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Neo-Colonial Subordination of Women in India in Gauri Shinde's *English Vinglish*

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By

Sangita Shrestha

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Sangita Shrestha has completed her thesis entitled “Neo-Colonial Subordination of Women in India in Gauri Shinde’s *English Vinglish*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from April 2014 to July 2015. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voice.

Jiblal Sapkota

Supervisor

Date: _____

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Neo-Colonial Subordination of Women in India in Gauri Shinde’s *English Vinglish*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Sangita Shrestha, has been approved by undersign members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

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Abstract

This thesis explores the issue of transformation of Shashi from a meek, doubtful, housewife to a woman who is confident and good at what she does. Satish, her husband and teen daughter Sapana mock her for her inability to speak in English. Furthermore, during her visit to America for her niece's marriage ceremony she gets a culture shock. And her distant relationship with her own family makes her more determined to learn conversational English. The film depicts Shashi's struggle to be a perfect home maker and help herself learning English. All with the help of her niece Radha, friends and teacher from English learning course, she gains back her confidence and acknowledges herself with respect. She learns that to be able to be loved by others in the first place, she herself has to love and respect herself. She makes her husband and daughter realize about her capabilities and what she can do and what extent she can go to gain back her respect and love she deserves. Ultimately Shashi becomes capable of loving her own language and have confidence intact as well and she raises above subordination and neo-colonialism.

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I. Neocolonialism, Subordination and Woman

This project focuses on Gauri Shinde's *English Vinglish* (2012), a story of Indian Homemaker. In particular, it explores the role of Shashi Godbole who is often overlooked by her daughter and husband. One of the reasons for them not to appreciate Shashi is that she is unable to speak English language. Shashi's entire existence is undermined because she doesn't speak English. Her teenage daughter and husband treat her with an affectionate disdain. Her limited knowledge of English and she being a homemaker limits her to the four walls of the house. Though Shashi in her own rights is a popular snack maker — her *boondi laddoos* are devoured by all her customers who respect her immensely — but her own family doesn't think much about her efforts. Yet she continues her *laddoo* business. The other reason for them not accepting her is because of the male patriarchal society. The thought of a woman who is termed as meek and weak character thoroughly comes through her husband Satish who is also the representative of the male in the society. However, the males are socialized to view themselves as breadwinners and heads of households whilst females are taught to be obedient and submissive housekeepers. Men are always overpowered with the sense of "I am man; she is woman. I am strong; she is weak. I am tough; she is tender. I am self-sufficient; she is needful" (Ruth 55).

The cause of such differentiation and discrimination is the fact that society views women as sexual beings and not as human beings (Charvet, 1982). McDowell and Pringle (1992) further state that, women are not only constantly defined— in relation to men, but are defined as dependent and subordinate to them as well. As a result, women are socialized to acquire those qualities, which fit them into a relationship of dependence on men. These qualities include gentleness, passivity, submission and striving to please men always.

Throughout the movie, Shashi has to deal with an impact of neocolonialism and even becomes the subject of subordination due to patriarchal society. The director Shinde deals with the female character as neocolonial subordination of women in India. The woman faces many obstacles, hindrances and has to struggle for her respect and dignity which she lacks in the family. Yet more she is more resistant. Women are always taken for granted. They are subordinated and are discriminated in the society just for being a female. In this regard Simone De Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* states,

woman has always been, if not man's slave, at least his vassal; the two sexes have never divided the world up equally; and still today, even though her condition is changing, woman is heavily handicapped. In no country is her legal status identical to man's, and often it puts her at a considerable disadvantage. Even when her rights are recognized abstractly, long-standing habit keeps them from being concretely manifested in customs. Economically, men and women almost form two castes; all things being equal, the former have better jobs, higher wages, and greater chances to succeed than their new female competitors; they occupy many more places in industry, in politics, and so forth, and they hold the most important positions. (29)

Likewise, drawing upon Gayatri Charavorty Spivak's concept of the character Shashi in the movie is noteworthy and influential character as she offers a critical position which undermines the predominantly masculinist neocolonial enterprise. A feminist literary analysis of the movie has however been quite in sparse in comparison to a general patriarchal notion of analysis of neocolonial subordination of women. This project seeks to plug this critical gap.

English Vinglish helps us see the women who are dominated by patriarchal society and are also a victim of neocolonial subordination. Not only the woman in *English Vinglish* is relegated to the centre of the story, but also she is vitally important as she illustrates the condition of a homemaker whose self-esteem and the respect she needs to gain from at least her family members is in disdain due to reason of not being able to converse in English language. Amidst the heartbreaking condition where she becomes the object of mockery by her loved ones, she resists being subordinated by learning the foreign language she is uncomfortable with. Dr. Asma Sayed in “English-Vinglish: Straddling Patriarchal and Linguistic Hegemony” in *Voices Awaaz*, highlights the position of a woman in a family and writes, “Gauri Shinde, the writer and director, takes charge of the issue of women’s role in a society still suffering from the colonial mindset where people’s worth is judged on the base of their proficiency in English.” (npag.)

The woman in the story is often taken for granted. Anupama Chopra highlights this situation in her review “Anupama Chopra Review: English Vinglish” in *Hindustan Times* stating, “Yet Shashi’s entire existence is undermined because she doesn’t speak English. Her teenage daughter and husband treat her with an affectionate disdain. It’s almost as if they consider her to be less intelligent because her language of communication is Hindi. At one point, Shashi ruefully asks her husband, “Important batein sirf English mein hi hoti hain? “(Do important talk must always done in English?) (npag.)

Likewise, Trisha Gupta in her review *Firstpost Bollywood Movie Review: English-Vinglish* focuses on the situation of a homemaker who is a mother, sister, daughter in law and wife. Her condition is full of injustice where her family takes her for granted. She does not get the appreciation she deserves even being exceptionally good at what she does. Meanwhile, Shashi is mocked by her daughter and husband

just because she is not good while conversing in English. And this becomes Shashi's great disadvantage that becomes a huge obstacle between mother and daughter and, husband and wife to understand as well as appreciate each other. This is the result because of the society being effected by neocolonialism where being a female Shashi faces the double complication to live her life full of dignity and acceptance in the family and the modern society. To this Trisha writes, "What Gauri Shinde's debut film insists on showing us is so deliberately unspectacular, so quiet and dull and taken-for-granted, that when we see it in real life (and we see it all the time), we merely avert our eyes. It is the predicament of the person whose personhood is summarily dismissed by a refusal to value the work they do—casually, perhaps without malice—but resulting in no less cruelty than if it were intentional." (npag.)

