# Chapter Three

## Contesting the Debate on Human Rights

### I. Introduction

While refugees are one of the main sources of foreign laborers, they are usually trapped in surveillance and exploitation due to their semi-legal or illegal status. In "Culture and the City in East Asia," as Mike Douglass notes, 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). The conflict between work and migration is "jagged" for both "contractual and negotiated terms" of migration and severe limitations of their "civil and work rights" (Papastergiadis 8). These migrants in host countries "effectively live[s] in a police state" and are "susceptible to exploitation and constantly in fear of punishment and deportation" (Papastergiadis 8). Under the governess of host countries, these refugees and asylum seekers are often falling into the exploitation because of their foreign status.

Britain has to distinguish and regulate these asylum seekers or foreign laborers on the basis of their status so as to keep its social order and to protect the rights of its citizens. Some proponents of restricting these illegal or legal asylum seekers or foreign laborers rigidly contend that these people across borders seeking rights of asylum are like intruders to Britain; for them, it is not Britain, the host country, which should be responsible for their basic human rights. It is mostly due to this kind of arrogant attitude in Britain that asylum seekers and foreign laborers, legal or otherwise, are miserably exploited and discriminated by employers and businessmen to various extents. The British government should be aware of this phenomenon and develop

new politics to confront the problem instead of merely monitoring these people flow passively.

*Dirty Pretty Things* successfully explores the theme of desperate asylum seekers' painful sacrifice in order to achieve their dreams in host countries. The film depicts how legal and illegal refugees and foreign laborers have no basic human rights in host countries due to their ambivalent status. Some of these noncitizens in the film provide their cheap labor to Britain and to global capitalism in order to survive. Okwe floats in the service economy, working hard as a driver during the day and a receptionist by night. Similarly, Senay, as a cleaning maid and cheap laborer, is threatened to be reported to the Immigration office unless she serves her boss with oral sex. Besides, there are refugees willing to sacrifice their bodily organs, who must go through the life-and-death ordeal of being cut off their kidneys if they long to be British people, such as the anonymous African refugee moaning painfully due to serious inflection after the unsanitized kidney operation in the film. Therefore, in this chapter, I argue that legal and illegal refugees and foreign laborers should not be deprived of their basic human rights merely due to their lack of citizenship. I borrow Alison Brysk and Gershon Shafir's analysis of citizenship and human rights to show the defect of nation-states in handling the cases of the exploitation of refugees and foreign laborers, whose human rights are neglected and unprotected only because of their illegal or ambivalent status in *Dirty Pretty Things*.

**II. The Conflict between Citizenship and Human Rights**

In "Introduction: Globalization and the Citizenship Gap," Alison Brysk and Gershon Shafir examine "the citizenship gap" (3) between citizenship and human rights in the era of globalization. Citizenship and human rights are in conflicts when

nation-states come to deal with people flow across borders because these two types of rights are quite different in their nature and objects. Nation-states face the challenge to handle their citizens' citizenship and legal and illegal refugees' human rights simultaneously. Brysk and Shafir trace citizenship and human rights as two traditional and primary resources to protect people. The identification of citizenship with nation-states can be traced back to the ancient origin in "the Greek polis," "its association with the Roman imperial frameworks," "the medieval city-state" and "the social struggle in modern industrial society" (Brysk and Shafir 4). Then citizenship gradually digresses from their association with "military service" and accesses to "labor market participation" (Brysk and Shafir 4). The development of citizenship extends to the "mobilization of trade unions," "workers' [men's] parties and social movements" to "women and minorities" (Brysk and Shafir 4). Therefore, the expansion of citizenship rights spans from the civil right through political and social and to the cultural ones (Brysk and Shafir 4). However, in spite of universally accorded nature of citizenship nowadays, it is "available only to members of political communities of limited size and particular characteristics, leaving out those devoid of membership" (Brysk and Shafir 4). In belief, citizenship protects the rights of specific groups of people.

In contrast, the principle of human rights is to protect individuals' humanity and dignity without discriminations in ethnicity, class and gender. To Brysk and Shafir, the universalism of human rights promises more rights than the citizenship of nation-states. Human rights guarantee protection of rights in regard to people's common humanity. They are associated with "the Enlightenment's individualistic and anti-hierarchical perspective" (Brysk and Shafir 4), whose concept first appears in the French Revolution. As Brysk and Shafir argue, human rights "*promise more* than nation-state citizenship" (4) and contain "not only *the possibility of an international*

*order*, which a well-ordered state sovereignty system also promises, but *a global community*" (5; emphases added).

