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Genre-%!\$?Ing: Harmony Korine's Cinema Of Poetry

Tom Austin O'Connor

Abstract

This study analyses Harmony Korine's films according to the two distinct stages of his cinematic career thus far. The first phase incorporates his screenplays that were directed by Larry Clark – Kids and Ken Park. The second incorporates the films that he both writes and directs: Gummo and Julien Donkey-boy. All of Korine's films are evaluated in the context of how they satirise and disempower his characters' tendencies toward nihilism and alienation. The films that he both writes and directs, especially, are significant because they utilise Pier Paolo Pasolini's notion of the cinema of poetry, which presents the diegetic realities of the films from wholly-subjective perspectives which, because they allow for poetic re-mediations of our perceptual habits, can re-write and transform any tendencies toward disaffection and desensitisation. All of Korine's films reject common-sense and normalising representations for the perspectives of non-dominant voices or the poetic speakers of disenfranchised populations—especially the young, the poor, people with disabilities, and the mentally ill—which productively challenge their commonplace portrayals in the mass media.

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