Shashi Godbole, a housewife who has a home-run business of making sweet snacks. Her husband Satish and daughter, Sapna take her for granted, mock her poor English skills and generally treat her with disrespect, making Shashi feel negative and insecure. The husband does not appreciate her efforts while working from home and taking good care of the family where he reduced her down to cooking. Meanwhile her teenage daughter is embarrassed to be around her because she does not speak in English and has a very simplistic attitude towards life and people.

However, her young son, Sagar and her mother-in-law likes her as she is. Shashi's older sister Manu living in New York invites Shashi's family for her daughter's wedding. It is then Shashi finds herself helpless where she has to go to New York alone to help Manu while Shashi's family will join her as the wedding approaches. From the beginning of her journey to America she faces difficulties where at the Airport she is cross questioned by the officer about her skill in speaking English language. The visa officer asks her about if she does not know English how is she going to cope in America. At that time the Indian visa officer says "the same way

you are living in India without knowing Hindi” which showed the suffering of woman living in once colonized country and the effect of neo-colonialism. Meanwhile, Kwame Nkrumah in *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of imperialism* writes:

Neo-colonialism, like colonialism, is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries. The temporary success of this policy can be seen in the ever-widening gap between the richer and the poorer nations of the world. But the internal contradictions and conflicts of neo-colonialism make it certain that it cannot endure as a permanent world policy. How it should be brought to an end is a problem that should be studied, above all, by the developed nations of the world, because it is they who will feel the full impact of the ultimate failure. The longer it continues the more certain it is that its inevitable collapse will destroy the social system of which they have made it a foundation. (npag.)

Her difficulties in everyday life just begins where she faces a traumatic experience at a coffee shop at New York due to her inability to communicate in English. Shashi went for walk with her niece Radha. While Radha attends her class Shashi was left alone at a park to wait for Radha to come and take her back. Shashi was feeling happy to look around new place and people. While she was sitting on a bench she feels that she is hungry and goes to nearby coffee shop. There she gets confused about what to ask for and as she is a vegetarian her difficulty adds up. She gets a culture shock where though she knew what she wanted she was unable to express it. She feels helpless and leaving her money she runs out from the shop full of tears. Then a stranger come to her with her coffee and sandwich. After this event, she feels the need of enrolling herself in an English language class and she is determined to learn English. In addition, while with her family and loved ones she experiences low self-

esteem in the family gathering as she does not understand English language. Then she helps herself and resist her difficulties by secretly enrolling in a conversational English class meant for four weeks and struggles herself to overcome her weakness; communicating in English as everybody around her make her feel incomplete because of lack of skill to talk in English.

As Shashi and her family is one example of being neo-colonised and Shashi being a women is further more affected because of patriarchal world subordinating women. This can be more clear in Jean-Paul Sartre's book *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* where he writes:

The third world is discovering itself and talking to itself through this voice. We know that it is not homogenous and that we still find subjugated peoples there, others who have acquired a false independence, others who are fighting to win sovereignty, and others, finally, who have won total freedom but who live under the constant threat of oppression. Here, the mother country contented itself with paying a few feudal landowners: there by dividing and ruling, it has artificially created a bourgeoisie of the colonized; elsewhere it has killed two birds with one stone by establishing a colony of exploitation and settlement. Thus European has multiplied divisions and oppositions, forged classes and sometimes racisms, attempted by every means to cause and to increase the stratification of the colonized societies. If revolutionary class triumphs, the national revolution will be socialist; if it's momentum is halted and the colonized bourgeoisie takes power, the new state, despite formal sovereignty, remains in the hands of the imperialists. This is illustrated rather well by the language of Katanga. Thus the unity of the third world is not established: it is an

enterprise in progress which goes via the union in each country, born before and after independence, of all the colonized under the command of the peasant class. That is what Fanon explains to his African, Asian and Latin American brothers: we shall achieve revolutionary socialism everywhere together, or we shall be defeated one by one by our former tyrants. (76)

As such the effect of colonization can be seen in the movie where Shashi has become the victim of neocolonialism where she is not gaining what she deserves. All the humiliation, heartbreaks and suffering Shashi is facing is because of neocolonialism where the language English was entered in India after India was colonized by England.

The protagonist of the movie Shashi would not face any of above mentioned difficulties if India was not colonized where there would not be any importance to English language at least within a house or among own family members.

Another point to be noted is the woman is relegated as a 'second sex'. About the Indian married women Kusum Sharma elaborates, "Under the existing cultural and social ethos of India a married girl / woman is no longer considered to be part of the family of her birth, instead she has become part of the family of the groom. Hence, after marriage the woman leaves her parental home and lives with her husband's family, where she is required to assume all household labor and domestic responsibilities." in "Women's situation in India" in Saarthak initiatives of relevance. (npag.)

Moreover, in relation to the theories of neocolonial subordination of woman in India where contemporary society can readily make for feminist issues precisely as families are increasingly superfluous, the result being that the exploitative relations between the sexes are more sharply defined and given expression. Shinde questions

this othering and takes woman as a human being. Shinde is against this othering of the females and is in tune in the presentation of females where her protagonist helps oneself to get out from neocolonial subordination.

Taran Adarsh in bollymoviereviewz.com reviewed *English Vinglish* and writes , “English Vinglish is the story of a woman who struggles with English and is made to feel insecure by her family and society at large. The film depicts the touching and transformational journey of a housewife, Shashi. Circumstances make her resolute to prevail over this lack of confidence, master the language, teach the world a lesson or two on the way to becoming a self-assured and confident woman.” (npag)

Shashi’s journey to a self-assured and confident woman had circumstances where the male dominated society many times block her way towards being a self-assured and confident woman. Meanwhile it is all because of heavy influence of neocolonialism where subordination of women added Shashi’s traumatic experience even within the family members.

Shashi’s daughter does not mind bad use of Hindi language by her teacher but she does not forgive her mother for not being able to converse in English. This also shows how neocolonialism has played along in third world countries where even without the presence of colonized rulers the normal people in third world countries like Shashi is being victimized through neocolonialism. It does not seem to recognize anyone’s skills or creativity but not knowing other’s language becomes a huge drawback even for people like Shashi with skills or creativity to do things on her own who is rearing her two children and even runs a business of her own.