Owing to the fact that citizenship and human rights are different in their nature and their objects, a citizenship gap arises when nation-states are confronted with many non-citizens. Nation-states protect people's rights according to citizenship and nationality, but human rights stress the basic humanity and freedom. However, though citizenship and human rights have different emphases, both depend on state institutions to be practiced effectively. In Brysk and Shafir's opinion, citizenship and human rights rely on the very "state," "the most effective enforcers and enablers" (5), to work and function. Citizenship only protects the political, social, and cultural rights of nation-states' citizens, while human rights are more universal and "institutionally less settled" (Brysk and Shafir 3), suffering from the lack of robust institutional underpinning. As a result, nation-states find it hard to handle the cases of legal and illegal refugees in their countries, especially in the era of globalization. Both citizenship and human rights have their own prospects and advantages, but both of them also suffer their own limits and deficiencies.

In the analysis above, the citizenship gap between citizenship and human rights shows the dilemma of nation-states between protecting only the citizenship of their citizens and protecting the human rights of all, including the refugees and foreign laborers, legal or otherwise, within their borders. Although granting citizens full protection, nation-states only confine their protection of rights to certain political or ethnic groups. However, though possessing the ideal of protecting humanity, human rights always lack solid institution to put these ideas into practice. In the face of the era of globalization, people flow across borders puts the debate on citizenship and human rights in the foreground.

**III. The Impact of the Citizenship Gap on Noncitizens and Second-Class Citizens**

The citizenship gap between citizenship and human rights puts noncitizens and second-class citizens at risk, which means judging people on the ground of citizenship is problematic to noncitizens and second-class citizens, especially in the context of globalization. Alison Brysk and Gershon Shafir think that the citizenship gap between citizenship and human rights can be detected in two kinds of people, “noncitizens” (6) and “second-class citizens” (7). Driven by the effect of globalization, noncitizens often have no legal rights in host countries. Noncitizens, also called “ambiguous citizens,” are “subject to global markets and mobility without secure membership in a national community,” such as “migrants, refugees, undocumented residents” and “certain ethnic groups, rural residents, and laborers” (Brysk and Shafir 6). They are “ineligible for rights of political participation, social services, and sometimes even international recognition of their status” (Brysk and Shafir 6). Their presence in a specific locale is often a result of the current globalization, such as “global patterns of investment, international immigration law, and transborder community ties” (Brysk and Shafir 6). Noncitizens are often unable to participate in the community and are always excluded from society.

While noncitizens have no claims on society, second-class citizens are still limited in their rights despite they are acknowledged legally. For example, although refugees get asylums, it does not mean they receive deserved respects or treatments. Instead, they have always become “second-class citizens,” who are historically granted “lower rights of membership” (Brysk and Shafir 7). These second-class citizens may include women, children, ethnic minorities, and sometimes labor (Brysk and Shafir 7). These already disadvantaged people of different ethnicity, class and gender always suffer double subordination due to the citizenship gap in the era of

globalization.

Thus, in the era of globalization, people flow across borders, such as legal or illegal refugees and foreign laborers, inevitably exists for the political and social turbulence in their homeland and sometimes for the need of global markets. Therefore, noncitizens' and second-class citizens' presence and their plight in host countries demonstrate the need to rethink the citizenship gap between citizenship and human rights.

**IV. The Ideal of Asylum Hotels**

The following analysis of the practice of asylum hotels in Britain helps to further illustrate the citizenship gap between citizenship and human rights in the era of globalization. British people's doubt and hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees show the predicament of carrying out the ideal of asylum hotels in Britain in reality. The difficulty of practicing the ideal of asylum hotels can start with the discussion in the metaphor of the hotel as nation-states and the sanctuary as asylums. In "Accommodating Strangers," Sarah Gibson analyzes the meanings of asylum hotels by tracing the meanings of hotels and asylums separately. As Gibson indicates, many discussions of asylums and hotels turn out that "asylum" and "hotel" are two irrelevant or even oppositional terms though both spaces of "hotel" and "asylum" are connected to various discourses of hospitality and are regarded as "hospitable spaces offered or given to stranger(s)" (372-3). According to these researches, Gibson clearly differentiates "hotel" and "asylum" by examining the developing history of these two terms.[1] On the one hand, "hotel" is "a metonymy of the nation insofar as sovereignty

