

Abstract

Care, Control, and Coloniality: A Decolonial Analysis of *Mrs. Chatterjee*

vs Norway

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Care is often viewed as a neutral and protective practice within modern welfare institutions. *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* (2023) challenges this view by showing how care can become a form of control when Western norms are treated as universal. This project analyses the film through a decolonial framework to examine how immigrant parenting practices are judged and regulated by state welfare systems. Drawing on the concepts of coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, the study shows how welfare institutions privilege expert authority, marginalise lived experience, and subject non-Western forms of care to surveillance and control. The project concludes that care in the film shifts from protection to regulation, revealing the persistence of colonial power within contemporary welfare institutions.

CARE, CONTROL, AND COLONIALITY: A DECOLONIAL ANALYSIS
OF MRS. CHATTERJEE VS NORWAY



Project submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of BACHELOR OF ARTS in English Language and Literature

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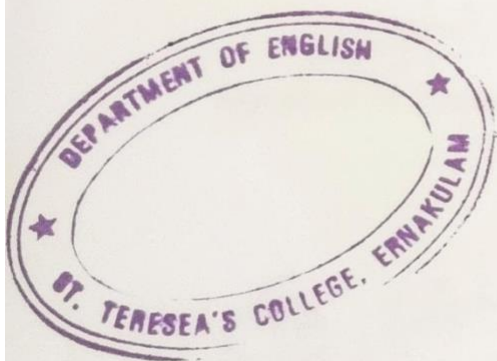
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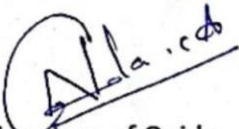
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project, entitled “Care, Control, and Coloniality: A Decolonial Analysis of *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*”, is a record of bona fide work done by me under the guidance and supervision of Ms Nandana C Ajith, Assistant Professor (On Contract), Department of English.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this project, entitled “Care, Control, and Coloniality: A Decolonial Analysis of *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*” by Ann Rachel Pathrose, is a record of bona fide work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

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CONTENTS

Introduction		1
Chapter 1	Coloniality Beyond Colonialism: Power, Knowledge, and Being	4
Chapter 2	Care Under Surveillance: Coloniality and the Welfare State in <i>Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway</i>	11
Conclusion		21
Works Consulted		24

Introduction

Care is often assumed to be a neutral and benevolent force. Especially when it is practiced through modern welfare institutions that claim to do best for the children. These institutions appear as protective, objective and guided by expert knowledge. The film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* challenges this assumption by showing care as a source of control, conflict and loss. For immigrant or non-Western families, sometimes care moves from support to supervision. It also raises questions about authority, legitimacy and belonging.

Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway is based on the story of Debika Chatterjee, an Indian immigrant mother living in Norway with her husband, Aniruddha and their two children, Shubh and Suchi. The film shows how their normal parenting practices come under the scrutiny of Norwegian Child Welfare Services. Hand feeding, physical affection and co-sleeping are considered as dangerous. These practices are common in Indian families. However, Norwegian standards judge them as risks. Because of these practices, the kids are removed from the family without prior warning. They are placed under foster care.

The film reveals deeper conflicts beyond cultural differences. Debika's explanations and emotional responses are always dismissed. The authority always valued expert reports and institutional assessments. Debika, as a mother, is devalued. The custody battle appears as a clash between institutional power and forms of care.

Through these interventions, the meaning of care gradually changes. What is presented as protection becomes regulation. Parenting is judged by criteria that are labelled as objective, scientific and universally true. While the Welfare system does not use direct violence. The consequences of its actions are separation, humiliation

and emotional damage. In this way the film raises questions about the nature of care in modern welfare institutions.

This project therefore asks whether care in *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* actually serves as a form of protection or whether it becomes a colonial tool when Western child care norms are treated as objective and superior. It will explore how institutions that operate in the best interests of children can, in fact, reproduce colonial hierarchies. They do this by prioritising European standards of knowledge and behaviour. Non-European forms of caring get sidelined. The central concern that drives this research is whether care in the movie becomes a form of neutral welfare practice or whether it becomes a site where colonial power continues to influence ideas of authority, knowledge and humanity.

To respond to this question, the project relies on Decolonial Theory. This theory challenges the idea that colonialism brought to an end with political independence. Decolonial thinkers argue that colonial modes of power continue to operate in modern institutions such as law, politics, education, and social service.

