

Cinematic Encounters with Memory in Thomas Vinterberg's Film *The Hunt* (2012)

تلاقيات سينمائية مع الذاكرة في فيلم الصيد (2012) لتوماس فنتربيرغ

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Abstract:

Memory empowers people with the faculty of retrieving and reconstructing past events to their consciousness, helping humanity maintain discoveries. Thus, no one has to rediscover anew bits of knowledge and skills acquired earlier. Whether memories are always permanent and fully faithful to the real experience is an essential question that this article attempts to discuss. One apt way of artistically representing memory, its alterations, and social manifestations is cinema which is the perfect art that can intrinsically embrace memories through motion pictures. Cinema itself intertwines with one's memory processes to build up an individualised vision and appreciation of life. In particular, Thomas Vinterberg's film *The Hunt* (2012) portrays a child's claims on abuse, an event that resurfaces from her memories. A psychological study of themes in the film reveals much on how memory is associated with more than known fallibility. It is rather susceptible to manipulation and transformation into false memories as framed by psychologist Elizabeth Loftus. Society proves to be the provider of misinformation, suggestions, and behaviours that heavily influence the workings of one's memory.

Keywords: Memory modification, false memory, child abuse, social manipulation, ostracism.**ملخص:**

تضطلع الذاكرة بوظيفة إعطاء الناس المقدرة على استرجاع الأحداث السابقة وإعادة بنائها في وعيهم وبالتالي مساعدة الإنسانية على المحافظة على مختلف الإكتشافات، حيث تُوقر على الإنسان ضرورة إعادة إكتشاف المعارف والمهارات من جديد مع مرور كل يوم. بصفة خاصة، يهتم هذا المقال بمناقشة ما إذا كانت الذاكرة دائمة ومرآة عاكسة بأمانة للتجارب الإنسانية الحقيقية. يُمكن للسينما كفن مرئي أن يُصور الذاكرة والتعديلات الطارئة عليها وانعكاساتها من خلال تتالي المشاهد التصويرية. كما أنّ تداخل السينما مع عمليات التذكر للمشاهد

تُساهم بشكل لافت في بناء تصوّرات وتدوُّق الإنسان للحياة. من بين الأفلام التي تطرقت لموضوع الذاكرة نجد أن فيلم الصيد (2012) لثوماس فينتربرغ يُصوّر ادعاءات طفلة صغيرة أنّها تعرّضت للتحرش، الحدث الذي طفى اثر استرجاع الطفلة لذكريات. من خلال دراسة سيكولوجية وموضوعاتية للفيلم نجد أنّ الذاكرة ليست مُعرضة للخطأ فحسب بل أكثر من ذلك تقع تحت طائلة التأثير والتلاعب مُتحوّلة إلى ذاكرة خاطئة كما نجدّها في نظرية إليزابيث لوفتس. ومن خلال ذلك نخلص إلى أنّ المجتمع له قدرة تأثير على ذاكرة الفرد سواء بتزويد الأخير بمعلومات خاطئة أو من خلال ميول اقتراحية وسلوكياتية تُؤثر وتمتدّ لتصنع ذاكرة الإنسان.

كلمات مفتاحية: تعديل الذاكرة، الذاكرة الخاطئة، التحرش على الأطفال، التأثير الاجتماعي، النبذ.

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Introduction:

Cinema as the art of moving pictures goes beyond the juxtaposition of images in time to imitate action. It rather evokes meanings and leaves space for interpretation, yet the keys that enable the audience to reach such realms lie in their cultural and individual awareness. By the same token, memory, can function as “screen memory” and is endowed with certain clues that lie hidden in some corners of our psyche (Mollon, 2001). With much acceptance, Memory is the human faculty that involves the two basic processes of storing and retrieving. Moreover, it has a reconstructive nature and is all about the persistency of knowledge. It expands to build up our personal identity and define who we are through the accumulation of experiences and their mental replay (Myers & DeWall, 2021, p. 805).

In his monumental work on improving memory, Foer (2011) goes to equal memory and self-definition in that such brain faculty works as the crucible of all life experiences. To bring the accumulated bits of information to the conscious awareness and make them build up our conscious experience, retrieving such records becomes crucial to recreate reality. Whether such process faithfully fulfils such premise is up to external as well as internal conditions.

