Chapter Two

The Gaze of Surveillance

I. Introduction

As records shown nowadays, more and more refugees are crossing borders, including those who are displaced by violence and persecution, and those who have become homeless within their own countries (Papastergiadis 54). However, in the era of globalization, nation-states carry out strict policies on asylum seekers' and foreign laborers' entries and works. While the phenomena of people across borders are an inevitable tendency in the era of globalization, some regulations on refugees' entry into a host country have become obsolete because of changing political and economic factors. Though most nation-states are under the influence of globalization, their immigration and asylum policies generally built to fit the needs of national communities is a question. Nation-states always protect their citizens in terms of securing national integrity and economic interests by controlling the entry and work of asylum seekers and foreign laborers. However, in the context of global migration and displacement, national policies on immigration controls and asylum quotas are regarded as "unjust" and "unsustainable" (Papastergiadis 56) because of these countries' main concern of protecting the economic interests of their own communities.

When making the film *Dirty Pretty Things*, director Stephen Frears must have kept such an unfair phenomenon in his mind. One may thus understand why Frears, when interviewed with Cynthia Lucia, mentions that he "favor[s] […] shot composition involving viewers to contemplate the characters in *the context of environment*" (8; emphases added). *Dirty Pretty Things* unveils the problem that

refugees' and immigrants' accommodation in host countries creates the tension between the surveillance of nation-states and the mobility of individuals moving across borders. Through incessant surveillance of various institutions, the British government affirms its authority, establishes the discourse of the law, and circulates the operation of power. However, people who cross borders, especially legal and illegal refugees, wish to enter and work in host countries without severe regulations. *Dirty Pretty Things* thus shows the conflict between nation-states' protection of citizens and refugees' quest for nation-states' full reception of them. In the film, the flow of asylum seekers and refugees not only accelerates citizens' fears of mixing with ethic other but strengthens the tension between the government's restricted recognition of them and the ethical ideal of absolute hospitality.

Dirty Pretty Things reflects the condition that asylum seekers are always demonized and monitored through various panoptic mechanisms of surveillance in Britain. The characters in the film, Okwe, Senay and other numerous refugees are under the surveillance of institutions and apparatuses. As the epitome of British society, The Baltic Hotel with its rooms as cells and its video-cameras as supervising eyes continuously control the cheap foreign laborers, which connotes the nation's mechanism and introjection of panoptic surveillance. I am not of the opinion that the surveillance of nation-states should be blamed. Certainly, a nation needs laws and borders to protect its citizens. I am also not encouraging illegal or legal asylum seekers or foreign laborers to come to host countries to work, sacrificing the interests of their citizens. Instead, I suggest that it is xenophobia or institutional deficiency which indirectly deteriorates asylum seekers' or foreign laborers' hardship and this should be blamed. Therefore, in this chapter, I argue that Frears shows how asylum seekers are demonized and monitored through various panoptic mechanisms of

surveillance by using The Baltic Hotel as the figurative symbol of nation-states. Jacques Derrida's theory of conditional hospitality and Michel Foucault's concept of Panopticon are applied to the exploration of the surveillance of nation-states on those asylum seekers in *Dirty Pretty Things*.

II. Jacques Derrida's Notion of Hospitality

Due to absolute hospitality's idealistic impossibility, nation-states inevitably adopt conditional hospitality, sometimes in its extreme form of xenophobia or racism, to handle asylum seekers and foreign laborers across borders. In the era of globalization, people flow, a regularly seen phenomenon, challenges the stability of nation-states' boundaries. Nation-states find it difficult in dealing with the political, social and economic problems caused by asylum seekers and foreign laborers across borders. Jacques Derrida points out a similar dilemma of handling these refugees and foreign laborers for nation-states. In "On Cosmopolitanism," Derrida suggests developing new ethics by changing the current status of nation-states in the face of people flow across borders. To analyze the problem of people across borders, Derrida illustrates the decline of nation-states and the decay of asylum rights with two points. The first one results from the progressive abolition upon the arrival of stateless people for the right to asylum. Although the right to asylum is figured as "a symbol of Human Rights in the domain of international relations" (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 6-7), it is still felt as "an anachronism and a principle incompatible with the international laws of the State" (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 7). Due to the absence of agreements on international charters of the right to asylum, nation-states fail to protect these refugees' human rights through international relations. The second is the massive influx of refugees which "necessitates abandoning the classic recourse to repatriation

or naturalization" (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 7). The traditional bases of repatriation of refugees among nations are no longer suitable to the complicated condition in the era of globalization. By reflecting Kant's cosmopolitan laws,[1] Derrida suggests we should change the role of nation-states and develop new politics[2] when confronting people flow across borders.

