

Chapter One

Introduction

If it has (indeed) arrived . . .

. . . then, one has perhaps not yet recognised it.

Jacques Derrida, “On Cosmopolitanism” 23

In the era of globalization, people flow¹ has become a constantly appearing phenomenon and challenges the stability of nation-states’ borders. The conflict between nation-states and asylum seekers and refugees,² a subgroup of people flow, occurs since reliance on nation-states as the sole authority can no longer handle the political, social and economic problems triggered by these asylum seekers across borderlines. Illegal asylum seekers or asylum applicants³ are often hired as cheap

¹ The term “people flow” comes from Arjun Appadurai’s five dimensions of “global cultural flows” in *Modernity at Large*, ethnoscap, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes, whose fluid and irregular configurations construct the landscapes of contemporary world (33). Appadurai defines ethnoscape as “the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live” (33), including “tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other *moving groups and individuals* constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and *between*) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree” (33; emphases added).

² Refugees and asylum seekers are changeable in some sense. According to the United Nations, a refugee is a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country.” A refugee is someone “who seeks refuge in a foreign country because of war, violence, or out of fear of persecution.” An asylum seeker is a person “who is seeking to be *recognized* as a refugee” (emphasis added). The person is referred to as an asylum seeker “until a request for refuge has been *accepted*” (emphasis added). Only after the recognition of the asylum seeker’s protection needs, he or she is “*officially* referred to as a refugee and enjoys refugee status” (emphasis added), which carries certain rights and obligations according to the legislation of the receiving country. The term “asylum seeker” emphasizes more the pursuit of official recognition of his/her status as refugees in host countries than the term “refugee.” For more details about refugees and asylum seekers in the world, please refer to Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refugee>.

³ The terms of “refugees,” “asylum seekers,” and “immigrants” are sometimes confusing and need further definitions. According to OED, a refugee is one “who, owing to religious persecution or political troubles, seeks refuge in a foreign country.” An asylum seeker is “a person seeking refuge, esp. political asylum, in a nation other than his or her own.” An immigrant is one “who or that which immigrates” and who “migrates into a country as a settler.” In other words, immigrants, people of

foreign laborers by employers for the purpose of global capitalist profits regardless of nation-states' prohibitions against asylum seekers' illegal entry and work. In recent years, more and more films have dealt with the subject of asylum seekers and foreign laborers across boundaries or the marginalized Third World laborers in the era of globalization, such as Lars von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (2000), Michael Winterbottom's *In This World* (2002), Stephen Frears's *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002), Edward Zwick's *Blood Diamond* (2006), and Gregory Nava's *Bordertown* (2007). In *Dancer in the Dark*, Selma, a Czechoslovakian immigrant woman working in a steel factory, is falsely accused of stealing her neighbor's money and is executed to death due to her marginalized and minor status. *In This World* is a documentary film about Afghan refugees who try to escape to Great Britain with the help of people smugglers, some of whom die in the trunks on their way to freedom and hope. *Dirty Pretty Things* unveils the exploitation of asylum seekers and illegal foreign laborers in sweatshops and cruel organ trade in London. *Blood Diamond* exposes the smuggling of conflict diamonds, which results in civil wars and inhuman exploitation in Sierra Leone, from South Africa to the First World. *Bordertown* is about the murder of four hundred women in Juarez, Mexico, a factory town that is home to people who toil away at "maquiladoras" (border factories) making cheap consumer goods for the US market. These films all reflect the uneven power relation between the First World and the Third World in the era of economic globalization. For the need of cheap laborers in global markets, capitalists often employ illegal foreign laborers⁴ in their countries or

migration, in a broad sense consist of people moving from their homeland to host countries, such as immigrants (settlers), asylum seekers and refugees. Therefore, in a general sense, asylum seekers and refugees are similar because they are persecuted due to reasons of race, religion, nationality, etc. Therefore, the terms, asylum seekers and refugees, are interchangeable according to aforementioned situation. For more clear definitions of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants, please refer to OED (Oxford English Dictionary) online, <http://www.oed.com/>.

⁴ The exploitation of foreign laborers often results from their lack of citizenship or severe

exploit disadvantaged people in the Third World so as to reduce the production cost. These foreign laborers or marginalized people in the Third World are easily falling into the exploitation of global late-capitalism⁵ and are deprived of their basic human rights.

British film director Stephen Frears directs *Dirty Pretty Things* in 2002, which delicately explores the hard lives of asylum seekers and foreign laborers in London. *Dirty Pretty Things* has won numerous awards and nominations.⁶ For example, in 2003, it received British Independent Film Award⁷ for Best Actor, Best British Independent Film, Best Director and Best Screenplay. In 2004, it was nominated for Oscar⁸ for Best Writing and Original Screenplay. It also won Humanitas Prize⁹ for Feature Film Category in the same year. Although *Dirty Pretty Things* presents that in

limitations from host countries. In *The Turbulence of Migration*, Nikos Papastergiadis maintains that the relation between work and migration is “jagged” for both “contractual and negotiated terms” of migration and severe limitations of their “civil and work rights” (8). The migrants in the host countries “effectively live in a police state” and are “susceptible to exploitation and constantly in fear of punishment and deportation” (Papastergiadis 8).

