

Epistemic Colonization: Assertion of Colonial and Erasure of Indigenous Knowledge and Culture through Survivance

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<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2025.14.2.118>

Abstract

This study examines the dynamics of epistemic colonization and the process of decolonization in Uzma Aslam Khan's The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali. Drawing on Walter Dignolo's theory of decoloniality, the study explores how colonial powers imposed language, religious ideologies, and Eurocentric knowledge systems to erase indigenous identities and cultures. The novel has been analysed as a site of resistance where subaltern voices challenge dominant narratives and reclaim their cultural and historical presence. The study finds that epistemic justice is central to the broader decolonial project, as Khan's narrative critiques the colonial control over knowledge and its long-term psychological and cultural ramifications. The novel offers a compelling reconstruction of its historical background. It unearths neglected events and perspectives that have been suppressed in official colonial records. It further exposes the silenced histories of colonized individuals and shows how colonialism used knowledge and culture as tools of control and erasure. Through the portrayal of lived experiences under imperial rule, Khan emphasizes the resilience of indigenous epistemologies and the silent struggles of oppressed communities. This research contributes to postcolonial literary studies by highlighting the transformative role of decolonial frameworks in reshaping historical memory and resisting epistemic violence. Ultimately, the study affirms the significance of literature as a means of reclaiming truth, identity, and justice in the aftermath of colonial domination.

Introduction

Colonial Epistemologies: Imposition and Erasure

Colonial epistemology refers to the knowledge system and mode of establishing colonial power and rule. This process is not limited to economic or political domination, but also develops a system that disrupts and marginalizes the indigenous culture and knowledge by imposing the foreign culture and knowledge system. Europeans established their educational systems in their colonies to westernize the thinking of native people, persuading them to adopt Western ways of thinking. Colonial powers taught the English language, philosophies, and moral values. They teach the books and stories to young minds, which instills the supremacy of European culture and language. As Mr. Campbell does, he tries to convince the natives to adopt European epistemologies so that they can rule over them epistemologically and psychologically.

The teacher, Mr. Campbell, was trying to convince Zee to re-read The Milly-Molly-Mandy Storybook. "Your sister likes it," he said, looking briefly from Zee to Nomi. She could tell

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Zee wanted something new. Books came to the island many years too late, and he often complained that his choices were limited (Khan, 2019).

This extract clearly highlights that the epistemologies attempt to erase the indigenous culture and values. Moreover, it shows the undermined freewill of the colonized people. They are not allowed to read, understand and develop philosophical thinking. Natives are grabbed from their minds and thoughts after the usurpation of the lands. Colonizers build a narrative through their epistemologies that they are inferior, primitive and uncivilized and Europeans are there to civilize them. Here, Zee's action of aversion for the book recommended by Mr. Campbell complies with Mignolo's notion of "re-existence" (Mignolo, 2011) and he shows his interest in reading other books, but his teacher refrains him as he says, "it incited restlessness and adventure, impulses that had to be tamed" (Khan, 2019, p. 14). The book which indicates the teachings of adventure and discipline are against the mission of the colonizers. It indicates the ultimate danger of the colonizer if they learn these things they will subvert the actions of foreigners in the land.

Imposition of Colonial and Erasure of Indigenous Language

Language serves as a major instrument which holds the indigenous culture and native epistemologies. Colonizers introduced English language as an official language and implemented it forcefully. They displaced the native languages, which, in fact, was replacement of indigenous culture from the societies. People who are unable to read or write English language are considered inferior and this idea is inculcated in their minds with a special purpose to rule epistemologically. As Haider Ali is in constant dejection that he has very little knowledge about the English language, he torments himself that he has committed many mistakes in his life and less knowledge of English language is one of them. The hodge-podge of his thoughts finds the way on the "de-linking" (Mignolo, 2018) trajectory of Mignolo. As he says,

Haider Ali could not read or write English, and every night, he was tormented by the thoughts...carrying love and terrible pain from the veins of the father to the veins of the children. Zee would have to learn... he would have to see the wrongs in believing in those that wronged them (Khan, 2019).