These institutions are often perceived as just, rational and progressive. But they continue to favour European modes of thinking and living. Anibal Quijano's idea of the colonality of power is useful in understanding how institution categorize and govern people according to universal standards. Walter Mignolo's idea of the colonality of knowledge brings attention to how Western knowledge is considered to be the norm. Also, how other modes of knowledge are marginalised. Also, go through Nelson Maldonado- Torres's idea of colonality of being. Together, these concepts provide the theoretical foundation for analysing care and welfare in the film.

This particular project is motivated by an interest in the workings of power operates in spaces that are not usually associated with domination or violence.

The reason why *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* was selected is that it locates the power of the state in the domain of family and care. Also, how power can be exercised in a non-violent manner through welfare and protection. Decolonial theory was selected for this research. Because it enables the film to be interpreted as part of a larger historical structure of power. Not as a conflict between cultures or an instance of individual injustice.

This study is goes from theory to application. Chapter 1 introduces the major concepts of the decolonial theory. Specifically on the coloniality of power, knowledge and being. Chapter two applies the concept to the movie *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* through a detailed analysis of the movie. The final chapter gathers the findings of the study and answers the major question.

Chapter 1

Coloniality Beyond Colonialism: Power, Knowledge, and Being

The term decolonisation was coined by German economist Moritz Julius Bonn in the 1930s. The word decoloniality, which emerged from a Latin American school of thought in the 1980s and 1990s. It was by the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano that this term was coined.

Decolonial theory is an important way to understand how colonial domination continues to shape the world even after colonialism formally ended. This not consider colonialism as an ended historical movement that belongs only to the past. Instead the decolonial thinkers argue that colonial power just survived by changing its form. Colonial domination is still an ongoing process in societies even after independence.

But rather than by direct rule now it works through modern systems like law, governance, education and social policy. These systems are often seen as progressive, neutral or as humanitarian. However, they are influenced by Western norms by marginalising or devaluing the non-Western way of living, thinking and knowing.

This chapter in particular, discusses the key tenets of decolonial theory and its significance for the analysis of contemporary institutions and cultural practices. Primarily it is based on three overlapping concepts. These are coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being. The ideas were elaborated by Anibal Quijano, Walter D Mignolo and Nelson Maldonado-Torres respectively. Together, they explain the ways in which colonial domination continues to be enacted through institutional mechanisms, through domains of learning and as a way of perceiving humanity itself. This chapter provides a theoretical backdrop understanding the longevity of colonial hierarchies and how they are made manifest in ways that are invisible.

Decolonial theory starts with an argument that colonialism did not end when the colonised overthrew the colonial rulers. There were many former colonies that achieved political freedom.

But the deep-seated structure that emerged in the colonial period, however, largely survived. These structures continue to guide the organisation of power, production of knowledge and valuation of cultures. Decolonial thought focuses on the idea of coloniality, which is the logic of colonial domination that continues affect the modern world. Decolonial theory doesn't suggest that all modern institutions are operating on the basis of colonial rule. But it explains that there are institutions that continue to operate on the ideas and systems that were created during the colonial period. It also shows how these ideas and systems continue to operate and influence power today.

Decolonial theory puts a particular focus on continuity of structures and institutions. Whereas the focus on representation is more on the foundation of the modern system itself. So recent decolonial thinkers are questioning how the contemporary law, governance, education and knowledge are rooted in colonial ideas. Decolonial theory is directly challenging the idea that modern institutions and values are neutral or universally applicable. And it argues that these systems are based on Eurocentric viewpoints and continue to recreate colonial hierarchies in the present. So these systems are perpetually biased and accommodative to Western norms.

Anibal Quijano's idea of coloniality of power is the foundation of Decolonial theory (Quijano 533). As Quijano notes, colonial domination is not merely a historical event that ended with independence. Rather he describes coloniality as a global structure that continues to shape modern power. The current global pattern of power is

predicated on an element of coloniality. In other words the structures established by European colonialism still shape our politics, economies and societies today.