Like any other human faculty, memory can be altered and damaged. For many years researchers in the field attempted to diagnose the failures of memory. While the more generic field of perceptual illusions found its roots as early as the 1860s, memory illusions captured the interest of a good deal of researchers only in the mid-twentieth century (Roediger, 1996). Based on such researches, it has been recognised that errors are susceptible to happen for many reasons, including traumas and age factors. This article takes as its focal point the false memory as it is a determinant element in real life experience as well as in cinematic representations. The description of memory with fallacy involves necessarily error making, but this research goes beyond this orientation to distinguish between “fallibility” and externally influenced memory. For Brainerd (2005), memory is “an imperfect archive of our experiences.” While there is truth in this statement, we rather focus on the factors that make memory swerve from the actual experience that made it in the first place.

Actually, false memory as a psychological phenomenon emerged at the turn of the twenty-first century. A number of psychologists spoke of “false memory syndrome.” Yet, in their view such anomaly appears only as a result of therapeutic interventions (Mollon, 2001, p. 3). Yet, one researcher has established herself as an authority in the field of memory studies, namely memory malleability. Elizabeth Loftus comes up with a clear vision on how memories can be altered and transformed with post-event influences (Elizabeth F. Loftus & Ketcham, 1996).

In this article, we endeavour to decipher the workings of false memory with regard to cinematic representation. Just as memory makes us dive into the workings of the mind, Danish cinema establishes itself as the producer of the most thoughtful films in Western Europe, to use British film critic Philip French’s words (Claire, 2014, para. 10.1). Thus, we seize the chance to work on one of the works of Danish filmmaker Thomas Vinterberg. As one of the founders of Dogma 95, his works focus more on ideas and themes than on stylistics. This article, therefore, investigates the creative portrayal of memory and its aspects in his film *The Hunt* (Jagten, 2012). A psychological study of themes in the film will dissect the workings of memory to detect the truth behind the main drive of the film. Both individual and societal aspects linked with memory will be targeted as to detect the bi-directional interactions within the human community.

1. Review of Literature:

Cinema and Psychology intersect heavily to engender the independent genre of the psychological drama. Thus, the importance of psychological dimension in films proves to be a reality in contemporary cinema. Thus, memory at the heart of the psychological phenomenon as well as its intersection with cinema has been of interest to researchers and critics. Nalbantian, Matthews, and McClelland (2011) devote a whole chapter to discuss the contribution of memory to the workings of cinema. If early cinematic representations dealt with amnesia as the main feature of protagonists, recent films evolved to embrace neuroscience, calling for attention to the links between memory and the brain.

Advanced studies moved to the layer of memory alteration and malleability, among which the work of Laney and Loftus (2005). It suggests that reports on traumatic events which entail apparent credibility on their perpetrators are not necessarily true. In this view, repressed memories are not always associated with truth when recovered. Misinformation evidently interferes with true memories. As part of such misinformation, we find the leading questions often used by interrogators. Rassin (2022) shows that the way people receive questions makes the difference when it comes to the retrieval process. According to him, suggestive questioning engenders false memories as humans tend to endorse compliance and suggestibility. Zhu et al. (2016) go a step further beyond the study of false and true memories to spot and examine brain areas involved in such faculties. The study identifies the individual differences in terms of short and long-term true and false memories.

When it comes to the cinematic representation of memory, Vinterberg's piece of work captured the interest of established authorities in the seventh art establishment, leading to its nomination for the Oscar rewards. In particular, Walsh (2013) conducts an interview with Vinterberg, attempting to unveil a number of aspects that make the film a masterpiece. Beside the questions involving cultural elements such as the film's portrayal of the church and Danish culture in general, the interview turns to the question of pedophilia. The filmmaker evokes his interest in children fantasy and interestingly dives into his belief that society keeps asking children specific questions that build up some memories which are not necessarily true. Moreover, McCalmont (2014) provides a feminist critique to Vinterberg's film, alluding to its celebration of patriarchal values. For him, the film hides behind its story a fantasy world in which women have a reduced role and white men have the ultimate power. He relies on the fact that the film portrays women as marginal characters with no influence or negative one. If they could inflict damage on the male protagonist, Lucas (Mads Mikkelsen-), they had no possibility of intervention to reverse the situation. In such critique, only the middle-class white men could restore justice as they exert their politic power. However, one would wonder how this claim is fully correct if female cinematographer Charlotte Bruus Christensen is the one whose work and contribution made the film possible.

