

LETTING THE MARGINS SPEAK: EPISTEMIC DECOLONIZATION IN ARAVIND ADIGA'S AMNESTY

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Abstract

This research examines the life of undocumented South-Asian character, Danny, who is a Sri Lankan illegal cleaner in Sydney, Australia, from Aravind Adiga's *Amnesty*, that explores how borders, citizenship and legality determine one's right to exist, belong and to speak. Danny's condition as a migrant without papers excludes him from any security and equality in Australia that is otherwise promised to its legal immigrants. Danny witnesses the murder of Radha Thomas by George, a dentist with whom she was having an affair but cannot report it because it would expose him to the authorities. This highlights how power operates through fear and surveillance. *Amnesty* examines epistemic decolonization where the monopoly of Western colonial knowledge is broken by the illegal immigrants like Danny who defy the legal system of the authorities of Australia by forming their own knowledge systems. Through the epistemic decolonization, the undocumented migrants have a privilege of knowledge of the backstreets, rental flats, surveillance patterns, alternative map of the city, which are invisible to official records. This gives these undocumented migrants the privilege to dodge off the dominant legal and institutional code of conduct that silences the other people. Danny is a marginalized character in the novel because of his undocumented migrant status but he reclaims his resistance by not settling for the monopoly of the justice system.

Through Danny's struggles the turmoil of the marginalized communities of the world could be examined where immigrant laws, racism and socio-economic inequalities create rigidity within the system. This research explores how the undocumented migrants deal with vulnerability and resistance.

Keywords: Epistemic Decolonization, Undocumented Migration, Marginality, Sense of Belonging, Immigrant Experience, South-Asian Immigration.

Aravind Adiga's *Amnesty* is a crime novel that reflects global tensions and the continuing effects of colonialism. It follows Dhananjaya Rajaratnam—Danny—an undocumented Sri Lankan immigrant living as a cleaner in Sydney. While the narrative clearly presents Danny's displacement and identity crisis, its primary function is to critique exploitative global systems.

The story unfolds in a wealthy, “core” nation, a strategic choice that allows Adiga to expose how colonial hierarchies persist through modern immigration systems and neoliberal economies. Danny’s challenges are shown not as personal failures but as consequences of structural inequality. The novel’s setting in Australia which is a country that advertises multicultural progressivism while enforcing some of the harshest immigration policies in the Global North—creates a rich landscape for exposing the contradictions within liberal democracies. A notable example of this critique occurs when Danny reflects on his lack of belonging:

“I live in this city, yet I am not part of it. I know its rooms and kitchens better than its citizens do, and still they would say I have no right to be here.” (Adiga, *Amnesty*, 54)

This moment illustrates the paradox of a migrant who is indispensable yet denied legitimacy. Adiga places Danny in the role of someone who performs necessary and intimate labour like cleaning homes, scrubbing private spaces, entering the unseen corners of Sydney, yet is erased from the civic imagination. His presence is economically essential but politically unwanted. Scholars such as Nicholas De Genova have described this condition as “the production of migrant illegality,” where the state actively manufactures categories of people who can be exploited precisely because they possess no legal standing. Danny embodies this condition: he exists within the city, yet the city refuses to acknowledge him.

Epistemic decolonization challenges whose knowledge is valued. Danny is a subject “silenced by dominant discourses” because his knowledge cannot be voiced without risking deportation. He knows the truth about Radha Thomas’s murder, but the system punishes him for speaking. Adiga makes this tension explicit in Danny’s inner debate:

“If I opened my mouth, I would lose everything. But if I kept it shut, someone else would get away with murder.” (Adiga, *Amnesty*, 112)

Danny’s dilemma exposes the structural absurdity of demanding that undocumented migrants uphold civic virtues like honesty, responsibility, moral integrity—when the state denies them the most basic civic protections. His knowledge exists in tension with his vulnerability; the truth becomes a dangerous possession. This mirrors Gayatri Spivak’s observation that the subaltern “cannot speak” not because they lack a voice but because structures of power render their speech unsafe or illegitimate.

