



**Glocalization of Place, Body and Narrative in *Dangal*: Analyzing the Blockbuster
Phenomenon in Popular Hindi Cinema
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Abstract:

The study of popular culture has deservedly gained predominance in the domain of cultural studies. There is a snowballing recognition of the force that popular culture exerts through popular literature, cinema, and social media on a majority of people around the world, their day-to-day lives, opinions, and decision making processes, while also being an indicator of the same. Like all cultural forces, popular culture is dynamic and forever evolving. This change can often be recorded in the change in popular art forms like cinema and literature. In the domain of popular Hindi cinema, such a change can be noticed in the change in the composition of the 'blockbuster' film in the 21st century.ⁱ For a film to be qualified as a 'blockbuster', the conditions of being 'popular' and 'financially successful' have to be met. The blockbuster film in Indian cinema has been discussed at length by academicians as a chiefly reductive and formulaic film concoction, often being specifically attributed to its epicenter in the Bollywood film industry situated in Mumbai.ⁱⁱ Yet, in the 21st century Indian cinema, a new phenomenon is raising its head across the horizon, making its thunderous presence felt on the blockbuster charts. This phenomenon which plays out both globally and locally, and socio-critically and commercially, is born of a hybridity that has changed the very chemistry of what comprises 'Popular Indian cinema in the 21st century'. This article aims to study this 'blockbuster phenomenon' through a detailed analysis of the film *Dangal*(2016), a film that achieved record-breaking commercial success and critical appreciation, both locally and globally, while balancing popular entertainment with socio-critical responsibility, thereby retaining a unique sense of hybridism.

Keywords: popular Hindi cinema, parallel cinema, hybrid aesthetics, new blockbuster phenomenon, Glocalization, rootedness, Campbellian monomyth



Introduction

Academicians and film critics studying Hindi Cinema, often tend to draw a clear cut division between the popular Hindi cinema and parallel cinema. The popular Hindi cinema is comprised predominantly of the super hit blockbusters which are usually typical ‘masala’ films or films that create fantastical and spectacular melodrama.ⁱⁱⁱ Certain cliché elements like reliance on the stardom of celebrities, glamour, music, item-songs, fantasy, and exhibitionism have made these popular films notorious amongst the critics even though the populace pays good money to watch them. On the other end, relegated to the margins by majority of the population, yet praised by critics and academicians alike, parallel cinema struggles to stay afloat with its responsible tendency towards socio-historical realities and creative experimentalism. However, as stated by Rachel Dwyer in “Real and Imagined Audiences: ‘Lagaan’ and the Hindi Film after the 1990s”, this division is getting blurred with time:

The cinema audience in India has always been segmented [...] and the producers and the critics take this into consideration in their predictions of box office potential. One absolute divide in Indian cinema is between the ‘art’ and the ‘commercial’ (mainstream) cinema (although recent years suggest there may be a slight blurring of boundaries), another is the market for non-Hindi cinema, which tend to be only in the area where the language is dominant. (Dwyer, 178)

Amit Rai has reaffirmed the breaking of the stark boundaries of classification in *Untimely Bollywood* through a process of incorporation and mixing of elements:

If genre distinctions are breaking down between the stark social realism of art cinema and the pure fantasy of the commercial film (and this genre binary was never as rigorous a distinction as it might appear in hindsight), we can begin to distinguish different combinations of form, emergent modes of address, and the production of qualitatively novel affects that are all entailed in this shift. In one sense, commercial cinema-in its narratives, its visual style, and even its choreography- has incorporated



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aspects of the former parallel cinema, which has opened the possibility for new audience segmentations. (*Untimely Bollywood*, 60)

The new blockbuster phenomenon that will be discussed here exists in a state of hybridity, as an amalgamation of various features that seem to include familiar characteristics that the audience has come to expect from cinema in the name of paid entertainment and introduces new elements which are imbued with creative excellence and conscientious socio-critical prowess. The new blockbuster phenomenon is born out of a set of films that have succeeded commercially while integrating entertainment with artistic responsibility. In a way, these blockbusters integrate elements from both popular cinema and parallel cinema. Moreover, in a more global context, these films have been a huge success, forever changing the distribution patterns and cinematic dynamics of Indian cinema.

