

Bartłomiej Stańczak

## WHALE RIDER

Directed by Niki Caro

<b>Subject</b>	Children's film, indigenous culture film
<b>Topic</b>	Overcoming traditional leadership, gender-assigned roles, authoritarianism, patriarchal societies
<b>Age Group</b>	14-18
<b>Work Methods</b>	Summary and film analysis, class discussion, group work
<b>Estimated Time</b>	90 minutes

### **Aims:**

- Students should be able to understand and analyze the main premises of the movie.
- Students should formulate their opinions on the topics of gender roles and patriarchy.
- Students will discuss the presented issues and provide their own input on the difficulties faced by the characters.
- The class should encourage interest in and discussion about indigenous cultures and the relationship between tradition and cultural change.
- Encouraging student interaction and exchange of opinions.

**Preparation:** Prior to the class, students are given a week to watch the film online and write a very brief summary (300-400 words) that will be used as the opening to the analysis and discussion segments.

**Points of interest:** Maori culture and mythology, Tapu, Gender Roles, Social Ladder, Destiny.

### **Materials:**

Caro, Niki. *Whale Rider*. Newmarket Films, 2002.

Format	Description	Time	Extras
<b>Introduction:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Students are asked if they are familiar with similar films (i.e. related to the Maori culture or related to female leadership). They then hand in their written reviews and briefly discuss the plot of the film.</li> <li>– Students are asked about female leadership – what do they think about it? Is it in any way different from male leadership? How are women in leading positions perceived in our culture?</li> <li>– Students are asked if they liked the film and why they did/didn't</li> <li>– Students are asked to empathize with Paikea and to explain whether they've had similar gender-related experiences in their lives</li> </ul>	30 min	<p>film summary</p> <p>students' opinions</p>
<b>Class Discussion:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Students are given several questions to discuss: what makes a good leader? can Koro be seen as an antagonist in the film? does the film spoil itself through Paikea's name?</li> <li>– Next, the class is asked to discuss the issue of male-dominated leadership – is this a result of patriarchal tradition or Koro's authoritarian methods?</li> </ul>	20 min	<p>teacher asks the questions</p> <p>students discuss the questions among themselves</p>
<b>Group Work:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Is Koro an <i>evil</i> character? Or does he simply fear change and can be seen as looking after the tribe's future?</li> <li>– Is Paikea destined to become the tribe's leader or is she simply the right person in the right situation?</li> <li>– Students rewatch the scene where the boys dive in the sea to recover the <i>rei puta</i> and later Koro cries himself to sleep after failing to raise a proper leader. They are then asked to discuss whether this procedure makes sense and if all of the boys were indeed unworthy of leading the tribe</li> </ul>	20 min	<p>students are asked to divide themselves into groups of 3-4 and discuss certain plot points</p>
<b>Conclusions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What is the ultimate position of women in the tribe after Paikea's success?</li> <li>– Does Koro redeem himself in the end?</li> <li>– Did your opinion about the film change after the discussion?</li> </ul>	20 min	<p>general closing discussion about the film</p>