
THE AMBIVALENCE OF GENDER TRANSGRESSION IN *DANGAL* FILM (2016)

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze how the *Dangal* film displays gender transgression towards gender construction in the sport of wrestling carried out by the Phogat family. By focusing on scenes and dialogue in the *Dangal* film, this research is analyzed using film narratology which is elaborated on Judith Butler's ideas regarding gender performativity and Sandra Harding's ideas regarding the gender construction process. The results of this research reveal that in the *Dangal* film, there is gender transgression that is shown not only focused on the physical appearance dimension but also on the conceptual and symbolic dimensions of ideas. However, instead of presenting gender transgression as an act of transcending gender norms that discriminate against women, *Dangal* ambivalently opposes patriarchal hegemony by not embracing the femininity of the female characters, namely Geeta and Babita, which is carried out through acts of defeminization of their character development.

Keywords: *Gender transgression; Gender construction; Defeminization*

I. INTRODUCTION

Dangal (2016) is a biographical film that raises the issue of gender discrimination against women in the sport of wrestling in Haryana, North India. *Dangal* tells the story of the prohibition against women being able to play wrestling because of the gender construction in Indian culture that the sport of wrestling is attributed to the male body based on the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. This cultural reference is significant because, as Chowdhry (2015) states, oral traditions such as epics are a means of legitimizing hegemonic masculinity in the patriarchal structure of Indian society.

In *Dangal*, the problem of gender discrimination begins when Mahavir Singh Phogat, a former Indian wrestling athlete, hopes that his children can realize his unfulfilled dream of winning a wrestling gold medal for India. However, all four of his children were born as girls. This then made Mahavir feel disappointed and required Mahavir to bury his dreams because wrestling was considered a men's sport.

Furthermore, Mahavir is depicted as having a boring life, until in one scene, Mahavir finds a report that Geeta and Babita, who are Mahavir's first and second children, have beaten two boys who were teasing them black and blue. This incident then became a turning point in the storyline of *Dangal* which brought Mahavir to the conclusion that women have the same abilities as men, so Mahavir decided to train Geeta and Babita to become wrestlers.

The turning point scene brings *Dangal* to the complexity of the story through the development of the characters of Mahavir, Geeta, and Babita. Mahavir is shown trying to escape the gender norms of his patriarchal society by training his two daughters in wrestling. However, on the other hand, Mahavir's training appears to be ego gratification through his two daughters to fulfill his unattainable dreams. Meanwhile, Geeta and Babita are shown not only trying to break out of the gender norms of their society, but also fighting against their father's patriarchal domination.

Referring to Ansara and Quick (2016), the actions carried out by Mahavir, Geeta, and Babita were acts of gender transgression. The wrestling training and resistance carried out by each main character are perceived as actions that exceed the gender boundaries or norms that apply in their society.

According to Batra and Messier (2005), transgression acts aim to review various taboos that limit individual freedom in expressing themselves, including gender expression, so that gender transgression is not interpreted as a failure to maintain existing gender norms, but rather a contestation that aims to emphasize the absence of anything that is considered normal or abnormal. Thus, I argue that there is an interest in further exploring the *Dangal* film, not only to explore how the issue of gender discrimination is presented, but also to question how *Dangal* displays acts of gender transgression through the characters Mahavir, Geeta, and Babita in the film *Dangal*.

This exploration of gender transgression was carried out in order to obtain a more complete picture of the concept of gender. As expressed by Butler (1999), gender is not an essential characteristic, but rather a performativity that is carried out repetitively until it reaches a natural point. This was also emphasized by Harding (1993) that gender is constructed through three processes, namely symbolism, structuration, and individual gender. According to Harding, these three processes are related to each other, gender is symbolized through a dichotomous masculine-feminine metaphor which ultimately determines the structure of space and individual activities. This means that rather than being a constant and constant construction, gender should be understood as a social construction that continues to change.

In the context of depicting gender concepts, *Dangal* can be considered to have quite a strong influence in India. Mahajan (2017), a spokesperson for the Indian parliament, stated that the reason *Dangal* was made a must-watch film for members of the Indian parliament was to convey a message of women's empowerment which it was hoped could be implemented by members of parliament as lawmakers in making policies related to women's issues. This means that the *Dangal* has become a dominant discourse that is validated by those in power.