⁵ Because of their ambivalent status as foreign laborers, refugees and asylum seekers are always exploited by their employers. In “Culture and the City in East Asia,” as Mike Douglass notes, some migrants often enter the labour market, such as refugees and asylum seekers. Douglass mentions that the asylum seekers and refugees “waiting for their cases to be heard are effectively forced to take work in the dirty and dangerous sectors of the labour market” (qtd. in Papastergiadis 40).

⁶ *Dirty Pretty Things* has won 15 awards and 15 nominations. For more detailed records, please refer to IMBD, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0301199/awards>.

⁷ Created in 1998, British Independent Film Awards set out to celebrate merit and achievement in independently funded British filmmaking, to honor new talent, and to promote British films and filmmaking to a wider public. (from IMBD, http://www.imdb.com/Sections/Awards/British_Independent_Film_Awards/) For more information about British Independent Film Awards, please refer to its official website, <http://www.bifa.org.uk/>.

⁸ The Academy Award (Oscar) is the main national film award in the USA. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is an organization composed of over 6,000 motion picture craftsmen and women. (from IMBD, http://www.imdb.com/Sections/Awards/Academy_Awards_USA/) For more information about Academy Award, please refer to its official website, <http://www.oscars.org/>.

⁹ The Humanitas Prize was created with an initial three-year grant from the Lilly Foundation, and is now financed by an endowment from the broadcast and entertainment industries. The endowment of the Humanitas Prize solely goes to the writer, producers and directors who are acknowledged to well bring the script to “life,” work for best communicates and encourages human values. (from IMBD, http://www.imdb.com/Sections/Awards/Humanitas_Prize/) For more information about The Humanitas Prize, please refer to its official website, <http://www.humanitasprize.org/>.

London asylum seekers are dominated and exploited for their lack of citizenship, the film also implies that asylum seekers' counter strategies and solidarity against exploitation offer a new possible alliance across borders in the era of globalization.

I. About Stephen Frears, the Director

Born on June 20, 1941 in Leicester, Stephen Frears is a director who works in both his native England and in Hollywood. Educated at Gresham's School, Norfolk, from 1954 to 1959, he went on to study law at Trinity College, Cambridge, between 1960 and 1963. After his graduation, Frears's initial career was in television where he contributed to several high-profile series such as the BBC's *Play for Today*. Not until the mid-1980s did he come to prominence as a significant director of British and later Hollywood films.

Frears makes both television and cinematic films, in which his achievements can be divided into three stages. Some are those about the white people or Anglo-Saxon Britons, others are those about multiple ethnic groups in London, and still others are produced as Hollywood films. The initial stage of his films was about the white people or Anglo-Saxon Britons. His first film was *Gumshoe* (1971), a revisionist detective film, while his second film, *The Hit* (1984), was a well-crafted thriller. He also produced notable television films, such as *Me! I'm Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1978), *Doris and Doreen* (1978), *Afternoon Off* (1979) and *One Fine Day* (1979), which were all made in collaboration with Alan Bennett, a white British writer. Then Frears entered the stage of describing the lives of multiple ethnic groups in London. Frears's first success was the film, *My Beautiful Launderette* (1985), in which he inventively collaborated with Hanif Kureishi, a famous Anglo-Pakistani writer. Later, he worked with Kureishi again in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987).

Frears's another noticeable film, *Prick up Your Ears* (1987), based on John Lahr's biography of British playwright Joe Orton (Gary Oldman) (Lucia 8), explored the gay relation in his unique presentation of grotesque London. Later, Frears also came to the US and made Hollywood films. They are *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988), *The Snapper* (1993) and *The Van* (1996). In 2002, Stephen Frears directed and published *Dirty Pretty Things*.

Frears's transition from making films about Anglo-Saxon people in the 1970s to films about multiple ethnic groups in London and those of Hollywood films results from Frears's discovery of his Jewishness in his mid-twenties. From then on, Frears cares about "self-interest in the context of community" (Lucia 8) and "smaller ethnic or marginalized groups in the context of a dominant culture" (Lucia 8), whose rights are easily sacrificed for the interests of the majority. He devotes himself to depicting "the way people live, how they think and how they react within their social environment" and he also likes to explore "the theme of racism, class, division, poverty, and homelessness," "a harsh indictment of the Thatcher government" and "an international political climate of class inequalities and abuses" (Lucia 8).

Dirty Pretty Things is Frears's scrutiny about how the British government whips up the fear of migrants and asylum seekers as though they are "crooks or terrorists or somehow feckless" (Lucia 9) while actually the immigrants have brought considerable prosperity to Britain. It is Frears's opinion that these people's willingness to come to Britain results from their impression of England as a tolerant country. As an observer, Frears thinks that Britain is "unwelcoming" (Lucia 12) to those people and his country ignores the problem on purpose. He recalls an incident that one cabinet minister after seeing *Dirty Pretty Things* denies nothing and says, "the British government knows that the world in this movie really exists" and "the economy will collapse if it didn't"

(Farouky 80). Therefore, *Dirty Pretty Things* is a manifestation of both Frears's aesthetics of presenting the inhuman lives of asylum seekers and foreign laborers, and his concern for these marginalized ethnic groups in London.