> Whenever the State is neither the foremost author of, nor the foremost guarantor against the violence which forces refugees or exiles to flee, it is often powerless to ensure the protection and the liberty of its own citizens before a terrorist menace, whether or not it has a religious or nationalist alibi. (*On Cosmopolitanism* 6)

This clearly points out the ambivalent role nation-states take in the era of globalization. Nation-states are not only asked to protect the rights of its people but are demanded to take the asylum seekers into account.

This tough problem for nation-states to balance between absolute hospitality and conditional hospitality is also explored in Derrida's *Of Hospitality*. Absolute

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[1] Jacques Derrida contemplates on Kant's cosmopolitan law, which seems to "encompass universal hospitality *without limit*" (*On Cosmopolitanism* 20; emphases original) while it actually contains two paradigms or limitations within. One is that Kant restricts hospitality to "the right of visitation" rather than "a right of residence" (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 21). That is, the right of residence is unfortunately rejected and requires to be made as the particular treaty between nations (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 21). The other is that Kant only assigns hospitality to the conditions dependent on state sovereignty. As shown, Kant still holds the opinion that hospitality, whether it is public or private, should be dependent on and controlled by "the law and the state police" (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 22). This type of the basis on nation-states always falls into the limitation of thinking hospitality from the perspective of nation-states. Therefore, Derrida suggests a new perspective on hospitality and recognition and hopes that "cities of refuge" could give rise to reflection on the questions of asylum and hospitality without entirely depending on the idea of using nation-states as units. He expounds the tendency of globalization in which cities become the immigrants' destination, whereas borders of nation-states are rendered problematic and gradually decline.

[2] Distrusting the nation-state as the only effective system to solve tension resulting from asylum seekers within borders, Derrida proffers a concept of "cities of refuge," a new type of cosmopolitics; "[W]hether it be the foreigner in general, the immigrant, the exiled, the deported, the stateless, or the displaced person, […] we should ask these new cities of refuge to reorient the politics of the state" (*On Cosmopolitanism* 4). He expects the city can "elevate itself above nation-states" or "free itself from them" (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 9) that looks forward that the city could be a place for asylum seekers to escape any threat to justice.

hospitality, known as unconditional hospitality, and conditional hospitality, known as political hospitality, are in contradiction. However, they do not exclude each other,[3] for "[h]ospitality is due to the foreigner, certainly, but remains, like the law, conditional, and thus conditioned in its dependence on the unconditionality that is the basis of the law" (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 73).

With the ideal of generosity and justice, unconditional hospitality possibly has the inherent risk of accepting immigrants and refugees without limits. For Derrida, hospitality, especially unconditional hospitality, implies the ethical dimensions of generosity, justice, and gift-giving for others. In the opinions of many socio-cultural theorists, such as Emile Beveniste's, hospitality is economically categorized as "a weaken form" which goes beyond the reciprocal cycle of exchange and obligation (Beveniste 77). As far as Derrida is concerned, as justice and a gift, hospitality is absolute, unconditional, and certainly "must remain aneconomic" (*Given Time* 7), which means hospitality should not be considered to be a form of give-and-take in the circulation of economic exchange. Unconditional hospitality must be "beyond debt and economy" (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 83) and should be deemed as aneconomic for it does not belong to the reciprocal circle of exchange and obligation. Therefore, instead of being governed by laws or even being degraded into a governed and lawful duty, absolute hospitality, which can be also named "the unconditional law of hospitality" (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 79),[4] stands for the structure of the gift, justice,

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[3] The manifestation of conditional hospitality relies on the instruction of absolute hospitality while absolute hospitality requires the conditional to reveal itself. In other words, absolute hospitality is impossible for it "undermines the very condition of a nation or state, which is constituted through the erection of frontiers and borders" (Gibson 375). Therefore, it is limited by "the naming or categorization of the guest, other or stranger" (Gibson 375), conditional hospitality.

[4] As Derrida puts it, "[T]his unconditional law of hospitality, if such a thing is thinkable, would then be a law without imperative, without order and without duty. A law without law, in short. For if I [Derrida] practice hospitality "*out of* duty" [and not only "*in conforming with* duty"], this hospitality of paying up is no longer an absolute hospitality, it is no longer graciously offered beyond debt and

generosity, and friendship and belongs to “the very figure of the impossible” (Derrida, *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice* 7).

Unconditional hospitality is a law beyond imperative, order or duty of nation-states. It should go above the control or commands of nation-states.

> Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others. Insofar as it has to do with the ethos, that is, the residence, one’s home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others. To others as our own or as foreigners, ethics is hospitality; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality. (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 17)

As Derrida indicates, hospitality is connected to ethics and culture and is about the relation between self and foreigners. It should be unconditional and beyond the political constraints, such as laws and the policing system.

