



[For Teachers] **AFGHANISTAN**

**Lesson: Osama's "Wheel of Influence"**

**Materials Needed: *Osama* DVD, Student Handouts**

**Objectives:**

- 1) To establish the characterization of Osama.
- 2) To show how the director uses symbolism to show the forces influencing Osama.
- 3) To show how Osama represents a young girl today in Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban.

**Focus:** How does the director use symbolism to show the forces influencing Osama?

**Pre-screening question:** Write down one person who has influenced you. Explain why they had power over you and whether they had a positive or negative impact on your life.

**Development:**

I. After having students answer the pre-screening question on their handouts, screen the first 20 minutes of the film *Osama*.

II. Have students analyze the forces influencing Osama by studying the wheel on the handout and answering the questions that follow. Have students answer the questions individually or in pairs and then share their answers as part of a class discussion.

1) Each of the characters in the wheel above exerts some form of influence over Osama and her experiences in the film. For each character, explain how the director uses the corresponding symbol. How is the symbol presented? How does the symbol connect to the character? How does the character, and his/her symbol, influence Osama?

2) Osama feels pulled in various directions by the different characters in the wheel. In your opinion, which character wields the most power over Osama and her choices in life? Explain your choice.

3) As a character, how would you describe Osama? Is she passive or aggressive? How does she cope with her situation? How does she escape reality?

4) What would you do if you were Osama? Would you dress as a boy? Why or why not?

**Homework:** Have students read the New York Times article, "Afghan Boys Are Prized, So Girls Live the Part," and then answer the following questions:

1) After seeing the film *Osama* and reading the article, do you believe Osama's only choice was to disguise herself as a boy? Why or why not?

2) How would you describe the attitude of the girls and their parents toward the idea of dressing their daughters as boys?

3) In your opinion, are the parents in both the film and in the article acting as "good" parents or are their actions selfish? Explain.