Dangal's success has become a must-watch film India is also inseparable from Aamir Khan's role as actor and producer of the *Dangal* film. The involvement of Aamir Khan as someone who is known to be committed to carrying out socio-cultural themes regarding the suffering of marginalized groups in India provides a clear ideology in the *Dangal* film. As Jhaveri (2016) revealed in his interview that Aamir Khan said that *Dangal* was made intentionally as a contribution from Aamir Khan Production to become a tool for women's empowerment in a patriarchal country. This is related to the social situation of Haryana which was recorded by The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 2016 as the Indian state that occupies the top position in crimes against women, such as rape, abortion and forced marriage. By looking at this reality, *Dangal* can be argued as a feminist film that seeks to challenge gender constructions that discriminate against women. Therefore, I focused this research on the problem of how gender construction and transgression in the *Dangal* film is displayed.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research carries out a narratological analysis of films which includes analysis of narrative elements and cinematic elements. Narrative elements relate to the

theme, characters, plot and story of the film, while cinematic elements include *mise en scène*, cinematography, editing and sound design.

In order to answer the research questions that have been formulated, this research begins by watching the *Dangal* film repeatedly in order to gain a deep understanding. Furthermore, using note-taking and screen capture techniques, data collection specifically focused on observing scenes and dialogue from the main characters, namely Mahavir, Geeta, and Babita, which presented the issue of gender transgression.

The data that has been obtained is then reduced and grouped based on identification that has been determined in accordance with the theoretical basis used as a data analysis tool. Data analysis continued by finding certain camera techniques and *mise en scène* as devices that became the operating sites for depicting construction and transgression in films. Referring to Pramaggiore and Wallis (2020) and Turner (1999), camera techniques and *mise en scène* are not only used to create the world in the film, but also to show character development, display certain political motifs and attitudes. Therefore, the analysis is elaborated with the concept of gender performativity from Butler (1999) and the gender construction process from Harding (1993) in order to obtain a comprehensive analysis and draw conclusions between the connectedness of the data and the references used.

III. DISCUSSION AND FINDING

Gender Construction and Transgression

Dangal (2016) begins the story by introducing Mahavir's background and the construction of gender in wrestling in India as a men's sport. This is shown in the *mise en scène* of the scene from minutes 00:06:00 to

00:07:58. In this scene, there are three elements such as muscular male body poses, lifting weights, and fist fighting which continuously appear.



Figure 1. Opening Scene of the Film
(Source: *Dangal*, Netflix 2023, Timecode: 00:06:37)

These three elements show the stereotypical image that wrestling is a sport that involves a lot of physical contact and strength that only men possess. Apart from that, the use of slow-motion camera techniques in displaying these three elements provides a dramatic effect and slows down time, thereby providing a longer spotlight on the details of the men's body movements when wrestling.

Dangal also combines the film's opening credit scene with non-diegetic sound elements, namely the film's soundtrack entitled "*Dangal*" which in Indonesian means "Wrestling". Referring to Pramaggiore and Wallis (2020), this combination of sound elements not only fills the gaps in a scene, but also builds the complexity of the story through the lyrics in the musical presentation.

Lyrics like "*Re latth gaad doon, re jaada paad doon, maa ke pet se marghat tak hai, teri kahaani pag pag pyaare, Dangal Dangal hoye Dangal Dangal hoye*" which means "I will still be here, giving you my best shot, since you were born until your death, every step of your life you always wrestle, wrestle, wrestle, wrestle" (translation by Netflix 2023) explains that wrestling is not just a sport, but has become a way of life for Indian

people, especially men in Haryana in the *Dangal* film (2016).

This is an obstacle that Geeta and Babita have to face in wrestling. The problem of wrestling is not only a gender issue, but also a norm that has been established previously. Thus, through the combination of slow-motion techniques and the film soundtrack in the opening credit scene of this film, it shows the emphasis on the meaning that wrestling is a male gender sport.