Quijano describes that the hierarchical racial system erected upon European Identity at the top and non-European peoples and cultures as subordinate, backward and uncivilised (Quijano 535). Race was not simply a social classification. It was a mechanism to determine who planned whose work was valuable, who got to lead and who could access the resources they needed. The colonies became independent. But this hierarchy did not vanish. They continued to operate via institutions, law and education. Colonial domination does not depend on direct military force or colonial administration. But as power operates via global institutions, policies and expertise.

Western models of development and social organisations are considered as the normal and universal standard for all societies. Non-Western societies is often evaluated based on standards that aren't rooted in their own cultural or historical contexts. Quijano's theory explains why and how Western systems continue their authority even after colonial rule officially ended.

One of Quijano's most crucial argument is his claim that modernity is inseparable from coloniality (Quijano 542). He states that modernity and coloniality are inextricably linked as a part of the same historical movement. This challenges the idea that modernity represents only progress, rationality and development. Instead it reveals that modern institutions were built alongside colonial exploitation, racial hierarchy and global inequality.

Although modern systems frequently aim to promote welfare, protection, or development, these objectives are often built upon colonial era assumptions regarding civilisation and progress. Such frameworks make external intervention and regulation seem both necessary and justified. Consequently, the coloniality of power explains

how domination persists within modern institutions even when colonial history is not explicitly mentioned.

Rather than relying on visible force, power is exerted through routine administrative practices that are perceived as natural, logical and legitimate (Quijano 544-49). A core part of the coloniality of power is Eurocentrism. Quijano describes it as the “hegemonic perspective of knowledge” in the modern world (Quijano 542). Basically this means that Western history, culture and logic are treated as the gold standard for how we understand everything else. Because Western thought framed as objective and scientific. It is seen as a universal truth. Meanwhile non-Western cultures are often pushed to the margins and described as being too emotional or traditional.

Eurocentrism enables Western institutions to evaluate other cultures under the guise of neutrality. Rather than accepting cultural differences these systems often treat them as flaws that require correction or improvement. When one specific cultural model is forced into a universal role it quietly rebuilds colonial hierarchies. This makes Eurocentrism an important tool for maintaining colonial-style control within modern governance, welfare and healthcare systems.

While Quijano’s work primarily centres on power, Walter D. Mignolo extends the theory towards the realm of knowledge. He introduces the coloniality of knowledge. Mignolo argues that colonial domination did not disappear after political independence. Instead, it continues through systems of knowledge that decide what counts as truth.

Western ways of knowing that emerged during the era of colonial modernity became recognised as universal and objective standards of knowledge. The other knowledge systems that existed at that time were removed from consideration and

treated as unworthy. The Western framework of knowledge has established a superiority hierarchy that treats all non-European knowledge as irrational, emotional, and unscientific. The existing hierarchy becomes visible through modern institutions which use expert systems to operate their legal and psychological and medical and social welfare functions. The institutions present themselves as neutral and scientific but depend on Western epistemological frameworks for their operations.

Many researchers struggle when they try to understand international cultural practices which originate outside Western traditions. The process of understanding these practices depends on the cultural framework which Western societies use to define knowledge. The expert knowledge system uses its power to define social norms while providing an objective scientific explanation for human behaviour.

Mignolo further shows that modern institutions sustain their power by governing both the validation process of knowledge and the identification of credible speakers. People usually view lived experience, cultural memory and daily care activities as less valuable than professional expertise. Institutions use their power to control knowledge to operate their non Western research programs while maintaining an image of impartiality and compassion.

In today's welfare systems, colonial hierarchies persist through expert assessments which determine acceptable care methods while correcting other approaches. The framework enables researchers to examine how *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* shows welfare institutions transforming culturally grounded parenting practices into signs of parental inadequacy.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres broadens decolonial theory through his exploration of power's impact on human existence. The colonality of being constitutes this concept. The deep-seated patterns of dehumanisation that have become a defining

feature of the modern era refer to this condition. This perspective explores how colonial hierarchies determine which individuals receive official recognition as complete human beings. The modern ideal of a person exists as a rational Western individual according to Maldonado-Torres.

People who experienced colonisation are analysed through emotional and instinctual traits according to the lens used by observers (Maldonado -Torres 247). The division not only classifies individuals but also establishes a condition that compels indigenous people to demonstrate their intellectual abilities and personal value. The dominant institutions refuse to recognise their existence because they continually question their credibility (Maldonado-Torres 247-248).