[1] Gibson has given an enlightening reading of *Dirty Pretty Things* in the framework of hospitality and asylum hotels. For more details, please refer to Gibson's "Accommodating Strangers: British Hospitality and the Asylum Hotel Debate."

is transferred from the aristocracy to the idea of civic government" (Gibson 373). People who are "welcome and housed in the 'hotel'" are thus "metonymic of who is housed within the nation" (Gibson 373). Therefore, a hotel is crucially a house for accommodation and entertainment of strangers and travelers (Gibson 373). However, on the other hand, "asylum" has "a sacred or quasi-sacred resonance denoting a sanctuary of inviolable place of refuge and protection for criminals and debtors, from which they ought not to be forcibly removed" (Gibson 373). Asylum also has the meaning of "a benevolent institution affording shelter and support to some class of the afflicted, the unfortunate or destitute" (Gibson 373). Therefore, "the space of asylum" is different from "the law of the state, of civic government" (Gibson 373). Asylum is "a 'higher' kind of law that establishes its sovereignty on the basis of a moral/ religious or 'ethical' relation to the law's abject classes (criminals, debtors, lunatics, destitute etc.)" (Gibson 373). It is moral, religious, ethical, and aneconomic. In other words, whereas the space of the hotel assumes that the guests (tourists) pay for their accommodation, the space of asylum is figured as a gift in aneconomic terms (Gibson 375).

Therefore, the contradictory nature between hotels and asylums declares the inherent conflict between citizenship and human rights, contained in the "asylum hotel," the notion of putting asylum seekers in a hotel, a hospitable space traditionally reserved for paying guests, such as tourists (Gibson 372). The ideal of asylum hotels, an extremely humanitarian concept to treat asylum seekers hospitably and generously without asking them for payments or obligations, is always opposed by the British people. Therefore, the failure of practicing the ideal of asylum hotels in Britain reveals the dilemma between citizenship and human rights in the era of globalization. Hence it is necessary to review the development of asylum hotels in Britain, the

accommodation of asylum seekers in the host nation, before we approach the feasibility of asylum hotels in *Dirty Pretty Things*. The practice of asylum hotels in Britain not only has a long history but is also controversial socially and economically. Refugees in asylum hotels are often regarded as parasites, who cause burdens to the British government. In Michael Dummett's analysis, the British government's arrangement of two Goan families in a four-star hotel in 1976 raises the public attention of these "Four-Star Immigrants" (qtd. in Gibson 371) who have been "accused of parasitizing the welfare of the nation" (Gibson 372). As Gibson indicates, the ironically named asylum hotel as the "International Hotel" (Gibson 372) in Leicester, which accommodates refugees from other countries shows again the distrust and the debate on accommodating asylum seekers and refugees in hotels.

To sum up, the debate on the practice of asylum hotels remains unsettled. In Gibson's opinion, to analyze the barriers to practice the ideal of asylum hotels in Britain, it is better to start with the meanings of hotels and asylums respectively. The term "hotel," a metonymy of the nation, means that foreign guests or tourists pay for their accommodation and entertainment and implies the division between ethnic self and other. On the contrary, to be in an "asylum" means that asylum seekers are accommodated and welcomed as a gift. Hence the individual meanings of these two terms show the inherent conflict in the term of "asylum hotel." In the UK, British people's doubt and hostility towards the government's legitimacy of accommodating asylum seekers with their social welfare also illustrate the plight of carrying out the ideal of asylum hotels in Britain.