The depiction of gender construction in wrestling as a men's sport is also shown in the dialogue at minute 00:19:22. Mahavir's wife Daya Kaur said "Wrestling is only for men, I have never seen a woman wrestle, what do the people say? village later." Next, in the scene minute 00:48:50 The wrestling competition committee laughed at Mahavir and said "You want to make women wrestle? When I hold a cooking competition, then you can register Miss Geeta, this is a wrestling competition!"

Based on these two scenes, the dialogue that appears shows the stereotype that women do not have the ability to wrestle. The words "women" and "cooking competition" indicate the separation of male and female gender constructions which results in a feminine-masculine dichotomy in the narrative of the *Dangal* film.

The feminine-masculine dichotomy in question is the identification of a characteristic between women and men. Referring to Harding (1993), this identification is called gender symbolism which is carried out by using gender metaphors which actually have nothing to do with gender differences. Gender symbolism is displayed in *Dangal* through the masculine-feminine binary opposition. Men are identified with being brave and strong, while women are identified with being weak, fragile and helpless.

Apart from gender symbolism, *Dangal* also displays a gender structure that separates the activities of men and

women. This gender structure is displayed in the dialogue "How funny is Mahavir, women in the wrestling arena? Do you want me to sin?" in the scene minutes 00:25:41-00:25:50. The dialogue seeks to map the spatial boundaries between men and women. The words "women" and "sinful" indicate that *the akhada* or wrestling arena is a sacred space intended only for men and forbidden for women.



Figure 2. Scene of Mahavir asking permission
(Source: *Dangal*, Netflix 2023, Timecode: 00:25:41)

This boundary mapping is not only presented in narrative form, but also presented in cinematic form. In picture 2, *Dangal* shows the scene of Mahavir asking permission for Geeta and Babita to practice in the akhada using a perceptual point of view. Referring to Chatman (1978), perceptual point of view provides an explanation of the character's point of view, namely Geeta and Babita's point of view. Through this point of view, the audience can see the distance that separates Geeta and Babita from the object of their view. This means that this point of view shows Geeta and Babita's position as being outside the akhada. Moreover, the long shot camera shot emphasizes the presence of *mise en scène* elements, such as a fence and a group of men, which indicates the boundary or barrier between Geeta and Babita and the akhada as a male gendered space.

The depiction of boundaries in the *Dangal* film (2016) becomes an exposition of the positionality of the sport of wrestling in the film. This exposition is intended

as an obstacle for the Phogat family; Mahavir, Geeta, and Babita to go beyond the gender norms that have prevailed both in their society and in the sport of wrestling in the form of acts of gender transgression.

The gender transgression shown in the *Dangal* film appears as resistance to gender construction in wrestling. Gender transgression is shown through dialogue in the scene at minute 00:18:51 as follows:

Mahavir: "All this time, I desperately wanted a son so that one day he could win a gold medal for his country. But I forgot, gold is still gold. Whether a man wins it or a woman. From now on Geeta and Babita don't need to take care of household matters, there is wrestling in them. From now on they will only wrestle."

Mahavir's decision to train Geeta and Babita to become wrestlers was motivated by the incident where Geeta and Babita beat two boys who mocked them until they blacked out. Through this incident, Mahavir realized that women have the same potential as men, especially in physical and mental abilities which have nothing to do with gender differences.

Mahavir's decision can be argued as an act of gender transgression through rethinking the understanding of the concept of gender. In this context, Mahavir goes beyond existing gender norms by understanding that the gender symbolism identified with women is the result of social construction. Therefore, traits that are seen as masculine or feminine, as well as roles that are considered male roles such as being a wrestler, are not natural roles that cannot be changed.

With a new understanding of the concept of gender, *Dangal* also displays gender transgression through the physical appearance of Geeta and Babita. In the 00:22:45 minute scene, a static camera shows the entrapment of a trader who feels strange when he sees the appearance of

Geeta and Babita wearing t-shirts and shorts while jogging through the market.



Figure 3. Scene of Geeta and Babita jogging through the market.

(Source: *Dangal*, Netflix 2019, Timecode : 00:22:45)

Through the *mise en scène* elements of this scene, Geeta and Babita's use of t-shirts and shorts is considered an act of going beyond the prevailing norms. In the traditional Indian context, women are regulated to wear *sarees* or *salwar kameez* which are considered more "proper and modest" for women. However, the *Dangal* film presents the use of t-shirts and shorts as not only trying to talk about appropriate and polite issues, but also talking about the function and effectiveness of moves in wrestling.