He hopes that his son will learn English language and will de-link the yoke of coloniality from their necks that has marked the deep scars around their necks. The purpose can only be achieved by repositioning and reorientation.

Indigenous languages and cultural knowledge are transgenerational, and their transmission is a symbol of life for native languages. Colonizers decline the use and transmission of indigenous languages and the cultural knowledge by imposing their language through various strategies. The local languages and cultural knowledge is overlooked and demolished from the society entirely. It is shown when Zee tries to write a perfect English essay to inspire his English teacher, Mr. Campbell. He thinks that this would change his mind and recommend him to study in England. Most of the indigenous epistemologies are in oral forms and considered inferior to that of colonizers. So, the cultural knowledge and the rich traditions are wiped out from the society. The undermining of indigenous knowledge systems often leads to a loss of cultural identity and a sense of dislocation. Colonized peoples are forced to reckon with the duality of embracing colonizer-defined education while grappling with the loss of their own traditions and intellectual legacies.

Imposition of Colonial Epistemologies and Erasure of Indigenous Knowledge

Colonialism not only disrupts the land and the sources of the colonized nations but also alters the lives of the colonized nations. Colonizers introduce their epistemologies to achieve the desired

goals and strive to control the mind of the colonized nations. By erasing the native educational system, they implement their epistemologies to govern physically as well as psychologically. Colonizers present their epistemologies as the only source of success in the world. Khan's novel highlights how the colonial forces attempt to erase the indigenous cultural values by enforcing their epistemologies. Britishers are ruling the islands where Indians are subject to them. Mignolo highlights the power dynamics of the colonial forces and how they shape the present and the future of the colonized nations by erasing their past. As Zee says, "instead of teaching us to read" said Zee, "don't you wish they'd taught us to swim?" (Khan, 2019, p. 08). Khan clearly states the ideas of power structures and their adaptation of ways to hegemonically rule. A British English teacher, Mr. Campbell is teaching the natives in the school, but despite being at the school the whole day Zee is unable to read because all the books are in English language and he cannot read them due to disinterest in learning English language and the books are not available in native languages. The inhabitants of the islands are punished and their books are banned. When his sister Nomi reads the books given by Mr. Campbell, he just likes turning the pages instead of making an effort to read them.

Colonizers also erase the indigenous culture and the traditions by presenting the ideas of Eurocentrism. They imposed their cultural values upon the colonized nations and as result of cultural clash, anxiety prevails in the society. The control of knowledge became a form of social and political power. By determining what counts as legitimate knowledge, colonial powers could shape entire societies, influencing everything from governance to social norms and even identity. This control over knowledge is not only a matter of intellectual dominance but also of shaping people's perceptions of themselves, their history, and their place in the world. Colonizers silenced or devalued the indigenous cultural knowledge. Colonizers ignore or reinterpret the local knowledge through their own lens and lead towards the distortion and erase the native cultural practices from the society. They use knowledge as a weapon against the colonized nations and using education as a vehicle to reinforce their cultural values as Aye says, "It is their... when he said their, his mouth turned in a way Nomi had not seen before" (Khan, 2019, p. 43).

Imposition of Christianity and Erasure of Local Religions

Proselytization is another basic tool of colonialism. Christian missionaries play their roles in the conversion of colonized nations from their native religions to Christianity. They inculcate in the minds of natives that their religious values and culture is backward and their only way of salvation is Christianity. They display the religious rites in the social ceremonies of natives and are not allowed to use them in their religious rituals. Mr. Lothian preaches Nomi to say the Lord's Prayer and refrains her to recite the Kalima in the school and check her and other children in the school whether they are saying the Lord's prayer or not. As Nomi says, "Mr. Lothian put his hairy ear to her lips to make sure she was really praying. She knows the Lord's prayer as well knew the first Kalima" (Khan, 2019, p. 41). This extract clearly states the idea that Christianity is imposed by the colonizers in the lands of the colonized nations with an idea of civilization that they are primitive and Christianity is the only way to civilize them. Mignolo's idea of "subjective reconstitution" (Mignolo, 2018) paves the way to understand the actions of the colonizers. They reshape the subjects and modify them in the form of life they like, in this way they erase the indigenous culture from the land.