As a main proponent of this phenomenon, Aamir Khan, in various capacities, has been a focal point in these blockbusters. He has acted in many of these films like *Lagaan*(2001), *3 idiots* (2009), *PK* (2014) and *Dangal*(2016), all of which seem to be films with a sociological cause that gained immense popularity and commercial success in India and across the globe. In the present context, *Dangal* makes up for an extremely viable text to understand the working of the new blockbuster phenomenon, at the heart of which lies the presence of ‘glocalization’.

Glocalization, as a concept, has been applied to study of popular Hindi Cinema for quite some time now. Blatter defines glocalization as the “simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political, and economic systems” (Blatter, *Encyclopedia Britannica*). A combination of global and local, this term is becoming increasingly relevant in analyzing the production and consumption processes of films. Tomlinson understands glocalization as “the oppositional interplay between local involvements and globalizing tendencies” (qtd. in Schafer 47). This interaction between the processes of globalization and the insistence on portraying an honest ‘local’ culture becomes essential in understanding the new blockbuster phenomenon which has revolutionized the popular Hindi cinema.

The term ‘glocalization’ fuses ‘globalization’ with ‘localization’. The new blockbuster is deeply rooted in the local aesthetics while meeting the criterion of universal



relevance that enhances its global appeal. This is evident in films like *Lagaan*, which, while situating itself on Indian soil in terms of its location, music, casting and costumes, encompasses universal narrative motifs like a hero fighting for his kingdom/ country, struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed, nationalism, colonialism and competitive sports. Similarly, *3 Idiots*, by evoking the space of an educational institution in India, is able to touch upon depression among students and youth, which found relevance across Asia. *PK* raised some very big questions related to religion and societal rituals, while predominantly satirizing certain Indian systems. *Secret Superstar* and several films starring Ayushman Khurana along with a handful of recently released films have roped in this new trend and have found moderate success. However, *Dangal*, as a prime example of this new blockbuster phenomenon, makes up for a sustainable subject to dissect the workings of the new blockbuster phenomenon that makes use of ‘glocal’ aesthetics.

Dangal, released in 2016, is a 161 minutes of sports biopic film directed by Nitesh Tiwari. The film depicts the struggle of Mahavir Singh Phogat who trains his daughters, Geeta and Babita, to be wrestling champions. Having amassed over 2000 crores on box office, *Dangal* is the highest earning film of Bollywood. Though a blockbuster itself, it breaks away heavily from the blockbuster formula of its times, while incorporating the majority of essential blockbuster elements. *Dangal* earned upwards of 1200 crore from China alone and has been hailed for the ‘rootedness’ of its represented locus. To create a globally appreciated spectacle while remaining faithful to its rural representation to an acceptable degree is no easy job for any project. After the addition of *Dangal* in a series of blockbuster hits Aamir Khan has appeared in, it becomes a ponderous point as to what exactly creates this massive phenomenon – both in terms of revenue/economics and aesthetics/cultural zeitgeist.

For the present study, the article shall closely investigate how *Dangal* is aptly universalized and faithfully localized by examining the representation of place, body and narrative to elucidate the exact aesthetic decisions at work behind the scenes of the ‘glocal’ impact that the film has made. Obviously, the film’s production, distribution, and promotions have played a huge role in its success, but for the present context, the study is limited to the aesthetics inherent in the film itself.



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Place

Place in cinema can come to connote the background or setting of the narrative, or denote the location where the film is shot, in addition to creating a ‘space’ which is often deeply intertwined with the emotional and psychological evocation brought forth by the film as a text. The element of ‘place’ becomes vital for it is the conditioning soil on which the plot and the characters sprout and unfurl organically. Hence, to understand the manifestation of glocalization in the film, studying the place becomes very important.

Most of the blockbusters that fall outside the domain of the new blockbuster phenomenon create a different ‘glocal’ effect by their effort to romanticize ‘place’ which often makes the plot and the characters themselves, fantastic and hence, unbelievable. Hence, often the setting of those films are foreign locales to provide aesthetic appeasement to the audience, in exchange for reducing the rootedness of the film. However, in the new blockbuster, the settings and the locations are well researched and authentic, yet with a difference. These films are able to salvage both believability and aesthetic appeal.