However, though illustrated as the metaphor of an aneconomic and generous gift, absolute hospitality embraces inexhaustible floods of immigrants and asylum seekers. Unconditional hospitality requires that one opens up their home “to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other” (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 25). This absolute other is foreigners who have “neither name, nor patronym, nor family, nor social status” (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 25). The laws of unconditional hospitality should be expected as “a law which tells us or invites us, or gives us the order or injunction to welcome anyone, any other one, without checking at the border” (Derrida, *Perhaps or Maybe* 8). For these nation-states, absolute hospitality might connote a crisis of

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economy, offered to the other, a hospitality invented for the singularity of the new arrival, of the unexpected visitor” (*Of Hospitality* 83; emphases original).

abandonment and loss of home. Unconditional hospitality implies that one does not ask the other to identify himself or herself, even if the other deprives him/her of his/her mastery or home. And this is “the condition of unconditional hospitality” (Derrida, *Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility* 70), in which one gives up the mastery of his/her space, home, and nation.

For absolute hospitality’s idealistic impossibility and inherent threat to host countries, nation-states often choose conditional hospitality, which sometimes tends to give rise to xenophobia or racism. Conditional hospitality is governed by the nation. Conditional hospitality is necessary for the reason that “hospitality is due to the foreigner, certainly, but remains, like the law, conditional, and thus conditioned in its dependence on the unconditionality that is the basis of the law” (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 73). Therefore, acting as a compromise, nation-states always get involved in the practice of hospitality by “the naming or categorization of the guest, other or stranger” (Gibson 375). Nation-states with conditional laws and regulations become executors of absolute hospitality. Under the guidance of absolute hospitality, the laws (plural) of hospitality, conditional hospitality, mark “limits, powers, rights, and duties, consisted in challenging and transgressing *the* law of hospitality” (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 77; emphasis original). Hospitality is hence often conditioned by the nation.

Nevertheless, conditional hospitality is easily combined with parasitism, in which refugees are deemed as parasites and enemies in host countries. Since the undifferentiating state between self and other and hosts and guests brings the conflict between the pursuit of the interests of citizens and the ideal of full reception of aliens, these asylum seekers and refugees across borders are always deemed as parasites and enemies to host countries. To extend Derrida’s concept of hospitality, Sarah Gibson in

"Accommodating Strangers" analyzes the reason of asylum seekers' not being welcomed into the nation actually results from the fact that "media and political debates often construct them as 'alien' strangers in the country" (375). In media the immigrants or asylum seekers are presented as parasites that take from the host countries job vacancies and social welfares. Evoking fears in British people, legal immigrants' or illegal refugees' flooding proliferation is negatively viewed as threats to the body and to the territory of the host countries. Therefore, Britons doubt whether hospitality is not only wrongly overemphasized but is overestimated for "something has probably gone wrong: hospitality has somehow been replaced by parasitism or charity" (Rosello 167).

Besides, for the arrival of immigrants and asylum seekers in Britain raises the question of accommodation and the debate on hospitality for the host nation, many politicians in Britain have made hostile statements on the issue of asylum seekers in public. Take the British politician, Enoch Powell, for instance. Powell calls for "an immediate reduction to 'negligible proportions' of the present immigrant flow" in 1968.[5] In his opinion, it is possible for immigrants to take over the nation and cause a disaster of "rivers of blood" (Stalker 125). Therefore, England will soon be occupied by immigrants and their descendents. In order to secure the property of citizens and advocate holding back the "swamping" asylum seekers, Powell's appeal exacerbates the racial tension between British people and immigrants.

In Gibson's analysis, the hatred circulating around the figures of black immigrants in media and in political debates has now been generalized into "contempt for strangers or foreigners in general" (368) in Britain. The accommodation of asylum

[5] For more information about Enoch Powell's "River's of Blood" speech, please refer to the abstract "Speech That Has Raised a Storm" in *The Birmingham Post*, April 22, 1968, http://www.sterlingtimes.co.uk/powell_press.htm.

seekers in “prisons, detention centers, hostels, hotels or asylums” poses problems for the “host nation” (Gibson 371). The nation, like a house, is limited by its borders, whose “thresholds/frontiers” must be crossed in order to “enter (or leave) the homely space” (Gibson 375) and arrests those who have no right to hospitality or the right of asylum as parasites and illegitimate guests (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 61). To maintain order and avoid the danger of losing oneself, the nation establishes the conditional law “submitted to a basic and limiting jurisdiction” (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 59) and accentuates the difference between a guest and a parasite.[6] It is this “demonisation” of asylum seekers that signals “the emergence of a new racism” (Gibson 369).

