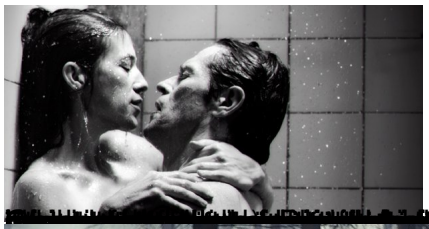
Chaos reigns! If your head hasn't been in the sand, then you probably have read about director Lars von Trier's latest controversy at the Cannes Film Festival. His new film, MELANCHOLIA, premiered there and—surprise! surprise!—polarized audiences, much as his previous picture, ANTICHRIST, did back in 2009. Here's Michael Gingold's review.

You will notice at the end of this review (or might have already, if you checked ahead) that I haven't assigned a rating to ANTICHRIST, the latest cinematic provocation by Danish director Lars von Trier. Some films elicit a response that defies easy encapsulation in one to four skulls (or stars, or whatever), and ANTICHRIST is just such an experience.

For me, anyway; a number of critics who previously caught the movie at Cannes and other showcases have had no problems expressing their opinions. Some booed and others raved, while one British critic caused a minor on-line scandal by affirming that he would never see the film yet penning a lengthy pan anyway, just based on what he'd read about it. And on the surface, ANTICHRIST does sound like the kind of film that gratuitously goes too far in its sex and violence, combining the two in scenes of genital mutilation of both sexes. But is there a justifying artistry underneath it all?

I'm still trying to answer that question for myself, weeks after having seen it. What I do know is that I couldn't take my eyes off a lot of the movie, even as there were moments that made even me, a longtime genre viewer, look away, wondering if the explicit sights were truly necessary.



[redacted]

[redacted]