## V. Unprotected and Exploited Noncitizens and Second-Class Citizens in *Dirty Pretty Things*

By using the hotel as the epitome of nation-states and the morgue as the only asylum hotel, *Dirty Pretty Thing*s shows that asylum seekers should not be deprived of their basic human rights due to their lack of citizenship in the era of globalization. Originally, the hotel stands for a hospitable place as a suitable asylum hotel because it is always a space where people feel warm, secure and free, even if they are strangers to the host country. However, in the film, The Baltic Hotel, which is extremely capitalized in its fabulous buildings and services, fails to be a hospitable place for refugees because the rights of these noncitizens and second-class citizens are ignored by the British government due to their illegal or inferior status. Even though not being customers, but laborers, in the hotel, these foreign laborers are not fairly treated and are always inhumanly exploited. The asylum hotel, the asylum in the form of a hotel, should have been an ideal, friendly and hospitable place for the unwelcome guests as a realization of unconditional hospitality and justice. However, in the film, The Baltic Hotel, bathed in the warm orange lights, becomes a site of exploitation. Belonging to the marginalized underclass in Britain, asylum seekers provide their labor to help the operation of the hotel with cheap payments and scarce protection. To serve the business of tourism, the foreign laborers in the film, legal or otherwise, are exploited to sell their labor.

In *Dirty Pretty Things*, the hotel is not hospitable to these foreign laborers and refugees. In David Stratton's opinion, Frears unveils how asylum seekers as minor and marginalized ethnic groups lead their tough lives in London by using the hotel as an epitome of Britain. The Baltic Hotel is "a kind of microcosm for Britain's melting-pot society in the new millennium" (Stratton 33) and becomes the very figure of Britain, a space of congregation in the postcolonial age and globalization era. The Baltic Hotel as the metonymy of the UK can also be considered to be a strong

metaphor as borders and entries in the film, where people with different nationalities "come and go," in Sneaky's words. The Baltic Hotel resembles the British border and entry as a place of negotiation and engagement for people flow from other countries, such as tourists and working foreign laborers, legal or otherwise. As the epitome of Britain, The Baltic Hotel reflects the condition of legal and illegal foreign laborers and refugees in Britain, who suffer from inhuman exploitation and surveillance, while the British government hardly notices these phenomena or tries to find any solution.

In *Dirty Pretty Things*, the failure of asylum hotels, the damage of human rights, is manifested in the tough treatment of these noncitizens and second-class citizens. Due to their illegal or semi-legal status, they have to provide their labor cheaply in sweatshops, some of whom even selling their organs as commodities. The film reflects the weakness of protecting people flow across borders in the era of globalization. Okwe, Senay, Gou Yi and other unidentified refugees are exploited due to their ambivalent status as asylum seekers. Due to Britons' fear of these ethnic others, the British government faces the dilemma of protecting British people and asylum seekers simultaneously. As A. O. Scott discloses, the refugees' intention to survive in the film leads to "a series of brutal, sometimes fatal transactions, which the protagonists must negotiate *without the protection of law, family or custom*" (2; emphases added). After leaving their homelands, these refugees have to lead a life without protection. London, the prosperous global city in the world, becomes a space of exploitation for these asylum seekers. For instance, in *Dirty Pretty Things*, when Okwe hardly believes organ trade in Britain, Guo Yi mocks that London is actually a "weird" city, where any possibilities or dirty things could happen. This bizarre and constant phenomenon of illegal organ trade among asylum seekers in order to get passports or earn money illustrates the hardship of asylum seekers in Britain while the British government does

nothing to the illegal and inhuman organ trade within their borders. Another case of the damage of asylum seekers' human rights is that when Senay is forced to have sex with Sneaky and curses evil Sneaky to "go to hell," Sneaky disdainfully responds that London is a "hell" in itself. Here, London becomes a hell of exploitation, where asylum seekers are unprotected for their ambivalent status. Both examples imply that to these noncitizens and second-class citizens, they are easily exploited and mistreated due to their obscure status.

Not recognized by the British government, these noncitizens and second-class citizens are deprived of their basic rights on account of their lack of citizenship. As seen in the film, these characters are in the margin and lead lives as wretched human beings suffering in the hell. Noncitizens provide their cheap labor to the exploitation of global capitalism. The human rights of noncitizens are threatened due to their illegal status. For example, in the film there are hundreds of cheap illegal foreign laborers at sweatshops and hotels, who are usually exploited by their employers because of their illegitimacy in host countries and their intimidation of being reported. Okwe, as an undocumented refugee from Nigeria, is one instance of noncitizens. Okwe works desperately as a taxi driver by day and a receptionist by night to make a living. He is exploited and threatened by his bosses for his lack of legal status. In the very beginning, Okwe wants to report the discovery of a human heart in a toilet bowl in one of the hotel rooms. However, as an evil businessman, who is involved in organ trade, Sneaky merely tells Okwe to mind his own business: "[H]otel business is about strangers. And strangers will always surprise you. They come to hotels at night to do dirty things, and it is our job to make it look pretty in the morning." Sneaky even threatens Okwe by calling the police and asking Okwe to identify himself and report the findings by himself. It is due to his stateless status that Okwe has to give up the