Sáenz de Viguera Erkiaga (2018) analyses the film through political lens in which populist nationalism attempts to take hold of the Danish community, representative of European and American nations. The study suggest that The Hunt's protagonist symbolizes the other in the eyes of such exclusionist rationales. Thus, once he is looked at as a different entity, he is to suffer from their institutionalized violence.

2. Cinematic encounters with memory complexity:

Speaking of the Lumiere Brothers' cinematograph, Douwe Draaisma establishes an astonishing link between cinema and memory, raising a lucid question: "in the end, isn't human memory just like cinematography, a combination of movement and stasis, a magic marriage of camera obscura and photography?" (as cited in Kilbourn, 2010) Cinema therefore surpasses being just a sharp metaphor for memory to become the creator of such mental images and part of them (Kilbourn, 2010). For this our account for memory provides a good deal on the aesthetics and cinema and its repercussions on our real and mental experiences. As a starting point in defining memory, Loftus begins from the plausible assumption that memory can be regarded "as some kind of repository in which facts (information) may be retained over some period of time" (G. R. Loftus & Loftus, 2018, p. 1). However, human memory is an elusive concept which evidently does not refer to a solid entity in the brain, but rather it is a complex and fragile phenomenon (Schacter, Gilbert, Nock, & Wegner, 2020). For Turkington (2003), it has "a complex constructive power". Loftus adds that "Our memories are constructive. They're reconstructive" (E. Loftus, 2017). This explains why the concept of memory is not one that is fixed both in meaning and time, but its flexible and susceptible to change under different circumstances. Psychologists speak of varieties that span over two opposites. A memory that accounts for events as they happened is a veridical memory, while the other adopts fictional happenings as real is one that is imaginary, termed "non-veridical or seeming memory" (Noonan, 2003, p. 144).

For Loftus, memory is all about paying attention and bringing conscious attention to a good deal of personal interest in a given event or bit of information (Elisabeth F. Loftus, 1988, para. 9.4). In *The Hunt*, Klara a five-year old girl who attends a nursery witness many events where she spends a good deal of her time. As she heads to the nursery, she often meets her teacher, Lucas. They both exchange some talks about her family and father who is also Lucas's friend. The child's remarks on Lucas's dog, Fanny, point out her interest in domestic animals.

Memory functions and expands as a system that is built on three divisions, she respectively labels as sensory store, short term store, and long-term memories (G. R. Loftus & Loftus, 2018). Complex procedures and the dimension of time decide upon the quality and perseverance of information. Loftus posits that memory has an imperfect mechanism, a thing that we cannot easily notice without much involvement and scrutiny. Cinema, with its myriad of representation techniques and aesthetics provides us with a good opportunity to dive into the workings of memory. Vinterberg's film *The Hunt*, considered to some extent as a modern witch hunt story (Pond, 2014), is entitled to highlight much of the complexities of memory. Through its themes and characters, we may be called upon to revisit our understanding of how memory works. For instance, despite her fresh memory faculty as a child, Klara once finds herself near Lucas's home and when he asks her about her direction, she answers: "I forgot to look where I was going" (Vinterberg, 2012, 00:04:15). The scene seems referring to an amnesia-like case. Right away, an over-the-shoulder shot that establishes understanding and coherence portrays Lucas bypassing her anxiety by providing her with tips on how to follow the lines on the road. In many ways, he is applying a mnemonic method that can help the child retrieve her memory (Figure N°1). Thus, he demonstrates how social factors could interfere in the process of memory retrieval. In contrast to her own family, Lucas plays a positive role, knowing that Klara's memory distortion was inflicted as part of the negative influence of her parents' quarrels.

Figure N°1. Lucas walking Klara through the line both literally and metaphorically.



