

Bend it like beckham analytical essay essay sample

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In the movie bend it like Beckham, the discourses relating to sexuality and gender shows how the social expectations of women interfere with their desires and roles in society, and this creates a demarcation between family members. It also suggests how homosexuality has become a big part of the modern society, but that the prejudice and negativity associated with both of the adolescent girls in the film, Jess and Jules and the fact that they love soccer and dress comfortably in a boyish way, still is dominant in both traditional and more modern communities. In the essay I will discuss how their unconventional appearance results in their sexuality being questioned by their parents, and how the girls struggle to rebel against cultural and parental expectations of gender roles, which are clearly defined by their mothers. The mothers don't think it is proper for girls to play soccer and are upset because their daughters are not 'feminine' and traditional like ordinary girls. The girls don't want to cook, wear make-up or sexy underwear. They just want to play soccer.

The idea that women have to accept and take on their expected roles in society is a reoccurring issue in the movie. Women can't play soccer and they can't dress just as they want according to Jules and Jess's mothers. Jess's mom is all about her being an ordinary Sikh woman that can cook, clean and marry an Indian man. Jess is a big contrast of this, and her opposing sister that is almost everything a Sikh woman is supposed to be, is used in the film to help the viewer to realize the differences between the sisters and to what extent Jess fulfills her cultural expectations. Their parents favor Jess' sister Pinky, because she is traditionally feminine in terms of appearance, qualities and hobbies.

This is illustrated in the film as the sympathy from their parents always revolving around her sister, and is also shown by the transformation Pinky goes through, where she in the beginning is very much tied to Jess, but as the film proceeds, she starts to look and act more like her mom, and is always seen on their side of the arguments. She contains a lot of female qualities and is getting married to a wealthy Indian man. Jess on the other hand dresses much more like a boy, and doesn't give any interest in taking the traditional role of a woman. This is highlighted by a particular scene (00:27:00) where her mother has her back turned to Jess, cooking an Indian dish while Jess is juggling vegetables on her knees instead of participating in the cooking.

The shots are full body shots, so Jess can show her soccer skills and the audience can see her mom and her facial expressions. This scene implies that Jess has no interest in cooking and taking on the traditional role of a Sikh woman. However she is much more passionate about soccer, so passionate that she even has to do it in the kitchen with the vegetables. The audience learns about her conflict with her mom, of taking on her very traditional role of a woman, and it really underlines her rebellious desire of going against the normal gender roles.

In the end of the scene we also learn that Jess's desires are constantly controlled by her mom, and even though she is rebellious her choice is not free, which we see when she ends up obeying her mom, when she tells her to stop fooling around and start cooking instead. Jess is much more hybrid and modern in her perception of life, which is shown by her interests and

values in the movie, being football. Her parents and especially her mom is having a very hard time understanding this and the lack of fulfilling her cultural expectations creates a gap between mom and daughter which is illustrated in the way jess and her mom only interacts when it's about jess doing something wrong.

Jules, who wants to play professionally in America, which is more than fine with her dad, but her mom does not like the idea at all, just like Jess's parents. Her mom feels that soccer is not feminine enough and would rather her daughter focus on school and marriage. Jules' mom fears that her daughter's short haircut and all the time she spends playing soccer will interfere with her meeting a boy. In one of the first scenes (00: 04: 25) of the movie Jules' mom is trying to talk her into a padded bra. The camera zooms in on the bra from the very beginning of the scene where it gives a close up, that sets focus on the bra and gives the viewer an idea of what the topic of the scene is going to be. She wants her to look more womanly and feminine.

Jules's mom says while holding up a bra "all the mothers have bought one for their daughters" which emphasizes her desire of making Jules's more feminine and socially accepted. When Jules' determined walks towards the sports bra section her mother is not pleased. Another example of this is where we see Jules and her dad playing football in their very neat villa garden (00: 15: 30). The shot starts by filming Jules shooting a ball at one of the many potted plants in the garden and it breaks, where after her mom storms out of the house yelling at Jules and her dad. In anger she yells at the dad " when are u going to realize that you have a daughter with breasts not

a son?" " No boys want to go out with a girl that has gotten bigger muscles than him." The scene shifts between a close up of the mothers very angry facial expression and Jules and her dad holding around each other.