Even her husband underestimates Shashi’s ability. Being in the influence of neocolonialism he denies Shashi’s ability and regards her skill as mere thing that every house wife should know for their husband. And her sole purpose being a women, wife, mother and daughter-in-law is to cook fine food for him and rear his

children. Except that nothing his wife does adds value in his fast pace modern lifestyle.

In an interview titled ‘A minute with Gauri Shinde on *English Vinglish*’ the director was questioned, “You said you’ve touched on the insecurity that Indians have of not being able to speak in English fluently. What do you think is the root cause of this insecurity?” To this Shinde answered, “I think it is to do with British colonization. It is to do with our history, our past. We have this tendency to look at any white people with great awe. And since they brought in this language, we think it is far more superior than what our languages are. It is quite sad because all languages are equal. Not that English is any less, but a language should not be an indicator of feeling superior. In Europe, they aren't so fluent (in English) but they speak their language with pride." (npag)

The primary objective of this study is to explore the issues of women. It aims at deconstructing patriarchal binaries in order to establish the women as a source of hope and integration amidst the circumstances like subordination, neo colonization and othering of women. Feminism always aims at defining, establishing and defending equal political, economic and social rights for women. Feminism also seeks to establish equal opportunities for women in education and employment. Lois Tyson narrates about the process of analyzing any literary text from a feminist perspective and states, “From a feminist perspective, when we interpret texts or anything else, the way to deal with our subjectivity is not to try to avoid it but to be aware of it as possible, to include it in our interpretation as fully as possible, so that others will be able to take it into account when evaluating our viewpoints” (95).

Feminism is a political movement which emerged in the late 1960s with an aim of defining, establishing and defending equal political, economic and social rights for women both in theory and practice. In addition to that, feminism seeks to establish

equal opportunities for women in education and employment. Feminism speaks to the specificities of geography, culture, and needs of women who were left on the periphery. The term 'Feminists' or 'Feminism' are political labels indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement which is committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism.

Feminist theory is inherently linked with women's political movements and their struggle to free themselves from the gender biases of the patriarchal society. It aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and lived experiences and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality.

Feminism primarily deals with the unequal relationship between the males and females. Men are in public domain as breadwinners, spiritual leaders, political leaders and women within the family as home-makers or housewives. The males are supposed to be independent, self-reliant, educated, centered, active and having the knowledge of good and evil; whereas the females are supposed to be dependent, weak, emotional, irrational, docile and marginalized. Whatever positive attributes men claimed for themselves, their opposites were affixed to women. In this regard, Simone de Beauvoir in her highly acclaimed book *The Second Sex* writes: "man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity" (xv). This presentation of the male as both positive and neutral is resulted from the subordination tendency.

The position of different social groups in the social and political space is not always equal in practice. This is particularly so in the case of women. The nature of society has a decisive impact on the extent and effectiveness of women's presence, participation, and protection of their individual rights. The issue of inequality of men and women has always been widely discussed in human society. Generally, women

have been seen as inferior to men in terms of their qualities, capacities and their roles in society. Patriarchy fosters gender-based inequalities that decides male as superior and women as inferior, man as powerful and female as powerless. Patriarchy considerably gives the right only to the males so that females are left as the desirable beings of males. In a patriarchal society, male treats female as a thing but not as a human being. Women have to live in formulated expression and discrimination on the basis of sex, race, age, class, religion etc. in such societies. Men are always overpowered with the sense of manhood and masculinity.

The male-centered society exploits the eternal light of females and imposes unnecessary restriction upon the female thought. In patriarchal society, male treats female as a thing but not as a human being. The woman is known not by herself for she has no independent value or identity — she is defined in relation to the man. According to Beauvoir, women is accordingly defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her” (44). Man discursively constructs woman as his binary opposite. Where she is the “incidental, the inessential as opposed to essential,” he is the “subject, he is the Absolute- - she is the other” (44).

The patriarchy forces women to do whatever males like. We can find the ill treatment to women and at the same time they are seen more responsible in the society. They have to do everything but the males have nothing to do: “Like maleness, femaleness is not a fixed inalienable quantity: it is, rather, a mode of social being and so a historically specific value which can be redistributed and reformulated” (Sangari 28-29).

Most of the feminists have accepted that the concept of femaleness is biological. It is related to female body and female experience but femininity is actually and essentially a cultural product. Gender roles, inequalities and power imbalances are set by the systems and cultures in which we live. Feminists believe that sex is

determined biologically but gender is a psychological concept which refers to culturally acquired social identity. Ann Oakley believes that “gender has psychological and cultural rather than biological connotations. . .” (158).

As such, masculinity and femininity are the psychological characteristics of men and women and of the different roles that men and women play. From the time they are born, males and females are treated differently in both obvious and subtle ways and are expected to behave differently. These attributes are described by Stevi Jackson in her book *Feminism and Sexuality*. She has noted: “Masculinity and femininity are defined not by biology but by social, cultural and psychological attributes which are acquired through becoming a man or a woman in a particular society at a particular time” (133).

The images of women in a patriarchal society are full of contradictions. Women become the subject of male dreams and idealizations. Woman is defined accordingly in terms of a man’s need at certain moments. Woman is characterized either as good angel or as evil monster or a witch. On the same note, Sheila Ruth claims, “This bifurcation of images is called the Mary/Eve dichotomy: Woman is represented as being at once a manifestation of the divine and an incarnation of evil” (87). Women are represented as having dual nature, of being all that is desirable, fascinating and wonderful, yet extremely destructive and dangerous. This dichotomy in the representation of women is a strong indication of extreme ambivalence on the part of men.

Women are considered as inferior and second class, while men are perceived as the superior beings. As so-called inferior beings, women have been assigned subordinate and peripheral position in society. The patriarchal society always learns to make the females as victims. This society treats women negatively, thinking that they are not human beings as males. Patriarchy does not accept the female world equally

and ignores and suppresses female values. That's why women do not hold roles of authority or any esteemed significance in their families and communities. Women have no voice regarding their own rights, and are unable to participate in any major decision-making process regarding themselves or their families. In the male-dominated cultures women are submissive and subservient. Males say it is women's nature that they are excluded from frontage. But according to Mary O' Brien, "it was not women's nature that excluded them from culture, public and work. It was the construction of the historically male public world of work, which separates men (and "pseudo men") from the so-called private care of children" (34).