As shown, for the impossibility of actualizing absolute hospitality, nation-states sometimes trap themselves in xenophobia or racism. For unconditional hospitality contains the menace of disturbing the law of the authority, the nation inevitably establishes the conditional law of limited jurisdiction and develops the politics of parasitism or demonisation of refugees and foreign laborers. Asylum seekers and foreign laborers are considered to be aliens or strange bodies in this kind of ethical thinking and discourse. In this logic of conditional hospitality, legal or illegal refugees and foreign laborers are put under nation-states’ severe control and surveillance.

III. Michel Foucault’s Concept of Panopticon

[6] Asylum seekers are often equated with “parasitizing or taking from the nation,” and begin to look like “beggars at the gate, or even thieves” (Gibson 380). However, in contrast, the relation between host countries and tourists will not be disdained as parasitism for tourists have the economic power and thus seem to take less from their hosts. Tourist guests are helpful to the development of host countries’ economy and cultural industry, while the host country is content to offer its conditional hospitality, such as tourism and fine hotel service. Therefore, the prosperity of tourism gives people the impression of hospitality, sight wonders, and the intimate condition of strangerhood. As a result, while host countries are encountering various kinds of people flow, they grant rights of hospitality to the wealthy and paying strangers, the tourists, on the one hand. However, the gift of generosity and hospitality towards others such as refugees and immigrants are, on the other hand, regarded as unnecessary because host countries invariably claim that they are harmful, “irresponsible, unrealistic, dangerous, or even illegal” (Rosello 6).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault suggests Panopticon, a combination of discipline and punishment, to be a mechanism to control and supervise individuals. The transformation of punishment from the public execution to the concealment of it signifies the formation of a new mechanism to regulate individuals through abstract consciousness. As Foucault analyzes, the shift of punishment from the pubic display of execution to its concealment is a new stage of punishment, which emphasizes the formation of the awareness of the possibility of being punished. Transformed from the public exhibition of the body of the condemned to the hiding of the execution, punishment becomes the most invisible part of the penal process and has several consequences: "[I]t leaves the domain of more or less everyday perception and enters that of abstract consciousness" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 9). Hence the effectiveness of punishment results from "its *inevitability*" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 9; emphases added), not from its visible intensity. Since punishment goes into abstract consciousness, its exemplary mechanics have also been changed. It is "*the certainty of being punished*" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 9; emphases added), not the horrifying spectacle of public punishment that discourages the crime. The shift from the visual shock to the consciousness of the possibility to be punished represents the maturity of modern legislation and the omnipresence of institutional apparatuses.

Foucault also mentions the existence of discipline in daily lives in addition to the punishment for crimes. Discipline is operated through "apparatuses" that have made discipline their principle of internal functioning and "state apparatuses," whose function is to assure that discipline "reigns over society as a whole" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 216). It is taken over by "institutions that use it as an essential instrument for particular end," like schools and hospitals, and by "pre-existing authorities" as the means of reinforcing or reorganizing their internal mechanism of

power like the function of family (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 216). Besides, discipline is “no longer simply an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, but of composing forces in order to obtain an *efficient* machine” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 164; emphasis added). For instance, economically, the discipline of the workshop tends to “increase aptitudes, speeds, output and therefore profits” and “treats actions in terms of their results, introduces bodies into a machinery forces into an economy” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 210). The discipline of factories has the target of dissecting people into parts of the assembly line, which can obtain the most profits at the shortest time. Therefore, not merely as an institution or an apparatus, discipline is “a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets” and “a physics or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 215).

In Foucault’s opinion, there are two images of discipline: “discipline-blockade” and “panopticism” (*Discipline and Punish* 209). As one type of discipline, discipline-blockade is “the enclosed institution of control, established on the edges of society, turned inwards towards negative functions,” such as “evil arresting, communications breaking and time suspending” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 209). Different from negative discipline-blockage, as the other type of discipline, Panopticism is a modality, which ensures the surveillance of power and knowledge in society. Panopticism, “the discipline-mechanism,” “improves the exercise of power by making it lighter, faster and more efficient so as to form a disciplinary society” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 209). As Foucault affirms, the configuration and the socio-political function of the Panopticon prison, whose “architectural figure of […] composition” (*Discipline and Punish* 200) is conceived by Jeremy Bentham, the

eighteenth-century British utilitarian philosopher. Architecturally, the Panopticon prison mainly consists of a circular building at the periphery and a tower at the center. Some extraordinary devices give distinctiveness to the Panopticon prison. First of all, the peripheral building is divided into multiple cells, each of which houses only one prisoner; in the central tower is placed a supervisor who is in charge of watching over and supervising the divided inmates. The design of division is to prevent any possible connection among prisoners, which forestalls the chance of collectively-conceived escape from or rebellion against the Panopticon prison. In addition, each cell is installed with two windows, "one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allow[ing] the light to cross the cell from one end [the outside] to the other [the inside]" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 200). Such arrangement contributes to the effect of backlighting, which makes it possible for the supervisor to observe what the prisoners are doing without being observed.