II. About Steven Knight, the Script Writer

Originally, Steven Knight intended to write *Dirty Pretty Things* as his fourth novel, but found it hard to get it into shape. He then transformed the story into a script, which became his “first serious screenplay attempt” (Dawes A8). Knight's script gained the admiration from Stephen Frears and fostered the cooperation between them. In the beginning, Knight aimed to build the story around a white surgeon, but found it difficult to bring it to life. Therefore, he changed the character to a Nigerian doctor, with whom the film became “a powerful picture of a bifurcated England,” which was filled with “the traditional England of country homes and gardens and a once-powerful empire,” and “the post-colonial world of foreign-born illegals working as servants, hookers and taxi drivers— plus the people willing to exploit them” (Howe N. 01).

Steven Knight, honored with the Oscar nomination for Best Original Screenplay in 2004, reviewed his motive and process of writing *Dirty Pretty Things* out of his concern for asylum seekers in London. In “Review: The Exploited,” a confession of his own motive of writing the script of *Dirty Pretty Things*, Knight mentioned that he wrote the story based on the reality of London.

[M]any of the maids and kitchen workers in London hotels were illegal aliens from Turkey and Eastern Europe. Most hotels could no more function without illegals than an engine could run without fuel. You open a door and suddenly you are on a tiny island, part of an archipelago of

sky-islands stretching across London, each one populated by a different nationality. (Knight 8)

Writing *Dirty Pretty Things* in the form of a thriller set in a hotel, Knight uses “invisibility” (Knight 8) as a weapon to explore the complicated ethnic groups in London. He is interested in “the way hotels employ people on the condition that they remain invisible” and fascinated with the notion that “this intimate interaction between two groups of people [white people/paying guests vs. staffs from the Third World] who studiously ignore each other, effectively living in two different cities” (Knight 8). Using realism to write the script, Knight intended to present the fact that in London the night porter “will almost certainly be African” while “the chambermaids will almost certainly be Turkish” (Farouky 80). As Jumana Farouky states, to Steven Knight behind the door that is marked “Staff Only” one entered a world that is “filmically wonderful” (80). In other words, Steven Knight prefers to uncover the reality hidden behind “normal” or “glamorous” surface of life. It certainly is very much so in *Dirty Pretty Things*.

For the filmic value of this invisible side of London, Knight thinks the stories of asylum seekers and foreign laborers are attractive and regrettably untold: “[i]t’s always the passenger’s story, not the cab driver’s, that gets told, and that just seems a waste” (Dawes A8). As Knight asserts, if one “stop[s] any minicab on any London street, the life story of the driver will almost certainly be more interesting than the life story of the passenger” (Knight 8). In his interview with Dave Kehr, Knight also mentions his concern for such a bizarre phenomenon in London.

What was fascinating about it was that you could walk around a North London suburb and see a totally nondescript building. You walk in that building and go up to the third floor, and suddenly you are in the third

world. People are dressed differently, speaking different languages. And the fact that some of the clothes they make are destined for some of the most expensive designer shops in London just adds to the irony. (Kehr E. 1: 7)

Therefore, Knight gives the audience “the back seat story,” which narrates “the sheer dramatic energy of what is happening in this city now, with London gulping down refugees by the thousand to satisfy its voracious appetite” (Knight 8).

Besides his keen observation of the invisible Third World people in the First World, Knight also notices the British government’s intentional ignorance of these foreign laborers’ hard condition and negligence of their basic human rights. He is shocked by a Home Office official’s comments on the need of these legal and illegal refugees for Britain, “[W]e need these people. Who else is going to pay for our pensions in 20 years time? It’s just that no politician dares stand up and say so” (Knight 8). As a result, in *Dirty Pretty Things*, Steven Knight presents the story of asylum seekers and the other side of London with his deep sympathy for these anonymous people.

III. Plot Summary

Dirty Pretty Things depicts the struggle of asylum seekers and foreign laborers in London.¹⁰ In the form of thrillers with black humor, the story starts with Okwe’s discovery of a human heart at The Baltic Hotel and moves to the exposition of the inhuman kidney removal of the illegal refugees in exchange for new passports and

¹⁰ In *Dirty Pretty Things*, Frears especially deals with two kinds of people flow, asylum seekers and foreign laborers. Guo Yi and Senay are legal and semi-legal asylum seekers. Okwe and other anonymous refugees in the film are illegal asylum seekers. Due to their status as asylum seekers, legal or otherwise, these people have hard lives in Britain. Many of them become illegal foreign laborers due to their lack of citizenship or rights of asylum.

identity. By rapid shift of scenes among the pretty Baltic Hotel, the dark rooms of the cab company, Senay's narrow apartment, and Guo Yi's mortuary, Frears shows a realistic and dark life of these legal and illegal asylum seekers and foreign laborers.