In the beginning, *Dangal* is set in Balali, a village in the CharkhiDadri district of Haryana State, India. In the film, place works on various levels within the text. Though *Dangal* follows realism to a certain degree, it sustains a complimenting color palette that gives the film its aesthetic appeal. Hence the film comes across as being quite at variance with the brand of realism that non-cinematic documentary footage might present. Moreover, there are a range of places that the film evokes. SatyajitPande, the cinematographer of *Dangal*, stated:

The majority of the film was shot using natural light in order to make it look as raw and real as possible. The color palette was derived from the story setting and milieu. The film starts in a small village in Haryana in the 80s and ends at the Commonwealth Games Delhi in 2010- that’s a fairly large and intriguing canvas. For the first part of the story set in a village, a few factors were a given- like the men wearing white or various shades of it- while the colors came from the dresses of the women. [...] The grade was always concentrated towards creating a realistic, earthy feel while keeping the action and the characters foregrounded. (*Business Standard*)



While providing the 'earthy' palette to the film, place also gives a rural and socio-cultural coloring to the character and the narrative. Rural realism born of the local place is retained to a certain extent in terms of costumes and language, yet, a more systematic organization of color palette and casting brings aesthetic beautification and rootedness of the narrative simultaneously. The dialogues and language that bring out the authentic rural flavor of 'place', yet are laced with *hindification* and humor, alongside rousing songs like 'Dangal' (theme song), 'Bapu', and 'Dhakad', which popularized Haryanvi language and brought it to the fold of popular culture.

Though the focus initially is on Haryana and the rural climate, the fact that the characters stand on Indian soil is always there in the background due to the nationalistic theme that runs through the film. The superstitions that prevail in the rural community which further strengthen and facilitate certain exploitative structure of power, are presented in the film as organically a part of the setup. For instance, the entire community comes to reinforce Phogat's need for a male child by suggesting various ridiculous strategies. Yet even though the scenes in the film depict a predominantly agrarian backdrop and setting, the 'peasant' dimension of lifestyle does not take the center stage. Fowler clarifies this argument best:

Whereas *rural*, *pastoral*, and *agrarian* all describe primarily the kind of landscape and way of life (including livelihood, customs, and cultural/religious beliefs) that are tied to and derive from the land, the term *peasant* has economic and cultural associations that are not always applicable to all the films under examination in this collection. (Fowler, 4-5)

In *Dangal*, Mahavir Singh Phogat clears up a patch of ground in the fields for his daughters to wrestle on. This instance points towards the agrarian setup and background, without focusing on Phogat's dependence on an agrarian income. This imbues the film with a 'glocal' effect as 'place' in the film stays local by being essentially rural and Indian, without being too specifically and obscurely integrated to an agrarian household's working and setup.



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Rather, while being situated in the peculiar experience of living in rural Haryana, it creates a bigger discourse of nationalism, feminism, family and sports that stays relevant globally.

The space where wrestling takes place influences the character's growth in various ways. Earlier in the film, Phogat visits other wrestlers playing at a wrestling 'akharha'. Geeta and Babita learn wrestling on the soil of the cleared field signifying a homelier start. To compete, Geeta is trained on the rooftop of the house, using beddings to create a firmer wrestling ground. When Geeta makes the transition from rural to the urban setting, she begins to practice on a more regimental basis that is not attuned with her specific style of fighting. In a formal space, Geeta loses her power because of being distant from her traditions. Even though she is trained by her coach Pramod Kadam at the National Sports Academy in Patiala in more technically developed settings and formalistic methods, she starts losing her ground and essence. The fight that takes place in the same spot in the fields in Balali later is significant. Even though, Mahavir loses the fight, Geeta feels a sense of unease and discontent. The direct contact with earth is significant here. The rural sentiment and identity as a story of origin and tradition which is so central to India's nationalistic discourse, is evoked throughout the film. This, in turn, becomes a part of a movement from 'rural' to 'urban' and then back to 'rural' which lies at the heart of many films globally. Both 'urban' and 'rural' have their own discourse and identity. As Fowler states, "[...] whereas the urban milieu defines 'the national' in terms of technology, progress, and forward development, the rural milieu provides its own definition, via its depiction of traditional folkways and mores and its evocation of continuity despite the march of time and change" (Fowler 2). The local journey back to Balali becomes a mental and emotional journey that takes her back to her traditional roots and to the benevolent patriarch of the house, her father. This makes the film globally relevant.