idea of reporting the event to the police. As shown, due to their illegal status, these noncitizens and illegal refugees cannot help but choose to take low jobs, such as cheap laborers in sweatshops, factories and hotels. They are doing the so-called 3D jobs that are “dirty, dangerous, and difficult” (Stalker 91), jobs that the native abominate. To these refugees and asylum seekers, they only want to escape the political upheaval in their homeland and to make a better living in other countries. Therefore, most of them have to take the limited job choices immediately with low payment in sweatshops, factories and hotels. As a result, they easily fall into the exploitation of capitalism.

Furthermore, some of these noncitizens even sell their organs and lead an inhuman life in order to live in host countries in *Dirty Pretty Things*. In order to get citizenships and passports, noncitizens are willing to sacrifice their kidneys and “be gutted like an animal.” In the film, there are lots of noncitizens, such as illegal refugees, who bleed seriously to fulfill their humble wishes and needs in host countries. As Chiwetel Ejifor asserts the validity of organ trade in the film,

> [P]eople do do organ transplants; that happens. In the way, it’s in the film. It’s a metaphor for the desperation people can be driven to, with this massive divide between wealth and poverty […] You’ll meet medics and doctors and surgeons driving cabs in London from West Africa or South Africa. People can be very highly educated and can’t afford to finish their studies [ . . .]. (Schaefer 05d)

The phenomena of organ trade in the film are exactly what usually happen in London. Some of noncitizens are willing to go through the life-and-death ordeal of kidney removal if they long to be Britons. For instance, in the film there is an anonymous African illegal refugee moaning painfully due to serious infection after the unsanitized kidney operation. He sacrifices his kidney to exchange for passports as an “English”

citizen. Nonetheless, at a heavy cost, he is infected seriously and suffers from hemorrhage because of poor sanitation. While citizens enjoy "free health service," those who have no citizenship dare not go to the hospital due to their undocumented status. As Samuel Amago argues, the implicit message in *Dirty Pretty Things* (58) is that

> [N]ot only are these night-dwelling immigrants and foreigners invisible, but they in fact exist within their own, very separate realm almost incomplete insulated from the world from the ground [. . .] whether the kidney comes from Senay, a Turk, or Sneaky Juan, Spaniard, is unimportant *as long as there is a kidney to be brought transported to the visible world by the blonde-haired Englishman* [. . .]. (58; emphases added)

The African asylum seeker in the film sells his kidney as the commodity in exchange for the passport. In the organ market, it does not matter whose kidney it is, only if there are always providers of human organs. The noncitizens, who eagerly desire for freedom and wealth, become the main source of organ trade.

While noncitizens strive to get their legal status by selling their labor or body organs, second-class citizens, those who have legal status, cannot be fully accepted in the community and are still excluded from British society. Even if refugees get the citizenship, they have often become "second-class citizens," who are granted "lower rights of membership," such as women, children, ethnic minorities, and sometimes labor. For example, in the film, Guo Yi is a legal refugee, and Senay is a semi-legal asylum applicant. They both belong to the marginal ethnic group as "second-class citizens." Not able to join British society fully as a second-class citizen, Guo Yi is not a "veritable" member of the community and is still held prejudices against. When

asked by Okwe about the mystery of the human heart, Guo Yi replies, “I don’t ask questions after eleven years here, and I’m a certified refugee. You’re an illegal, Okwe. You don’t have a position here. You have nothing. You are nothing.” Here in spite of being a legal refugee, Guo Yi says he has no position to ask questions, which implies that he could not articulate his ethnical and cultural differences, symbolically speaking. Thus, we can see that legal refugees like Guo Yi are still regarded as second-class and inferior citizens in society. He is actually living with the dead instead of living with the British people. As Jessica Winter deliberates, the morgue in *Dirty Pretty Things* is the “existential station of the refugee— legal or otherwise,” the only living space for asylum seekers, which also “doubles as a dumpster” (109). To Winter, these second-class citizens in the film are deemed as disposable and detested garbage. This illustrates that second-class citizens still cannot be fully accepted in British society ethically and socially.