Okwe (Chiwetel Ejioror), a Nigerian doctor, is hunted by his government because of his disagreement with a hospital superior and his refusal to take an autopsy. The consequence is that his home is firebombed and his wife murdered. Forced to leave his country to flee political persecution, Okwe goes to Britain and drives a taxi by day and mans a hotel by night for survival in London. Due to his illegal entry into the country, Okwe is unable to rent houses and always keeps himself hidden from the authority. Senay (Andrey Tautou), a devout Turkish Muslim asylum applicant in England, illegally lends Okwe her couch as the place for temporary dwelling. They cover and support each other in their lives. There are also other immigrants that belong to the marginalized ethnic groups: a Chinese immigrant, Guo Yi (Benedict Wong), who works in the morgue, and Ivan (Zlatko Buric), the Slavic doorman at the hotel. The hotel manager, Sneaky (Sergi López), is also an immigrant, who involves in the business of selling human kidneys in exchange for passports in the secret rooms in the hotel. Even Juliette (Sophie Okonedo), the prostitute with a standard English accent, is the descendant of black immigrants. Working as a receptionist in the hotel, Okwe accidentally discovers a human heart stuck in the toilet in one of the rooms. When telling Sneaky about this finding, Okwe is threatened to be reported to the British and Nigerian governments unless he remains silent and agrees to join in organ trade with the guarantee of getting a new passport in return.

On the other hand, being exploited by her employers and hounded by immigration officers, Senay is driven to sell not only her labor but also her organs out of despair. As a mean and evil guy, Sneaky asks Senay to offer her sex in addition to

cutting off her kidney. After learning Senay's being brutally violated by Sneaky, Okwe decides to take revenge on him. Pretending to join the operation on Senay's kidney removal and with the aid of Guo Yi, Juliette, and Ivan, Okwe cheats Sneaky, removes his kidney instead after a trick and gets the new passports for Senay and himself. At the end of the story, Okwe and Senay leave separately for different destinations. Okwe returns to his homeland with his new passport to be united with his daughter while Senay goes to New York to start a new life.

IV. Literature Review

After *Dirty Pretty Things* was released in 2002, film reviewers soon praised both Frears's and Knight's genius in presenting the hard lives of asylum seekers and foreign laborers in London and the issue of inhuman organ trade in London. They think that *Dirty Pretty Things* successfully explores the issue of ethnicity, capitalism and human rights of asylum seekers and foreign laborers¹¹ in the era of globalization. Reviewers discover that the exploitation on foreign laborers, mainly consist of illegal refugees and asylum seekers, is a manifestation of the uneven ethnic power relation and global late-capitalism. Fleeing the political or social persecution in their homeland, asylum seekers provide their cheap labor to serve the operation of capitalism; some of them even sell their organs in exchange for passports and money in order to survive. Most of Frears's film reviewers examine *Dirty Pretty Things* from the viewpoint of ethnicity, which is mainly concerned with asylum seekers' presence in global cities and the debate on their basic human rights. For example, in "Dirty Pretty Things,"

¹¹ As mentioned previously in footnote 3, the terms, immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, are interchangeable in different situations. Critics of *Dirty Pretty Things* in their reviews also use these terms alternatively. To present their criticisms faithfully, in my thesis, I use the exact term in their original reviews. The term "illegal immigrants" is used by Stratton, Farouky, Hunter, Andrews, Scott, Winter, Power and Brownell, and Amago. The term "refugee" is also used by Winter. Gibson uses the term "asylum seekers" in her criticism.

David Stratton considers *Dirty Pretty Things* to be Frears's explosive breakthrough, which explores the theme of illegal immigrants' painful sacrifice in order to achieve their dreams by using the hotel as the metaphor for Britain. Presenting the hotel as the symbol of Britain, Frears powerfully shows how people from various walks of life and of different ethnicity congregate and strive to survive in London. Besides, he appraises that the contribution of the film is "a large cast of the unknown" with "a Russian [sic] doorman and staff from all over the map" (Stratton 33).¹² The hotel, called "the Baltic," is seen as "a kind of microcosm for Britain's melting-pot society in the new millennium" (Stratton 33).

In "London Underground," Jumana Farouky admires Frears's presentation of the other side of London which is usually unseen to ordinary people. Therefore, *Dirty Pretty Things* depicts the lives of marginalized ethnic groups instead of those of the white British people. It provides the audience with "an underworld they rarely see and a reality they choose to ignore" (Farouky 80). Noticeably, Farouky points out the uneven spatial division between illegal immigrants and British people. Farouky thinks Frears has an inventive way to investigate the immigrants' presence in global cities.

A. O. Scott in "The Scariest Action Movies Around" applauds how Frears's *Dirty Pretty Things* ingeniously makes use of the long-debated topic of immigrants across borders. According to Scott, the film manipulates the dilemma between illegal immigrants' trade of their organs "for forged documents" and "their desire for a better life and just the will to survive" (2). The plight leads them to "a series of brutal, sometimes fatal transactions, which the protagonists must negotiate without the protection of law, family or custom" (Scott 2). Scott acclaims Frears's concern on

¹² Noticeably, Ivan's ethnicity is Slavic, but there is no direct evidence to prove that Ivan is definitely a Russian. However, though Stratton misunderstands Ivan's nationality as a Russian, I still quote his original review faithfully.

immigrants and asylum seekers' obscure status in London.