Source: (Vinterberg, 2012, 00:04:55)

To foster memory, namely the long-term one, humans resort to the procedure of rehearsal (Elisabeth F. Loftus, 1988), a behaviour-building process that basically needs repetition. No wonder then, Vinterberg imbeds a number of scenes that seek to establish this very idea. The film opens with a scene showing the community that Lucas belongs to competing on showing their swimming skills. It is very clear that this is a ritual-like that the village's hunters tend to repeat. All men are present in a distant lake, whether they are participant in the competition or just observers does not matter as much as to show that everyone is learning through constant and perpetual attendance. The same scene involves a lad accompanying his bicycle, an illustrative example on how humans learn through repetition and practice certain skills. Another scene, demonstrates how children at the nursery expect the coming of their teacher, Lucas, near the gateway only to foster the idea about how they have come to memorise his arrival time and walking path. They often await him and hide behind the trees in the nursery's yard. As he arrives, they joyfully play with him, without any restrictions or calculations. To them, Lucas is more than a teacher but as a result of seeing him again and again, he is their family.

3. Allegations of child abuse:

Based on our argument that memory is so important in one's definition, we extend this to the dangers involved with the distortions that might affect such mental faculty. As humans live in communities, the overlap of individual memories gives the latter social dimensions. In *The Hunt*, the interactions between the villagers and then accounts for the private lives set the realm of the film as one social psychology to a certain extent. As we know it, Psychology makes us alert that a film that endorses it has the potential of revealing the hidden layers of the target individuals and more importantly the relationships that weave their encounters.

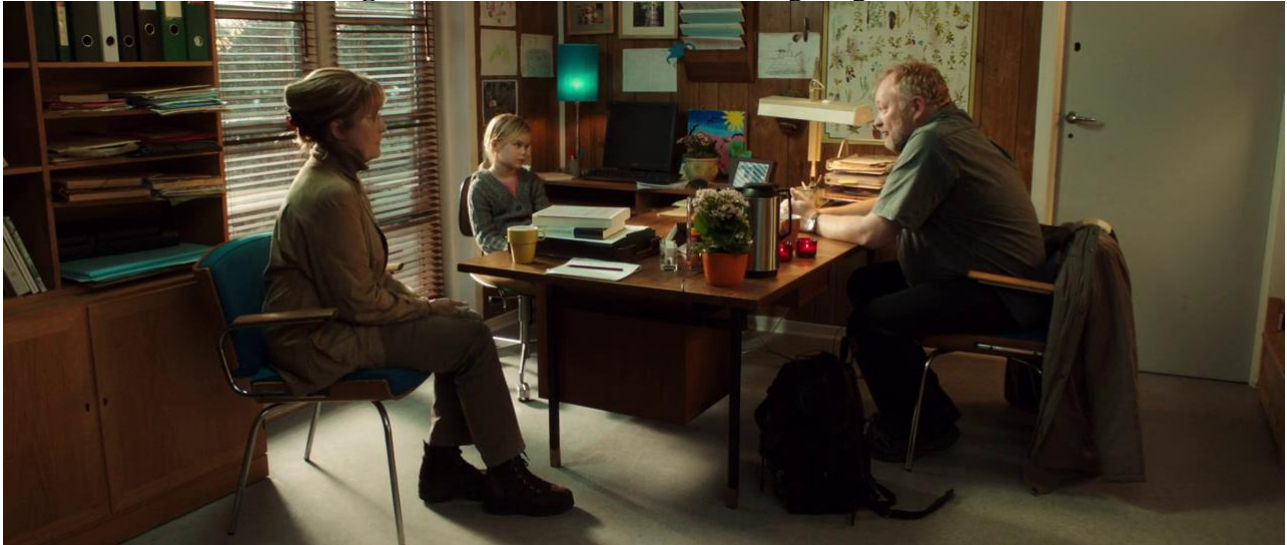
Vinterberg begins his journey of visualising the overlap of social connections with a scene that involves the majority of characters gathering at the lake near their village. The extensive talks and dialogues between them as they enjoy swimming mark the social boundaries that join them. Another scene shows what appears as a society of hunters coming back from the woods accounting for their joyful day and celebrating their hunts. The narrative gets then into specifics as to portray the main characters lives, starting with the protagonist Lucas. We get acquainted with him as a new recruit into the village's nursery and as a divorcee, who is trying to start his social life anew.

