

Kundskabens Træ

("The Tree of Knowledge")

Denmark : 1981 : dir. Nils Malmros : Per Holst

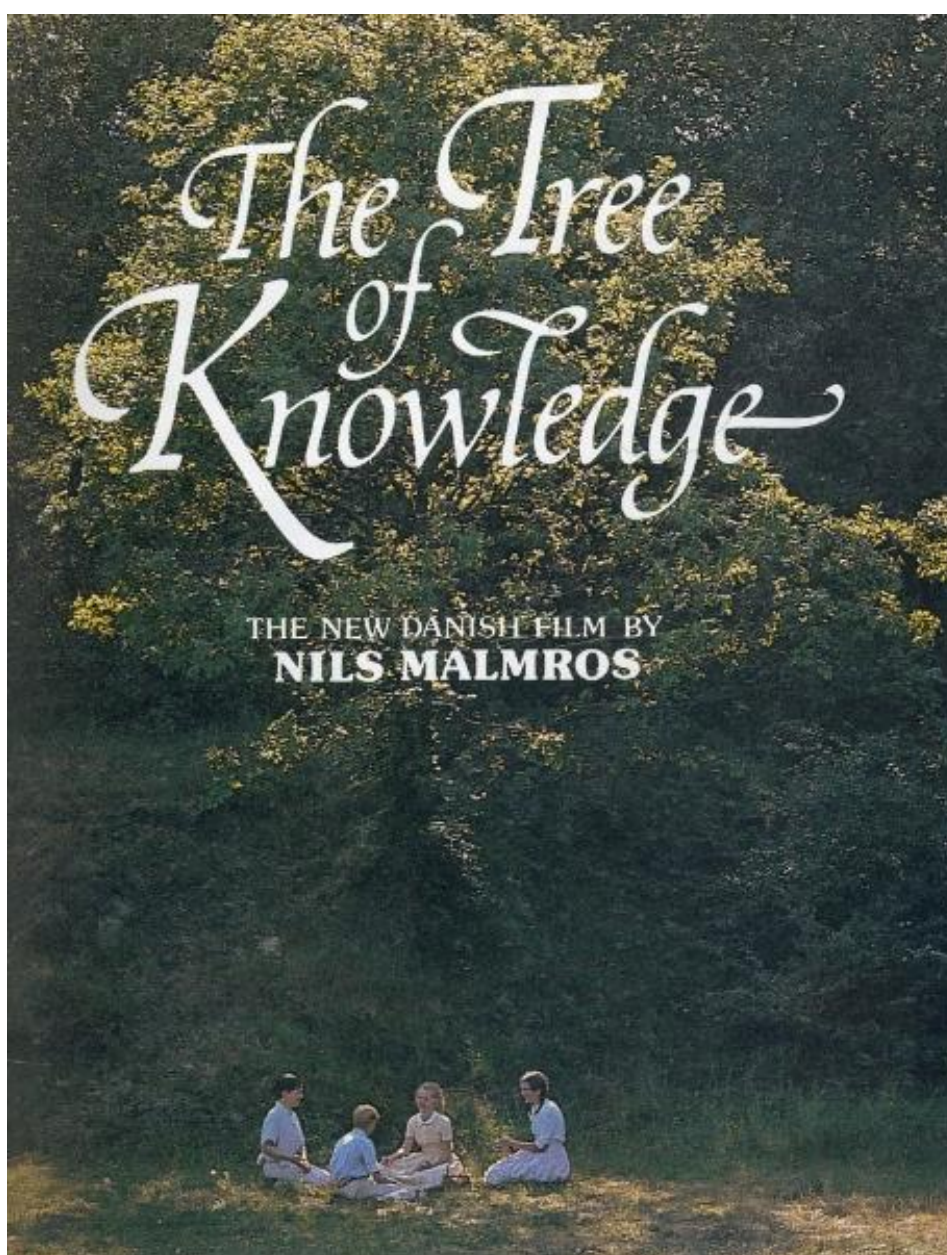
: 110 min

prod: : scr: Nils Malmros : dir.ph.: Jan Weincke

[Jan Johansen](#); [Andres Ørgård](#); [Brian Thiebel](#); [Bo von der Lippe](#)

Eva Gram Schjoldager; Line Arlien Søbørg; Martin L Jensen; Lone Elliot; Marian Wendelbo;
Marin Lysholm Jepsen

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Cheeky! Jan Johansen with the matchsticks, and Andres Ørgård left

Source: *The Moving Picture Boy*

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"Two years of secondary school life circa 1960, where the brainiest, and the most popular girl in the class find their roles reversed by degrees, and all the conflicts come to a head during the school dance before the summer holidays. A terrific new observation of youth - in all its unadorned truth - by Malmros, who also in reality spent two years on the shooting, due to which the process of growth and change in his adolescents could be authentically registered. The convincing construction of time gives extra depth to the film which, without any pretentiousness, is near enough a masterpiece. ***1/2 "

International Film Guide 1982 note:

"Nils Malmros's **"THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE"** is due for release in November 1981. His films **"LARS OLE 5c"** and **"BOYS"** have proved his talents in more than one direction. Again he handles a subject close to himself - this time a school class in Aarhus, Denmark, during the late Fifties. The film shows the boys and girls during a three-year spell, from the 7th to the 9th grade."

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Johansen:

"In **"KUNDSKABENS TRÆ"**, probably the most truthful film ever made about adolescence, Nils Malmros took advantage of the physical and psychological changes of puberty by filming his two-year story over a full two-year period, so that we actually watch the changes happening. The children's bodies elongate, their expressions become more cagey and pensive, most get interested in the opposite sex. Some get nicer, others don't.

One boy revenges himself on a shy, attractive girl who has rebuffed him, by launching a campaign of slander, ridicule and ostracism which reduces her to a tragic wreck. Loyalties slither, conformism makes cowards of previously decent boys. We wait to see who, if anyone, will go to Elin's aid, and at last someone does, but it is too little, and too late.

In the quaintly formal early-teen society of classless Denmark around 1960, this film never strikes a false note. It is unpredictable, often wonderfully funny, and sometimes appallingly painful.

As the weak, good-natured Niels-Ole, the central male character, Jan Johansen is perfect. Brian Thiebel (a crewcut oddball) and Bo von der Lippe (a puckish anatomist) are outstanding among the other boys."

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available, because like most of Scandinavian cinema it is completely ignored by the English-speaking world, and twice damned because it concerns schoolchildren. Reading Holmstrom's account of it does make one yearn to see it. He cites no other titles for Johansen, Ørgård, Thiebel or Von der Lippe.

See subject index under **BULLYING, SCANDINAVIA** and **SCHOOL**.