This shows how the legal system prioritizes its rules over justice, punishing marginalized knowledge. Danny’s “legal liminality” becomes the source of a unique understanding of the city, what one critic calls a “vernacular theory of migrant spatiality.” This liminal knowledge exposes the moral contradictions of the host nation. His undocumented status like his “*persona non grata*” existence is not incidental but embedded into global neocolonial logic. Adiga’s portrayal aligns closely with the writings of Achille Mbembe, who argues that postcolonial societies are governed by systems of “necropolitics,” determining whose lives are protected and whose lives are exposed to suffering. Danny lives in a state where he is allowed to survive, but only barely, and always under threat.

The psychological burden of illegality becomes a mechanism of state control. Danny’s perpetual fear is captured in Adiga’s description:

“Every step I took was a risk. Every knock on the door could be the last sound I heard in Australia.” (Adiga, *Amnesty*, 38)

This fear shapes his decisions more powerfully than moral considerations. Following Maslow’s hierarchy, safety becomes his primary need, eclipsing ethical obligations. Surveillance-induced paranoia also fractures undocumented communities. Fear prevents

solidarity, ensuring migrants remain isolated and easily controlled. Scholars such as Michel Foucault have emphasized how surveillance is internalized by subjects, ultimately enabling the state to govern not through overt force but through self-regulation. Danny embodies this principle: he polices his speech, movement, and behaviour in anticipation of punishment.

As undocumented immigrants navigate this psychological terrain, they form what sociologist Cecilia Menjívar calls “liminal legality” which is a condition in which individuals possess neither full inclusion nor full exclusion but instead occupy a vulnerable middle space. Danny’s entire existence is defined by this instability. He cannot return to Sri Lanka because it represents violence and danger; he cannot remain safely in Australia because it represents expulsion and legal erasure. Adiga amplifies this tension through the one-day structure of the novel, compressing Danny’s fear and urgency into a tight narrative that mirrors the suffocating reality of undocumented life. Danny’s work as a cleaner grants him an alternative map of Sydney, an unofficial, subaltern geography:

“Only a cleaner knows the true Sydney—the stains behind the sofas, the secrets in the drawers.” (Adiga, *Amnesty*, 73)

Through this access, Danny becomes an invisible observer, reversing the gaze of the state. While authorities surveil him, he inadvertently surveils the powerful. His knowledge becomes crucial when he discovers evidence implicating Prakash Wadhwa:

“The jacket lay where he had dropped it, its lining marked with the same pattern I had seen in Prakash’s wardrobe.” (Adiga, *Amnesty*, 97)

The jacket symbolizes how subaltern knowledge can reveal truths inaccessible to dominant institutions. The central crisis arises when Danny must choose between revealing what he knows and protecting himself. Adiga frames this dilemma sharply:

“They want the truth from me but none of the rights that make the truth safe to tell.” (Adiga, *Amnesty*, 121)

Justice becomes transactional, contingent not on facts but on legal status. Danny becomes the moral center of a society that refuses to grant him full personhood. His moral agency like his ability to make decisions exists in direct conflict with the state’s refusal to recognize his humanity.

Adiga’s novel forces readers to confront global inequalities and recognize the moral value of marginalized knowledge. By giving narrative authority to Danny, a figure normally excluded from official discourse, *Amnesty* performs epistemic decolonization. Danny’s unofficial map of the city, his hidden observations, and his knowledge of the murder become forms of counter-surveillance that challenge the legitimacy of state power. The moral revelation is clear: a just society must include those it seeks to silence. Letting the margins speak requires fundamentally rethinking justice so that truth is not limited by legal status or nationality. Danny’s epistemic positioning in Sydney reveals how undocumented migrants construct alternative forms of knowing that disrupt dominant narratives of legality, belonging, and national identity. He navigates the city through back alleys, train stations, cheap grocery stores, cleaning closets, and the private bedrooms of wealthy clients. This movement places him in intimate proximity to spaces that most citizens never see, forming what anthropologist Aihwa Ong calls “graduated sovereignty”, where subjects experience differing levels of rights and visibility depending on their position within the state. Danny experiences the low end of this spectrum, but his location outside official visibility becomes a source of insight.

