

# **Coming of Age - Teaching Billy Elliot to German Teenagers**

Julia Selbach



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Zwischenprüfungsarbeit aus dem Jahr 2008 im Fachbereich Englisch - Pädagogik, Didaktik, Sprachwissenschaft, Note: 2,3, Universität zu Köln, Sprache: Deutsch, Abstract: Against the background of the coal miner's strikes situated in Northern England during the years of 1984/1985 and the difficulties caused by drastic actions of then prime minister Margaret Thatcher's governance Stephen Daldry's film "Billy Elliot- I will dance" deals with various possibilities and occurrences of manliness. Those are demonstrated by the conflict between eleven years old Billy, the main character, and his father as well as his brother: "Darüber hinaus thematisiert er [der Film] den sozialen Konflikt, das Gefühl der Entfremdung, möglicherweise den "Verrat" an seiner Familie, seiner Klasse, weil der Tanz Billy unweigerlich aus seinem Milieu, aus seinem Dorf hinausführen wird" (Brenneisen, 2002, p.5).

Employing and using this film in an English language classroom provides several opportunities to foreign language teachers. First of all, the film is generally applicable to discuss the specific difficulties and problems younger people are faced with during their own period of coming of age. While watching and receiving the film learners can put themselves in the main character's position. They can possibly compare it to their own life situation and their own experiences. This effect can be regarded as highly motivating for the learners, since it is a topic that affects most of them. They are able to bring in and talk about their personal experiences which will probably lead to authentic discussion promts that are encouraged among the learners.

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