In terms of location, *Dangal* was shot at Ludhiana but was given a Haryanvi touch. Jaswinder Singh Babbu, sarpanch of Gujjarwal village stated that "Old homes in the village are being renovated and even shopkeepers in streets where shooting will take place are being paid by the team. They have given contract of civil works and carpenter works to our villagers" (Goyal *Indianexpress.com*). An old home that had been locked for years in the streets of Gujjarwal village was depicted as Mahavir Phogat's home. Hence, though the film



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aims to provide authenticity of place, yet it is done mostly on an aesthetic level rather than literally.

In *Dangal*, the land is indistinguishably connected with the nation. Yet, often the physical space is not the same as the emotional and psychological space. For instance, the presence of 'India' during the depiction of the Commonwealth Games, Delhi is not as much as a physical place, but rather is evoked by the nationalistic ardor born of the sound of the Indian national anthem and the tricolors of the national flag being hoisted up as a mark of respect to the winner nation. Mahavir Phogat is shown to be locked in a closet and yet, it is the sound of the national anthem that seeps through the door to him, which transports him for it signifies that Geeta has won the fight for her country. Hence, *Dangal*, in its evocation of 'place' becomes a form of a bigger narrative, the unlived colonial fantasy of actually defeating the colonizer – the West/ Other/ 'bahir', reacting to the collective post-memory of the pre-independence oppression, while also being a part of the Campbellian monomyth of defeating the strong enemy.^{iv} Hence, place which stays culturally local as well as discursively global gives way to glocalization in *Dangal*.

Body

Body in cinema can be understood as the 'visual' body which in turn can either evoke the celebrity, the actor, or the character. Though the audience is able to differentiate between the actor and the character at all times, often, due to some of the actors' celebrity status, the audience is unable to 'un-see' their cumulative celebrityhood even within a specific film text. Hence, often, certain films tend to make use of 'celebrityhood' during the casting process to give certain typical roles to certain celebrities. Yet, in other films, this very powerful status of the 'celebrity' can be an issue. This can be seen at play in Ali Abbas Zafar's *Sultan* (2016) in which Salman Khan's celebrity status ruptures the rootedness of the text. In *Dangal*, on the other hand, Aamir Khan's celebrity status, though staying potent, gives way to a rigorously authentic designing of the cinematic body of the character of Mahavir Singh Phogat.

While working for *Dangal*, Aamir Khan gained twenty-five kilograms in six months, eventually shedding it all again, to provide authenticity to his 'character' as Mahavir Singh Phogat. Khan stated in an interview: "You know, your breathing changes when you put on



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weight. Your whole body language changes, the way you walk, the way you sit, the way you try to stand up" (*Times of India*). In the film, the body of the character is an integral part of cinema's visual language. Hence, as we see Aamir Khan as Phogat, both as his younger and older version, the realism evoked through the body externally as a visual language has an impact on the sketching of the character itself. Though the Indian audience stays aware that they are watching an Aamir Khan performance, it requires a degree of oblivion towards the 'celebrity' for the authenticity of the character to set in. Moreover, for the film to succeed globally, authentic visual language is a must. What a global audience sees first and foremost is the character and the authenticity of the visual language born out of the narrative. The body must become 'glocally' relevant to be a glocal success.