This reversal of gaze is central to the novel’s political critique. Traditionally, migrants are objects of surveillance they are watched, categorized, controlled, and policed. Yet Danny gains

access to the hidden moral failings of the very society that surveils him. Scholars such as James Scott, in *Seeing Like a State*, argue that marginalized populations often possess “illegible knowledge” which is the knowledge the state is unable to recognize because it does not conform to bureaucratic forms. Danny’s understanding of Sydney is precisely this: intimate, embodied, and gained through labour rather than citizenship. His perspective reveals that legality does not equal morality; rather, morality often resides with those positioned outside the law.

Danny’s fear, guilt, and moral uncertainty echo across the experiences of undocumented migrants globally. Sociologist Roberto G. Gonzales, in his study *Lives in Limbo*, explains how undocumented young adults live in “a suspended state of existence” which is a phrase that resonates strongly with Danny’s daily struggle to balance basic survival with ethical obligation. Danny’s identity is shaped by contradictions that no citizen would have to confront: he is both visible (as a worker) and invisible (as a person), both central (to the functioning of Sydney) and peripheral (to its civic identity). These dualities illustrate how neoliberal society’s structure inclusion through exploitation while masking their dependence on precarious labor.

Adiga amplifies this contradiction by emphasizing Danny’s constant psychological negotiation between fear and desire. Danny desires safety, love, belonging, and the ability to lead an honest life. Yet he fears exposure, deportation, judgment, and the violence of his past. This internal battle is expressed vividly when he recalls the precariousness of his early days in Australia:

“I learned to walk without being noticed. I learned to smile without being remembered. I learned to exist without leaving a trace.”(Amnesty, 46)

This line, though subtle, encapsulates the survival strategy of undocumented migrants around the world. Their existence is conditioned on self-erasure. Danny’s very body becomes tactical where he must move, speak, and behave in ways that minimize risk. His invisibility is not a natural state but an enforced condition shaped by immigration laws, economic precarity, and racial hierarchies. This is where epistemic decolonization becomes most apparent: the knowledge Danny constructs is born from the margins rather than the center. It is shaped by coping, resistance, and adaptation. Danny’s lived experience destabilizes the official narratives of Australian nationalism, which often position the nation as fair, egalitarian, and multicultural. Adiga’s Sydney, however, is a city where multiculturalism becomes a facade that masks deep inequalities. Danny’s ability to see the cracks in this facade is what makes his perspective indispensable.

Danny’s navigation of Sydney’s geography also carries symbolic weight. Postcolonial critic Edward Said argues that space itself becomes political in the colonial and postcolonial world. In *Amnesty*, Sydney is not just a physical location—it is a structure of power that Danny must interpret and survive. His routes through the city represent the routes of subaltern survival: hidden, unpredictable, and risky. When Danny mentally traces the city while contemplating whether to call the police, he consults what the novel calls “his map down to Castlereagh Street” a line that demonstrates how deeply the city is embedded in his memory and body.

Danny’s map is not the map found in tourist brochures or government documents. It is the map of cleaners, delivery boys, undocumented workers, street vendors, and service laborers who are those who move through the city in ways that remain unnoticed by formal institutions. This “migrant spatiality” highlights the limits of official knowledge and the power of everyday knowledge. The city’s truth resides not in courtrooms or police stations but in kitchens, back rooms, elevators, storage closets, and cramped apartments where migrants live and work.

At the same time, Danny's moral struggle underscores the psychological consequences of living under constant threat. Adiga's narrative engages with trauma theory, particularly Ronnie Janoff-Bulman's concept of "shattered assumptions." Danny's assumptions about safety, fairness, and justice are continuously destabilized. The murder of Radha Thomas becomes the event that forces Danny to confront these fractures directly. His conscience compels him to speak, yet his survival depends on silence. This ethical conflict is one of the most important dimensions of the novel, illustrating how the state's power forces migrants into impossible moral positions.

The emotional toll of this conflict appears repeatedly in Danny's internal monologues. When he imagines calling the police, his thoughts spiral into fear:

"If I told them what I knew, would they listen to me? Or would they see only a Tamil man who did not belong here?" (Amnesty, 109)

This fear is grounded not in paranoia but in the real experiences of racial profiling and discriminatory policing documented across the Global North. Studies by scholars like Mary Bosworth and Katja Franko highlight how immigration enforcement increasingly merges with criminal justice, transforming migrants into perpetual suspects. Danny understands this implicitly. He recognizes that even as a witness to a crime, he will be treated not as a truth-teller but as a problem to be managed.