The turning point in the film is when Klara (Annika Wedderkopp) reports to the nursery's headmaster some events, alluding that Lucas has sexually approached her. Such abrupt claims elicit a kind of recovered memories. The child who previously appears in a good number of scenes marks herself as an eminent character who drives the narrative. The importance she is endowed with comes from the fact that she links the protagonist's domestic and professional worlds which represent his actual ordeal as we come to know that he recently lost both his wife and job. On the one hand she is the daughter of Lucas's best friend Theo (Thomas Bo Larsen) and, on the other, she is one of the kindergarteners that he is in charge of. From this point on, the film's main theme becomes whether the child has actually undergone such sexual abuse. More importantly, the truth or fallacy with regard to her memory become so critical in defining the fate of Lucas and his family, with respect to his community.

The allegations advanced by Klara come after a cinematic process that lays the grounds for the possibility of them happening for real. One scene had already presented Lucas playing with the kids at every corner in the nursery. The dubious allusion happens when he helps one of the kids wash in the bathroom. The relationships between Lucas and the kids appears to take a risky turn when Klara prepares a gift to her teacher. She is portrayed as emotionally devoted when she envelops a heart. Surprisingly, she gives it to Lucas right before another key scene that shows him rejecting her kiss. After explaining to her that kisses are just for parents and her peers, her facial expression demonstrate that Lucas's answer has engendered a traumatic effect on her. Evidently, when Lucas asks her whether the gift was for him, she promptly denies the claim. Such cinematic representations of Klara's emotional involvement are justified and purposeful as to explain the way memories could be fostered. Actually, it has been proved that memory could be enhanced when emotional arousal happens. The main features of the central event are well stored while the secondary details are somehow reduced in resolution or totally neglected (Schacter, Coyle, & Harvard Center for the Study of Mind Brain and Behavior., 1995, p. 18).

The nursery's headmaster Grethe (Susse Wold) takes it on her own to move the case from an internal affair to a public one. In that event, she invites Ole (Bjarne Henriksen) to make a sort of interview with Klara (Figure N°2). In the beginning the child refuses to talk or answer questions in what seems a self-induced act of denial. In their study, Bücken, Otgaar, Mangiulli, Ramakers, and Merckelbach (2022) suggest that forgetting previous claims on misdeeds fosters the idea that they were not put into action. In other word, it was highly the product of imagination. Actually, Grethe had referred to Klara as a child with high imaginative activity. Thus, it is only after a joint effort of the two adults, she denies that she underwent any sexual abuse. With no hesitation, the interviewer pushes forward with leading questions that make Klara confirm her allegations. In this scene, we notice that Klara was confused and not certain whether she actually lived the events being evoked through the interrogation. Yet, in a swift manner, the lead questions that entail extra information, what Loftus calls misinformation, activate the process of memory formation. The kid, who showed no evidence of lie making before this scene, eventually seems convinced, i.e., not acting. Loftus's frame of false memory creation is fostered when we recall that a previous scene involved almost the same details of nudity allusions, the Klara was exposed to. Actually, her older brother imposed on her to look at some nudity pictures in his tablet device. Vinterberg made it clear in that scene that a mental process was taking place as a close shot took a number of seconds locked on Klara's face. It is this very instance which alludes to the process of memory implantation.

Figure N°2. Ole and Grethe interrogating Klara.



Source: (Vinterberg, 2012, 00:34:31)

Based on Klara's final claims and despite Grethe's assertion that she will not jump into conclusions, Ole and Grethe build the case against Lucas. They seem very convinced that he is guilty. Their assumption is that a child is not susceptible to lie. However, in general terms, there is discrepancy on child witness. If, for many, children are innocent and never lie for some academics, "the traditional view is that "children are highly unreliable witnesses— so unreliable that early researchers had claimed that children's evidence can only mislead jurors" (Baddeley, Eysenck, & Anderson, 2020, p. 462). Even if one would consider Klara's claims are just childish lies, it is clear that there is a certain "sexual ambiguity" within society, as Cummings (2012) puts it. In the case of Lucas, such lie seems so harmful and ungrounded in that he has proved his straight behaviour during the early phases of the film's narrative. One scene showed him earlier involved in a discussion with his best friend, Theo. The latter told him "I can tell when you're lying. Your eye twitches" (Vinterberg, 2012, 00:07:20). Later on, another eye-to-eye scene joins them only to shake the minds of alert viewers.