In "Invisible People in an Alien World: Our Own," Stephen Hunter gives credits to Frears's ambition to examine asylum seekers in the face of the danger of deportation and exploitation in Britain. He thinks that by using the detective device, Okwe is designed "to crisscross the fringes, to visit apartments and sweatshops and late-night fast-food joints," in which people "on the verge of deportation" "would rather die than be sent back" (Hunter C. 01). By granting Okwe the mission of discovering the mystery, Frears reveals the invisible and dark side of London.

Beverly Andrews thinks that *Dirty Pretty Things* successfully presents a dark nether world, "where people are so poor that they have to sell part of themselves" (61) in "Films: Dirty Pretty Things." The film is also designated as one that captures "the parallel world that these characters [illegal immigrants and refugees] inhabit" (Andrews 61). Andrews acclaims that *Dirty Pretty Things* is a film about "isolation and survival instincts" (61) while simultaneously it features love and hope. His review not only points out the contrast and parallel world between British people and immigrants revealed in the cityscape of London but also deserves further investigation of the problem of defining people flow in such a cosmopolitan city as London only on the ground of maintaining the interests of the major ethnic groups.

Also noticing the spatial unevenness of London, in "London Kills Me," Jessica Winter thinks of *Dirty Pretty Things* as a remarkable film that "tunnels beneath a bustling city's surface to find the personae non grata who keep its motor clean" and "presents a scrubbed and anonymous London" (109). Winter notices that refugees, legal or otherwise, are always marginalized in the underworld of London and acclaims both Frears's and Knight's approach to "un-Hollywood" subject matter, world view, and plausible casting (109).

Even though *Dirty Pretty Things* is analyzed from the perspective of ethnicity, its multiplicity still fascinates other critics to approach it from alternative angles. Film reviewers notice that these asylum seekers' and immigrants' presence in global cities is not only a problem of ethnicity across borders but also a result of economic globalization. Because of their undocumented status, they are easily falling into the exploitation of global late-capitalism. For example, in "The Long Road Home," Carla Power and Ginanne Brownell analyze that European movies tend to reflect "the changing place of immigrants in European society," which opens the "debates raging over their status and benefits" (48), by bringing immigrant characters and subjects into the foreground. They also analyze how global capitalists and immigrant laborers congregate simultaneously in global cities (Power and Brownell 48). Global cities become a good space to investigate the effect of economic globalization with the coexistence of foreign laborers and international capitalists gathering together across borders. Power and Brownell insightfully detect Frears's concern about the contradiction between global elites and asylum seekers and the disparity between capitalists and immigrant laborers in *Dirty Pretty Things*.

In "Accommodating Strangers: British Hospitality and the Asylum Hotel Debate," by discussing the accommodation of asylum seekers in light of Jacques Derrida's concept of hospitality, generosity and parasitism, Sarah Gibson analyzes how asylum seekers across borders reflect the effect of economic globalization, which disturbs the original distribution of capital and labor. Therefore, due to nation-states' intention to protect its domestic benefits and economic autonomy, asylum seekers are always deemed as thieves and parasites, who steal away the host country's wealth and social welfare. Parasitology is invented as a discourse of regarding immigrants and asylum seekers as parasites, who intrude into the body of the host nation (Gibson 379).

However, Gibson subversively points out the reversed relation that it is actually “the nation-state who parasites ‘the guests’ or the asylum seeker”: “[I]t is precisely strangers who ‘give’ to the nation-state its defining difference and its infrastructure of cheap labor within the service economics” (381).

In addition to noticing the exploitation on asylum seekers in the era of economic globalization, critics pay lots of attention to the bizarre phenomenon of selling bodies as global commodities, which takes physical labor and bodily organs as products for consumption. Discussing the effect of economic globalization from another aspect, critics discover that these marginalized ethnic groups are driven to sell not merely their labor but their bodily organs, in order to survive. In the era of economic globalization, even organs from the marginalized can be purchased as commodities. This reflects not only the tough condition of these marginalized ethnic groups but the distorted consequence of global late-capitalism. While Stephen Schaefer confirms the fact of organ trade in London, Nancy Scheper-Hughes analyzes the phenomena of organ trade all over the world. Samuel Amago even discusses both the exploitation of migrants’ labor and the commodification of bodily organs in the context of global capitalism. In “‘Dirty Pretty Things’ Has Been a Pretty Good Thing,” Stephen Schaefer interviews Chiwetel Ejifor, the chief actor in the film, who talks about his experience of growing up in London as the child of Nigerian immigrants. In this review, Schaefer exposes the phenomena of organ trade in such a civilized global city, like London. Organ trade is not a fiction but a fact that happens in many countries.

In “Biopiracy and the Global Quest for Human Organs,” Nancy Scheper-Hughes regards *Dirty Pretty Things* as “a social thriller” (14) that faithfully “toys with the theme of organ theft, blending elements of fantasy, with realist scenes of human trafficking for kidneys” (14-5). She considers that the film reflects the

reality of organ theft in the world, in which organs are sold as “a reservoir of spare parts” (15) from the Third World countries to the developed countries nowadays. In the same article, she mentions that she also blames organ trade fiercely in a panel discussion on “Ethnics, Access and Safety in Tissue and Organ Transplant” at World Health Organization Conference in 2003. She lays bare that “this kind of informal global networking and trade in body parts ignores the cruel realities of such practices for vulnerable donor communities” (16). Human tissues and organs are the newest commodities of global economy and this trafficking of fresh organs has become a troubling side of globalization. Scheper-Hughes thinks that the environment of globalization should be responsible for the climate of organ trade all over the world.