In addition, t-shirts and shorts are important aspects that symbolize gender transgression against traditional Indian norms. *Dangal* shows that Geeta and Babita are not hindered by the expectations of existing norms. They are free to move and embrace the freedom of being a wrestler. This is an important statement regarding the emphasis on the idea of gender transgression presented by the *Dangal* film to try to escape from social pressure that forces one to conform to existing norms.

Efforts to transcend the pressure to conform to existing norms are also shown through Geeta and Babita's haircuts. They are both shown with short hair like men. This can be seen in Mahavir's younger brother's dialogue in the scene at minute 00:38:21, as follows.

Mahavir's Brother: "Telling them to wrestle is understandable, but it's too cruel to shave their heads! After all, they are women."

Mahavir's sister's dialogue can be argued as a strong statement in transcending the expected feminine image. The sentence "after all, they are women" shows the prevailing gender construction that women are told to have long hair. By displaying a short haircut, *Dangal* underscores that freedom of expression is more important than mere conformity to an appearance that conforms to existing norms.



Figure 4. Geeta and Babita with short hair
(Source: *Dangal*, Netflix 2023, *Timecode*: 00:39:30)

Gender transgression efforts in *Dangal* are not only presented in the form of physical appearance, but also in symbolic form through direct resistance. In the scene minute 01:23:43 *Dangal* shows a wrestling match between Geeta and Mahavir.



Figure 5. Geeta's fight against Mahavir
(Source: *Dangal*, Netflix 2023, *Timecode*: 01:25:52)

This fight was won by Geeta. *Dangal* shows Mahavir's helplessness with gasping breaths through static camera techniques. The fight not only displays the narrative that women can beat men in wrestling, but also symbolizes resistance to patriarchal hegemony which is represented through Mahavir's dominance as a father.

Referring to the *Manawa Dharmacastra* book in the fifth chapter, namely *Atha Pancamo'dhyayah* sloka 148 and 19 states that "In childhood, a woman must submit to her father, in her youth a woman must submit to her husband, and in childhood "When her husband dies, the woman must submit to her son" (Pudja and Sudharta, 1977). In other words, throughout life women have always been dominated by men. Therefore, I argue that Geeta's fight against Mahavir reflects women's resistance or awakening to the male domination that has so far controlled their lives.

Defeminization and Marketplace Masculinity

Dangal raises the issue of gender transgression in the sport of wrestling as the main theme of the narrative. This is related to the claim that *Dangal* is a film that has a feminist spirit. Acts of gender transgression are continuously shown throughout the film. However, in this

subchapter I found something that contradicts what the *Dangal film echoes*.

In the scene at 00:40:20 minutes, the middle shot camera shot shows Geeta and Babita laughing in front of the mirror while adjusting the position of the earrings they are wearing until they are shocked by Daya Kaur, in the following dialogue:

Daya Kaur: Hey, you guys want to go to Sunita's wedding?

Geeta: I... mother. (Shows a scared face)

Daya Kaur: *You want to embarrass me?*

(While dressing Geeta and Babita in jewellery).
Finally my daughter looked like a girl.

Geeta: Don't tell dad, Mom. Daya Kaur: Go home before 8 o'clock.

The sentence "don't tell father" shows the excessive fear felt by Geeta and Babita. This was caused by the actions they took, namely dressing up like women, as Daya Kaur said that they looked like women when they dressed up.

However, the actions taken by Geeta and Babita to "become" women by dressing up are narrated as breaking the rules. This is built through the cinematographic presentation of the *Dangal* film, as follows:



Figure 6. Geeta Asks Her Mother Not to Tell Mahavir
(Source: Netflix Screenshots 2023)

In the 00:40:20 minute scene, *Dangal* uses low-key lighting. Referring to Pramaggiore and Wallis (2020), low-key lighting gives a dim feel which creates a

mysterious impression and indicates that something is being hidden, especially by Geeta and Babita.