Panopticon is based on the principle of visuality and unverifiability. As the replacement of the dungeon with its full lighting to the eyes of a supervisor in which "[v]isibility is a trap," Panopticon becomes a machine to preserve and maintain power, where the "architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 200-1). To achieve this, the inmate should be caught up in a power situation, of which they are themselves the bearers. That is, the power relation should be built on the tension of being "visible and unverifiable" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 201). Visibility means that "the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central from which he is spied upon" while unverifiabilty implies "the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment," but "he must be sure that he may always be so" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 201). As shown, the

perfection of the power is established on the principle of the inmate's awareness of his constantly being observed and his uncertainty of identifying when and where the power is. The maintenance of the power is based on the visibility of its existence and the unverifiabilty of its presence. The layout of the cell gives the inmate an "axial visibility" and yet, out of the device of division of the cells, creates a "lateral invisibility" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 200). While the "lateral invisibility" further disconnects the communication among the prisoners, the "axial visibility" makes these inmates aware of the presence of the supervisor but unclear about whether or not they are being watched over. The uncertainty of being observed or not imposes the sense of fear and intimidation upon the prisoners and leads them to internalize the sense of being watched over, of being supervised, i.e., of being under surveillance. It does not matter whether there is really a supervisor of flesh and blood; instead, the introjection of surveillance in the inmates fills the Panopticon prison with greater momentum and strength, promising its power of omnipresence and omnipotence.

Foucault also mentions that Panopticon functions in a "diffused, multiple, polyvalent" way and is a mechanism of society penetrating "through and through with disciplinary mechanisms" (*Discipline and Punish* 209). The Panopticon is "a marvelous machine, which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogenous effects of power" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 202). The mechanism of Panopticon serves as the media for the exercise of power. Power is the machinery that assures "dissymmetry, disequilibrium, difference" and "any individual can operate the machine in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 202). The more numerous anonymous observers are, the greater the inmate's anxious awareness of being

observed is for it is difficult to identify them exactly.

The Panopticon prison operates and extends to different kinds of institutions. Institutions, such as armies, workshops, schools, hospitals, religious groups, charity organizations, and police all function in the same way as the Panopticon prison does (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 211-2). The sense of being under surveillance is the very socio-political goal intended to be achieved by the Panopticon prison. In the operation of institutions, panoptic surveillance is detected in the command of power and control over individuals.

However, while the disciplinary establishments increase, Panopticon is also "'de-institutionalized,' to emerge from the closed fortresses to circulate in a free state; therefore, the massive, compact disciplines are broken down into flexible methods of control" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 211). Sometimes "the closed apparatuses," such as the connection among schools, neighbors and families, add "a role of external surveillance" to their "internal and specific function," which develops around them "a whole margin of lateral controls" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 211). Besides, in addition to the form of enclosed institutions, the spread of disciplinary procedures is also seen in "centres of observation disseminated throughout society" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 212), e.g. religious groups and charity organizations. Thus, though de-institutionalized, the disciplinary surveillance is interrelated and omnipresent.

Panopticon needs the body as the target of operation. That is, Panopticon relies on the productive and subjected nature of bodies. As Foucault explicates, the political investment of the body is largely as "a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination" (*Discipline and Punish* 26). That is, the body's being constituted as labour power is possible "only if it is caught up in a

system of subjection" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 26). That is, the body is simultaneously "a productive body" and "a subjected body," an object of the operation of apparatuses and institutions in the mechanism of "a micro-physics of power" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 26).

Through bodies, Panopticon serves a specific type of power and knowledge. It is on this unit that punishment and power are based, the so-called "micro-physics of the punitive power" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 29), which means that the mechanism between power and bodies goes right down into the depths of society. The operation of panoptic power is a mechanism of tactics and networks which works on and through bodies.

> [T]hat its effects of domination [the power exercised on the body] are attributed not to appropriation, but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings; that one should decipher in it [the body] a network of relations, constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess. (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 26)

Therefore, the exercising power is conceived not as a property but as a strategy to manipulate the body. The exercise of power in bodies through discipline and punishment focuses on the formation of knowledge and discourse in society. As Foucault contends, power and knowledge generate each other; "[P]ower and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (*Discipline and Punish* 27). Therefore, through the mutual reinforcement of each other, power and knowledge circulate their operations; their processes and struggles "determine the forms and possible domains of knowledge" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 28). Making use of

"productive" and "subjected" nature of bodies, Panopticon functions as a specificity of mechanism and modality to control and supervise individuals.