In “Why Spaniards Make Good Bad Guys,” published in 2005, Samuel Amago notices the exploitation of foreign laborers in the era of globalization and argues that Frears’s accentuation of Sneaky’s Spanishness in *Dirty Pretty Things* overlooks the exploitation of immigrants by the highly capitalistic countries rather than by a particular agent, such as Sneaky. Amago sharply blames the prosperity of globalization on the exploitation of immigrant labors. In his opinion, the significance of the role of the Spanish Sneaky lays in its function as “the strategic separation of the exploitation of immigrants in London from the English (and European) context from which it [the exploitation of immigrants in London] springs” (Amago 59) and trickily distracts the audience’s attention to identify the exploiter as the Spanish immigrant rather than the British people.

V. Justification

Although there have been many critics analyzing *Dirty Pretty Things* from various perspectives, they only treat the issues about ethnicity, economic globalization

and human rights separately. I believe there is still room to scrutinize the film from different angles, such as Poststructural, ethical, and Post-Marxist perspectives. I intend to offer an ethical angle to display how globalization promotes the need to redefine citizenship and manifests the possibility of new alliance across borders. I will offer a geopolitical reading of *Dirty Pretty Things* by examining the relation between nation-states and asylum seekers.

VI. Purpose of This Thesis

This thesis aims to analyze the problem of asylum seekers and foreign laborers from the perspective of globalization in *Dirty Pretty Things*. Globalization not only promotes the flow of people across borders but also the flow of transnational capital. As aforementioned reviews of current studies, many critics, such as Power, Brownell, and Gibson, observe how asylum seekers across borders not only disturb the ethnic and economic stability in the host country but promote the redistribution of capital and labor.

However, although most critics in their analysis notice the issues of ethnicity, economic globalization, and human rights in *Dirty Pretty Things*, they always think that asylum seekers are passive victims. They are inclined to view the relation between nation-states and refugees as the exploitation or domination from top to bottom and deem it as the inevitable result of globalization. Few of them notice the discursive and hegemonic surveillance of nation-states and examine the connection between nation-states and asylum seekers dialectically. Besides, in global cities congregate not only native people but asylum seekers and foreign laborers across borders. Their co-existence becomes a terrain for the study of the effect of globalization. As discovered, the traditional citizenship or borderlines could no longer

stop people from flowing across borders. It is controversial for nation-states to restrict asylum seekers or foreign laborers sternly because the porosity of borders encourages people flow across borders. For the symbiosis between foreign laborers and host countries, any attempt to draw a clear distinction only based on hosts and parasites or citizens and aliens proves problematic.

Moreover, almost no one notices the counter strategies and resistance of these asylum seekers in *Dirty Pretty Things*, which enable the characters to rebel against the surveillance of nation-states and the exploitation of capitalism. I argue that the solidarity across borders at the end of the film implies the rise of new alliance across borders in the era of globalization. Although in this film asylum seekers are inspected and deprived of their basic human rights due to their lack of citizenship, their counter strategies and solidarity against exploitation not only unveil the instability of nation-states' surveillance but the possibility of new union beyond borders in the era of globalization. I hope to examine the dialectics between surveillance and resistance and between citizenship and human rights, which could present the turbulence in the era of globalization, and to inaugurate a new ethics or politics. By putting *Dirty Pretty Things* in the framework of people flow and global late-capitalism, I will explore the geopolitical relation between asylum seekers and nation-states.

VII. Theoretical Framework

In order to analyze the dialectics between nation-states and asylum seekers, in *Dirty Pretty Things*, I adopt Jacques Derrida's concept of absolute and conditional hospitality, Michel Foucault's theory, especially Panopticon and resistance, Alison Brysk and Gershon Shafir's analysis of citizenship and human rights, and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's idea of radical plural democracy. These theorists'

concepts and assertions help examine the motivation and mechanism of a nation-state's surveillance, address the fallacy of such xenophobia, and illustrate the solidarity for the asylum seekers and foreign laborers as the best solution.

Analyzing the discursive formation of deeming asylum seekers as parasites and ethic others, Jacques Derrida suggests developing new ethics to face people flow across borders. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida points out the dilemma between nation-states' effective control and asylum seekers' basic human rights, and between conditional hospitality and unconditional hospitality. Absolute hospitality is the condition of full reception of foreigners in the host country, whereas conditional hospitality is governed by laws and duties of nation-states. It is hard to practice each of them separately because absolute hospitality is impossible in itself for it "undermines the very condition of a nation or state, which is constituted through the erection of frontiers and borders" and is, therefore, limited by "the naming or categorization of the guest, other or stranger" (Gibson 375), conditional hospitality. The undifferentiating states between self and other and hosts and guests bring the conflict between internal governance and ethics, and between the pursuit of the interests of its citizens and the ideal of generosity and full reception of aliens.