4. Repressed Memory:

The exquisite cinematic acting of Annika Wedderkopp in *The Hunt* makes the character of Klara very convincing, knowing she was just 6 years old when the film was being produced. The hypothesis of her lying, both deliberately or accidentally, seems unjustified and very unlikely. Thus, the different dialogues in the film make a daring attempt to shake the viewer's belief in Lucas's ethical grounds. For instance, the nursery's headmaster, Grethe, is portrayed as a connoisseur in terms of children psychology. Her delicate acting makes the premise of the film psychological with excellence. Despite the potential flaws that her character might be affected with, she gradually follows the child abuse case from the beginning. Within such process, she provides a number of hypotheses and attempts to explain the possibilities to the village community. Although not explicitly mentioned in the film, the main hypothesis she endorses is that the child Klara suffers the effects of repressed memories. While such directions make her contradict her initial claim and promise to Lucas not to jump into the conclusions, the narrative proposes some justification to her belief. A couple of scenes had already showed her exposed to elusory events leading to potential possibilities of sexual misconduct, with regard to Lucas. The man who is supposedly divorced swiftly appears in intimate

interactions with a woman of no consolidate position in the community. Besides, a number of phone calls from his ex-wife allude to her close relationship with Grethe. The idea is that the latter's stand and orientation have been affected by her emotional ties with her friend rather than rational and reason-based rationales.

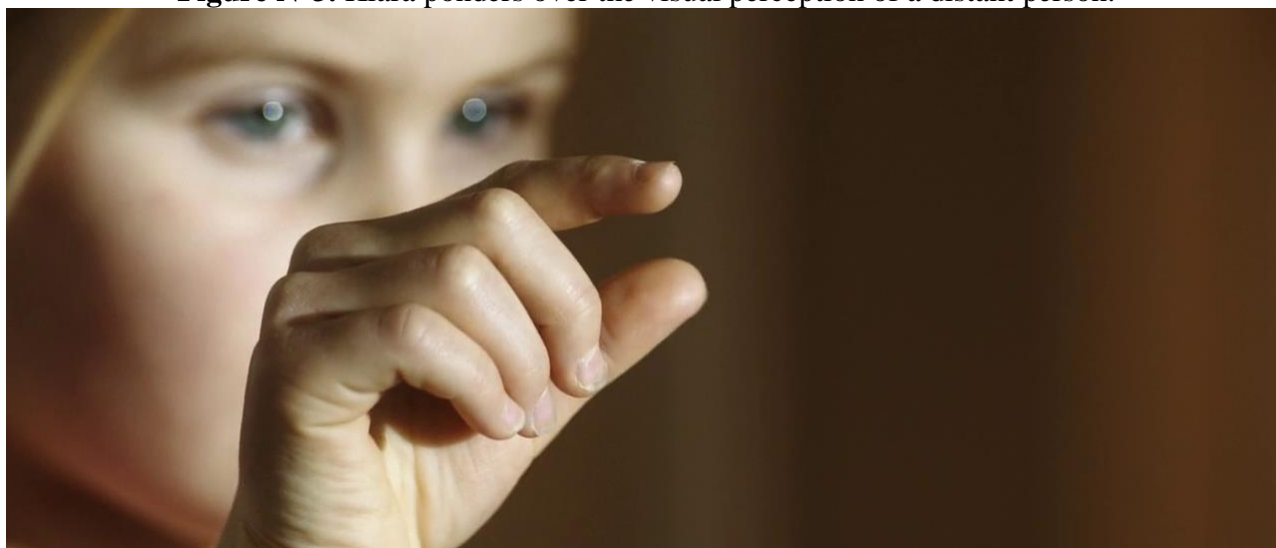
A number of scenes show how Karla suffers at home because of her parents quarrels and the only one with whom she finds refuge and protection is Lucas. They often go together to the nursery and the nature of her father's relationship with Lucas gives justification to the latter's presence in her life. The viewer is to be astonished when the child's allegations of sexual abuse arise abruptly. Yet psychologically speaking, such claims appear ways far from Grethe's explanation that relies on her repressed memories drive behind the girl's position. For the sake of clarification, it is of interest to advance the basic assumptions on repressed memories and their eventual resurfacing. Loftus summarizes what believers in repressed memory think. In their view, persons who face some traumatic events in the like of sexual abuse resort to some psychic energy to protect themselves by denying those very events and experiences, moving them from the conscious level of experience to the unconscious one. It is only when one recovers from the immediate effect of trauma that his mind becomes apt to uncover the buried memories (Elizabeth F. Loftus & Ketcham, 1996, para. 9.33). Grethe, therefore seems to be one of these believers as she warns every one in her meeting with the parents about the possibilities of multiple child abuse cases. To prove that their children actually suffered from a defined perpetrator, Lucas, she prescribes to them the clue to that event. She explicitly points out their attention to the question of memory repression. For her, any dream or precisely nightmare would mean the existence of a traumatic memory that the kids' minds are making effort to bury in the hidden corridors of their unconscious psyche.

