**TEENAGE FLICKS**

**Week 3: Coming of Age -** The teen film comes into its own – 70s depictions of youth and adolescence

**Saturday Night Fever (1977)**John Badham

* Directed by John Badham
* Produced by Robert Stigwood
* Screenplay by Norman Wexler
* Based on *The Tribal Rites of the New Saturday Night* byNick Cohn
* Cinematography by Ralf D Bode
* Edited by David Rawlins
* Music by The Bee Gees and David Shire

**Disco**

* Grew out of the American urban nightlife scene
* “Four of floor” beats
* Syncopated bass lines
* String sections
* Horns
* Electronic piano
* Synthesizers
* Electric rhythm guitars
* Began as a mixture of music from venues popular with African Americans, Hispanic and Latino Americans and the LGBT community particularly African-American, American-Italian and American-Latino gay men
* Initially influenced by the sounds coming from the psychedelic clubs of the late 60s/early 70s
* It can be seen as a countercultural reaction to the dominance of rock music
* Nile Rogers and Bernard Edwards

**Saturday Night Fever (1977)**John Badham

* Centres on Tony Manero, a working-class young man who spends his weekends dancing and drinking at a local Brooklyn discotheque
* Though his life generally is much more mundane, come Saturday night Tony is the champion dancer.
* His circle of friends and weekend dancing help him to cope with the harsh realities of his life: a dead-end job, clashes with his unsupportive and squabbling parents, racial tensions in the local community, and his general restlessness.
* Drug taking
* Teenage pregnancy
* Gang violence
* Suicide
* Rape

*"The way Saturday Night Fever has been directed and shot, we feel the languorous pull of the discotheque, and the gaudiness is transformed. These are among the most hypnotically beautiful pop dance scenes ever filmed ... Travolta gets so far inside the role he seems incapable of a false note; even the Brooklyn accent sounds unerring ... At its best, though, Saturday Night Fever gets at something deeply romantic: the need to move, to dance, and the need to be who you'd like to be. Nirvana is the dance; when the music stops, you return to being ordinary.”*

**Pauline Kael**

* Two theatrical versions of the film were released: the original R-rated version and an edited PG-rated version in 1979
* The R-rated version released in 1977 was 119 minutes.
* The PG-rated version was 112 minutes.
* The profanity, nudity, fight sequence, and a multiple rape scene in a car, were all de-emphasized or removed from the PG version.

*It doesn't have the power, or the impact, of the original, R-rated edition.’*

**Robert Stigwood**

**Breaking Away (1979)**  
Peter Yates

* Directed by Peter Yates
* Produced by Peter Yates
* Written by Steve Tesich
* Cinematography by Matthew F. Leonetti
* Edited by Cynthia Scheider
* It follows a group of four male teenagers in Bloomington, Indiana who have recently graduated from high school.
* The four friends are all approaching ‘manhood’
* They are at a loss as to what to do with rest of their lives
* They spend their time at the old limestone quarry, now filled in as a makeshift swimming pool
* They are often at odds with the more affluent teenagers in town
* They are called ‘cutters’ a derogatory term, referring to their parents working class backgrounds when they worked in the now defunct stonecutting local industry
* The term ‘cutters’ was made up for the film, the term actually used i.e. ‘stoners’ was jettisoned because of its links to drug use
* Dave develops a crush on Katherine, a university student
* In order to impress her he pretends to be an Italian exchange student
* He is also obsessed with competitive bicycle racing and is thrilled when he is able to join a professional Italian racing team
* However, things don’t go well and the team turns on Dave
* Dave confesses his deception to Katherine and she is heartbroken
* Though disillusioned and frustrated Dave’s friends come together for him and they enter the Little 500 race
* It’s a heartfelt, well written and acted drama
* It creates a warmer and sincerer picture of what it feels like to be young, confused and misunderstood
* Unlike many teen dramas, it tries to focus our attention on adolescents from more working class backgrounds
* It deals with peer pressure, snobbery and the class system, generational issues; and examines the folly of trying to be something other than yourself

*‘…the cast is unknown, the director has a spotty history, and the basic premise falls into this year's most hackneyed category ... the finished product is wonderful. Here is a movie so fresh and funny it didn't even need a big budget or a pedigree.’*

**Janet Maslin (New York Times)**

*‘…a wonderfully sunny, funny, goofy, intelligent movie that makes you feel about as good as any movie in a long time. It is, in fact, a treasure ... Movies like this are hardly ever made at all; when they're made this well, they're precious cinematic miracles.’*

**Roger Ebert**

* Was nominated for Best Director, Best Picture, Best Supporting Actress and Best Original Song Score at the 1980 Academy Awards and actually won Best Original Screenplay
* Its budget was $2.3 million and took around $20 million at the box office

**The Wanderers (1979)**  
Phillip Kaufman

* Directed by Phillip Kaufman
* Produced by Martin Ransohoff
* Screenplay by Rose Kaufman and Phillip Kaufman
* Based on the novel The Wanderers by Richard Price
* Cinematography by Michael Chapman
* Edited Stuart H. Pappé and Ronald Roose

*‘…Kaufman’s film isn’t simply a remake; he’s taken the central idea from the original film and transposed it to a different setting – a city rather than a small town – with a range of characters.’*

**John Brosnan**

* The Wanderers seemed to ride on the new wave of nostalgia which was riding over the US and later, the UK
* Many teenagers from the 50s and early 60s were now ‘adults’ and they became the first youth culture to develop a real sense of the past
* Also, the aesthetic of the 50s and early 60s appealed to the new generation

*‘Despite an uneasy blend of nostalgia and violence, The Wanderers is a well-made and impressive film. Philip Kaufman, who also co-scripted with his wife, Rose [from the novel by Richard Price], has accurately captured the urban angst of growing up in the 1960s.’*

**Variety**

*‘This is a giddy parody of gang pictures, "West Side Story" without the music and set in the Bronx of the '60s.’*

**San Francisco Examiner**

* Violence
* Racism
* Teenage pregnancy
* Alcoholism
* Domestic abuse
* Adultery
* Examines the idea of community/gangs/groups/cliques
* Like Quadrophenia and Saturday Night Fever, it looks at the adolescent contradictions of wanting to be an individual and wanting to belong to a group or gang
* All these films are ultimately about disillusion