Not all new arrivals are received as guests if they don't have the benefit of the right to hospitality or the right of asylum, etc. Without this right, a new arrival can only be introduced "in my home," in the host's "at home," as a parasite, a guest who is wrong, illegitimate, clandestine, liable to expulsion or arrest. (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 61)

However, since absolute hospitality inherently has the danger of confusing ethic self and other and contains the threat of losing the boundaries between self and other, nation-states always grant asylum seekers with conditional hospitality, limited duties

and rights. In order to maintain order and avoid the danger of losing oneself, nation-states establish the conditional law “submitted to a basic and limiting jurisdiction” (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 59) and accentuate the difference between a guest and a parasite. Nation-states sometimes fall into an extreme form of xenophobia or racism in handling asylum seekers and laborers across borders.

Therefore, in the discourse of xenophobia or racism, asylum seekers are put under nation-states’ control and restrictions. As Michel Foucault argues, individuals are “productive” and “subjected” (*Discipline and Punish* 26) bodies under the panoptic surveillance of nation-states through external and internal surveillance. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault explains that the concept of Panopticon prison is originally a tower with two windows, “one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other” (201). In Panopticon tower there is placed a supervisor in the center to observe the prisoners in the cells. The panoptic mechanism makes it possible to “see constantly and to recognize immediately,” in which “full lightening and the eye of a supervisor” capture better than “darkness” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 200). Unlike the dungeon, the effect of Panopticon lays in the inevitable tension of being observed.

The mechanism of Panopticon is “to introduce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 201). The surveillance is “permanent” in its effect, even if it is “discontinuous” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 201) in its action. Power is established on the principle that the culprits are aware too little of power’s visibility and too much of its omnipresence. The maintenance of the power is based on the visibility of the existence of the power and the unverifiability of its presence. It is “a

machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 202). Foucault extends the Panopticon prison to the configuration and internalization of the panoptic surveillance in nation-states. The significance of Panopticon not only lays in different kinds of institutions, such as armies, workshops, schools, hospitals, religious groups, charity organizations and police, but relies on social conventions and introjections of surveillance in individuals. The process of making individuals the subjects under nation-states’ control is especially clearly seen in nation-states’ surveillance on these people across borders.

Through various channels, asylum seekers are demonized as parasites and are controlled by nation-states. Therefore, due to nation-states’ regulations, asylum seekers’ basic human rights are always neglected and sacrificed, which becomes noticeable in the era of globalization. In “Globalization and the Citizenship Gap,” Alison Brysk and Gershon Shafir discuss “how globalization has created a ‘citizenship gap,’ which puts noncitizens and ‘second-class citizens’ at risk” (3). That is, the citizenship gap reflects the difficulty in handling the cases of legal and illegal immigrants and asylum seekers in their countries merely based on citizenship in the era of globalization. While human rights are granted as “the endowment of individuals with rights by virtue of their common humanity” (Brysk and Shafir 4), citizenship is originally identified with nation-states and extends to certain social and cultural groups. In the era of globalization, citizenship and human rights have their own limitations and deficiencies. While the practice of citizenship is only available to “members of political communities of limited size and particular characteristics, leaving out those devoid of membership” (Brysk and Shafir 4), the ideal of human rights suffers from the lack of robust institutional underpinning (Brysk and Shafir 5).

As Brysk and Shafir contend, though citizenship is generally granted to their people in many nation-states, there remains a citizenship gap, which makes it controversial for host countries to manage the cases of asylum seekers and foreign laborers within their borders. One kind of people suffering from the citizenship gap is the growing number of residents who are “noncitizens” (Brysk and Shafir 6). They consist of “migrants, refugees, and undocumented residents” and “certain ethnic groups, rural residents, and laborers” (Brysk and Shafir 6). These people are “ineligible for rights of political participation, social services, and sometimes even international recognition of their status” (Brysk and Shafir 6). The other kind who suffers from the citizenship gap is second-class citizens, “granted lower rights of membership, such as informal sector, women, children, ethnic minorities, and sometimes labor” (Brysk and Shafir 7). Both noncitizens and second-class citizens are often treated inhumanly for their lack of legal or ambiguous status as citizens.

Nevertheless, nation-states’ and capitalism’s surveillance on asylum seekers and foreign laborers are always confronted with the systematic deficiencies in their mechanisms and are resisted by individuals’ counter strategies and solidarity. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault indicates that resistance is always accompanied with the exercise of power no matter how dominant surveillance is: “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (95). In this book, Foucault moves away from the rhetoric, in which individuals seem to have no opportunity to resist power in *Discipline and Punishment*, to a position, where individuals have the possibility to refuse the regulation of apparatuses of power. He contends that nearly in every relation of power, the supporting force and the resisting force co-exist (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 95-6). In other words, the dominant force in the power relation is

always accompanied with multiple forms of resistance. Foucault also rejects the idea of power as an absolute possession of the privileged people and agents and asserts the concept of power “which come[s] from below” (*History of Sexuality* 94). Foucault’s bottom-up analysis manifests that to fully understand a mechanism of power, one should inspect the force from the bottom as well as from the top.