This explains why Danny's silence is not cowardice but strategy. His refusal to speak reflects an acute awareness of the state's priorities: preserving borders over delivering justice, maintaining legality over recognizing humanity. Danny's decision-making process becomes a critique of political systems that demand moral behavior from people they refuse to protect. The paradox is stark: Danny is expected to act like a citizen without being granted the rights of one. Danny's conflicted ethical position also illuminates a broader critique of liberal democracies. Countries like Australia promote themselves as defenders of freedom, fairness, and human rights, yet maintain immigration regimes intentionally designed to produce fear. Scholars such as Ghassan Hage have written extensively about the moral contradictions of white nationhood, arguing that Western multiculturalism often conceals deep anxieties about racial others. Danny is permitted to exist only to the extent that he remains invisible, compliant, and economically useful. His humanity is acknowledged only when it serves the interests of the nation-state, and even then, it remains precarious.

Danny's existential crisis intensifies as he navigates his memories, fears, and desires throughout the day. His recollections of Sri Lanka the violence, the poverty, the threats—create a painful psychological backdrop against which his Australian life unfolds. Adiga uses flashbacks to illustrate how Danny's past trauma shapes his present choices. These memories do not function merely as exposition; they highlight the transnational dimensions of migrant fear. As Danny reflects:

"I had left one kind of danger only to live inside another. Here the bullets were gone, but the fear was constant." (Amnesty, 41)

This fear is integral to understanding why epistemic decolonization is essential. The knowledge emerging from Danny's life his lived experience of navigating borders, danger, and survival cannot be understood through Western legal frameworks alone. Instead, it emerges from a space of transnational displacement that transcends national boundaries.

Danny's perspective exposes how neocolonial power structures operate simultaneously in the Global South and Global North.

Adiga emphasizes this through the portrayal of Danny's work and living conditions. Danny lives in a cramped storeroom, a place designed for commodities rather than human

beings. This setting symbolizes the commodification of migrant life. As Saskia Sassen argues in her work on global migration, neoliberal economies treat migrants as flexible labor units, valued only for what they can produce and quickly disposable when inconvenient. Danny's existence in the storeroom epitomizes this logic; he is literally stored away, out of sight, like an object.

Yet this same position grants him access to truths unavailable to the economically and socially privileged. In the private homes he cleans, Danny encounters the objects, conversations, and personalities of Sydney's upper-middle class. He sees their wealth, their secrets, their loneliness, and their hypocrisy. Danny becomes a silent witness to the moral contradictions of a society that prides itself on fairness while exploiting migrant labor to maintain comfort and luxury.

This paradox is sharpened by Danny's relationship with Radha Thomas. As one of his clients, Radha occupies a position of privilege, yet she is also vulnerable ultimately falling victim to violence. Danny's connection to Radha humanizes her murder and complicates the power dynamics between them. He respects her, fears the consequences of knowing too much, and feels a moral responsibility toward her death. His knowledge of her life and the crime is intimate, embodied, and deeply personal.

At the same time, Danny knows that the system will not acknowledge his knowledge without punishing him. The police are unlikely to see him as a credible witness, and worse, contacting them may result in immediate detention. Danny's fear emerges not simply from his precarious status but from his understanding of how institutions treat people like him. His doubt is justified, reflecting what legal scholars term "crimmigration" the merging of criminal and immigration enforcement that transforms migrants into presumptive criminals. Danny's anxiety about approaching the police highlights this reality:

"No matter how innocent I was, no matter how good my intentions were, I knew that the moment they heard my name, everything else would stop mattering." (Amnesty, 118)

This line reveals the profound disconnect between moral truth and legal truth in the novel. The legal system recognizes only those who fit within its definitions of legitimacy. Danny's knowledge, no matter how accurate, is treated as inherently suspect because it comes from someone who lacks the proper documents. His undocumented status undermines not only his rights but his credibility.