Moreover, in the colonial missionary school, Mr. Campbell has hung the picture of Christ in the classrooms for the students representing their religious ideology in the minds of the colonized. Nomi observes the feet of Christ in the picture. She observes that Aye's feet are slender with

prominent veins just like Christ's feet. This shows the idea that the ideologies of the colonizers are working ideologically that the native people are finding them in resemblance with Christ. Aye becomes their friend after Nomi's observation, this shows how the teachings of the colonizers are developing a false sense of friendship, comfort and solace for them in Christianity.

Imposition of Colonial Identity and Erasure of Local identities

Identity crisis is another weapon which colonial rulers use to erase the local culture and distinctive identities of the native people. The colonial rulers modify and subvert the nomenclature as per their desires. Khan's novel presents a number of instances where the colonial powers change the cultural names of the native people and name them according to their culture or sometimes tag them after their actions and works. As 218D is a prisoner in the jail. Instead of calling her by her real name they tag her with a new identity. Colonial rulers identify her because of her tag and alert others about her character and deeds. As D in her name represents the word dangerous which highlights the idea that local people are dangerous for the colonizers and their activities in the land. There is an instance where the colonial Master named the local Indian born boy as Robinson Crusoe. He is serving as gardener for the colonizers. Mr. Howard named him Robinson Crusoe because he was brought to the island and he has started cultivating there. Mr. Howard never calls him by his real name, this shows how the colonial powers work to erase the local knowledge, culture and identities by undermining them. White Paula is another example of a character who is the daughter of a mixed race. She is confused about her identity as her father is a Britisher and mother is an Indian. Her complexion and her hair represent her as a mixed-race character. Her mother is the one who is resisting the colonization and inculcating the same things in her daughter but her father's identity follows her. As her name is also not belonging to the local culture. In this way the colonial rulers are erasing and undermining the indigenous culture and identities.

The colonial powers rule the colonized by imposing their culture, traditions and knowledge undermining the local culture and knowledge. It is a powerful form of resistance through which the native people assert their culture against the domination of colonizers. As the domination of the colonizers is not only limited to political dominance but also about controlling and grasping the lives of the colonizers through culture and knowledge. In response to the erasure actions of the colonizers, subaltern classes of the oppressed society revolt against them and struggle to preserve their local culture and traditions and present their indigenous knowledge as an ideology to follow in their life instead foreign epistemologies. Khan's novel presents a forceful idea which highlights the subalterns' resistance through indigenous culture and knowledge. As Khan says,

Uncle Bimal's son, Aqeel, sat next to her at school. Aye and White Paula were in another batch, because they were older. The classroom was the same one she had lessons in when Haji Sahib was her teacher. Now the teacher's name was Sir Saha. The first thing Sir Saha did was tell each child to take turns standing up and giving his or her name. Then he assigned a Japanese name, which was written in a ledger ... He could not stop laughing. He made all the children laugh ... The children had stopped laughing and so had Aqeel, who still could not say the two simple sentences. Sir Saha told him that his name was Akio, which did not sound too different from Aqeel. He said it meant 'bright boy' and all the children laughed again. When it was Nomi's turn, her name stayed the same because it was already Japanese. 'It means beauty ... Sir Saha told the small girl at the back to hand out notebooks and pencils. The children were to write their new names on the notebook covers and then, on the first page ... Sir Saha sighed. 'These are Arabic

numerals, 'he said, pointing to the numbers they had been writing in English their whole lives. 'Write them down, please (Khan, 2019).