The resistance from beneath fights against subordination in the field of economy, gender, and race and enhances solidarity among different ethnicity, class, and gender. Confirming the power of solidarity beyond ethnicity, class, and gender, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, the celebrated contemporary Post-Marxists,¹³ suggest that radical plural democracy offer a way of alliance, which turns “democratic antagonisms” into “democratic struggles directed towards a wide-ranging democratization of social life” (96). In *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, Jacob Torfing, a scholar who scrupulously elucidates the development of Laclau and Mouffe’s theory, comments that Laclau and Mouffe’s concept of “radical plural democracy” is “a new collective will” which makes sure that “the interests of one group are not pursued at the expense of the interests of other groups” (257). Therefore, Laclau and Mouffe argue that the expansive hegemonies, such as fascism, capitalism, patriarchy and racism, which exclude other different identities and ideologies, are problematic for they are incapable of living with other differences and multiplicities. In other words, liberal democracy and deliberative democracy oppress different opinions in race, class, and gender in their attempts to build a consensus dominantly. Therefore, Laclau and Mouffe’s strategy of radical plural democracy is,

¹³ Though Laclau and Mouffe remain attached to the theoretical discourse of Marxism, they define their goal as “operating deconstructively within Marxist categories” (3) in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. To accomplish this, they transform some of the elements in the classical Marxism and move into “post-Marxist terrain” (Laclau and Mouffe 4). They conclude that it is necessary to move beyond Marxism and formulate the new conception of “radical, libertarian and plural democracy” (Laclau and Mouffe 3-4).

on the contrary, to expand the liberal definition of democracy, on the basis of freedom and equality, to include differences. The idea of “radical plural democracy” is no longer lodged with particular agents constituted at a particular social level, whether they are the working laborers, or women, black people or the environmentalists because each of these groups of people possibly takes a position which is prejudicial and dominant to some or all of the others. Radical plural democracy is based upon the principle of liberty and equality for all, in which all the relations of subordination and exploitation are abolished, such as racism, capitalism, and sexism, etc. In Laclau and Mouffe’s opinion, these oppressive relations should be made visible, re-negotiated and altered. By building democracy around difference, dissent and solidarity, oppressive relations of power that exist in society are able to come to the forefront so that they can be challenged. Nikos Papastergiadis in *The Turbulence of Migration* thinks Laclau and Mouffe’s idea is especially useful in the era of globalization, in which the politics of agonism should seek to “activate the rights of minority groups” and “forge new alliances across the traditional divisions of nation, class and gender” (166).

VIII. Chapter by Chapter Layout

As shown above, a dialectical reading of *Dirty Pretty Things* can better explicate the relation between nation-states and asylum seekers in Britain in the era of globalization. Although *Dirty Pretty Things* realistically reveals that in global cities, like London, asylum seekers are controlled and deprived of their basic human rights due to their unrecognized status, the film also indicates that asylum seekers’ counter strategies and solidarity against exploitation manifest a new possibility of alliance beyond borders in the era of globalization. Therefore, in Chapter Two, I first argue that asylum seekers are demonized and watched by the state through various ways of

surveillance, which are clearly seen in the epitome of The Baltic Hotel as the apparatus of the British government. By borrowing notions of Derrida's conditional hospitality and Foucault's Panopticon, I dissect how nation-states control asylum seekers in different forms of panoptic surveillance. Noticeably, I contend that it is not the surveillance of nation-states but xenophobia and institutional deficiency that should be blamed. Critic Sarah Gibson's analysis of the discourse of considering asylum seekers as parasites through media and political reinforcements also helps a lot to explore the atmosphere of racism and demonisation of asylum seekers in the film.

In Chapter Three, I adopt Brysk and Shafir's concept to expose the plight of noncitizens and second-class citizens caught in the citizenship gap between citizenship and human rights in *Dirty Pretty Things*. Certainly, Britain needs to categorize these people flow across borders according to their legitimacy so as to maintain the order of its society and protect its citizens. Therefore, these legal or illegal asylum seekers and foreign laborers are always paradoxically exploited by their employers due to their ambivalent status while the British government fails to intervene only for the reason that these people are not its legal citizens. In addition to the surveillance of the host country, asylum seekers are controlled in many ways, such as welfare control. The politics of asylum are thus restrictive in asylum seekers' housing, economic subsidies and health, etc. These people are exploited to different degrees without sufficient protection of rights for their illegal or inferior status. This gray area and institutional deficiency should be redressed so that the protection of asylum seekers' and foreign laborers' human rights can be perpetuated. Finally, in Chapter Four, I will use the perspective of Foucault's resistance and Laclau and Mouffe's radical plural democracy to indicate the significance of solidarity as counter strategies for people across borders in the era of globalization. Not only the

exploitation of these asylum seekers and foreign laborers but inhuman organ trade prompts Okwe to act as the leader of the marginalized and disadvantaged groups to rebel against organ trade and exploitation enacted upon them. Solidarity, an essence of radical plural democracy, combines the manpower of asylum seekers and marginalized ethnic groups and helps them to establish a support system of their own so as to resist exploitation and mistreatment.