The women are more alert of their existence. They have realized their undervalued position being imprisoned within the narrow domestic world of mothering and house managing. They express their desire that women should also be a part of history, and emphasize upon equality or legal reform for women's rights. They revolt against patriarchy for the equality, autonomy, the end of gendered discrimination and most importantly their own freedom. As Meena Kelkar and Deepti Gangavane define, "Freedom is a state of mind where in one can doubt and question everything and therefore it is so intense, active and vigorous that it throws away every form of dependence (and) slavery" (25). That's why, they want to correct and reform the set of stereotypes about women. They tend to seek for their own dreams and desires and seek to revive while upholding the values.

Maternal nurturing, housework and financial management are the cultural roles that are assigned to women from the beginning of human civilization. Women are gifted with compassion, tender-heartedness, caring nature and concern for others. With these provided gifts the women try to maintain harmony in the family and society while revolting for individual freedom and personal identity within the same socio-political structure. Women accept and enjoy the cultural roles and values while

refusing to be identified as an appendage and a second class citizen, 'the other' in the society.

Living within the patriarchal society, women are very aware of their self respect and individuality, and the serious consciousness of self-existence makes them rebel against any condescending behavior from the men. The women demand freedom and self-authority. The women want their independent existence. They don't accept the dual identity designed by patriarchy. They want to assert their position as a human being not as a silent, passive, obedient and docile creature for patriarchal use and pleasure. They search for their own meaning and position in the same milieu where they live in. In this regard, Sasha Walby asserts, "Women are formally equal citizens and most women are paid workers, women are still expected to be domestic creatures first and foremost, as wives, and to put the needs and interests of other before their own" (100).

The women know patriarchy has some evils but can be and should be corrected living within the same structure. They don't want to be escapist and separatist from the male society. They value familial structure but are against patriarchal domination and exploitation upon women. The women are aware that life has no meaning out of family and society. They also think solution of any problem can be achieved through compromise and mutual understanding. They are in favor of emancipation as emancipation is a fearless situation where women have love, social inspiration, self-awareness, and freedom, within the limit of social ethos. Liberation brings happiness and realization of their self. As Quasim Amin defines, liberty is "a person's independence of thought, will and action, as long as this does not exceed legal limits and maintains the moral standards of society" (16). Liberation for women is consisted of the unflinching confidence in their selves and actions along with the acceptance of socio-cultural values of the society where they live in. This liberation

can only be achieved through compromise. Their compromise is not one sided, temporary and further encouraging the patriarchal domination but one firm step ahead to institutionalize them and to realize the freedom and autonomy within the institutions through self-assertion and self-reliance. They believe that true freedom and emancipation comes through compromise-mutual coexistence with the men in the society.

As far as women are concerned, they accept the feminine responsibilities given by nature and prescribed by the patriarchal society on the condition that they recognize their 'self' as an individual with their own ideas and emotions. In this context, Jasbir Jain comments on the nature of women: "She is simultaneously able to achieve two things- one, recognize the value of feminine virtues for society and human survival and second in the process also free them from the category of gender" (121).

In a nutshell, women happily accept the natural role provided by the nature and strongly support the concept of co-existence. But they are not ready to be submissive, docile and passive creatures to be tamed by patriarchy. They value the familial and societal norms and prefer to come to terms with the males for the social harmony.

However, patriarchy brings the concept of hierarchy for its own vested interest. The women are not unknown about this hierarchal condition in the society. It is the common experience of suffering and oppression that makes the bonding between females stronger and more effective, i.e. in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's words; it is 'strategic essentialism'.

Thus, feminism provides a new spectacle to look at the literary text to analyze whether the events and situations in the texts carry any sort of stereotypes of patriarchy and tries to make the people aware of such domination. So, the feminist

critic urges everyone to observe the text from the perspective of women. Using the same spectacle as the tool, minute observation of *English Vinglish* has been made.

This project makes significant contribution in two areas of critical concern. First this study brings the issues of women in limelight with the purview of critical analysis. Second, this study makes a significant connection between the women, hope and resistance where women are the major sufferers due to patriarchal society and their plight is added more because of neocolonialism. This study shows the optimistic nature of women even being subordinated, rejected and unappreciated for their efforts.

To achieve the aforesaid objective the thesis focuses on the condition of females and their socio-political condition in the context of India. This study concentrates on the analysis of women as a source of hope and social integration. Though previous criticisms have pointed out the female problems in the film, they are very far from a comprehensive theoretical analysis. This study attempts to fulfill that lack by discussing the problems, suffering and struggle for freedom of the women.

To study this text from the feminist perspective, this researcher has divided this thesis into three major parts. The first part is introduction to the research which gives a description of how subordination became an abhorrent reality in the life of female and how they become a source for resistance while discussing the film from a feminist perspective. The second part is the textual analysis which analyses the condition of Indian women in the different forms of subordination yet focuses on the hopeful nature of women who seek happiness in unity and are the major sources for social integration by being self enlighten. And the third part is about the women who revolt against the patriarchal dominance while upholding the same traditional roles.

II. Neo-Colonial Subordination of Women and Resistance

This chapter focuses on textual analysis of the film *English Vinglish* by applying neo-colonial perspectives. Specifically the theorist Kwamen Nkrumah in Neo-Colonialism *The Last Stage of Imperialism* states, “Neo-colonialism is also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony, those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case. Neo-colonialism, like colonialism, is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries.” (XI)

That means neo-colonialism, like colonialism is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries. Neo-Colonialism is based upon the principle of breaking up former large united colonial territories into a number of small non-viable states which are incapable of independent development and must rely upon the former imperial power. One variant of neo-colonialism theory suggest the existence of cultural colonialism, the alleged desire of wealthy nations to control other nation’s values and perceptions through cultural means, such as media, language, education and religion purportedly ultimately for economic reasons. People once subject to colonial or imperial rule, latch onto physical and cultural differences between the foreigners and themselves leading same to associate power and success with the foreigners’ way.

