



Politics, Theory, and Film: Critical Encounters with Lars von Trier

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Lars von Trier's intense, disturbing, and sometimes funny films have led many to condemn him as misogynist or misanthropic. The same films inspire this collection's reflections on how our fears and desires regarding gender, power, race, finitude, family, and fate often thwart -- and sometimes feed -- our best democratic aspirations. The essays in this volume attend to von Trier's role as provocateur, as well as to his films' techniques, topics, and storytelling. Where others accuse von Trier of being clichéd, the editors argue that he intensifies the "clichés of our times" in ways that direct our political energies towards apprehending and repairing a shattered world.

The book is certainly for von Trier lovers and haters but, at the same time, political, critical, and feminist theorists entirely *unfamiliar* with von Trier's films will find this volume's essays of interest. Most of the contributors tarry with von Trier to develop new readings of major thinkers and writers, including Agamben, Bataille, Beauvoir, Benjamin, Deleuze, Euripides, Freud, Kierkegaard, Rancière, Nietzsche, Winnicott, and many more. Von Trier is both central and irrelevant to much of this work. Writing from the fields of classics, literature, gender studies, philosophy, film and political theory, the authors stage an interdisciplinary intervention in film studies.

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