

troubledWATER

Discussion Guide

1. 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 (one example is when Jan Thomas spills his coffee before sitting down to play)?
2. Criminal reformation is a very controversial issue. How does this film deal with the issue? What is your personal opinion about criminal reformation, and about Jan Thomas' specific case? Would your opinion of his case differ if Jan Thomas was convicted as a legal adult?
3.
 - a. Discuss the significance of the organ music in this film. What does the organ represent for Jan Thomas?
 - b. During Jan Thomas' organ rendition of Simon & Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water," we see close-ups of all the schoolchildren. Why do you think the director, Erik Poppe, chose to feature the children's faces so prominently in this scene?
4.
 - a. In a scene between Jan Thomas and Anna, he asks her: "If God really has a purpose for everything, what about evil then? Is evil an act of God also?" What would your answer be to this question?
 - b. Later in the same scene, Anna tells him that atonement is more important than forgiveness. Do you agree? Which do you think Jan Thomas is seeking: forgiveness, atonement, or both?
5. During the restaurant scene with Jon's new boss and his wife, the two women have a conversation about "losing" their sons. Discuss the significance of this shared moment between mothers. Why do you suppose Jan Thomas' own mother was left out of the film?
6. Einar Egeland, the film's editor, won a 2009 Amanda Award (Norway's equivalent of the Oscars®) for his work. What details do you recall about the editing? Discuss, in particular, the manner in which the crime was revealed.
7. If you saw Poppe's previous film, **HAWAII, OSLO**, how would you compare it to **TROUBLED WATER**? These two films are part of a trilogy that Poppe directed; what similarities do you notice between the films? Which film do you prefer, and why?