The idea of the colonality of being explains why specific groups experience ongoing suspicion and surveillance and state actions against them. The established hierarchies within systems which function based on care and protection principles produce treatment that dehumanises individuals. The colonised subject receives neither full autonomy nor genuine recognition because society sees him as someone who requires external help for his correction and control. The perspective removes all decision-making power from people because it transforms care into a method of controlling society (Maldonado Torres 248-52).

The theoretical frameworks proposed by Quijano, Mignolo, and Maldonado-Torres are interconnected. The colonality of power establishes the fundamental system that governs contemporary institutional operations. The idea of colonality of knowledge explains how these systems maintain their legitimacy through Western perspectives which they designate as their exclusive truth standard. The processes of human dignity and recognition face their most severe impacts through the colonality of being which leads to multiple adverse effects.

In today's world, Western frameworks have become universal standards which people now accept as common practice. The framework provides a method to study present-day institutions which present themselves as neutral or humanitarian yet show colonial power structures through their routine operations.

These systems often show an unintentional tendency to recreate colonial power structures because they choose to favour particular cultural models instead of others. The systems create a process for regulating care because they choose to focus on specific cultural models.

The framework provides a valuable tool for evaluating institutions that operate under the pretence of delivering protection and care, which includes welfare systems, legal frameworks, and social services. The protection and expertise functions as control instruments when people use Eurocentric standards to implement them. This chapter outlines the fundamental concepts of decolonial theory as it examines Anibal Quijano's work, Walter D. Mignolo's research, and Nelson Maldonado-Torres's contributions.

This chapter demonstrates how modern institutions maintain colonial power structures through their activities which serve both humanitarian purposes and their supposed neutral status.

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework is applied to the film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*. The film examines decolonial concepts through its narrative and institutional practices and its various representations. The study investigates how coloniality operates in present-day governance systems and protection mechanisms and care facilities through this analysis.

Chapter 2

Care Under Surveillance: Coloniality and the Welfare State in *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*

A welfare state that prides itself on progressivism and putting kids first can still end up excluding people in profound ways. *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* lays this bare by showing how protective institutions cling to rigid rules that leave no room for cultural differences. Instead of loud, violent colonialism the movie uncovers how power sneaks in via experts, paperwork and unshakable bureaucratic confidence.

In the film, Norway's Child Welfare Services (Barnevernet) doesn't come off as some impartial guardian, it's an outfit enforcing its narrow idea of normal family life. They pitch their calls as all about the child's best interest, but keep tagging non-Western ways of parenting as flawed or dangerous. It's not just about what's legal; it's about who gets to say what counts as real care. This hits home when think about Anibal Quijano's coloniality of power. It shows how today's systems keep old hierarchies alive without relying on direct coercion (Quijano 533).

The film opens by showing its main process from the start. The officials arrive at the Chatterjee residence and they proceed to take the children without any prior warning according to their established administrative procedures.

The film contains no violent scenes yet every aspect of it leads to deep destruction. The mother suffers from pain which nobody acknowledges or treats because they all choose to disregard her condition. The system maintains its power through control methods which do not require any theatrical performances or physical intimidation. The system operates through its standard processes which appear unbiased yet create significant effects on both individuals and societal norms.

The film ultimately reveals through its main message, the emotional and moral damage which bureaucratic systems inflict on people. The film demonstrates how people provide care without a genuine understanding of others while showing how colonialism continues to shape systems that believe themselves to be morally superior. The state doesn't look like a tyrant. It looks correct. And that's exactly where its power comes from.

In the courtroom scenes, the legal battle goes beyond custody rights because it determines who will define what constitutes an appropriate family.

Debika appears to be an outsider who fights her own battle from the room's edge while judges and social workers establish their authority in the courtroom. An official declares, "Children are children and this is Norway, not India" (*Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* 00:47:11-00:47:14) which demonstrates how the system forces its specific cultural concept of child care onto all people. They dismiss Debika's parenting methods as incorrect and hazardous while they maintain Western standards as their ultimate reference point. The system operates to advance Eurocentric principles while it depicts Indian practices as unsafe.

Then officials claim, "We want your children to have the best opportunities in Norway" (*Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* 00:11:44-00:11:49). It's a slick line that dresses up their meddling as pure care and protection, really just hiding how they see Western ways as superior by default.