Apart from that, the conversation scene between Geeta, Babita, and Daya Kaur is also combined with the use of the whip pan camera movement technique which gives the visual effect of changing points of view when the dialogue is spoken by Geeta and Daya, thus creating visual dynamism that builds emotional intensity like in a police interrogation scene. and criminals. Thus, the use of light effects and camera techniques in the 00:40:20 minute scene can be argued as a way for the *Dangal film* to provide exposition on the rules that Mahavir set for Geeta and Babita not to "become" women.

This proves to be a problem as shown in the 00:43:25 minute scene. *Dangal* shows a scene where Mahavir slaps Omkar at Sunita's wedding party as an outlet for his anger at Geeta and Babita. This means that Mahavir did not want the feminine qualities of Geeta and Babita.

Mahavir's attitude of not wanting feminine traits in Geeta and Babita, In fact, it has been shown in the early scenes that Mahavir does wrestling training on Geeta and Babita.

In the scene at 00:22:17 minutes, Babita says "Daddy, it's difficult to run in these clothes". In this sentence, at first glance, it means that Babita feels hampered if she runs wearing a *shalwar kameez*. However, the context of Babita's words was to ask Mahavir to stop his training and not to ask Mahavir to replace their clothes with t-shirts and shorts which in fact were interpreted as men's clothes.

Furthermore, the act of defeminization is also carried out in the scene at minute 00:36:23. *Dangal* shows the scene of Mahavir ordering the barber to cut Geeta and Babita's hair by displaying Mahavir's authority through

high angle camera shots. thus providing a clear picture of the interactions between the characters and the setting where the scene takes place. *The mise en scène* of this scene shows the position of Mahavir standing alone with his arms crossed in front of his chest, thus emphasizing that Mahavir has authority over the people in front of him. This is also emphasized through the dialogue between Mahavir and Geeta, as follows:

Geeta: Dad, please. We don't take issue with it. Actually, we enjoyed it. Please don't shave our hair. We will obey your words. Mom, speak. Look what Dad did. Please don't shave our hair, Dad. We will obey you. But please don't shave our hair. Please, Dad.

Mahavir: Shave.

Barber: Shave?

Mahavir: Can you grow it? Then shave! (Scene minute 00:36:23)

Based on this dialogue, Mahavir did not respond to Geeta's request at all. Mahavir is shown freely deciding whatever he wants and making sure everything goes according to his wishes. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to argue that this scene is a scene that shows the representation of traditional Indian men, husbands and fathers through the very authoritarian character of Mahavir.

Mahavir is shown as still upholding patriarchal values as stated in the Law of Manu, the fifth book of *Atha Pancamo'dhyayah* verse 154, which states that "even if a husband is devoid of virtue, or seeks external pleasure, or does not have good qualities, but a husband must be respected as a god by his faithful wife."

The authoritarian nature and defeminization actions carried out by Mahavir towards Geeta and Babita show that Mahavir considers Geeta and Babita not to be subjects who have their own agency, but rather as individuals who are forced to obey and are continuously produced by

Mahavir's patriarchal domination. Referring to Butler (1999), Mahavir's defeminization can be said to be an act of reconstructing Geeta and Babita's gender through acts of performativity. However, Geeta and Babita's gender performativity is problematic if it is considered an attempt to carry out gender transgressive acts against gender constructions that discriminate against women. Behind the gender transgression displayed by Geeta and Babita, in fact there is an obligation to fulfill the wishes of the patriarchal imagination.

In this case, the obligation to fulfill the wishes of the patriarchal imagination can be seen in the scene at minute 01:20:30. Geeta, who at that time was an adult and had become a national champion, started living her new life by watching TV, shopping, going to the cinema, and even growing her hair long.

The new life that Geeta is living is of course contrary to what Mahavir has implemented, especially regarding growing her hair long. However, instead of *Dangal* embracing Geeta's feminine side, *Dangal* responds to Geeta's transgressive attitude by punishing her.

In the scene at minute 01:30:02, the punishment meted out to Geeta has a significant impact. Through parallel editing techniques, *Dangal* displays two events in different places, namely Geeta's match at the World Championship, Sydney and Babita's competition at the National Games, New Delhi at the same time.

