñafiel
- Based on the novel *The Children's Game* by Juan José Plans
- Cinematography by José Luis Alcaine
- Edited by Antonio Ramírez de Loaysa and Joan Serra
- Music by Waldo de los Ríos

- Aka *Would You Kill a Child?/Lucifer's Curse/Island of the Damned*

"It was a film about explosive social change, a finely honed focusing point for the entire you explosion that took place in the late sixties and early seventies. It was a movie for all those parents who felt, in a kind of agony and terror, that they were losing their children and could not understand why or how it was happening."

Stephen King

- Narciso Ibáñez Serrador had worked mainly in television
- He was responsible for creating the television series *Un Dos Tres*
- The format was developed for British TV as...

Spanish Cinema

- The silent era – Spain in terms of cinema, seemed to be revelling in the new art form
- In 1928, Ernesto Gimenez Caballero and Luis Bunuel founded the first *cine-club*, in Madrid
- Dali and Bunuel classic surrealist film ***Un chien andalou***
- But with the introduction of sound Spanish cinema seems to struggle with the new technology
- On top of this The Civil War devastated the industry and only about 10% of Spanish silent films actually survived
- Both sides used cinema as a means of propaganda and this continued after Franco's victory
- Many films starred child actors
- By the late 50s as with other countries such as France, Italy and the UK we began to see films which were much more critical in tone
- The 60s/70s saw Spanish cinema receiving a new lease of life via its co-productions with other countries.
- Many Spaghetti Westerns, for instance are filmed in Spain.
- We also get the rise of cheap exploitation horror films like ***Vampyros Lesbos*** aimed at the American and UK markets, and you also get weird cult classics like the ***Tombs of the Blind Dead***

- Some of these films are arguably thinly veiled attacks on a dying Franco regime.
- ***Who can Kill a Child*** was released on the back of Franco's death and carries a strong social commentary

Who Can Kill a Child? (1976)

Narciso Ibáñez Serrador

- The lengthy opening montage of actual footage of conflicts and atrocities proved controversial and was taken out of some cuts of the film
- The images are disturbing enough but they are made more disturbing by the addition of children's singing on the soundtrack
- The director was certainly setting out his 'political' stall with this
- Without this montage, the film is still an excellent horror film but by retaining them, the string social message of the film is much clearer
- The idea of an older generation reaping what they sow at the hands of an angry younger generation has never felt so relevant
- Middle class holiday makers Tom and (pregnant) Evelyn decided to take a secluded break on the fictional Spanish island of Alamanzora.
- When they arrive though, it soon becomes clear that the island contains no adults and there is something very wrong with the children who inhabit it.
- It is clear that Tom and Evelyn's marriage is clearly in trouble
- Evelyn is heavily pregnant and is hinted that Tom initially raised the idea of termination, giving a double meaning to the title of the film
- The island, which Tom has visited before becomes a metaphor for their relationship, to constantly look to the past without dealing with the present is ultimately destructive
- As well as the film being an obvious allegory about the abuse of children and the hypocrisy which ensues it can also be viewed as one of the many 'monster attacking islanders' films

Over the Edge (1979)

Jonathan Kaplan

- Directed by Jonathan Kaplan
- Produced by George Litto
- Written by Charles S Hass and Tim Hunter
- Cinematography by Andrew Davies
- Edited by Robert Barrere
- Music by Sol Kaplan

Jonathan Kaplan

- Born in Paris in 1947
- Was son of Sol Kaplan
- Started as a child actor
- Attended NYU films school and was tutored by Martin Scorsese
- Scorsese recognized his talent and recommended him to Roger Corman
- Corman gave him his first opportunity to direct a Hollywood film

Over the Edge (1979)

Jonathan Kaplan

- Based on real events

'The project began in the early 70s, when Tim Hunter [the other co-screenwriter] showed me an article by Bruce Koon from the San Francisco Examiner called "Mousepacks: Kids on a Crime Spree." It was a sort of sensational piece, and was about young kids who were vandalizing property in Foster City...'

Charles Haas (co-screenwriter)

- Centers around a group of bored teenagers who struggle to express themselves on any level in a highly suppressive authoritarian adult reign
- They rebel against authority in the community of New Granada after the death of one of their own
- Starred a 14-year-old Matt Dillion
- The film featured young actors actually playing their age
- The film only had a limited release, showing only in some cinemas in Los Angeles and New York
- The film was pulled after only two weeks, due to fears that it could encourage young people to riot
- The film would develop a cult following over the years picking up fans who would view it at arthouse cinemas or its repeated showings on cable TV
- It was eventually released on DVD
- Really tapped into the 'young people will bring about the end of Western civilization' paranoia
- Due to its casting, particularly its younger actors made the film feel more real and immediate
- It was a much more realistic view of 70s youth, being filmed at the time
- It captures the frustration and powerlessness which many youngsters in America were feeling at the time

Rumble Fish (1983)

Francis Ford Coppola

- Directed by Francis Ford Coppola
- Produced by Francis Ford Coppola, Doug Claybourne and Fred Roos
- Screenplay by SE Hinton and Francis Ford Coppola
- Cinematography by Stephen H. Burum
- Edited by Barry Malkin
- Music by Stewart Copeland

American Zoetrope

- Founded by Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas
- It came out of a desire to 'subvert' the studio system, which felt restrictive
- The idea was to produce mainstream films to generate funds for more experimental projects
- Coppola was an integral part of the 'New Hollywood' alongside George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese, Brian De Palma, Terence Mallick, Robert Altman, Woody Allen and William Friedkin

Rumble Fish (1983)

Francis Ford Coppola

- Motorcycle Boy (Mickey Rourke) is a former gang leader who wants to lead a more peaceful existence
- His younger brother, Rusty James (Matt Dillon) is hell bent on becoming the teenage hoodlum his brother once was
- The tensions which arise from brotherly relationships was already material Coppola was well-versed in, particularly when examining his previous work on *The Godfather* etc.
- It's a very stylish film
- It carries its 'cool credentials' admirably with its casting of the likes of Rourke, Cage and Waits
- Its heightened 'performance style' delivery give the film an almost Shakespearian feel
- Its experimental soundtrack also gives the film an off-kilter, cult feel
- The use of stark black and white cinematography and Film Noir/German Expressionist influences create a memorable visual experience