The female body in *Dangal* retains the 'glocal' element as well. Sakshi Tanwar is casted as Daya Kaur, Phogat's wife. She wears plain clothing and keeps her head covered with her dupatta. The braided hair with a mid-partition along with salwar suit and chunni donned by Geeta and Babita lends authenticity to the depiction of young girls from a Haryanvi household in Balali. Moreover, their utilitarian shift from wearing women's clothing to men's clothes to do wrestling, becomes a major feminist statement in itself. The costume designers Manoshi Nath and Rushi Sharma were replaced by Maxima Basu to design the costumes for *Dangal*. Maxima Basu speaks about her efforts for the costumes to become unnoticeably a part of the surroundings of the characters as follows:

I worked very hard on the film, but the idea was to not get noticed. I was hoping that the work is so good that nobody notices my work because it is meant to blend in... you shouldn't see the costumes, they should be so, part of the environment [...] It's a sensitive approach and also being realistic about it... you just cannot give the girls shirts-pants. In the film, they feel like girls but they had to wear boys' clothes. To live their emotions and to be able to costume them accordingly, I did put a lot of thought into it. (*Telegraph India*)



The cutting of the girls' hair, donning of men's clothing and consumption of milk and meat, marks a clear shift in the narrative. Lewd comments are made on Geeta's clothes and her status as an essentially weak 'woman' as she steps into the fight, since a sportsperson as a woman, even for reasons such as injuries sustained in a game, cannot afford to bare her body. This aspect in itself is turned into another Campbellian challenge as the song 'Dhakad' plays in the background and as Geeta proves all male chauvinists wrong as she fights on an equal footing, turning the fickle crowd into fans. Though the layman would not decode the 'mardana' walk of Geeta and Babita as 'women walking', diversely and specifically strong, the audience senses the masculinization of the daughters as empowering, hence, not really disturbing the patriarchal distribution of power. Yet, in actuality, the essentialized feminine body, by coopting the practices which are predominantly occupied as a masculine space, is able to reclaim the strong potential inherent in the female body itself. As Geeta and Babita wear suits, bangles and apply bindi, to attend the wedding of their friend, or later on, as Geeta grows out her hair and begins to explore areas culturally considered 'feminine', they lose the empowerment and structure which a one-sided focus and vision towards their goals requires of them.

Moreover, the female body in the 'akhara' is not sexualized. Rather, the focus stays on the motif of 'sports' which in turn also acts as a metaphor to address other debates. The girls acting as Geeta and Babita's younger and older versions were trained by Kripa Shankar Bishnoi Beniwal, coach of the Indian wrestling team for almost eight months to provide authenticity to the wrestling scenes. The regime followed was a lower toned version of the routine followed by the Senior Indian Women's wrestling team.

Another major trend that can be noticed, which is very much a part of the postmodern zeitgeist, is that characters are no longer prototype heroes or villains that are inherently good or evil but rather manifestations and role players of major cultural discourses and public sphere debates retaining certain archetypes of plot flow. This assures commercial success amidst varied audience while also staying true to the aesthetic and ethical imperatives of popular cinema.

Also, the positioning of the bodies inside the screen frame becomes very significant. For instance, in *Dangal*, the point of view and the framing dynamics of the film depict the



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role of Phogat as the central figure of the entire narrative. The image and voice of Phogat pervade the entire plot. Most often, Phogat is seen at the center of the frame with the gaze of the daughters directed towards him which is either submissive or looking for approval, while his gaze is one of fond pride and ownership.

Similarly, even language is Hindified so that it can reach a wider audience. Though Sunita Sharma, who trained Kangana Ranaut to sound authentic in *Tanu Weds Manu Returns*, trained the *Dangal* actors to speak the Haryanvi accent correctly, the phrases and dialogues in the film are modified a bit to sound authentic:

There are very subtle differences that the average Hindi speaker will not get, but the person from Haryana will immediately understand. [...] My job is to see where the words are slipping, which parts the accent is catching, and what is being missed. It's like using a sieve- it gets more refined as it goes along. (RamnathScroll.in)

Overall, the body in *Dangal* stays authentic and hence, at one with the visual narrative of the film. The celebrity body steps back to reveal the character's authentic body language. Moreover, glamour emerges within the empowerment gained through the narrative and the motif of sports, rather than an a priori condition of celebrityhood, making the impact 'glocal'.

Narrative

Since the turn of the century, majority of Aamir Khan films, in which Aamir Khan has participated in various capacities, have set off immense public sphere debates. In his films, which have become a brand in themselves, we witness a filmmaking mode which is generating a brand of popular culture that seems to disapprove of exploiting the cliché and formulaic cultural codes, but creatively immerses the audience within the narrative, without losing the depth and seriousness of the corrective coordinates of socio-cultural codes and values. The incredible mantra of these films is the 'to-be-reckoned-with' combination of entertainment and social relevance that is woven together within the narrative, which ensures that the films succeed commercially by being entertaining and also stay realistic and believable as social narratives with socially influential statements and commentary, as were given by parallel cinema. This, in turn, majorly safeguards their 'glocal' success.