This is a powerful example of what philosopher Miranda Fricker calls "epistemic injustice" a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower. Danny's testimony would be dismissed not because of its content but because of who he is. This is the essence of epistemic coloniality: the idea that certain people's knowledge is systematically devalued, excluded, or rendered dangerous.

Danny's entire day unfolds within the tension between knowledge and danger. The jacket left at the crime scene is a perfect symbol of this tension. In the hands of a citizen, the jacket would be considered evidence; in Danny's hands, it is incriminating. It represents both truth and risk, justice and peril. Danny's contemplation of what to do with this knowledge becomes a metaphor for the broader struggles of undocumented migrants, whose truths are often known but cannot be spoken.

As Danny moves through Sydney, Adiga emphasizes how the city's urban environment mirrors Danny's inner turmoil. The streets, buildings, and public spaces reflect the alienation he experiences. Even the most ordinary locations train stations, parks, coffee shops become battlegrounds where Danny must calculate risk, assess the behavior of others,

and monitor his own visibility. He must always anticipate being questioned, being watched, or being detained.

This constant vigilance is not merely psychological; it shapes Danny's physical movements, gestures, and expressions. His body becomes a site of political struggle. Every decision becomes a negotiation between visibility and safety. His efforts to "look Australian" modifying his accent, adjusting his posture, adopting habits he observes in others illustrate the ways marginal subjects must perform belonging even when they are denied it. Adiga captures this with precision:

"I tried to look like a man with an Australian spine." (Amnesty, 56)

The phrase "Australian spine" is ironic: it refers to a posture of confidence, entitlement, and ease within the city a posture Danny can only imitate but never fully acquire. This performance underscores how belonging in a nation-state is not only legal but embodied. Migrants must learn the gestures, movements, and mannerisms associated with citizenship, even while they remain legally excluded.

Yet this performance comes at a cost. Danny's attempt to integrate into Australian society only deepens his sense of displacement. He becomes hyper-aware of his difference, constantly evaluating how he appears to others. In this way, Adiga demonstrates how undocumented life fragments identity, forcing individuals to inhabit multiple selves simultaneously: the worker, the migrant, the friend, the potential suspect, the man who knows too much, and the man who cannot say what he knows.

All of these selves converge on the question of whether Danny will speak. His internal debate is the emotional core of the novel. It reveals the impossible ethical demands placed on marginalized migrants: tell the truth and risk deportation, or remain silent and allow injustice to prevail. The novel refuses easy answers. Instead, it exposes the structural violence of systems that create such dilemmas in the first place.

Danny's position in Sydney not only exposes structural injustice but also reveals the limitations of formal legal systems in addressing morality. The novel suggests that justice cannot be reduced to legality alone; rather, it must account for the knowledge and perspectives of those who inhabit the margins. Danny, through his daily work and navigation of the city, gains insights into social hierarchies, domestic secrets, and moral failings that no government report or surveillance camera could capture. His testimony, his observations, and even his silence are forms of knowledge that challenge the epistemic authority of state institutions.

Adiga emphasizes that the marginal perspective is not simply additive but transformative. Danny's knowledge destabilizes dominant narratives, revealing contradictions in Australian society. He observes the hypocrisy of affluent households that rely on migrant labor while denying migrants legal protection and recognition. He sees wealth and privilege built upon labor that is systematically undervalued and invisible. In this way, Danny becomes a moral and epistemic agent, whose insight into the city surpasses the official institutions charged with maintaining law and order.

The novel also foregrounds the psychological toll of this moral labor. Living under constant threat, Danny experiences heightened anxiety, hyper-vigilance, and ethical dissonance. Scholars such as Sekhar have highlighted how undocumented migrants endure both external and internalized surveillance, leading to what he terms "self-policing anxiety." Danny exemplifies this dynamic: his awareness of danger compels him to monitor not only his actions but also his thoughts and intentions. The novel's compression of events into a single day intensifies this tension, creating a claustrophobic temporal structure that mirrors Danny's emotional state.