In this extract subalterns' resistance against the colonial powers is visible as before in the school there was Britisher teachers who were teaching the local people but they have their own teacher whom they call "Haji Sahib". He is teaching them the knowledge of science, mathematics and English. This highlights the idea that local people carry equal abilities to the colonizers as they can teach updated knowledge to their people. Locals are keenly learning under the supervision of a local teacher as compared to the supervision of a new colonizer's teacher Sir Saha. The native children are laughing and they make the whole class laugh in front of the colonial teacher. Their laughing behavior shows the resistive narrative of the colonized subaltern class that they are deeming the colonial knowledge and language as merely a laughing stalk. Sir Saha is imposing upon them a new identity as after asking their local names, he gives everyone a new name in Japanese language. His act of imposing new names upon them highlights the basic aim of erasure of the local culture, knowledge and identities. When he assigned a new name "Akio" to a local boy named "Aqeel", all the boys laughed again, their laughing actions subverting the imposition of foreign identities. Sir Saha tells him that the name he is giving to him means "a bright boy" to show the superiority of his language and culture and the laughing action of the boy shows that his native name, knowledge and culture is not less than the foreign ones because his indigenous name means the same. Similarly, he does not assign a new name to Nomi because the word also exists in the colonizer's language. Her name means "the beauty" in the colonizer's language. It shows that every culture and language carry knowledge which is different or the same from the other culture and language. This idea holds the inclusive efforts of the subalterns to attain the space and dignity for their native culture in the dominant colonial narrative.

Moreover, Haji Sahib tells them the history of the invasion of Germany in France. This shows that local people are teaching their local subaltern class the true picture of history and how it silently worked to shape the colonized nation's present. As the history is learnt through documentation or narration like a story (Yusin, 2016, p. 01). Haji Sahib is teaching their locals through narration. It also highlights the identity of local culture which carries the beauty of native culture in the form of oral traditions. He is intentionally using the names of other nations and countries but in true essence he wants to inculcate the history of his own nation in the young minds of the subaltern class. His action shows his resistance against the colonizers and telling his nation about the enrich historical values and colonizers' suppressive actions against them. As a result, after understanding the ideologies behind the narrative of the colonizers, local people are revolting against them. As Sir Saha orders them to take out their notebooks and write the knowledge which he is teaching them, they do not write in their notebooks. Their action highlights the resistance of subalterns against the colonial powers and assert their local knowledge as an ideology for them in their lives. When he asked them again to write, they started writing the Arabic numerals which they have written in their whole life. Their Arabic numerals represent the assertion of local epistemologies and resistance against the colonial epistemologies through assertion of local knowledge.

Introduction of Missionary Schools and Erasure of Education System

Colonizers introduced their educational system in the colonized lands with the purpose to control them and to promote Christianity and foreign culture in them, undermining the native knowledge, culture and educational system. The only purpose of the educational systems of the colonizers was to make the native people subjects to the colonizers and to prepare the colonized people to serve

the colonial masters. They categorize them as good or bad citizens on the basis of their services to the colonizers (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012, pp. 46–54). These binaries are created on the basis of their services for the colonial master, colonizers who follow and co-operate with colonizers in their mission and the colonizers who are hindrance in their mission and resist against them. As Khan in her novel depicts the role of Missionary schools in the society where the local knowledge and culture is forbidden and foreign epistemologies are highlighted, taught and imposed. Colonial master undermines the local knowledge and implements their intellectual supremacy in the minds of the colonized nations. As Mr. Campbell imposes the colonial epistemologies upon them and refrain them to read the local epistemologies. Mr. Campbell recommends and lends the books to the students of the school to read and understand the meanings. His purpose is to develop the young minds of the colonized nations as per the aims of the colonizers. Zee wants to read *Just Williams* but Mr. Campbell says, “it incited restlessness and adventure, impulses that had to be tamed” (Khan, 2019, p. 14). The line shows the aims of the colonizers that if the colonized nation develops a sense of understanding they will resist against them. Therefore, Mr. Campbell refrains him to read the books and misguides him by saying that this book will cause restlessness. Colonial powers undermine the local knowledges and with epistemic violence (Spivak, 2023, pp. 171–219) render the native epistemologies as inadequate and insufficient to compete with the myth of modernity. Similarly, Khan in her novel presents the same idea of understanding the aims of the colonial epistemologies and presenting their indigenous knowledge and epistemologies to challenge the colonial narratives. The colonial epistemologies are developed with a special purpose to grab the colonized nations. As Mr. Campbell recommended zee to read the type of books which incite slavery in the minds of the local people. As Khan asserts,

The teacher Mr. Campbell was trying to convince Zee to read The Milly Molly Mandy storybook ... She could tell Zee wanted something new...he often complained that his choices are limited. He liked Just Williams but Mr. Campbell said it incited restlessness and adventure, impulses that had to be tamed (Khan, 2019).

