

Film analysis of "billy elliot"



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Billy Elliot is a film about a young boy who discovers and starts dancing ballet. His father and brother work in the mines and are working class people. But still Billy's father manages to let Billy go to boxing lessons. Billy doesn't love boxing and isn't very good either. When the local ballet dancers start practicing in the same venue as he does, he develops an interest in the dancing and soon joins the ballet group. Billy has to hide the ballet dancing from his father, with good reason.

When his dad finds out he denies Billy to dance, but Mrs. Hudson, the ballet teacher, who has discovered Billy's talent gives him lessons in private, without any cost. When Billy is presented with the opportunity to audition for the royal ballet school in London he has to decide whether to convince his father and go London or continue his life eventually ending up as a miner just like his dad and brother.

The film takes place in a fictitious town of Everington, in the North of England, namely the Durham County in 1984-1985. This period of time was called the Thatcher era and the rise of unemployment was specific for this time. The father and brother of Billy work in the mines and are a part of a strike. The conditions are tough, and they have to burn their mother's piano to get wood. Billy's neighbourhood mainly consists of brick houses without gardens, and working class people. Billy also lives in one of these houses and has to share room with his big brother, Tony. The story begins in the early autumn and stretches throughout the winter and early spring.

Billy is a twelve years old boy who attends a public elementary school. He is a sensitive, tolerant, determined, stubborn, courageous and single-minded

boy. He has inherited boxing gloves from his grandfather and he is expected to do boxing and become a miner. He only follows the customary path of the real man because he is trying to fulfil his father's expectations as well as the expectations of the society. It is obvious that he is not the one to give a punch. The men in his family do not show emotions and are quite brutal and violent, but Billy manages to show feelings through dance and when he is forced into confrontation, he is courageous and stubborn.

Billy is the youngest member of the Elliot's household. It seems that Billy as a "child" still keeps the right to miss his mother who has died and he has the right to talk about her. It seems that every person in this film has an expectation from Billy, depending on his or her social status and personal experiences. Through the movie Billy develops from a boy trapped by gender roles and afraid of the new and unknown to a boy that takes risks to fulfil his dream and is not afraid anymore. He also learns to make hard decisions and achieves a better relationship with his family. Billy also finds a mother figure in his ballet teacher Mrs Wilkinson.

Mrs Wilkinson is a disappointed woman who carries her cigarette like a weapon. She is a part of the middle class in England and runs a ballet school. She discovers Billy's talent and practices with him in private. She can be viewed as quite harsh but she is a sweet lady that believes in Billy and helps him find himself. You could say that she pushes him a bit towards dancing, but only to help him. Another character who helps Billy is his best friend Michael. He struggles with his sexual identity and when Billy discovers this he is pushed a bit more out of the gender based-society he lives in. Michael is very supporting of Billy's dancing and they kind of help each other.

Jackie Elliot is Billy's father. As a miner the future is not very bright due to the political situation in England at this time. But still Jackie can only imagine his sons as miners. He is a real macho man that has a lot of suppressed anger. He is placed in an uncomfortable situation when his son decides to dance ballet. He deals with it in all the wrong ways and has a hard time accepting his son's choice. He develops a lot through the movie. He goes from a harsh dad that is moulded by the society to accepting and understanding his son despite the gender norms.

When it comes to how the movie is made I will start off with how the camera style of filming. It is usually at a normal distance, but when we are supposed to focus on a person's face we get close-up shots. In the scenes when we are witnessing the strike, the camera is placed in the middle of the crowd. This makes it more realistic and gives us a feeling of authenticity. The camera also follows Billy's moves when he dances which makes us a part of the dance in the same way as it's done with the strike scene. The music emphasizes the mood in the film and because this is a film about dancing most of the music is upbeat and therefore suitable for the different dancing scenes.

The music often morphs from atmosphere music, coming from the radio, to background music telling us something about the scene. An example of the use of music is when Billy's dad walks into the boxing arena when Billy and Michael are dancing to up-beat and happy music. When Billy notices his father the music stops. This helps to show the tension that is between Billy and his father.

Billy Elliot is a movie about many things. It is a coming of age story that reflects on how Billy grows and learns. Another theme in the movie is class differences. Billy and his family represent the working class, Mrs. Wilkinson represents the middle class and the people at the royal ballet school represent the upper class. What I would say is the most prominent theme is gender roles. Billy is trapped in a society that has specific activities that are for girls and specific activities for boys. Billy, Michael and Mrs. Wilkinson are all apart of demolishing these roles. I think that the director wants to say to the audience that you have to fight for your dream and if you have an ambition or a dream you can make anything work. You also have to break loose from the norms and do what makes you happy.