

Fall 2011

Over the past several weeks we have been discussing issues related to identity: self-identity, community identity, and the internal and external factors that define who we are. To summarize the issues we have been discussing, and to give an interesting visual depiction of identity, we will watch the film *Billy Elliot* (2000). There will be questions to answer as we watch the movie, an overall analysis of the movie, and a discussion of the themes of the movie when it is over. Also, there may be an extension activity after the movie.

Here is the storyline from the Internet Movie Database (IMDB):

“ In the 1984 Miners Strike in England, brawn is more the theme than style, with violence all too common in the struggles of the strikers. Eleven year old Billy Elliot's father and his older brother, union miners themselves, are caught up in it, and the most bellicose elements of their personalities are in full swing. This makes Billy's affinity for dancing over boxing all the more unfathomable to them, and they don't support him in pursuit of his dream to become a ballet dancer.

With the help of a local ballet teacher who secretly takes him under her wing, Billy persists and his talents as a ballet dancer develop impressively. Still, to pursue his dreams, Billy will need both financial support and encouragement from his family, and there is grave doubt whether either is available to him in a family psychologically consumed and financially impaired by the strike.

Billy's father must balance his allegiance to his fellow miners with his allegiance to his family. How he resolves this conflict is the substance of this insightful, and ultimately uplifting, film.”

The ideas presented in this film, and its overall story about identity, serve as a great summary to the issues we have been discussing in class. Furthermore, this movie does an excellent job in depicting the internal and external factors that shape identity. The film has an “R” rating due to “language.” However, viewed in a safe environment, the film can be beneficial to the learning experience. If you do not want your child to see the movie, an alternate lesson plan will be made available.

Please sign and return the bottom portion of the page letting me know you read the above letter and agree/disagree to your son/daughter viewing *Billy Elliot*.

Thanks!

Robert Alvarado

____ I give my son/daughter permission to view the movie

____ I do not give my son/daughter permission to view the movie.

Student Name _____

Parent Guardian Signature _____ Date _____