Also we see that Jules and her dad are wearing clothes that are very alike. Both grey shirts and track pants. The mom is in strong contrast by wearing all pink. By this we clearly get the impression that Jules is closer and more attached to her dad than her mom. It also indicates the difference in the way men and women see the importance of having certain roles in a society. The mothers are much more strict and conscious about they're appearance and fulfilling their social and cultural expectations, where the men are more loose and careless. Jules' mom is scared about the fact that her daughter is different from others so she in that way fails to fulfill her social expectations, where she by that will end up as a social outcast.

The roles the two unconventional girls have taken in two very conservative communities, leads to sexual prejudice. This is shown by many misleads and assumptions made by their mothers, especially Jules mum. Her suspicions are driven by the factor that her daughter is not a typical adolescent but an atypical one. Her mom has no other answer to her daughter's odd obsession with soccer and tomboyish look than that she is lesbian. Many young people today would see homosexuality as a more natural thing, but it seems like Jules's mom's worst nightmare. This conclusion is drawn based on the segment of the movie (00: 58: 00), where the mom overhears a conversation between Jules and Jess, where all she hears is " You don't know the meaning of love! You've really hurt me Jess" Jules mother presumes that her daughter

is having a relationship to jess even though they are fighting about their coach Joe.

The following scene I shot in their living room, where Jules's mother is sitting in the couch with her husband consoling her, while she is crying over the fact that she thinks her daughter is lesbian. She also expresses in that same scene, how she is scared of her daughter being a social outcast and the main topic at the other mothers afternoon talks. She has a tendency to over dramatize small things, which is also shown in a scene towards the ending of the movie (01: 33: 12), where she is driving Jules to jess's sisters wedding. She is very frustrated and angry due to a recent incident at the soccer game where Jules and Jess kisses each other in joy of winning the championship finale.

This triggers her anxiety about her daughter, so when she turns up to the wedding and sees Jules kissing jess on the cheek, she storms out of the car saying " how could you be such a hypocrite?.....when I know you've been kissing my daughter in broad daylight?!" The shot goes from filming behind Jess and Jules with the mom in the background, to slowly move around the mom when she arrives, so now the whole Indian family is the background, and you really get a sense of location, atmosphere and that all attention is drawn towards the mom. The mom now notices that jess is wearing her stilettos, and a close up of her face, reveals her very shocked expression, where after she bursts out: " get your lesbian feet out of my shoes."

The whole setting of the scene, with the Indian family standing all around them watching, really makes the mother seem crazy and out of control,

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because no one understands what is going on. Hereafter the mom starts crying hysterically in the car, saying that she has always known that Jules is a lesbian. Then when Jules tells her that she is not a lesbian just because she wears trackies and plays sport, her mother immediately stops crying. The scene is shot from a normal angle that makes the viewer able to read both Jules's mom and Jules's face, so we can tell what they are feeling.

The social expectations of the adolescent girls are dictated by their gender, and if the normality of their social roles are broken the society starts prejudicing them. In the end of the movie (01: 24: 12) we see Joe running towards Jess in the airport. He tells her how he has been offered to coach the men's side, which he has dreamt of for a long time. However he turned down the offer, and chose to coach the women's side instead even though he is too embarrassed to tell his dad. In the same scene Jess is wearing a girly pink top and a purple skirt, which is very much in contrast to her usual tracksuit. This is followed by an intimate kiss, which shows how feminine Jess actually is, and how the homosexual prejudices have been shut down. This segment of the movie shows how Jess has overcome her family and social expectations to perceive her dreams. It also shows the victory of women, as Joe chooses to coach the women's side instead of the men's. This breaks the social expectations of the genders, creates hope for the audience and shows the transformation of the society during the movie.

In the film *mise en scene* is used effectively to create discourses relating to gender roles, social expectations and sexuality. The film clearly shows how breaking the norms can result in prejudice and how appearance really

matters in both social and cultural aspects. Even though the girls are not feminine or very conventional the ending is happy and as a audience we notice the transformation the characters have gone through during the movie, and how they each have learned to accept differences.