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Dangal, as a Campbellian narrative, makes use of the motif of struggle or fight. The feisty connotations born of the theme keep the tone of the film highly strung with its close-ups of characters' expressions, body movements, music, and plot. Yet, it does not simply depict the struggles inherent in the act of wrestling with the opponent on the court, on a national/ international front, but also the fight against the conservative ideas and prejudices with respect to the role and agency of women in certain fields, a fight that takes place inside MahavirPhogat as well as outside him with his family and the society at large. This fight is inherited by the daughters who first decode in it the subversive patriarchal authority of the father, but eventually grow to understand the empowerment, social impact, and pride behind it. In this way, the film is able to chart the range from a local to a more global degree of relevance by touching upon sports, feminism, and nationalism. Seen as concentric circles, the universal narrative ripples out from the localized context leading up to a collective global impact. As MahavirPhogat (played by Aamir Khan) addresses Geeta a day before her finals in *Dangal*:

There is only one strategy tomorrow, that is to make people remember you... People could remember you when you get the gold medal. Your victory will be the example for girls, countless girls will join you against those who discriminate against women... If you win tomorrow, you will not enjoy victory alone, there will be thousands of girls like them to share the victory with you, it is the victory of the girls who are imprisoned in the drudgery of housework, the victory of all the girls who are considered inferior to men, the victory of girls who can only serve their husbands and teach their children. (*Dangal*, trans. Dir Tiwari, 2016)

In addition to championing women empowerment, the film also critically brings to the foreground other issues like the banal condition of sports facilities in India, child marriage, neglect of indigenous familial traditions, rural superstition, et cetera. Like the young India in the 21st century, the character of Geeta in the film becomes a microcosm of the inherent complexity and contradiction that youthful population in India faces today, yet which is quite similar to the condition of youth in other countries in Asia. There is a tendency to move forward and progress, alongside the danger of Westernization and loss of power. Hence,



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though Geeta's struggle with the community is appreciated, when she tries to challenge Phogat himself with her newly learnt techniques, she loses power by severing her ties from her roots that nourished her endeavors till that point.

The new blockbuster strikes a delicate balance between being popular yet conscientiously impactful, and between being locally specific and authentic while being globally relevant. As a Neo-blockbuster, the film succeeds on the basis of certain aesthetical decisions, so that the film, without outrightly outraging, bombshelling or alienating the locally varied audience, is able to immerse them within the narrative's authentic build up and humor.

For instance, the superstitions of the villagers are not commented upon directly, rather satirized and made playful through humor. The strategies suggested by the villagers are made ludicrous to an extreme, especially when laced with the tone of the narrator, suggesting the satirical element in an explicitly humorous way, a method of 'laughing it off' while correcting gently, so the varied audience (even if culpable) joins good-humoredly in laughter.

In another instance, the film associates the sympathies of the audience with Geeta and Babita in their struggle and hence, takes them alongside with their own evolution in understanding their empowerment. There is initial resistance from them both, their mother as well as the community. For instance, other children from school and the villagers add to the 'resistance' against the achievement of the ideal. The audience enjoys the struggle of the hero through such perils in a cathartic wishful expectancy for a victorious resolution.

Yet, on a global level, in addition to the immersion of the local populace within the narrative, the motif of sports plays on a Campbellian level of the monomyth. Even though the film addresses local issues, yet through the monomyth, it achieves global affinity. This can be analyzed in detail.