With the prevalence of panoptic institutions, Foucault's theory clarifies how the government can maintain the order of society by virtue of panoptic surveillance. As an apparatus of power relations, the panopticon spreads throughout society and makes power more effective. Individuals are hence strictly spied and monitored in a panoptic society. The panoptic surveillance represents the way in which discipline and punishment work in modern society.

IV. The Systems and Devices of Surveillance on Asylum Seekers in *Dirty Pretty Things*

In *Dirty Pretty Things*, Frears reveals how asylum seekers are demonized and monitored by various panoptic mechanisms of surveillance in Britain. Jacques Derrida's theory of conditional hospitality and Michel Foucault's notion of Panopticon are employed to explore the demonisation and surveillance of nation-states on the asylum seekers and refugees in the film. Derrida analyzes the demonisation of asylum seekers as evil or subhuman in conditional hospitality. For the impossibility of actualizing absolute hospitality, nation-states inevitably adopt conditional hospitality to deal with asylum seekers and refugees across borders even in the form of xenophobia or racism, in which asylum seekers are considered to be parasites. In addition to the demonisation of these ethnic others, nation-states always condition and govern asylum seekers through laws and limits. As Foucault explicates, individuals are monitored by disciplinary mechanisms. Foucault argues that individuals are controlled as "productive" and "subjected" bodies in the disciplinary mechanisms of a nation. In *Dirty Pretty Things*, the main characters, who are also asylum seekers,

belong to marginalized people flow across borders under nation-states' surveillance. The film clearly shows these marginalized asylum seekers are both demonized and monitored under nation-states' surveillance.

Globalization with its convenience of transportation and circulation of capitals across borders promises prosperity and hopes for asylum seekers, who escape their homelands due to different political or religious factors. Unable to stop asylum seekers across borders, the British government uses an indirect way to control their entry and presence within its country, creating an image of asylum seekers as parasites and unwelcome ethnic others. First of all, the film reveals the demonisation of asylum seekers in Britain. As Frears indicates, the British government does not handle "asylum" very well but, instead, "whips up the fear in Britain" "as though these people have two heads or something" or as "crooks or terrorists or somehow feckless" (Lucia 9). As a result, some of British people show "contempt for strangers or foreigners in general," which forms the atmosphere of the "demonisation of asylum seekers" and "the emergence of a new racism." Secondly, the film unveils the strife between conditional and unconditional hospitality in Britain. In Frears's opinion, immigrants have intimate relation with Britain and should deserve better treatments, "England has always done very well out of immigrants… the Asians, for example … have brought considerable prosperity to Britain" (Lucia 12). However, according to Derrida, due to absolute hospitality's inherent risk of accepting immigrants and refugees without restrictions, nation-states' conditional hospitality, which marks "limits, powers, rights, and duties," is sometimes trapped in xenophobia or racism. Therefore, in the film, it is under this discourse of conditional hospitality and the demonisation of asylum seekers that the British government and British people differentiate ethic self and ethic other. Therefore, although, in many respects, British

people are “rather tolerant,” they are at the same time “very unwelcoming to people” (Lucia 12).

In the atmosphere of demonisation and racism against asylum seekers and immigrants, asylum seekers are monitored by both external and internal forms of surveillance in *Dirty Pretty Things*. In the film, asylum seekers are governed by two layers of external mechanisms of surveillance, The Baltic Hotel and the British government. The Baltic Hotel, the epitome of the British government, inspects asylum seekers with external devices and executioners of surveillance. Remarkably, in *Dirty Pretty Things*, The Baltic Hotel, composed of rooms and lounges and the central service system, is structured like a Panopticon prison. In other words, the multiple separated rooms correspond to the prison cells which serve to shut up the inmates. In the epitome of The Baltic Hotel as Britain, asylum seekers and foreign laborers are under disciplinary surveillance. First of all, in The Baltic Hotel, video-cameras signify the omnipresence of panoptic surveillance with the hotel porter, the receptionist, the hotel manager, and the invisible boss as figures of surveillance. Both Ivan, the hotel porter, charged with receiving the hotel residents, and Okwe as the receptionist, who is responsible for monitoring the central service system, resemble supervisor figures. Ivan as the hotel porter “[gets] the door, [and …] see who comes and goes.” Furthermore, Okwe, who is in charge of serving the hotel inhabitants, looks over the condition of the hotel rooms and their inmates. The hotel porter and the receptionist, representatives of the hotel manager and the invisible boss, hence serve not only to receive the hotel inhabitants but also to watch over and supervise the people who come to and go out of the hotel.