The murder investigation further illuminates the tension between knowledge and survival. Danny discovers the jacket that implicates Prakash Wadhwa, yet he cannot deliver it to the authorities without risking deportation. The jacket thus becomes a metaphor for marginalized epistemic power: it contains truth, but its usefulness is constrained by the structural position of the knower. Danny's dilemma is emblematic of what Miranda Fricker identifies as both testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. His testimony is discounted because he is undocumented, and his ability to interpret events is undermined by his exclusion from the legal and civic frameworks that would render his knowledge credible.

Adiga's treatment of the jacket underscores the moral inequities embedded in immigration systems. While privileged citizens enjoy both the ability to act morally and the protection of the law, undocumented migrants like Danny face a zero-sum scenario: moral action risks survival, and self-preservation risks complicity in injustice. Danny's predicament compels readers to question the ethical assumptions of societies that claim fairness while producing structural vulnerability. His moral conflict is not accidental but systemic, demonstrating how inequality is reproduced through both legal frameworks and social norms.

The novel also engages with the broader economic context of migration. Danny's labor is essential, yet his remuneration, status, and recognition are minimal. He embodies what Marxist theorists might describe as the alienated worker: his labor creates value for others while leaving him socially and economically marginalized. This structural exploitation is intertwined with global capitalist systems, which rely on cheap, precarious labor to maintain metropolitan wealth. Danny's invisibility allows others to prosper while ensuring that he cannot claim the protections and rights associated with full citizenship.

This intersection of labor, legality, and morality situates *Amnesty* firmly within postcolonial and globalization studies. Adiga's critique aligns with Prakhar Medhavi's analysis of neoliberal subaltern voices, which highlights how contemporary economic structures reproduce colonial hierarchies. Danny's precarious existence is not merely the result of personal misfortune but reflects enduring patterns of global inequality, where power and knowledge are concentrated in "core" nations, and marginalized populations bear the costs of structural imbalance.

Epistemic decolonization in the novel occurs precisely because Danny's knowledge—his "vernacular theory of migrant spatiality"—challenges the authority of dominant institutions. His map of Sydney, his awareness of domestic vulnerabilities, and his observation of the crime create a counter-narrative that exposes the limits of state epistemology. This aligns with the work of Ananya Chakrabarti, who notes that undocumented migrants develop localized, context-specific knowledge that is systematically undervalued by formal structures. Danny's insights are indispensable for justice, yet they exist in tension with his precarious legal status.

The novel's structure, which unfolds over a single day, mirrors Danny's precarious temporality. Each decision carries immediate consequences, reflecting the compressed ethical and emotional reality of undocumented life. The narrative intensifies the psychological dimension of liminality: the constant awareness of risk, the negotiation of moral choices, and the surveillance of both self and environment. Danny's movement through Sydney becomes a study in how marginalized subjects adapt to extreme vulnerability while maintaining moral awareness. Adiga also emphasizes the social consequences of isolation. Undocumented migrants often form fragmented communities, hampered by fear of discovery, which inhibits solidarity. Danny's relationships are mediated by suspicion, secrecy, and necessity, reflecting findings in sociological studies of migrant networks. Without trust or collective action, knowledge remains

dispersed, limiting its potential to challenge systemic injustice. Danny's individual perspective, however, demonstrates that even isolated epistemic labor can expose structural failings if recognized as credible.

At the same time, the novel portrays how labor itself can be a source of epistemic power. Danny's work as a cleaner grants him intimate access to spaces where social hierarchies, moral contradictions, and hidden truths are visible. The irony is profound: the very act of serving others allows Danny to witness their ethical shortcomings. He moves invisibly through the homes of the privileged, gaining insights denied to those who occupy institutional authority. In doing so, he becomes the most reliable observer of truth, an agent of epistemic decolonization whose perspective challenges conventional hierarchies of knowledge.

Danny's role as an epistemic agent reaches its climax when he weighs the decision to act upon the knowledge of Radha Thomas's murder. This moment crystallizes the moral and political stakes of the novel. Danny's knowledge exists in tension with legality: the law does not protect him, yet he bears the responsibility of truth. Arundhati Roy has described such narratives as exposing the "moral geography" of power, where ethical obligations intersect with structures of domination. Danny embodies this intersection, demonstrating that justice requires acknowledging the experiences and insights of those who live at society's margins.