This extract states the role of colonizers in the colonized lands. They recommend their subjects to read the books which help them to teach that colonized nations are inferior and slave and in order to live their lives in a better way they have to follow the epistemologies of the colonial rulers. They refrain from reading the knowledge which makes them able to understand themselves as useful citizens. As the author says Mr. Campbell convince Zee to read the book which he has recommended him but Zee understands the purpose behind the fascinated stories and wants to read something new, variety of knowledge and longs for another book to develop a good sense of understanding about the indigenous knowledge, he refrains him to read the book and his “epistemic violence” (Spivak, 2023, pp. 171–219) misguides him about the knowledge. He says these types of books provoke the senses of restlessness in colonized subjects and they develop a spirit to solve the problems of their lives. The author also presents Mr. Campbell as an authority figure and a teacher in the society who is imposing the epistemologies of the colonizers. He represents the particular mindset of the colonizers and Zee is representing the colonized subjects of the society with no freewill. Zee’s statement also shows the limited choices of the colonized nations as colonizers are imposing an outdated knowledge upon them because books arrive there after an ample time has passed. These books on the one hand are not related to the indigenous culture and values and on the other hand these books are not having contemporary knowledge and guidance for them. Zee’s desire to read *Just Williams* also shows the desires of freedom and autonomy which colonizers want to suppress because these qualities of subjects enable them to question the rulers. So, Mr. Campbell says that these books incite the values like self-determination and adventure and

the colonizers curb these qualities. They want to limit the activities which lead towards the resistance. The notion of taming these impulses parallels Mignolo's idea of "Dark side of coloniality" as they claim themselves on the way to civilize the savage nation but in reality, they are implementing their knowledge upon them with a purpose of control over the nation. Zee's longing for something different and new also represents that local people need their representation and identity in literature and in daily life but the colonial powers deny their needs and undermine their abilities. In this way Zee represents his population's efforts to break the colonial narratives and reclaim the indigenous identities.

"Ethnographic Reason" and "Colonial Difference"

As discussed previously, local people are ready to be Christians and colonizers' mode of education streamlines the task (Shah & Abbas, 2014, pp. 87–97). Colonizers present themselves as the civilized and superior being while the natives as inferior being. Khan's novel highlights the idea where local people are idealizing the lifestyle and actions of the colonizers and deem their indigenous culture and knowledge as inferior because of the teachings of the colonizers. As Mr. Campbell tells Zee, he is not perfect because he is not perfect in English. He tries his best to write a perfect English essay. When Mr. Campbell assesses his essay and comments, "well done my boy...you know if you were not a convict's son, I would recommend you to study in England" (Khan, 2019, p. 16). His words show that the colonizers taking the natives as "other" and treat them differently they understand the abilities of the native people but not admire them and the actions of the colonizers are following idea of Mignolo's "ethnographic reasons" that on the basis of language they are superior and different while the native culture, language and knowledge as inferior despite of his efforts of perfection in English writings he does not appreciate him. He calls him as the convict's son which shows the intentions of the colonizers, they show the idea that they are superior and as a result of their superiority they become xenophobic. The colonial power is not even considering the local people as a human being. As in the school people call Aye as the pet of Mr. Howard's pet and Nomi as Mr. Campbell's pet (Khan, 2019, p. 42) because Mr. Campbell assigns different tasks to Nomi after the school timings. He does not allow Nomi to touch his pet dog. He thinks that these locals are untidy and if they touch his superior race dog, they will make the dog also dirty. Mr. Campbell and Mr. Howard are representing the true face of Mignolo's notion of "colonial difference" as Mr. Howard does not allow Aye to visit the club built for the colonizers and Mr. Campbell does not allow Nomi to touch his pet dog. As he says, "You children always make her dirty" (Khan, 2019, p. 17).