In the film, an important device of surveillance which penetrates the hotel is the multiple video-camera, which as a matter of fact helps to extend the scope and the

power of control and supervision over people in The Baltic Hotel. In the reception area where Okwe serves as the receptionist and the guard, multiple video-camera televisions are set up, which put every corner of the hotel space under control and supervision. Originally, these video-cameras are installed in order to preserve the security of the hotel and its residents. Yet they also complement the deficiency of guardian figures in terms of maintaining the order and surveillance of the hotel. The widespread existence of the video-cameras reflects the extension of the guardian's supervising and spying eyes and the omnipresence and omnipotence of the surveillance system. Through the porter, the receptionist and cameras, The Baltic Hotel becomes the panoptic epitome of Britain, where foreign laborers and refugees are under its control and surveillance.

In addition to the epitome of The Baltic hotel, Frears shows us the omnipotent surveillance of British society on asylum seekers and foreign laborers in daily life. The mechanism of The Baltic Hotel with external video-cameras, the receptionist and the porter are similar to the surveillance of state-apparatuses with verifying identification systems and immigration officers. In panoptic society, passports and identification cards are devices of control with the Immigration Enforcement Directive as executors of surveillance. For a refugee to have free passage to and out of Britain, one needs a passport. To be regarded as a legal resident and worker in this "beautiful country," in Senor Juan's terms, a refugee or asylum seeker has to have an identification card to prove his/her legitimate claim to reside and work. In the film, when Okwe tries to avoid attentions from British people in his way back to Senay's house, there are shots covering both the high tower and the market in London. These scenes implicitly suggest that above the crowd in the market there always exists the surveillance system that gloats over the individuals and intends to "automatiz[e] and

disindividualiz[e]" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 202) them.

The most representative example in *Dirty Pretty Things,* which corresponds to the category of panoptic institutions explored by Foucault, is the immigration officers. The two officers from the Immigration Enforcement Directive (IED) are the executors of surveillance. They always check and supervise Senay, who under review of the IED is only allowed to stay but forbidden to work or rent the house to others. Informed by Senay's neighbors who "see things and say in the last few days someone comes and goes, a man," the two officers launch an inspection in ambush to check whether Senay does in secret rent or share her house with others. Although helped by Okwe and Ivan to prevent the ensuing deportation, Senay leaves The Baltic Hotel and works as an exploited laborer in a sweatshop. However, the supervision of the immigration officers does not end here; they chase Senay to the sweatshop. The on-going inspection and pursuit of the officers from the Immigration Enforcement Directive illustrate how the surveillance system severely dominates individuals through institutions.

Secondly, while in the hotel the video-cameras function to extend and intensify the gaze of supervision with the immigration officers as executors of surveillance, the dresses the characters put on for special occasion or profession in the film imply specific social surveillance. Allegorically speaking, The Baltic Hotel also epitomizes social surveillance, in which conventions and norms, especially clothes, are acted extensively to encode individuals on the basis of socially shared and agreed-upon norms and then to confine them under the eyes of recognition. As Sarah Gibson brilliantly observes, *Dirty Pretty Things* illustrates the distinction "between asylum seekers and tourists within Great Britain" and between "the consumer and the laborer" (381). Clothing to some extent constructs and consolidates such distinction. This kind of panoptic surveillance is "de-institutionalized" from enclosed constitutions to

swarming “methods of control.” The hotel livery comes to be the occupational marker which reflects and even helps to pin down the identity and position of the hotel workers. While wearing the hotel livery, Okwe, Senay and Ivan can be easily identified and recognized as hotel workers. Besides, clothes in which the characters dress themselves correspond to the condition where they are situated and to the identity which they perform.

As Lucia states, “[A]ll of the characters in *Dirty Pretty Things* occupy society’s margins” (9) and this film describes how the “British government […] place[s] them in a rather difficult situation” (11). In order to survive in the game of subsistence, these characters have to work hard and to save enough money for survival. The efforts made by these characters are grounded upon their longing for a better life, which is represented by the postcard sent to Senay by her cousin who lives in New York. Specifically, when Okwe wears the hotel livery, the camera puts emphasis upon his life and experience as a hotel receptionist. Then, when Okwe takes the livery off and turns to work as a cab driver in London, the shot then shifts to the episode of his daily life and of his working as a driver. Therefore, uniforms reflect one’s specific identity and social status and become a kind of social surveillance and conventions. They are used to construct and control the identity of characters and make them easily known, recognized and domesticated in the system of panoptic surveillance.

Thirdly, in the film the continuous ticking of the clock illustrates effective exploitation and surveillance in capitalistic British society. The asylum seekers and foreign laborers are forced to work incessantly to meet the exploitation of Great Britain and to “increase aptitudes, speeds, output and therefore profits” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 210). Put under the political and capitalistic surveillance, Okwe and Senay are the minor social group of asylum seekers and foreign laborers. Another

instance of economic exploitation and surveillance in the film is that when the hotel workers come to work, they have to look to the video-camera set in the lounge for check-in, which also demonstrates their consciousness of the presence of control and surveillance and their willingness to be observed and regulated. Their responsive gaze in the film is suggestive of the successful domestication of these hotel workers under the command of panoptic surveillance.