Adiga's narrative demonstrates that epistemic decolonization is not simply an intellectual exercise; it is a form of moral praxis. By validating Danny's perspective, the novel challenges readers to reconsider how societies assign credibility and authority. In Danny's world, conventional markers of legitimacy citizenship, documentation, social status do not align with the capacity to discern truth. Adiga foregrounds a critical question: if moral knowledge resides with the marginalized, how should societies restructure institutions to recognize and act upon it? The novel's emphasis on visibility and invisibility underscores the political dimensions of knowledge. Danny exists in the interstices of society: seen enough to be exploited, invisible enough to be ignored. This duality allows him to gather insights that the privileged cannot access. As Adiga writes:

"Only a cleaner knows the true Sydney—the stains behind the sofas, the secrets in the drawers."(Amnesty, 73)

Through this line, Adiga illustrates how epistemic authority can reside outside formal institutions. Knowledge gained through lived experience, labor, and observation of the hidden social world is as valid if not more so than that generated within legal or bureaucratic frameworks. Danny's epistemic labor exposes the moral failings of the city and the broader societal structures that produce inequality, fear, and vulnerability.

Moreover, Amnesty highlights how systemic oppression shapes ethical possibilities. Danny cannot act freely because the state's legal structures penalize him for moral behavior. This tension exemplifies what philosopher Achille Mbembe calls the "necropolitical" dimension of governance: some lives are systematically rendered precarious, leaving individuals to navigate ethical dilemmas under conditions of existential risk. Danny's predicament shows that undocumented migrants often inhabit spaces where moral agency is constrained, yet the knowledge they produce remains critical for understanding systemic injustice.

The novel also critiques the global neoliberal order. Danny's exploitation as a low-wage cleaner, his invisibility to the law, and his forced precarity illustrate the structural inequities underpinning modern capitalism. Scholars such as Saskia Sassen and Prakhar Medhavi have emphasized how globalization reproduces hierarchies that disproportionately affect migrant labor. Danny's experience in Sydney embodies this reality: he is essential to the functioning of the city yet

denied recognition, security, and rights. In this way, Adiga's work bridges postcolonial critique with an analysis of contemporary globalization, showing how neocolonial power persists through economic and legal systems.

The moral and epistemic stakes are amplified by Danny's intimate access to the world of Sydney's affluent citizens. Through his work, he observes the vulnerabilities, hypocrisies, and moral failings of those who occupy positions of power. This access turns the typical surveillance model on its head: while the state monitors him, he becomes the observer of the privileged, producing a counter-knowledge that challenges conventional hierarchies. This inversion represents a form of literary epistemic decolonization, validating the knowledge of the marginalized against dominant institutions.

Adiga's narrative, while focused on Danny, serves a broader purpose: it calls attention to the structural conditions that produce fear, vulnerability, and moral compromise among undocumented populations. By framing Danny's experience as both psychological and social, the novel emphasizes that justice cannot be achieved without systemic change. The story forces readers to confront uncomfortable truths about the dependence of wealthy nations on invisible labor and the moral failures of states that exploit yet exclude.

The ethical lesson of *Amnesty* is both clear and urgent: marginalized voices must be recognized as epistemically credible. Danny's knowledge of Radha Thomas's murder, his navigation of Sydney's hidden spaces, and his observations of inequality reveal that the authority to know is distributed unevenly by social structures, not by the intrinsic quality of insight. The novel's final implication is radical: if societies are to achieve justice, they must validate the perspectives of those the system marginalizes.

In conclusion, *Amnesty* functions as a powerful narrative of epistemic decolonization. Danny, an undocumented immigrant, becomes a figure through whom Adiga interrogates the intersections of legality, morality, labor, and knowledge. The novel demonstrates how marginalized individuals possess forms of knowledge that are essential for ethical understanding and social justice. By granting narrative authority to Danny, Adiga exposes the moral failures of legal and political systems, challenges readers to reconsider who counts as a legitimate knower, and highlights the structural inequalities embedded in contemporary globalization and migration. Letting the margins speak, as Adiga illustrates, is both an ethical imperative and a prerequisite for a just society.

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