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The Significance Of The Queer And The Dog In Alejandro González Iñárritu's Amores Perros (2000): A Masculinity At War

Orla Juliette Borreye

Abstract

The Mexican New Wave film Amores perros (2000) directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu was an international commercial success and was highly acclaimed by critics. Even though it has been extensively studied, certain aspects of the film have been neglected, in particular the existence of a queer undercurrent. In this essay I argue that Amores perros offers a portrayal of masculinity as both a gender performance and a return to animal instinct. The latter is emphasised through the canine allegory which is constantly present in the film. Masculinity is shown more in terms of hypermasculinity as it is characterized by aggression, violence, rivalry, sexual promiscuity and demonstrations of pugnacity. Not only are men at war against each other, but they also appear to be at war with themselves and this is all the more evident in the context of queer masculinity. Indeed, men struggle to maintain their (hyper) masculine image, yet certain inconsistencies in some of the male characters' behaviour or appearance reveal their queerness and thus lack of compliance with the ideals of machismo. In short, this essay highlights the extent to which gender roles and in this particular case the machista role, imprison individuals and lead to a vicious circle of violence and death allegorised by the dog fighting in the film; alternative manifestations of masculinity must be repressed for survival and thus are often hidden behind an exaggerated version of mainstream masculinity. This repression however is just another symptom of a gender order in crisis.

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