Not merely controlling asylum seekers and foreign laborers as the epitome of the British government, The Baltic Hotel secretly employs and exploits legal and illegal asylum seekers against Britain's restrictions on hiring asylum seekers illegally.[7] In other words, although the control of asylum seekers in The Baltic Hotel resembles that of the British government, for its ends, it sometimes contradicts the regulations of the British government. With different aims, these two forces, the surveillance of The Baltic Hotel and that of the British government, monitor and discipline these asylum seekers and foreign laborers to different levels and degrees. This condition reveals that even within the dominating power, there are various forces competing with one another, forming an intricate power struggle.

In addition to external surveillance, asylum seekers are conditioned by internal surveillance. By internal surveillance, I mean the institutionalized surveillance is internalized unwittingly by the individual that he/she monitors either others or himself/herself. This lateral spread of institutionalized surveillance is what Foucault terms as "de-institutionalized" surveillance. The extension of the effect of panoptic surveillance on people is so imminent that one can say sometimes the strength of the surveillance system consists not so much in the external surveillance as in the internal

[7] There is no direct evidence to prove that Sneaky is the owner of The Baltic Hotel. We can only be sure that he is a median-level manager. However, The Baltic Hotel does secretly benefit from the cheap labor of these asylum seekers and acts against the prohibitions of employing asylum seekers and foreign laborers, legal or otherwise.

surveillance. In the film, the internal surveillance could be divided into two kinds. One is the British people's internal knowledge to monitor asylum seekers around them. The other is the asylum seekers' internal awareness of omnipresent surveillance on themselves. First of all, as one of the IED officers says to Senay, it is the divulgence of her neighbors that they initiate the action. The neighbors, the people of the United Kingdoms, are subjected to its laws and regulations and are sensitive to detect the illegal asylum seekers and ethnic others in society. The neighbors' report to the Immigration of the existence of illegal refugees around their neighborhood manifests, in Foucault's terms, the function of Panopticon in a "diffused, multiple, and polyvalent way" (*Discipline and Punish* 209), and demonstrates the omnipresence of surveillance on refugees. Senay's neighbors' alertness and divulgence of the possibility of the existence of illegal asylum seekers to the Immigration Office suggest the introjection of surveillance on British people to help supervise asylum seekers.

Secondly, Senay's and Okwe's fears of being found out also signify the internal surveillance on themselves, which means that in their mind they are afraid of the possibility of being caught. In the scene when Okwe, who as a matter of fact shares the apartment with Senay, asks her to give him a copy of the key, Senay demands that Okwe watch out and keep distance from her because "the neighbors […] see things." When Okwe wants to enter their apartment, Senay requires that he waits for "five minutes, then knock the door" and "knock lightly." Senay's alertness and concern that the neighbors may find out her illegal sublease of the flat to Okwe reveals the introjections of the all-seeing surveillance on herself. Not only Okwe but Senay are timid of the possibility of being caught. Whether there are really the police or the neighbors who spy, Senay and Okwe have to be watchful in case the police will catch them on the spot. The internalization of the surveillance mechanism on Senay herself,

the operation of the supervising system, represented by the IED officers, and the neighbors who see things, all dramatize what Foucault has pointed out—the “visible and unverifiable” (*Discipline and Punish* 201) characteristics of panoptic surveillance over individuals.

Dirty Pretty Things touches the argument presented in Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*: the power of discipline and punishment reigns over society and is incessantly affirmed through various institutions and apparatuses. Derrida’s analysis of absolute and conditional hospitality explains the fear and demonisation of asylum seekers and refugees across borders inherent in the process of panoptic surveillance on asylum seekers. Whereas absolute hospitality with its altruistic ideal implies the crisis of the loss of home, conditional hospitality is always limited according to the major interests of national community. With the extension of Panopticon to nation-states’ socio-political effect through various kinds of institutions, *Dirty Pretty Things* cries out at ethnic prejudices and severe panoptic surveillance enacted upon these asylum seekers and foreign laborers. The asylum seekers are controlled and inspected through various ways, such as verifying passports and immigration officers. With the setting of The Baltic Hotel as the Panopticon under surveillance, the asylum seekers are supervised and controlled effectively. As Okwe says in the very beginning of the film, he is there to “rescue those let down by the system.” Okwe exposes to us how the strict surveillance and regulations on asylum seekers force them to work illegally in order to survive. *Dirty Pretty Things* reflects the dilemma between the surveillance on these asylum seekers and the need of protecting their basic human rights, which will be explored in the next chapter.