5. The power of suggestion:

As Grethe takes on her own the endeavour to build up on Klara's claims, Ole, the specialist in crime investigation, brings himself to the forth as a representative of the social institutions which proclaim themselves the controllers and judges. Not earlier involved in the narrative and in contrast with Klara, such character gives no way to acceptance or sympathy. He swiftly gets into a dialogue with premeditated intents, clearly apparent through his economy of words. The dialogue swerves from the initially suggested hints at the man's social intelligence and mastery of his job to a rather investigative mission, void of any emotions or delicacy. He leaves no space for the girl to breathe as she attempts to answer his myriad of questions. The questions he advances take one direction and leading to one conclusion. There seems to be no other possibility but to extract the child's ascent. Actually, when Grethe asks: "Please tell him what you said about the heart." (Vinterberg, 2012, 00:31:24), a close shot makes it clear that the girl deeply ponders, providing the following answer "I didn't say anything" (Vinterberg, 2012, 00:31:37). While at surface level, this denial alludes to what might be understood as a repressed memory manifestation, as we explained earlier, the more tangible explanation is that the girl's mind has retrieved access to the long-term memory which has no traces of the allegations advanced in one of the previous scenes. If the viewer who has developed some sympathy with Lucas might breathe a sigh of relief, Ole completely dashes such possibility as he pushes the girl's memory hard to begin a process Loftus calls "memory formation" based on misinformation. For instance, he confines the girl's thinking with intimidating questions as to shake her relationship with her headmaster, proposing that the later is just making it up. He even goes to shake her belief in her own integrity as he intimidates her further by suggesting she is all making it up. In many ways, Ole's flaws as a professional are demonstrated by hypothesising that a lie could happen without any grounds, simply because as (Steffens, Mecklenbräuker, & Schiller, 2007) posits, there is no lie without purpose. More importantly, treating the child as a low-perceptive person is not scientifically grounded.

Vinterberg makes it clear that the child is a meditating person over the sensory reality around her. One close-up shot brings to the forth Klara taking time to meditate over how she perceives persons based on her sensory visual input (Figure N°3). Moreover, suggestive questions keep overwhelming the interrogated, in this case Klara, using rehearsal methods, which Loftus refer to as the best ways to foster memory and make it lasting. As such, he repeats the same suggestive questions in correlation with the data he collected from Grethe's previous dialogues with the child. Suddenly, the latter shows consent over the suggested conclusions imbedded in Ole's questions and she provides him with the answers that he seems to have hypothesised as true. A close shot shows his happy face and his dialogue continues only with Grethe as to decide on the judicial procedures.

Figure N°3. Klara ponders over the visual perception of a distant person.



Source: (Vinterberg, 2012, 00:09:14)

6. The social implications of false memory:

The social implications of the false memory are keenly presented by *The Hunt*. The ultimate metaphor at the core of the film portrays a violent friction between the individual and his community that endangers one's right to life. Watching the film and thinking of its title, one would wonder who is hunting who. Vinterberg demonstrates the way false memories have engendered a mass-hysteria which turned Lucas from a recovering man to a demolished pariah in his own village. Just after Ole draws conclusions out of his interrogative dialogue with Klara and the subsequent official judicial proceeding against Lucas, the community moves to execution and begins expelling him from their gatherings. Abruptly, everyone meets him shows no signs of acceptance or even sympathy. Not only distant members of the community embrace such behaviour, but even his intimate circles. Nadja (Alexandra Rapaport) who previously showed him affection and intimate closeness turns her back on him, along with other friends who appear as if they undergone some brain washing process. More importantly, Theo, Lucas's best friend adheres to mob-psychology and takes a decision to follow the rest of his community in terms of their stance. As a first step, he fully rejects any sceptical advances against his daughter's claims. One scene joins him with Lucas's son, Marcus, portrays how he has become transformed into just another member of community who lacks any affection or affinity, supposed to distinguish him from the crowd. Undermining any chances of reconciliation, Marcus evokes his emotional involvement with his father's imprisonment. As he addresses Klara with a nervous tone, he engenders a violent reaction from the child's family, including Theo. Once again, Vinterberg demonstrates how false memory has direct effects not only on the person, per se, but on

