Bend It Like Beckham: Movie Review

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM (BILB): Starring Parminder Nagra, Keira Knightley, Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Anupam Kher, Shaheen Khan and Archie Panjarbi. Directed by Gurinda Chadha. Rated PG-13 (for language and sexual content). Fox Searchlight Pictures. 112 mins.

BILB directed by Gurinda Chadha, follows the story of an Indian teenager, Jesminder Bhamra (Parminder Nagra), fighting against tradition, sexism and racism to achieve her goals in soccer. Idolizing the famous soccer player, David Beckham, Jess dreams of becoming a professional soccer player in America. However, her traditional parents are persistent in their daughter leading an Orthodox lifestyle, with an intelligent husband and children of her own. Whilst Jess' older sister is preparing for a lush traditional Indian wedding, Jess struggles with balancing her love for sport and her obligation to help the family.

BILB is a comedy-drama film used to portray the harsh racism, discrimination and overall sexism people like Jess and Juliette Paxton (Keira Knightly) have experienced, during the early 2000s. BILB displays how not all women aspire to learn and partake in the traditionally female roles, challenging many stereotypes for the female gender. Parminder Nagra successfully illustrates the emotional and physical pressures many have experienced due to overlooked sexism and family expectations, bringing to life the effects of stereotypes.

Parminder Nagra often renders characters with strong and resolute personas. Parminder Nagra is very successful with personating head strong characters who are willing to fight for their dream. Many of Parminder Nagra's characters show struggle under the pressure of expectations and being an outsider. Parminder Nagra portrayed Jess beautifully, as Jess is a determined young woman with a rebellious streak, her life ambition is to play soccer professionally, and she is prepared to disobey her parents to reach that ambition.

Throughout BILB there are many morals, that are somewhat concealed by the comedy within the film. During the film Jess noticeably matures, she no longer plays football playfully, but in a professional environment. Jess starts to realize the benefits of standing up for what you believe in, that she wants to live her dream, not her parents.

Sexism is an important theme within the film. BILB represents the issues and negative effects sexism can cause. A strong message within BILB is that despite gender, race, culture, religion, et, we are all capable of achieving our goals in life.

Family is an ever-present theme throughout BILB. BILB acknowledges the difficulties, misunderstandings and bonds that all families have. Jess, Jules and Joe (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) all experience the struggles of parents pressures and expectations. Joe emphasized that sometimes parents don't know and understand what is best for you. That to reach your full potential you may need to rebel against them. However, Jess accentuated the importance of preserving a strong bond with your family, and that you should never underestimate the love of a parent.

During BILB racism is a strong and obvious theme. Whilst BILB raises recognition towards

racism within our society, it simultaneously provides us with an indirect vision of a better and more multicultural lifestyle. BILB displays how sport can be used to promote a more inclusive society in terms of cultural diversity. How through involvement in a team, a hybrid culture can be formed. Overall leaving us with the question, what does cultural diversity and gender equity actually look like?

BILB is comedic, empowering and educational film. Providing the viewers with an array of life lessons, relevant to people of all backgrounds and ages. BILB challenges many assumptions about traditional masculinities and femininities. Demonstrating sports as an arena of opportunity, in which structural inequalities such as racism and sexism can be reduced through involvement in teams. However, whilst BILB represents itself in a feminist way, underneath hides a troubling yet subtle reassertion of masculinity and patriarchy.