What truly stands out here isn't just a cultural misunderstanding, but a deliberate setup that rejects other ways of raising kids. The court never outright slams Debika's background: it just recasts her parenting as a hazard, plain and simple. The concept of coloniality of power which Quijano develops exists as a complete framework which shows how power operates while pretending to maintain equality.

The movie sharpens at this point. Control today skips the big showdowns because it succeeds by determining which values will become standard throughout society.

This mindset that begins in court extends into daily life. The legal system operates through three main components which include parenting workshops, monitored visits and psychological checks to assess Debika like a shadow. People do not want to hear her perspective because they want her to change her behaviour. Aniruddha responded to her question about whether the monitoring would end by stating that “If we want to stay in Norway, we’ll have to follow their systems”(Mrs. *Chatterjee vs Norway* 00:06:44-00:06:48). The system of welfare programs forces families to adjust their behaviour in ways that create both physical and mental discomfort. The film modifies Quijano’s concepts by showing how modern systems, which display caring behaviour, control human differences without using any coercive methods.

In the film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*, authority appears strongest through professional expertise that defines who holds real power. The psychologists together with social workers and child welfare officers created assessments. These assessments create direct guidance for legal decisions about custody and child care. The reports count as objective and final. The film reveals the cultural beliefs which exist beneath their surface in gradual segments.

The public holds fixed beliefs about correct parenting methods and emotional management and family dynamics. The public accepts these facts as normal. Debika’s understanding of care presents a different perspective from established official knowledge. Her daily routine includes her cultural practices and her ongoing responsibility for the children. The methods of that organisation receive lower status than they should. The officials continue to classify those situations as excessive,

dangerous, or incorrect. The process of differentiation causes automatic suspicion to emerge as a natural outcome.

The moment shines brightest when Debika describes feeding her children by hand. She permits her children to sleep beside her. The husband says, “Use a spoon”(Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway 00:05:46-00:05:47) to feed Shubh. Debika answers back, “He doesn’t like to eat with a spoon”(Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway 00:05:48-00:05:49). The statement demonstrates her understanding of what brings the child comfort and joy. People develop small practices through their cultural background and their personal skills. The system questions them as bad form or wasteful every time. Debika sees these steps as ways to build closeness and safety. Officials give no reply to her words.

The psychologists use their models to make judgments. Those stress distance, holding back feelings and early self-reliance. The same thing happens when applying Kohl on Shubh. An official asks, “What’s the dot?”(Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway 00:08:12). The tone carries clear disapproval. A cultural habit becomes something strange. The end, real meaning from tradition gives way to expert opinion.

Walter Mignolo’s research illustrates how the colonality of knowledge helps explain the interactions occurring in these specific scenes. The film shows that Western knowledge systems do not defeat all other methods of understanding. The film shows that expert-based systems developed to create parental evaluation standards which measure cultural behaviour. The system applies its analysis through mandatory parenting classes, supervised visitations and psychological assessments which extend beyond basic judgment.

Officials asked Debika to change her behaviour to match standards which are presented as universally valid and applicable to all situations. In the end, a system takes shape that rules mainly through specialised expertise, turning what should be genuine care into just another method of regulation and oversight rather than true support.

In the courtroom scenes, a clear hierarchy emerges in what counts as knowledge. Expert evidence controls the entire legal discussion through the use of reports and evaluations and psychological terminology. The mother delivers her first words which express deep emotion without providing actual knowledge. The acknowledgement of her lived life experience quickly disappears from view. The film shows a system which respects academic qualifications while dismissing common knowledge as authentic understanding.

In the same way, this pattern extends beyond verbal communication because it affects the ways people understand their daily caregiving responsibilities. Touch-based relationships with close people develop into danger signs which indicate harmful behavior rather than showing a person's commitment to their responsibilities. Indian parenting practices are treated as incorrect methods which require correction because cultural differences create risks in parenting. These beats show meaning turning into a battleground for control authority holds the reins by deciding what's safe, standard, or acceptable.

Throughout the film, *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* keeps its main character's voice present and strong. The courtroom scene begins to change as the story progresses. The mother stops trying to establish her parental rights through official documentation. She delivers her performance through unfiltered emotional expression which she performs without any restrictions. She uses informal methods to measure

her relationship because she believes her understanding surpasses what experts can evaluate. She begins dismantle the systems which define her according to their Western standards and Indian heritage.