This eventually leads to the foreigners’ ways being regarded as the better way and being held in a higher esteem than previous indigenous way. We are familiar with the fact that Film is an art Rudolf Arnheim said, “The pleasure given by film derived almost entirely from the subject matter. Box-office success depends even now much

more on what is shown than on whether it is shown artistically' (7) The main subject matter of this film is the struggle of Indian homemaker to be respectful amongst her family members and get rid of humiliation and insecurities raised due to lack of knowledge of English language.

In the film *Gauri Shinde*, the writer and director, takes charge of the issue of women's role in a society still suffering from the colonial mindset where people's worth is judged on the base of their proficiency in English. And Paul Gilroy in *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures, Serpent's Tail*, 1993, P 49 writes,

“Nation are created ‘through elaborate cultural, ideological and political processes which culminate in (the individual's) feeling of connectedness to other national subjects and in the idea of a national interest that transcends the supposedly petty divisions of class, region, dialect or caste.”

In other words, nation is the combination of people from communities where combination of numerous communities makes the nation. In each community, there is diversity of culture, language, beliefs and more. The sum total of all these aspects creates an identity to the people of the nation. Hence, creating a sense of connectedness between the people of different communities, though being different people from same nation supports each other having mutual co-operation and understanding between them. Therefore creates a sense of brotherhood and support to each other. In the same way Shashi's family with her mother-in-law, husband, daughter and son live life together as an ideal family of India. However, there creates a conflict between Shashi and, her husband and daughter because of the neo-colonial effect lingering in India where a person's worth is judged by his/her competence of speaking in English. Shashi being a homemaker and not having fluency in her English speaking, constantly get humiliation by her own husband and daughter. Here the culture of colonialist dominates Shashi and even being exceptionally talented in what

she does she is mocked, humiliated and disdain where her capability is also taken for granted. Shashi, the housewife in question, is prompted by being patronized and mocked respectively by her husband and teenage daughter back in Pune. But *English Vinglish* is about much more than a mother wanting to learn English to gain the respect of her family. It asks some important questions about the competing pressures placed on women in emerging societies, and the power structures within which these women are themselves seeking to ‘emerge.’

It also highlights a tension inherent in modernization: how much of yourself and your values are you prepared to give up by becoming modern? And who ultimately benefits?

Shashi’s journey is a narrative of emancipation, for sure. And yet her transformation carries some fascinating paradoxes. A poster advertising English classes on the New York subway tells her: “Uncle Sam wants you to learn English”. This is an overt admission of American cultural hegemony – can English, the language of the patriarchy, really set you free? And when, after receiving a belittling, contemptuous phone call from her teenage daughter, Shashi reacts by, unwittingly, ordering a meal in perfect English, she does it with the specificity of a high-maintenance Manhattanite.

For Joseph Goebbels, the concept of cultural resistance is semiotic analysis. He says, “When I hear the word culture I reach for my revolver” (1). Culture is always on the side of power, the subordinate always resist socially dominant forms of cultural power. It seems to be happen everywhere and all of the time-from positions of relative cultural powerlessness. In Gauri Shinde’s film *English Vinglish* the main character Shashi resist this cultural humiliation time and again. When Satish, Shashi’s husband could not attend PTA meeting at Sapna’s school Shashi is told to go to

school for the meeting where first she hesitates but later Sapna's harsh words make Shashi angry a form of resistance and commands Sapna to be ready to go to school.

Sapana: No!No!No! Dad how could you do this? Please.

Shashi: Sapna... what happened Satish? Why is Sapna yelling?

Satish: Shashi... I won't be able to go to the PTA meeting .

Shashi: How can you do this? No wonder she is angry...

Satish: I told her you will go with her...

Shashi: Me? How can I

Satish: What do you mean by how? Aren't you a parent too?

Shashi: What will I say there?

Satish: Don't be silly Shashi... you're not going into a jungle it's a school... they are not going to eat you now I have to go... bye

Shashi: I'll...

Sapna: No need to come I will tell them you are ill and dad's not in town

Shashi: Why ill? Tell them I'm dead

Sapna: Don't be dramatic mom. Do you even know what PTA means?

Shashi: No... I may not know the meaning of PTA... but I certainly know the meaning of a parent. Now before I get really angry... go get ready... (12:06)

This shows that Shashi has never been the part of parent teacher appointment (PTA) and has always been suppressed to do house hold chores. Shashi got the chance to participate in the PTA just because Satish was busy. Meanwhile Sapna loses her temper as she has to be with her mom not her dad in the PTA where she even humiliates Shashi's lack of English where Shashi resists telling her that though she does not know the meaning of PTA but she knows the meaning of being a parent.

Shashi's knowledge of English is limited, and her teen daughter, the older of the two children in the family, and her husband Satish continuously make fun of her linguistic incompetency. The daughter is embarrassed about her mother's minimal knowledge of English and does not want Shashi to go to school with her as Shashi will not be able to converse in English with other mothers or with the principal of the convent school. Satish is complicit in deriding Shashi's weaknesses. Shashi feels justifiably belittled and insecure. Nonetheless, despite the lack of appreciation that her family shows toward her, Shashi never sways in performing her motherly and wifely duties. As part of a patriarchal system that she doesn't explicitly question, she accepts that Satish expects her to have his breakfast ready in the morning, and that she be ready to warm his bed by night.

As such, Shashi spends her time doing all the household chores and running her small business, and never finds a moment for herself. Shashi is facing such difficulties in her everyday life as India was once colonized and Indians have always suppressed women in their society where characters like Shashi have to pay the price. The neo-colonial aspect in once colonized country like India has double colonized the women where they are dominated by male chauvinist society along with the aftermath of colonization in form of language and cultural barrier adding more pressure and weight on the form of suppression.

This leads to double colonization of women in country like India where Petersen and Rutherford argue that a male ethos has persisted in the colonial and post-colonial world' (A Double Colonisation, P 9). They crucially point out that both colonialism and resistances to it can be seen as male-centred. This complicates the extent to which they offer freedom to women.

For example, Ketu H. Katrak has argued in 'Indian Nationalism, Gandhian "Satyagraha" and the Engendering of National narratives' (in Nationalisms and

Sexualities, ed. Andrew Parker et al., Routledge, 1992) that Mahatma Gandhi's resistance to British colonial rule in India during the 1920s and 1930s used specifically gendered representations for the purpose of Indian nationalism but ultimately did little to free Indian women from their patriarchal subordination to men.

