

DeUsynlige | Troubled Water

Director: Erik Poppe

Country: Norway (Denmark)

Year: 2008

IMDB: [link](#)

Film homepage: n/a

Trailer: [link](#)

Available on: Amazon [link](#)

Introduction:

A man convicted in his teens for killing a child is released on parole. He finds work as a church organist and develops a rewarding relationship with a priest and her young son. However, his caring for the boy catches the attention of his old victim's mother, bringing to the surface her bad memories and unanswered questions. This draws them both into troubled waters, having to learn when to hold on and when to let go.

This film is the third part of Erik Poppe's multi-awarded Oslo Trilogy, after his directorial debut with SCHPAAA (1998) and Hawaii,Oslo (2004)

Discussion questions:

1. The English title of this film is "Troubled Water". The Norwegian title is "DeUsynlige" (TheInvisible [People]) **note written as one word*. What does each title symbolize/ refer to? Do both titles work equally well? Why would the film not have a direct translation? What do each of the titles get at? Who is this a story about? Examine the DVD cover, how many faces do you see (there are two). How does this connect to the Norwegian title? What does water symbolize in the English title?
2. What is the significance of the organ music in this film? What does the organ represent?
3. In a scene between Jan Thomas and Anna, Anna says that atonement is more important than forgiveness. Do you agree? Which do you think Jan Thomas is seeking: forgiveness, atonement, or both? Which scene(s) point to this?
4. Criminal reformation, although different in the US and Norway, is a very controversial issue. How does this film deal with the issue? What is your personal opinion of this

case? Would your opinion differ if Jan Thomas had been an adult at the time of the murder?

5. There are missing details in the film. Some reviewers have questioned what the intent was of stealing the stroller in the first place pointing to Thomas' friend as ambiguously effeminate and them stealing a *boy*, was there a (homo)sexual intent in stealing the boy in the stroller? Is this something you thought about watching the film? Does it affect your opinion of the case?

6. In the scene where Jan Thomas is playing for the school group, two other visuals are shown very prominently, what are they and why do you think they were included? Do the visuals affect you the same way the music does?

7. Discuss the split narrative structure of this film. In what ways did you find this structure effective (or not)? When did you first become aware of a second point-of-view in the story? Can you identify the overlapping moments in the script?

8. How is *Troubled Water Nordic* and not solely *Norwegian*? Could the Danish element have been omitted?

9. Were the relationships in this film depicted differently than what they would typically be in an American film?

10. If you have seen *Hawaii*, *Oslo*, how would you compare it to *Troubled Water*? These two films are the second and third films the "Oslo trilogy" which Poppe directed. What similarities do you notice between the films? Do you prefer one, and why?

About the director:

Interview with Erik Poppe: [link](#)

Suggestions for further reading/ viewing:

If you enjoyed this film, we suggest the following.

Films:

Schpaa, *Hawaii*, *Oslo*

This NORTANA discussion guide was prepared by Kari Lie Dorer and edited by Maren Anderson Johnson.