The inferior condition of second-class citizens is similarly seen in Senay, whose application for asylum is “under review” and is regularly checked by the rude and overbearing immigration officers. In the film, due to her ambivalent status, she is reminded by immigration officers of her “ELR status,” not to “accept rent” or “engage in employment of any kind for at lease six months, and cannot work.” In Senay’s case, she is forbidden to work outside for her current ELR status. However, in Frears’ opinion, this regulation is problematic for the asylum seekers “are given forty pounds a week and cannot take a job and cannot rent or sublet the apartment” (Lucia 11). They are actually not provided enough to live on but at the same time they are prohibited to work. Therefore, Frears indicates that some of them have to “take jobs illegally” and “are open to being exploited in sweatshops and hotels” (Lucia 11). This kind of tension between illegal work of foreign laborers and regular check from

immigration systems is much better illustrated in the hide and seek between Senay and immigration officers in the film. In the beginning, the immigration officers check Senay's apartment rudely and remind Senay of her ambivalent status. Then, they lurk in the hotel, waiting to get the evidence of Senay's illegal working, and appear quite disappointed when failing to catch her red-handed. At the third time, the immigration officers rush into the sweatshop in order to arrest Senay again and surprisingly find that the factory has no one except the boss, who in fact does employ and exploit illegal foreign laborers secretly. The immigration officers' appearance in The Baltic Hotel, the sweatshop and Senay's apartment shows a tug of war between the surveillance of the state power and the predicament of legal or illegal refugees and foreign laborers in Britain.

Also a second-class citizen, Senay's situation is more complicated in addition to her lack of citizenship. She is doubly marginalized because of gender. Being harassed and abused by men, Senay's dream of taking Britain as her asylum is broken and her religious faith as a devout Muslim virgin is also smashed. As an attractive Muslim virgin, she is not only verbally abused, but also sexually coveted and harassed. Ivan, who feels curious about her virginity, makes fun of Senay's Muslim religion and says to Okwe, "You know she's a Muslim, which means she's a virgin. Like a little angel." Ivan's flippant verbal words show his chauvinism and disrespect for women. This example indicates that owing to her status as an asylum seeker, a woman, and a Muslim, Senay is sexually and religiously harassed and discriminated. Another example to manifest her vulnerable situation is her experience working at the sweatshop. Senay has to compromise with her wanton boss by sex to avoid being reported to the Immigration. The boss even menaces her if being found out, she will be put into the prison where sexual violence prevails: "[t]hey mix the men and women.

So, every night you will be raped. If you want to be like a Western girl, that's what happens to Western girls." Not daring to expose the evildoing of her wanton boss in the sweatshop, Senay desperately considers the possibility of trading her kidney to Sneaky in exchange for passports so as to escape from him, but Okwe tries to dissuade her.

> Okwe: You keep away from Senor Juan!
>
> Senay: This is like taking out a tooth.
>
> Okwe: He's lying, Senay! Because you are poor, you will be gutted like an animal. They will cut you here or they will cut you here. They will leave you to rot.
>
> Senay: One of the laundry girls did it, and now she's free.
>
> Okwe: Others are dead, Senay.
>
> Senay: So they are free, too.

Not protected with any basic human rights, Senay is determined to cut off her kidney. Out of despair Senay is even envious of the dead. In addition, to get a new passport, Senay is also forced to have sex with Sneaky. In *Dirty Pretty Things*, Sneaky's "complete disdain for humanity" and his "callous exploitation of the people" make him "a chilling villain" (Stratton 33). When Sneaky coerces Senay to have sex with him, Senay rebels and curses him—"go to hell." However, Sneaky makes a remarkable and arrogant contempt: "this is hell." As shown, her lack of citizenship makes her a victim of male lechery. Suffering the tension between morality and reality, Senay finally realizes there is no utopian place that will "have lights in the trees" or "policemen on white horses." As an asylum applicant, Senay is at best deemed as a second-class citizen and is even exploited and harassed due to her gender as a female. Senay, a representative of thousands of female refugees across borders, yields her

beliefs and bodies in order to survive in such a brutal world.