Moreover, for the treatment of the colonized nation colonizers have deputed a veterinary doctor in the land. This shows the inhumane treatment of the colonial powers towards the native people. They deem the island is the place where they are free to do whatever they want to do as Zee comments about the colonial master that the island is a place where no god is observing their cruelties but men are observing the other men. They have deputed the horse doctor there in the jail to examine the prisoners. This shows that they consider the natives as animals instead of human beings. Although the doctor is examining all the prisoners briefly, he is actually manifesting the colonial difference and ethnographic reason.

Assertion of Indigenous Knowledge and Culture

Khan in her novel also presents the ideas through which local people are preserving their culture, traditions and identities contending the colonial powers. As history is the key element in the preservation and reclamation of the local culture, described through documentation and

storytelling (Yusin, 2016, pp. 1–8) these both elements are depicted in the novel. The history of the silenced part of the colonial era is depicted through the storytelling along with the documentation in the novel. The author also touches on how the indigenous culture plays the role of resistance against colonial cultural imposition. As Shakuntla is playing her role in preservation of her indigenous culture. As the wife of an English officer, she shares an opportunity to preserve her culture and to guard her people. She starts farming there and her garden consist of the vegetables, fruits, trees and animals that she keeps all belongings to her native land. She opens her house for the women to live there comfortably. All the workers at her villa belong to her native land. In this way she is not only preserving her indigenous culture but also helping the locals and resisting the foreign culture and traditions. On the New Year's Eve, she invites all the colonial officers to her house and serves them local foods with the fusion of European foods.

It began with calf tail soup, chestnut balls and curried turtle eggs (prized by the Andamanese), followed by stewed eels, stewed Chittagong fowl (from a local farm), pickled pork (ditto), Turbot a la Reine and a saddle of mutton with Breton sauce ...commander-in-chief, East India punch...The waiters—Local Born children and settled convicts (Khan, 2019).

She began to serve them with local food items which shows the idea of decolonization and preservation of indigenous culture. Local food items are a representation of indigenous traditions. Through these food items she is preserving her unique cultural identity while she also serves them with European cuisine in order to present the inclusivity of her culture. She portrays cultural equality with the help of food items. The presence of local items such as calf tail soup and curried turtle eggs represents a strong connection of local people with their land and culture while the presence of European food items such as stewed eels represents the influence of colonial culture and identities in the lives of the indigenous people. Stewed Chittagong fowls and Turbot a la Reine are the food items which represent the fusion of foreign and local food, are ultimately representing the fusion of both cultures that how the local people are living their lives under the influence of foreign culture and how they preserve their own culture and adopt the foreign culture but the colonizers do not accept the culture of indigenous lands but they impose their own culture upon them. In the feast local waiters are serving the food and their glocalized attire also represents the efforts of local people to preserve their local culture. Their dresses are also the symbol of strong resistance against the colonizers. Shakuntala is a sign of cultural preservation and her actions propose the cultural inclusivity in the society. Shakuntala is adopting the strategy to challenge the dominant colonial narratives through the assertion of indigenous voices. Her actions are the true representation of the assertion of indigenous culture and traditions. She intentionally named the dishes with native belongings such as “Chittagong fowl”, this name on the dinner table is representing the native identity and culture and this dish is there on the table in front of the colonizers. It shows the contesting and challenging behavior of the local people for the dominant colonial narratives. She revolts against the foreigners, as the local people who are convicts and whom they deem as danger for the society are serving as useful members of the society. Their dressing and sophisticated style of serving the dinner is resisting and subverting the colonial nations.

Khan in her novel depicts the idea of “Epistemic justice” where the colonial powers usurp this right from the local people. Zee tries to write a perfect English essay but fails because of epistemic justice. His teacher, being a representative of the colonizers, believes that native people are not able to perform well. He germinates the desire to send him to England but when Zee toils and

achieves the goal, he spoils his desires by telling him that he is writing a perfect essay now but he is a convict's son and his identity is a great hurdle in his way. As Mr. Campbell says,

Interrupting the composition, Mr. Campbell tapped a test book on his desk. 'Well done, my boy. You have written a most successful essay. It is purposeful, accurate, and has only one spelling mistake. Do you know, if you were not a convict's son, I would recommend you for study in England?' (Khan, 2019).