Gandhi's involvement of women in his 'satyagraha' (literally, truth force) movement—part of his political strategy for national liberation—did not intend to confuse men's and women's roles; in particular, Gandhi did not challenge patriarchal traditions that oppressed women within the home. Furthermore, his specific representations of women and female sexuality, and his symbolizing from Hindu mythology of selected female figures who embodied a nationalist spirit promoted... a 'traditional' ideology wherein female sexuality was legitimately embodied only in marriage, wifhood, domesticity—all forms of controlling women's bodies. (PP 395-6)

In the film *Shashi* after so many incidents where her daughter crushes Shashi's heart taking advantage of Shashi's weakness that is her little knowledge in English. She inquires her value with her husband:

Shashi: Tell me... why did you marry me?

Satish: What can I say... One look at you and I was hooked! Isn't there any water?

Shashi: Why didn't you marry a modern woman?

Satish: If I gave it so much thought why would I get married at all...It's a joke Shashi... come on what's come over you?

Shashi: No matter how hard I try... I just can't seem to please anyone.

Satish: Sapna's just a child.

Shashi: And you? (18:08)

The conversation between Shashi and Satish directly associated with the double colonization of the women in India where the neo-colonialism has haunted Shashi a person who is loving caring along with talents to do something on her own but constantly fails to get respect that she deserves. Incidentally, performing another of her traditional roles, Shashi has to travel to America alone to help her sister plan her daughter's wedding. Once in America, she reads a billboard advertising English classes that promise fluency in four weeks. Shashi starts attending classes. Shashi's classmates are from various ethnicities and nationalities; all of them are struggling with their language skills and ultimately become good friends as they learn English. One of her classmates, a Frenchman Laurent, falls in love with Shashi. As the film progresses, Shashi's husband and children come to Manhattan to attend the wedding. Shashi, who has been making all the arrangements for the wedding, makes laddoos for the party. When Satish makes the statement that —“My wife was born to make laddoos”—Shashi is supported by her niece who reminds Shashi that she is capable of much more than laddoo-making and is far more competent than her husband perceives her to be. Meanwhile, talking about the ways of neo-colonialism works in once colonized country Frantz Fanon says:

In an under-developed country an authentic national middle class ought to consider as its bounden duty to betray the calling fate has marked out for it, and to put itself to school with the people : in other words to put at the people's disposal the intellectual and technical capital that it has snatched when going through the colonial universities. But unhappily we shall see that very often the national middle class does not follow this heroic, positive, fruitful and just path; rather, it disappears with its soul set at peace into the shocking ways—shocking because anti-national— of a traditional bourgeoisie, of a

bourgeoisie which is stupidly, contemptibly, cynically bourgeois. (120-1)

As follows in the research of film, Shashi and her family is from a middle class family. Like any other middle class family Shashi's family has also enrolled the daughter of the house Sapna and son Sagar in a convent school. India even having independence due to the aftermath of colonial aspect and due to the mentality of middle class family in India about the getting educated in convent school will secure a better future for their children has helped to intensify effect of neo-colonialism in subordinated women like Shashi whereas Shashi is being victimized in this accordance. The colonial impact has affected the mindset of the once colonized land where the people who are not colonized now are desperate to follow the education, culture and language of former colonial rulers. Shashi trying to fulfill the role of a perfect homemaker give breakfast to everyone while her daughter did not want her paratha's or bread where Sapna asks for particular things on the breakfast table making Shashi's hard work of the morning taken for granted. Along with that she gets mocked and laugh at her pronunciation of 'Jazz' dance by her husband and daughter:

Shashi: This brown bread, white egg all started since you joined this new dance class that... that Jhaaz dance! (Sapna and Satish giggles on her pronunciation)

Shashi: What's so funny?

Sapna: I can't control it... it's too funny... mama... say... what dance?

What class? Which class?

Shashi: Eat your omlette

Sapna: Where's the omelette? There's only toast and paratha here.

(giggles) come on dad.. let's do the Jhaaz dance (4:30)

Though the daughter is mocking her mother's little knowledge about this new culture and new term 'Jazz' her husband supports Sapna and accompanies her belittling Shashi. They were having fun teasing Shashi where as Shashi's confidence tremble after being teased. It hurt Shashi's feeling and feels she does not belong to them and she needs something more than what she is doing right now. In accordance to it Lord Macaulay, president of the Council of Education in India, put thus in his now infamous 'Minute on Indian Education' of 1835:

It is impossible for us, with our limited means to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." (p 430)

It can be seen that Sapna who is a seventh grader and who goes to a convent school for education disowns her own culture and identity. She wants brown bread instead of paratha and she likes to do dance Jazz other than Indian dance. In addition even mocks her mother, belittle her and hurts her mother's pride only because she does not know English language. And in entire film she has took her mother for granted and did not understand the value of mother like Shashi who is excellent in everything who manages her house, takes care of her family and even runs her own snack business where her customers praise her a lot and gives respect. But her worth is valued in terms of her ability to speak in English by her own daughter. After returning home from PTA meeting Shashi is scolded by her daughter which breaks Sashi's heart badly:

Sashi: Everything was fine.

Sapna: (shouts) Banana chips? Is Father Vincent your uncle?

Sashi: Father Vincent was so kind...so polite... he said something in jest and I went along with it. He didn't seem to mind at all. He made me feel so comfortable by talking in Hindi.

Sapna: And you made him feel so uncomfortable... by talking in Hindi. Dad should have come... and you were talking in Hindi with Rupel's mom, each time I had to answer for you.

Sashi: I'm failed. (17:22)

Sashi belittle herself and loses her self confidence and she gets a cultural shock at Manhattan when she was ordering food in a café. This trauma leads her to realizing that she need to learn English if she wants her lost dignity and respect back.

On top of that Shashi is dominated by the patriarchy society where even her family members are unaware of how Shashi is feeling and about her insecurities going to America alone. And in America too her sister too did not understand Shashi and leaves her alone in the home though with keys did not guide Shashi about the difference living in India and America. Either her sister or her husband talked about what Shashi might face in totally new surrounding with different culture from how she is living in India. These things too played vital role that victimized Shashi with neo-colonial aspect during her visit to America.

