

TEENAGE FLICKS

Week 7: **Girls Just Wanna Have Fun?** - The young female in focus

Ghost World

Terry Zwigoff

- Directed by Terry Zwigoff
- Produced by Leanne Halfon, John Malkovich and Russell Smith
- Screenplay by Daniel Clowes and Terry Zwigoff
- Based on *Ghost World*, the comic books by Daniel Clowes
- Cinematography by Affonso Beato
- Edited by Carole Kravetz-Aykanian and Michael R. Miller
- Music by David Kitay

- The story focuses on Enid (Thora Birch) and Rebecca (Scarlet Johansen), two teenage outsiders in an unnamed American city
- We begin when the pair graduate from high school, Enid though, is being made to take a summer school class before she can get her diploma
- The two have decided not to go to college and they plan to get jobs and move in together
- Enid and Rebecca live on the edge of 'normal' - though they need to get jobs and pay the rent etc. they lean towards the more unconventional side of life and delight in insulting the 'norms' in the community
- Conversely, they (especially Enid) are drawn to the world of losers and more nerdy type characters
- Zwigoff and Clowes asked Beato to try and recreate the comic book feel on screen

The Look

- The final version is over saturated to reflect the way that the modern world constantly tries to attract your attention
- The minimal use of extras helped to create this sense of emptiness

"I wanted to hug this movie. It takes such a risky journey and never steps wrong. It creates specific, original, believable, lovable characters, and meanders with them through their inconsolable days, never losing its sense of humor."

Roger Ebert

"Unlike those shrill, hard-sell teen comedies on the other screens, Ghost World never becomes the kind of empty, defensive snark-fest that it targets. Clowes and Zwigoff keep the organic pace of the original, and its empathic exploration of painfully changing relationships."

Andrew D Arnold – Time Magazine

The Virgin Suicides (1999)

Sofia Coppola

- Directed by Sofia Coppola
- Produced by Francis Ford Coppola, Julie Costanzo, Chris Hanley and Dan Halsted
- Screenplay by Sofia Coppola
- Based on *The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides
- Cinematography by Edward Lachman
- Edited by James Lyons and Melissa Kent
- Music by Air

The Lisbon Sisters

- Lux (Kirsten Dunst)
- Mary (AJ Cook)
- Cecilia (Hannah L Hall)
- Therese (Leslie Hayman)
- Bonnie (Chelse Swain)

Plot Points

- Mr Libson allows Lux to accompany Trip to the Homecoming Dance
- Lux and Trip have sex on the football field
- Trip abandons her and she wakes up alone
- As she has broken curfew, Lux and her sisters are then kept under 'house arrest' by her parents
- This sense of mystery about the girls drives the local boys into a frenzy of curiosity
- Girls 'mystery' is amplified by their screen representation as artistic creations, Pre-Raphaelite like visions, magical and unreachable

'Kathleen Turner and James Woods are excellent as the well-meaning but oppressive parents, evoking sympathy and irritation in equal measure. The real star, however, is Coppola, whose remarkably assured debut blends tragedy with comedy and employs a curious, idiosyncratic tone. The picture is nostalgic yet regretful and there is a sense that the sorrows of the girls come to represent the difficulties faced by an entire gender.'

Darren Richman

Ginger Snaps (2000)

John Fawcett

- Directed by John Fawcett
- Produced by Karen Lee Hall and Steve Hoban
- Written by Karen Walton and John Fawcett
- Cinematography by Thom Best
- Edited by Brett Sullivan
- Music by Mike Shields

The Werewolf on Screen

- Often a reflection of uncontrolled masculinity or aggressive sexual advances – the bestial side of human nature is brought to the surface and explored
- Examines the proximity of human behavior to animal desire
- *The Howling* (1981) – can be seen as satire on the media, on late 70s 'spiritualism' and new age dogma
- *An American Werewolf in London* (1981) – an accidental Jewish allegory?

"The story of a man equipped only by his wit (if not his wits) in a country that neither understands nor particularly wants him. A man who is dazed by his recent bloody and brutal ordeal who does his very best to get along, despite being racked by the guilt and self-hatred of knowing what he is inside. I'm not arguing that director John Landis set out to make a hairy Jewish allegory, I'm just saying that there was an incidental subtext that continues to speak to and comfort me almost 30 years later. And that's why I love it. An American Werewolf in London is the film that connected me to my Jewish culture."

Jon Spira

The Bloody Chamber by Angela Carter

"My intention was not to do 'versions' or, as the American edition of the book said, horribly, 'adult' fairy tales, but to extract the latent content from the traditional stories."

Angela Carter

Little Red Riding Hood

Interpretations

- Solar myths and natural occurring cycles – the red hood represents the sun, which is swallowed by the night (the wolf)
- Puberty rite – by going through each series of events and emerging from the wolf's belly – she has gone from girl to woman

The Werewolf

- The Werewolf - naturally occurring cycle
- The menstrual cycle is often referred to as 'The Curse'
- A natural occurring cycle used to 'demonise' or 'sexualise' females

"The changing body of the werewolf is a metaphor for the horrors of puberty, menstruation, and sexual maturity."

Ginger Snaps (2000)

John Fawcett

- Set in Bailey Downs
- Numerous dog attacks have been reported
- Two death obsessed sisters Bridgette and Ginger decide to kidnap a dog belonging to the school bully
- Ginger starts her period, leading them to be chased by the dog responsible for the recent attacks
- Ginger is attacked but Bridgette rescues her
- After the attack, Ginger begins to go through physical and emotional changes, she is aggressive and more sexually promiscuous

Reception

- Many critics saw the werewolf/puberty metaphor as too obvious and some of the performances too over the top

"By simultaneously depicting female bonds as important and fraught with difficulties, Ginger Snaps portrays the double-binds teenage girls face." and "Ginger is an embodiment of these impossible binaries: she is at once sexually attractive and monstrous, 'natural' and 'supernatural,' human and animal, 'feminine' and transgressive, a sister and a rival."

Bianca Nielson