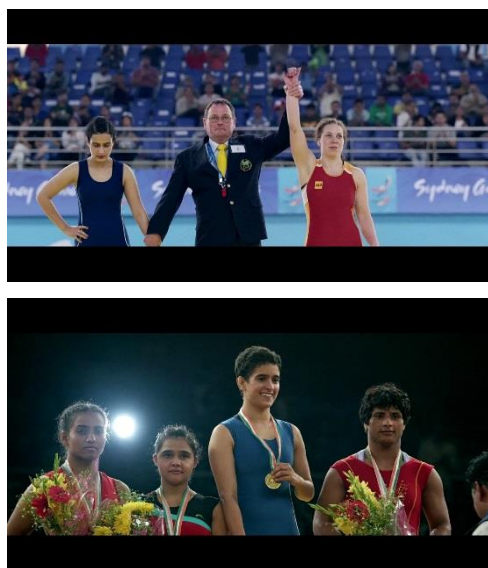


Figure 7. Comparison of Geeta and Babita's match
Source: Netflix Screenshots 2023

In using this parallel editing technique, *Dangal* tries to emphasize that Geeta's defeat was caused by Geeta's transgressive attitude towards Mahavir, namely growing her hair long and Babita's victory because Babita remained obedient to Mahavir by not growing her hair long.

This is in sharp contrast to what is shown in the scene at minute 01:41:27. Geeta, who is said to have realized her mistake and apologized to Mahavir, decided to shave her hair short as Mahavir wanted. In this scene, *Dangal* builds a narrative that Geeta's action of shaving her hair short is the right action and marks a new chapter in Geeta's life in achieving her victory.

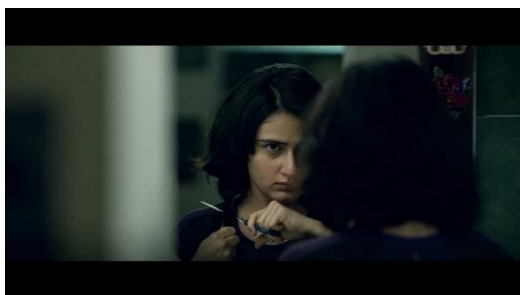


Figure 8. Geeta shaves her hair short
Source: Netflix Screenshots (2023)

Geeta's victory, of course, cannot be separated from Mahavir's role. Mahavir is said to have helped with Geeta's training preparations for the 2010 Commonwealth Games Olympics. However, the role of Mahavir played by *Dangal* actually directs the film's narrative to the concept of marketplace masculinity as mentioned by Kimmel (2004), that marketplace masculinity is synonymous with aggressive attitudes, competition and anxiety.

This can be seen in the scene at minute 01:11:27, namely the scene where Geeta asks permission to attend the training camp at the NSA (National Sport Academy). In this scene, *Dangal* displays the anxiety shown by Mahavir through its cinematographic presentation as follows:



Figure 9. Changes in Camera Technique Medium Shot – Medium Close Up
Source: Netflix Screenshots (2023)

In the scene at 01:11:27 minutes, *Dangal* uses a medium shot camera shot to show a distance that looks far enough so that it doesn't show too much emphasis or details of certain expressions. However, after Geeta

answered and explained the meaning of her words with the dialogue "I have to go too, Dad. From now on I have to train there. Under the tutelage of the national coach , there was a change in the camera shot used by *Dangal* from a medium shot to a medium close up combined with a push in camera technique so as to give a pulling effect to get closer to Mahavir's face and pay attention to the change in Mahavir's expression from normal to worried (Figure 9) .

The change in Mahavir's expression can be argued that Mahavir is actually afraid of losing control over Geeta because Geeta will be under the control of the National coach and not Mahavir. Thus, in the development of the story, Geeta and Babita are only used as objects for the accumulation of power and social status as markers of Mahavir's masculinity.

The accumulation of power is also shown in the scene at minute 01:50:04. In this scene, Mahavir and coach Geeta are involved in an argument and each of them shows their aggressiveness, as follows:

Coach Geeta: You have made it mistake by wasting time. At 55 kilos, Geeta wouldn't even be selected for fights at 51 kilos he can win a medal.