When Shashi gets hungry while roaming and waiting for Radha at a square, she goes to a nearby café to have something to eat. There the rude staff humiliates Shashi as Shashi was taking her time to figure out what to eat where here lack of efficiency in speaking and understanding English make her experience worst moment of her life being called stupid in front of lots of people in the cafe:

Man: This lady is so rude...must having a bad day.

Man: Can I get a regular coffee and blueberry muffin

Staff: Here's your receipt...Please pick up your food over there...

Man: Okay... Have a nice day.

Staff: Next... How you doing today maam?

Shashi: I want...

Staff: I asked how you were doing today.

Shashi: Doing...I'm doing... I'm doing

Staff: You cannot take all that time, I got a long line here.

Shashi: Sorry...What to eat?

Staff: Are you kidding me right now...please hurry up lady.

Shashi: Vegetarian

Staff: Vegetarian is fine but what do you want to eat. A bagel...a wrap...a sandwich?

Shashi: Sandwich

Staff: And what kind of filling do you want inside! Do you want cheese, tomatoes...lettuce...?

Shashi:Uhm...

Staff: lady... you're holding up my line... this is not rocket science.

Cheese (Shows the cheese)

Shashi: Yes cheese.

Staff: Yes to cheese. Anything to drink?

Shashi: Water.

Staff: Still or sparkling?

Shasi: Only water.

Staff: Still or sparkling? (get angry)

Shashi: Coffee

Staff: Americano, Cappuccino, latte?

Shashi: Nescoffee

Staff: Yes, nice coffee. We have best coffee, anyway I'll give you cappuccino. (25:05)

This is an example of Shashi getting a cultural shock where she becomes determined she has to learn English anyhow. Because before this experience she was feeling humiliated only at her home and it was her own family members—husband and daughter who were mocking her English speaking skill. The language English, the language of colonizers made Shashi nervous and uncomfortable. It was the staff at café who was rude and uncooperative while here ability to speak in English and being a native of America the people felt there was mistake from Shashi's side while all her fault was nothing but her lack of English language.

Meanwhile, women are always subordinated, discriminated, marginalized and alienated in the society. By that problem, women attempt to fight against the system which is authorized by patriarchal culture. Thus, the struggle of women is substantively to fight against the ideology of patriarchy which is symbolic in the form of traditional rule. Due to the domination by male chauvinistic society Shashi's psyche is penetrated with the fact that searching for own existence and individuality brings a thunderstorm in the females. And in the film too Shashi's new-found self-determination threatens to destabilize Shashi's sense of herself and her own values – prompting her at one point to lament 'What's happened to me? English has become more important than my children'. This discomfort with one's own transformation, the loss of familiar moorings, is another familiar component of the experience of women in emerging societies and a situation showing double colonization of in modern Indian society.

The women want to transform the patriarchal society in a positive way without being extra rebellious. They struggle to assert their self, for self-reliance, self-decision and autonomous existence living within the same social milieu. They

challenge the patriarchal society through acceptance. This has been elaborated in *Beginning Postcolonialism* by John McLeod:

We shall consider the extent to which Western feminist discourses are able to address the double colonization of women living in once colonized societies and in western locations. As we shall see, Western or 'First World' feminism has come in for much criticism from postcolonial critics due to the lack of attention paid to the problems suffered by women with links to countries with a history of colonialism. In opening up these debates, we can also think about issues such as female agency, the articulation of women's voices and the relationship between feminist critics and their subject matter, as well as recognize the creative dialogues that are enabled by the encounters between 'First World' feminism and women from once-colonized countries. (181)

It is important, however to note that the females' acceptance and resistance as two alternative coping responses to the domination are inspired by love and compassion. Their love for the children and their compassion for one another endow them with enough strength and resilience to endure the adversity. The women's decision to accept or resist the male domination is for the most part contingent on their care and concern for others. Their resistance is most often inspired by their devotion and compassion. They are aware that emancipation of females is not enough. Their own identity and newness should be there. In this context, bell hooks states, "that opposition is not enough. In that vacant space after one has resisted there is still the necessity to become oneself anew" (15).

Shashi finally chooses to resolve it by reasserting her adherence to her own traditional values, when an accident prompts her to choose making *laddoos* – the

activity her overbearing husband believes she was “born to do” - over taking her English exam. Now again surrounded by the family she had to leave behind to learn to respect herself, she is starting to slide back into her ‘humble housewife’ role, her transformation fleeting and possibly illusory. But a decidedly Indian dues leaps to the rescue from the Manhattan when her classmates (representing globalization and the aspiration to progress of all non-English-speaking people) rock up at the wedding. Their presence emboldens her to deliver the speech, which makes her transformation complete. The women want to transform the patriarchal society in a positive way without being extra rebellious. They struggle to assert their self, for self- reliance, self-decision and autonomous existence living within the same social milieu. They challenge the patriarchal society through acceptance.

At the wedding party, Shashi gives a speech—yes, in English. She reminds the couple getting married, as well as her husband and daughter, of the value of family and the need to support one another without being ‘judgmental’ – a word Shashi has picked up from one of the many English films she has watched to learn the language. After her speech, both Satish and their daughter apologize to Shashi for their ill-manners. However, this repentance emanates only after Shashi has learned English and in so doing learned her own self-worth. Shashi comes to appreciate herself, her work and her identity, and becomes a more confident woman :

Shashi: Meera kavin this marriage is a beautiful things. It is the most special friendship. Friendship of two people who are equal. Life is a long journey. Meera, sometime you will feel your are less. Kevin you will also feel you are less than Meera. Try to help each other to feel equal it will be nice. Sometime married couple don’t even know how the other is feeling. So how do they help the other? It means marriage is finished? No, that is the time you have to help yourself. Nobody can

help you better than you. If you do that...you will return back feeling equal, your friendship will return back... your life will be beautiful. Meera... Kevin... maybe you will very busy... but have family. Son... daughter... in this big world your small world. It will make you feel so good. Family... Family can never be judgmental. Family will never put you down. Will never make you feel small. Family is the only one who will never laugh at your weaknesses. Family is the only place where you will always get love and respect. (2:05:22 to 2:02:15)

Likewise, realization of the self as an individual personality is to be herself and to transcend the narrow demarcation on the dependence on man which contributes to the widespread development of women's personality. Consciousness of the self produces the duty and responsibilities towards themselves, reminding who they are and what they are. The same awareness of the self leads them to independence and freedom from the submissive domination. Self confidence is a way to make a separate identity where they identify themselves different from others; they become strong enough to decide their action and behavior. According to Spivak, throughout(post)modernity, between the twin poles of (neo)colonialism and indigenous patriarchy, "the figure of the woman (forever) disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (1988:102)