society as a whole. Thus, Marcus gets more than physical punishment and a number of scenes display the manifestations of the community's reaction *vis-à-vis* a mere unevidenced claim. Things go further to reach denying the family the right to attend the village's groceries. In other words, through the metaphor of food provision, the repercussions related to the building of false memories and the resulting claims extend to reach an existential level.

Conclusion:

The Hunt (2012) makes distinction through its cinematic representation of themes pertinent to Psychology and Social Psychology, in particular. Vinterberg remarkably demonstrates a good handle of the peculiar field of memory study. Through minimalistic aesthetics in cinema, he brought false memory to the focus, producing an artwork that functions as an eye-opener over a crucial phenomenon that begins with the individual and finds its repercussions at the social level. While the film raises questions over well-thought-of themes of molestation and child abuse, the imbedded message is one of more complexity, diving into the workings memory and the dangers of social manipulation. The film makes us ponder what memory can ever tell us about the past, but more importantly it shows how such faculty builds bridges between one and his society. It is by showing the negative implications of misinformation when added to actual memories, the idea of keeping human interactions pristine and clear of distortion makes its way to the audience. Taking the title of *The Hunt* actually raises many concerns not only over environmental issues, but also upon the way modern society can turn an ordinary person into a pariah, without much physical evidence. False Memories become a metaphor on the way society resorts to unethical methods to put the blame on one of its members. Making *The Hunt* a modern-day witch hunt, Vinterberg calls for raising awareness on the possibility of allegation fallacies. Thus, established principles in psychology and forensics should not be taken for granted in all cases. Modern society has evolved to the degree memories, the incubator of our human experiences and saviours of our past and sense of identity, could possibly become corrupted and devoid of truth. In many ways, the film presents a harsh criticism to the existing methods of investigation that lead to untrue results. As such, the remedy could go through the reduction of suggestive questioning and the development of new techniques that take benefit from the witnesses' memory without inflicting any level of damage or alteration to its essence.

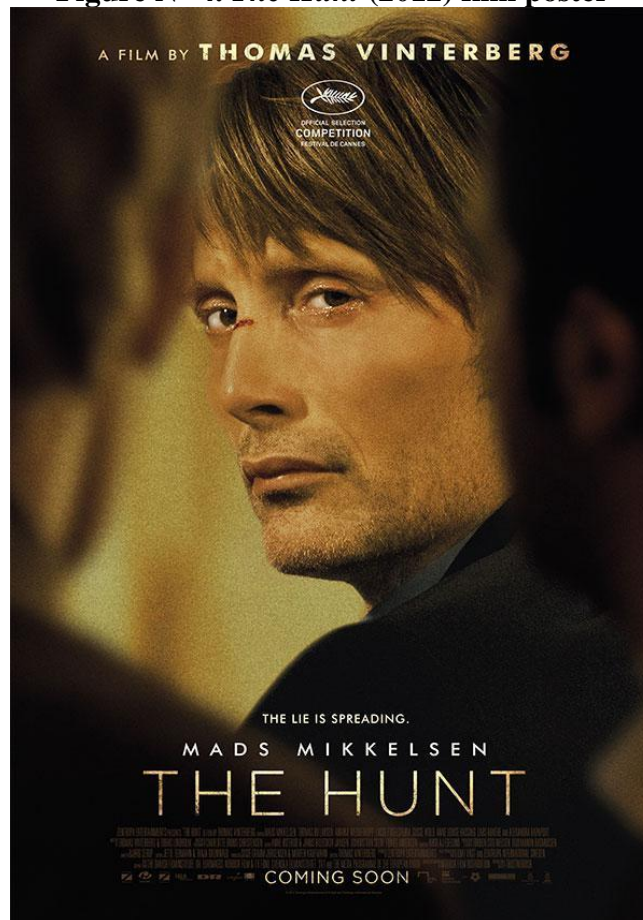
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8. Appendix:

Figure N° 4. *The Hunt* (2012) film poster



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