The teacher checks his test book and comments that he has written the best essay because the whole essay is perfect in all the wits despite one mistake in spellings. Then, comments that he is a convict's son so he is not allowed to study in England. These lines show the idea of testimonial injustice that despite his skills, correctness and perfection, he undermines his knowledge and skills. His conversation also demonstrates the true mindset of the colonizers. His words also disclose their mission to civilize and to educate the colonized nations. This conversation also reflects the hermeneutical injustice in the society where local people are interpreted through the lens of others and their social identity is the source of woe for them in the society. His teacher's comment also reflects that the colonizers not only discriminate against the natives on the basis of color and creed but also on intellect. As he is appreciating Zee for his knowledge and abilities but he is at the same time terminating all the possibilities for him in the future. This idea reflects how knowledge and intellect is denied under colonial rule and how the limited opportunities are bestowed upon them. There is another key element of prejudice which is visible in the recognition of knowledge. His remarks undermine the credibility of indigenous people and their knowledge and this not because of the system of understanding but due to assigning the value to the knowledge. Colonial powers limited the access to the knowledge and opportunities on the basis of their social background and production of knowledge, where it is produced and who has produced it. The teacher's remarks reinforce Mignolo's idea of working tracks of colonization where they assess that where is the knowledge producing and who is producing the knowledge. Then, they categorize the credibility of the knowledge. These remarks also reinforce the "dark side of colonialism" where they exploit, discriminate and eliminate the knowledge of indigenous people.

Epistemological Domination and Resistance of Subaltern Population

The colonial forces rule the colonized hegemonically and just like other areas of life, they rule and dominate the third world countries epistemologically and to sustain their domination they erase the local culture, knowledge and epistemologies. The colonial forces dominate through patriarchy, social injustices, capitalist system, hegemonic cultural norms and epistemologies. Indigenous people resist them in many ways, sometimes their resistance is in the form of direct rebellion subversion and sometimes it is in the indirect form which works subtly. Spivak uses Antonio Gramsci's term "subaltern" (Gramsci, 2006, pp. 13–17) for the local people. Subaltern people are indigenous marginalized people whom the colonialists dominated and suppressed. Cultural preservation serves as the first and foremost form of resistance against the dominating forces. Through cultural preservation local people preserve their language, norms, rituals, traditions and folklore. They understand the key differences of both the indigenous and imposed cultures and assert their dignity and identity. Subaltern people also resist through their daily life actions like uncooperative behavior of local people and delaying in the execution of their orders in daily life. This form of resistance is not visible in the historical books unlike the political resistance which includes the direct rebellious form of resistance.

Subtle Resistance

Local people in their everyday life resist and subvert against the dominant power structures of the colonizers. Subaltern's everyday acts of defiance become the source of their survival under the hegemonic societal structures. As Khan in her novel presents the idea of quiet resistance through the characters in the novel, she depicts the society where subaltern people are resisting against the colonial forces and through their everyday actions, they are challenging the colonial narrative and toiling to preserve their culture, traditions and epistemologies. Zee, Nomi, Aye and many other subalterns are resisting against the hegemonic rule of the colonizers covertly. Their subtle resistance is for the preservation and assertion of their indigenous knowledge and culture. As Zee resists against the colonial structure in the school, where he is bound to read the colonial epistemologies but he subtly resists against the colonial forces and pretend that he is reading them but he is just turning the pages. His act of pretending to read their books sets as an action of camouflage. His action portrays the idea of acceptance in the minds of the colonizers but the colonized are longing for their indigenous epistemologies. Nomi also resists against the colonizers. Nomi's resistance is not in a loud manner but she through her actions in her daily life strongly defy the colonial forces and her actions perform a preservative role for their local culture and traditions. Moreover, the local people build a Gurdwara which shows the cultural harmony as well as the efforts of local people to promote against the imposed culture of colonizers. As the colonizers work to convert the local people into Christianity but opposing their efforts and instead of building a Church, they build a Gurdwara, a place of worship for the indigenous religion. This action of indigenous people represents their resistance against the colonizers. subalterns are speaking through their actions. As Khan asserts,

When construction of the gurdwara began the following year ...six Hindus, five Muslims, two Christians, one Buddhist. Except for Dr Singh, all were former convicts... Haider Ali joked that if any Parsi ever broke a law, he would be most welcome among them...Each man pledged that, regardless of caste or creed, he would cherish what they had together helped to build... Around them lay scattered a small pile of the same red brick used to make the jail, though the temple was to be built primarily of wood. It would not be fireproof, which was a risk worth taking. The temple could not resemble the jail (Khan, 2019).