Director Shinde has showed through the character Shashi how third-world woman is caught between tradition and modernization. At one point in the film Shashi questions her responsibility and role leaving behind her quest to learn English for her own growth. Shashi being tangled between her responsibility and existence chooses her responsibility. However, with the support of her niece Radha she tends to resist subordination. And Foucault comes to address the issue of freedom which is simply

related in the concluding scene of film. In the movie, Shashi battle to shape her life desirably until the last episode of the movie. Foucault says:

We are not passively shaped by forms of power. Power always involves a relation of struggle, in which some try to direct the activities of others, who in turn resist and strive to counter these impositions. System of power emerge to extent that resistance is overcome and individuals are rendered docile and predictable. At the same time, the possibility of resistance can never entirely be eliminated (155).

To paraphrase above statement, resistance brings identity with a certain time in society. He says that we are no passively shaped by power. Exercise of power makes us capable to fight against the activities of others. Similarly, Shashi battles against the activities of her family members and in foreign land. Therefore, resistance of women against the patriarchy neo-colonial world can be seen in the movie. The same way, further, the development of critical positions and new theory must be linked with power of communities, groups, organizations and networks of people who are actively involved in social and cultural change and shape. Social movement demands positive images but give up the requirement for assimilation. All women are held to be of equal status and gave the right to have liberty and freedom. So, the resistance is requirement for the women who are neglected and taken for granted in neo-colonial society with chauvinistic thinking like the character Shashi in film *English Vinglish*.

Meanwhile the institution of motherhood is much glamorized in contemporary societies in that a woman is deemed incomplete if she is unwilling or unable to conceive. Motherhood is still considered a central tenet of female identity. And yet, in a changing neoliberal and patriarchal society people fail to see the value of women's domestic chores including those related to motherhood, and as such mother-work is neither socially respected nor valued economically. This reality is reinforced at the

end of the film for Shashi's role does not change – she is still the same housewife and a doting mother – although one who can now speak English. Shashi's speech about family values brings her right back to square one; thus, Shashi's role is static.

Therefore, the film does not suggest any radical transformation of women's social roles. It merely demands from them a higher level of education that, while potentially personally fulfilling, is not intended to challenge their traditional roles and could be argued to be simply placing more pressure on women. Moreover, the audience does not get a glimpse into Shashi's feelings for Laurent; when her niece questions her about Laurent, all that Shashi says is that she does not need love, but respect. Shashi thanks Laurent for making her feel special, but as a dedicated Indian wife, she is not allowed to have any feelings of her own, and she goes right back to the husband who didn't appreciate her much – one is to be hopeful that he will be a changed person when they land in India off the airplane from America, but then, can the patriarchal ideologies that have been internalized over the years be forgotten that quickly? After all, following more than six decades of decolonization, India has not unlearned the hegemony of English.

The role of language has been debated continuously in the post-colonial world. While English came to countries such as India and Africa as a result of colonization, it has endured and, in India, now has a much stronger hold than during the colonial period. English has become a tool of what R. Radhakrishnan has called “cultural modernization.” However, English has been a contested language in post-colonial world at large. For instance, while Ngugi Wa Thiong'o wrote that “language is a collective memory bank of people's experience in history” and refused to write in English, Chinua Achebe declared that the language that the colonizers left behind belonged to him. While he decided to use it, he saw it as remade via appropriation: for the English he used had “to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral

home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.” Whether it is Standard English, or appropriated, favoring the language at the cost of indigenous languages is a political move and a culture-altering exercise.

III. Resistance of Women

This research reveals the condition of women in India, a land that was once colonized by British, gender discrimination and further subordination of women through neo-colonization and resistance of a woman. It analyses the condition of modern woman in such a background. Women become the source of hope and integrity despite domination, subjugation, dehumanization and exploitation. The women are powerful enough to resist all the critical situations. They do not choose alienation, isolation or prefer to explore on own despite the humiliation, disgust and disdain in their family. In spite of the sufferance and inferiority, the women succeed to present themselves as the sources of hope and integration resisting, and at times revolting while upholding the same traditional roles. They seek to revise while upholding them.

Shashi is the representative of the Indian women or the women from the third world/once colonized country who is double victimized by patriarchal ideology and neo-colonialism. Through the help of this character Sindhe has tried to reveal the pathetic condition of modern women. How do the women become the victim of their family, society and country? How have they been marginalized? How have they become mere puppets in the hands of a male dominated society? This research has tried to address these questions.

The males and indirect colonialism coalesce to render female more invisible in the context of Indian society and cause them to be more oppressed and dependent in the private sphere of the family. So the woman struggles against such domination to assert a respectable position for themselves with the acceptance of their status quo. The analysis of the film reveals the women's sacrifice is triggered by their maternal sense of responsibility, love and empathy. On this note, the women's resistance is seen to be the manifestation of their feminine sentimentalism. Meanwhile, those who

lack the knowledge of English have to prove their worth by learning the language of colonizers. In not moving away from a colonialist mind frame, Indians are fulfilling Lord Macaulay's desire, expressed in his 1835 "Minute on Education", "to form a class of persons, Indians in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions..." It is an irony that in a country which has its own richness of multiple languages, the hegemony of English has outlasted British colonial times.

Ultimately the film is about an Indian woman's moral and family values—Shashi shows no interest in Laurent, the Frenchman who loves her, nor does she even once abandon her *saree* and *mangal sutra*—signifiers of a married Hindu woman when in America. At the end, Shashi is just an English-speaking sacrificial Indian woman—not a woman who has awakened to her rights or to her own needs. Shashi's confidence returns after she found acceptance by a Frenchman, and after her husband and daughter have found her worth enhanced due to her English speaking skills. This is a classic example of patriarchal and linguistic supremacy. Shashi depends on the approval of men to feel good about herself. She also proves her worth by learning English. Therefore, one cannot deny that English has become a lingua franca in India, and that sadly, there is linguistic hierarchy in the nation with English as the ticket to upward mobility. Thus, the fact that in the film, Shashi proves her worth by learning English showcases India's highly colonialist linguistic history or neo-colonialism in current terms.

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