The first step in the monomyth is the challenge which is thrown to a non-hero who hesitates and often, initially, does not have what it takes to complete an adventurous task. This plays within the sports motif in the shape of an underdog character who is initially thought to be incapable of winning the game. Within the film, the underdog non-hero are the village girls, who firstly, coming from a rural background, have to fight the social stigma and prejudice of playing *dangal*, a sport dominated by men. Moreover, they are not provided



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proper facilities during the initial years of their training. Later, the coach does not tap Geeta's original potential but tries to homogenize her training. In every way possible, conditions keep piling up in their disfavor which take the shape of 'monomythic obstacles'. Though these conditions are locally specific, they play on a bigger scale as a part of the monomyth. As an obstacle and a tragic flaw, Geeta's distraction, too, becomes a character flaw. Geeta's final opponent, known to be powerful, adds to the challenges. Geeta loses fights, yet the final challenge comes in the shape of the final match. As a mentor, Phogat only accompanies the hero till the point of the entrance to the Belly of the Whale. All the training the mentor provides comes to test when it is time for the player to be on her own. Phogat is locked in the store room right before the final fight, leaving Geeta on her own. She achieves atonement by finally overcoming the challenge. At the end, Geeta and Phogat earn the reward for their community, the monomythic 'Gift of the Goddess'. Geeta makes her father, her village, her nation and women proud. From being a story about Phogat and his two daughters, the story goes on to become a story about a father and his two daughters, a story about Indian values, a feminist tale, a sports story, and a story of nationalism.

In this way, the narrative operates simultaneously on various levels, which provides it the 'glocal' power. The motif of sports, itself, in addition to rigorously involving the interest of the audience globally who inevitably find themselves rooting for Geeta's growth and Phogat's victory, becomes a medium for addressing various other local concerns like issues of discrimination against women, socio-economic problems and corruption of systems related to sports facilities in India, and child-marriages in rural population, while also staying family friendly. Thus, the film succeeds in becoming a hybrid and appeasing a vast spectrum of population worldwide.

Conclusion

The glocalization of place, body and narrative in *Dangal* is born out of a dynamic semiotic exchange that takes places globally and locally, often simultaneously, at different concentric levels of the local microcosm and the global macrocosm. While evoking a sense of 'rootedness' in the locale, the character's body and the story that takes place in Haryana, India, the film also succeeds in evoking the rural-urban divide, the female body and the

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monomythical and sports narrative worldwide. Even though production, distribution and promotion are certainly big aspects that play a huge role in deciding the success rate of these films, the aesthetics of the films play a significant role in themselves and deserve a detailed analysis.



Notes

ⁱ Sheldon and Stephen Neale have discussed the genealogy of ‘blockbuster’ in the introduction to their book *Epics, Spectacles, and Blockbusters: A Hollywood History*.

ⁱⁱ A very popular term used for Indian cinema is ‘Bollywood’. The term has gained currency globally. Though it is often used synonymously for popular Hindi cinema or commercial Hindi cinema, it was originally restricted to the Mumbai based film industry. The term was eventually criticized for its “homogenizing strains and its suggestions of Indian cinema’s derivativeness” (Roy 2). M. Madhava Prasad in “This Thing Called Bollywood” calls Bollywood the “empty signifier” spreading its signifieds all over Indian cinema. Ashish Rajadhyaksha wrote an essay called “The ‘Bollywoodization’ of Hindi Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena” in which he differentiated between Bollywood and Indian Cinema. He stated that “the Indian film industry is not solely based in Mumbai” (Rajadhyaksha 25). Further expanding on the difference between Bollywood industry and Indian cinema he argues:

[...] the cinema has been in existence as a national industry of sorts for the past 50 years (the Indian cinema, of course, has celebrated its centenary, but the industry, in the current sense of the term, might be most usefully traced to the post-Second World War boom in production), Bollywood has been around for only about a decade now. (Rajadhyaksha 28)

ⁱⁱⁱ Ganti defines the masala film:

A common term used by the film industry, the Indian media, and audiences to describe many popular Hindi films is ‘*masala*.’ A Hindi word meaning a blend of spices, *masala*, when applied to films, refers to those that contain a potpourri of elements – music, romance, action, comedy, and drama – designed to appeal to the broadest range of audiences. However, not all Hindi films are *masala* films. Though it is a term used for a specific kind of film, it has become the basis for the most common



stereotype held by Western commentators and viewers unfamiliar with the form: that Hindi cinema lacks genres or that multiple genres are combined within a single film. (Ganti139)

^{iv}Refer to Clarissa Pinkola Estes' introduction to Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

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