This passage highlights the strong resistance against the colonial forces local people are performing a collective action. These indigenous people are subalterns and stigmatized as most of them are convicts and spending their lives on the island without their will powers. Their collective performance is interpreted as subalterns' resistive actions contesting the colonizers. As colonial powers tag them as convicts and the useless and harmful people for the society but their action of building a gurdwara and unified mode of working is challenging the dominant colonial narrative. All the local people who are working in the construction of the building are suppressed and marginalized and they are speaking through their actions. Despite their disregarded status in the social hierarchies of the colonizers, they are playing their role in the preservation of their indigenous religion and culture. They are challenging their imposed identities and working to reshape their indigenous identities. This passage also highlights the unity of indigenous people and subverting the colonial strategy of divide and rule. All the locals belong to the different religions but they are unitedly working to build a religious site for Sikhs. Their unified action is resisting and challenging the colonizers against their personal subjugation and the divided policies. The colonial powers title the local people as uncivilized but their unity is resisting their dominant cultural narrative. They are using the same red bricks to build the religious place which the

colonizers have used in the construction of jail. Their use of the same red bricks also shows resistance against the colonial forces. As they are using the same building material which is used for their oppression, as gurdwara is a place of worship in Sikh religion, symbolically representing the place of peace, calmness and serenity while jail is place of oppression and physical punishment, both places are built with same building material and works differently. Both buildings are constructed with different backgrounds and ideologies. Therefore, gurdwara turns into the symbol of liberation and a tool for the transformation of subalterns and their journey from oppression to religious and cultural growth. Although they are using the same material, but the construction of the gurdwara is contrasting to the building of the jail. This difference is intentional by the local people to differentiate between the role of oppressors and the oppressed. This contrast is an intentional rejection of colonizers' legacy of violence, control, enslavement and imprisonment. They are intentionally resisting through the structure of the building and their unity is highlighting the idea of communal independence against the slavery of the colonizers. They are using woods and the rooftop is not fireproof which shows the vulnerability and imperfection with a room for improvement but the place provides calmness and peace to the people.

Furthermore, their collective effort to construct a building which belongs to an indigenous religion rejects and resists against the imposed religion of the colonizers as all the workers are belonging to different religions but all the religions are their native religion and their religious values are the purpose for their lives and construction of a place of worship of the native religion is a ray of hope for all the native people to express and practice their religions under the hegemonic dominant structures. In this way they are resisting the colonizers with preservation and representation of local cultural values. This construction is a symbol of dignity and reclamation of native values and space for the subalterns. The convicts who are marginalized and stigmatized in the society are now playing their active roles in the construction and production of something which is meaningful and purposeful. Haider Ali's joke represents the inclusivity of and flexible nature of native people which the colonial powers lack.

Conclusion

In this study, the researcher examined the epistemic colonization imposed on indigenous cultures and the consequent efforts toward the decolonization in Uzma Aslam Khan's *The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali*. The analysis focused on deeper understanding how colonial epistemologies erased or influenced the native culture, traditions and the knowledge systems and how the subaltern populations resisted this domination to assert their identities. The colonizers marginalized the native people, putting them at the center of the world and natives at the margins neglected them and their culture and knowledge. Sometimes they resist personal and microlevel and sometimes they resist colonial domination overtly using the tools of unified or political resistance. In this decolonial study of colonial epistemologies in Asia, the researcher argues how the colonial epistemologies aimed at the domination of the colonized and perpetuated its ideology of intellectual supremacy to undermine the knowledge, culture and identity of the colonized nations in the novel.

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