Power maintains its place, be it in laws and structures or in specialist language, professional assessments and tight controls around what's actually factual knowledge and truth. In bringing lived experiences and cultural understandability front and centre in the way it has, it creates space for other pathways to knowledge and nurturing that resist such controls in a strong fashion.

The film illustrates in no uncertain way that there is more at stake in the case of Debika Chatterjee's struggle than differences in knowledge or cultural understanding or both in conflict with one another. The cut goes much deeper and cuts much closer to its core. The way in which her position as a mother becomes subject to continuous question, tight scrutiny and continuous diminishment throughout her interactions in the narrative. Throughout her experiences in the film, there's no sense in which she is treated as in control of her path in the way in which she herself seeks it instead, there's the sense that she's no different from a file in need of tending in insidious ways through rules, observation and care with tight limitations around it all.

These scenes disclose a deeper form of harm that associated with Maldonado-Torres's concept of the colonality of being. Modern institutions impose limits on who counts as fully human. Some are recognised as complete. Others are labelled as incomplete, suspect, or in need of fixes.

This seldom requires overt violence. The work is done instead by routine checks, inbuilt doubt and the demand to prove worth. In *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*, child welfare looks upon parents as suspects from the very beginning. Care

competence meets suspicion before any nod of trust. Control over children moves from parents to institutional hands. Parental instinct gives way to expert oversight. Trust cedes place to regulation. The movie brings into sharp view the uneven judgment of emotions in this system. Mrs. Chatterjee's tears, frenzy and raw desperation get logged as instability markers. They find no space as normal responses to fear or loss. Restraint over feelings signals duty. Visible pain stands as proof of poor fitness. This pattern stacks the deck against her time and again.

These forces can be most clearly observed within supervised visits. Her every move is monitored. Her act of touching, holding and consolingly embracing her children is controlled. Gazing at her children lovingly is also regulated. In these moments, love too has to validate itself. Debika's resistance, "staring at someone cannot be a normal system" (*Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* 00:06:47-00:06:48), reflects on how being continuously monitored becomes normal, loving care notwithstanding the evocation of fear.

Moments like this put every demand into stark relief, particularly during supervised visits. Everything an individual does is subject to intense examination. Touching, holding and consoling the children elicits immediate reprimanding and rules. Affection itself is subject to sign off.

Love turns into something that elicits defending. Indeed, as one can measure with one particular supervised session with the foster families themselves, control means one thing being overwhelmed by just seeing her children. Debika cried in front of her kids because of seeing them again. Tears well right before her kids. The command issues immediately "Please do not cry in front of the kids" (*Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* 00:33:28-00:34:25). The weeping does not stop. The scheduled session cuts short. The kids are again removed by forced mean.

The removal of kids hits as the cruelest peak of the whole ordeal. Officials show up, run through their forms and head out. No reasons given, no solace offered. The mother chases the car in shock. Afterwards, silence fills her steps through the bare house. Beyond raw sorrow, the scene etches out how institutions wipe away her place as a mother. Not only is custody in effect denied, but so is any opportunity or right to exist as a mother in one's own right in this case, seen as an untapped potential of risk rather than one of great loss.

This denial reaches into the private space of the family. Her husband is encouraging her to control her emotions and comply with institutional pressures. Under the perception that if she does this, people can only improve their prospects. Thus, institutional powers do reach into personal relationships.

Consequently, her inability to try to keep her feelings suppressed serves only to further reinforce her feelings of isolation. Her breakdown is treated as a personal failure rather than one that is born out of all the scrutiny, frustration and marginalisation she has endured. Her suffering is individualised, but no one challenges the system that serves to generate it. What she must deny goes beyond custody to her right as a mother to mother on her own terms. She, in their eyes, lurked as a threat, not as one who was under extreme loss. Her resistance to burying hurt propels her further into isolation.

Throughout *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*, trust is bestowed first upon officials or experts to be used at their own discretion. For Mrs. Chatterjee, however, she continues to be asked to prove a point to earn a shred of trust, but even that doesn't happen. Her care remains under strict supervision, her affections misinterpreted to prove a point against her and over time, her humanity dwindles. This can be referred

to as a type of colonialism of being. It cannot be referred to as a type of violence, but one where a person's humanity is diminished over time. Simple acts of co-sleeping, hand feeding, or expressing their affections may go on to a list that ultimately portrays Mrs. Chatterjee's unfitness as a mother.