Mahavir: He should have won a medal from the start, at 55 kilos. You are the cause!

Coach Geeta: What did I do wrong?

Geeta's natural game is attack. With more priority technique, you've changed the game. It's like ordering tigers to fight like elephants. You will be abandoned by the tiger or elephant.

Coach Geeta: So, why don't you tell me how to fight for a medal!

Mahavir: With your permission, I will show you right now. (Scene minute 01:50:04).

In this scene, Mahavir and coach Geeta's dialogue is presented intensely. The two of them compete for legitimacy over who is the best at training Geeta. The sentence "So, why don't you tell me how to fight to win a medal" uttered by coach Geeta was intended to challenge

Mahavir to wrestle directly with him. The two are shown facing each other and preparing to start the fight. However, someone from the federation officials called and ordered Mahavir, Geeta, Babita and the coach to go back into the room so that the fight did not take place.



Figure 10. Mahavir and Coach Geeta Preparing to Fight.
Source: Netflix Screenshots (2023)

In the 01:50:04 minute scene, it can be argued that *Dangal* displays aggressiveness which is shown through the characters Mahavir and coach Geeta. The competition between the two is not just about whose technique is best for training Geeta and Baita, but to prove which of them is the most "man".

The peak of Mahavir and coach Geeta's rivalry is shown in the scene at minute 02:19:07 which shows the scene of Geeta's final match against Angelina, a wrestler from Australia. In this scene, Mahavir is shown being locked up in a warehouse by coach Geeta's men. Coach Geeta's actions were the result of the competition between them. Coach Geeta decided to lock Mahavir up with the aim of eliminating Mahavir's frequent interventions during the match.

However, this action does not simply eliminate the intervention carried out by Mahavir. *Dangal* presents Mahavir's intervention through other means with presents Mahavir's instructions through Geeta's memories and inner voice.

In the scene at minute 02:22:02, Geeta is shown winning the first round with points 5-1. However, she seemed to have lost confidence because she knew that Mahavir was not present to watch her match, so in the second round Geeta lost to Angelina with 4-6 points, and in the third round Geeta was left behind with 0-3 points.

At the moment of despair experienced by Geeta, she then remembers what was taught through non-diegetic sound elements in the scene at minute 02:28:8. "To score 5 points is difficult, but it can be done. You have to play with your opponent's mind. Deceptive step, but make another step."

These non-diegetic sound elements are presented dramatically using echoing voice overs which are also combined with slow motion camera techniques. These two cinematic elements complement each other in emphasizing that Mahvir's *non-diegetic sound elements* have an important role in Geeta's victory. Mahavir's instructions were shown to be able to restore Geeta's self-confidence in fighting Angelina so that Geeta was able to score the hard-to-get 5 points with one kick.



Figure 11. Geeta's 5-Point Slam
Source: Netflix Screenshots (2023)

In the scene minute 02:28:48 This can be argued as a scene that shows the act of defeminization presented in the film *Dangal*. Geeta with her short hair won the match against Angelina. This is in sharp contrast to the scene at minute 01:32:19 which shows Geeta's defeat when she has

long hair against Angelina. This means that through these two scenes *Dangal* emphasizes that short hair like a man gives Geeta strength and even victory. This means that *Dangal* prefers Geeta and Babita to have masculine qualities rather than maintaining feminine characteristics.

IV. CONCLUSION

The *Dangal* film presents a paradox in carrying out gender transgression. Instead of going beyond gender norms that discriminate against women by presenting gender transgression through conceptual, physical and even symbolic dimensions, *Dangal* emphasizes the defeminization of the characters Geeta and Babita through Mahavir's ego in realizing gender equality. The female characters Geeta and Babita are shaped in such a way to look like men. Thus, *Dangal* does not speak about Geeta and Babita's individual gender freedom as women. *Dangal* further emphasizes that Geeta and Babita's femininity is an obstacle to Mahavir's goal of realizing his dream of getting a gold medal in wrestling for India. This means that *Dangal* ambivalently fights and perpetuates the male gender construct by not embracing the femininity of the female characters Geeta and Babita. *Dangal* defines the development of Geeta and Babita's characters.

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