These scenes are a stark example of how today's system takes away a woman's humanity, but there's absolutely no hint of violence. Not only the woman's but also any non Western people. There are no scenes of Mrs. Chatterjee or her children being beaten or shouted at. It's a gradual erosion of a woman's power over her own life.

Power in systems of welfare is effective in secret without noise or fanfare. With steps like reports, checks, phone calls to judges or legal officials, or specialised words defining quite rules for what is right in child rearing or conduct. Western norms are invisible in this scenario. Action styles elsewhere manifest as flaws or dangers. Balancing safety looks perfectly proper. But hidden currents of prejudice permeate it in depth.

Core questions for Mrs. Chatterjee refract well beyond custody struggles in any case of the courtroom grab. Rather, they encompass issues of recognition-liberty from any inquiring eye or doubt that seeks to control without unconditional amounts of love-in childrearing. Challenges used in this narrative embrace issues of control in social care or welfare, where individuals are placed under objective microscopes of diminishment without any evident or substantiated harm to nutrition.

Humanness is front and centre in struggles with social care or welfare systems in action in this narrative. With emotion prominent in questions of control of doubt without any manifest or substantiated harms with invisible norms of Western action

standing in stark contrast with action styles elsewhere made manifest as flaws or dangers or dangers of flaws.

Conclusion

The film *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* finally shows that the conflict at its centre is not just about cultural differences or legal procedure. What unfolds is an uninterrupted struggle over who is trusted, who is judged and who is allowed to define care.

Throughout the narrative, Debika Chatterjee is required to prove herself repeatedly within a system that treats parenting as something that can be measured, corrected and supervised. The film makes clear that authority does not always operate through force or open hostility. Instead it works through mundane assessments, expert reports and expectations about how a good parent should behave. By following Debika's experience closely, the film exposes how unsymmetrical power can appear ordinary, even reasonable, while quietly reshaping lives.

This study examined how the idea of care functions within *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* when viewed through a decolonial lens. Rather than treating the conflict as a simple case of cultural misunderstanding, the analysis approached care as an institutional practice shaped by power, authority and regulation, particularly in the context of an immigrant mother subjected to state intervention.

The central tension of the film lies in the way parenting practices that are ordinary and meaningful within an Indian context are recast as speculative and improper within political welfare gradually. What initially appears as a political concern for child welfare gradually reveals deeper geomorphological issues involving skilful authority, eligible judgement and indicative unequal treatment of ethnic differences. By framing care as a critical and administrative process rather than a

critical demonstrative or private matter, the way opened space for a critical engagement with decolonial theory.

Decolonial concepts of power, knowledge and being provided the framework for understanding these processes. The analysis drew attention to Anibal Quijano's idea of coloniality of power to show how modern welfare institutions exercise control through eligible procedures rather than overt domination. Walter Mignolo's concept of the coloniality of knowledge, helped to explain how modern or Western systems are treated as universal, while other ways of knowing are marginalised or dismissed. Nelson Maldonado Torres's notion of the coloniality of being drew attention to the human consequences of these structures, particularly for those who fail to conform to dominant norms.

Applied to the movie *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*, these ideas revealed that care in the film does not function as a humanitarian, indifferent or strictly protective practice. This analysis establishes that care in *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* is shaped by surveillance, authority and unequal power relations.

At Western childcare norms are treated as objective and universal, care foreground from protection to regulation, reproducing hierarchies that place non Western subjects at a disadvantage. At the same time, the film exposes itself that care as authority. The mother's refusal to fully conform to institutional expectations and her insistence on the legitimacy of her care foreground the limits of expert knowledge.

Overall, *Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway* stands as a form of critique of contemporary welfare institutions. Through a Decolonial reading, the film exposes how colonial patterns of power, knowledge and being continue to shape practices of care in the present. The project concludes that care, when imposed through rigid and Eurocentric standards, risks becoming a form of domination rather than support. The

film ultimately shows that without respect for cultural difference and lived experience, care can reproduce the same power hierarchies it claims to oppose.

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