For asylum seekers, the hotel also becomes the site of crimes for its mobile and anonymous characteristics, where people come and go with indifference. The Baltic Hotel is no longer a hospitable space but a purgatory with Okwe, Senay and Ivan as anonymous nobodies. Instead of being the ideal of an asylum hotel, the manifestation of human rights, The Baltic Hotel embodies the Hell and becomes a corrupt place. Ivan, the porter, as an allegorically religious figure of a postman, assembles Palladeus, the mythical figure who ferries the souls to the nether land. The Baltic Hotel pathetically blurs the boundary between the cold wintry London outside and the warm orange lights inside for its illegal deals and demonic exploitations. In other words, metaphorically speaking, the host country like the UK, fails to actualize the ideal of asylum hotels. As Okwe tells Senay, "[F]or you and I, there is only survival. It is time you woke up from your stupid dream." For these immigrants in the global city, the most important thing is to survive, let alone to love like other people do. Therefore, although both Okwe and Senay get new passports and are able to leave Britain finally, as Senay sighs that "always we must hide," the new passport and newly made identity cannot annul the hard condition they suffered before. The aforementioned instances of the noncitizens and second-class citizens' plights all reveal the citizenship gap between citizenship and human rights unveiled in the inhuman condition of noncitizens and second-class citizens in the era of globalization.

Although the glamorous Baltic Hotel is unable to act as a place of hospitality and fair treatment, the morgue in *Dirty Pretty Things* ironically takes the role of accommodating these homeless refugees and becomes a type of asylum hotel. The morgue where Guo Yi works is the only space where some asylum seekers can take shelter. First of all, as discovered in *Dirty Pretty Things*, when Senay is bitterly

monitored and threatened by the Immigration Enforcement Directive officers who force Okwe to leave her apartment, Guo Yi tries his best to provide Okwe with a hotel-like morgue to live.

> Gou Yi: Staffs stay only at 5:00 p.m. Only ghost. Shower is there. Water is not too hot, but it runs. Couch of my office is pretty soft […] My friend, welcome to my hotel. Beautiful, isn't it? Other residents are very quiet.
>
> Okwe: I'll only be here until […]
>
> Gou Yi: Until the world improves.

The morgue is sardonically the only place where asylum seekers could inhabit until British people notice their existence.

Secondly, accommodating Okwe and Senay when they are helpless, Guo Yi's morgue in *Dirty Pretty Things* actualizes the function of asylum hotels. Guo Yi, the master and the guardian, offers his unconditioned hospitality. He, for instance, is concerned about the nether life of a deceased and unidentified Chinese immigrant. When the anonymous body of the Chinese immigrant is sent to his morgue, out of his unconditional friendliness and hospitality, Guo Yi sews up his pocket as a religious gesture of wishing him peace and eternality. While sewing with care, he tells Okwe,

> Unusual. Chinese guy with no family. Maybe from the back of the truck. I cut out his button, so his soul can escape. Sewing his pocket. So he can't take his bad luck to the spirit world. Even if he is atheist, ruining his suit is no one I've ever seen. If he is Buddhist, I give him eternal life with the price of a piece of thread.

This episode presents that after leaving their homelands, some asylum seekers and refugees are floating without places of belonging; some of them even die in foreign

lands, alone and unidentified. But Guo Yi, who has no kinship but boundless concerns for the deceased, does his best to help these homeless people. Here, the morgue is a deliberate and sarcastic contrast to the warm but demonic Baltic Hotel for it is the morgue, not the Baltic Hotel, that proffers hospitality and daily necessities for the asylum seekers and refugees. Although in *Dirty Pretty Things* the scary and bleak morgue is always presented with dim lights, corpses, and trashes, it is painfully and ironically the last asylum provided to Senay and Okwe.

From the exploitation in The Baltic Hotel and the last asylum hotel taking place in the morgue discussed above, we can see the good intention of the British government to accept refugees is frustrated for its own restrictions. As Cynthia Lucia clarifies, *Dirty Pretty Things* "deals with a situation in which the British government grants asylum, while at the same time it forbids immigrants to work, placing them in a rather difficult situation" (11). The British government shows limited generosity and hospitality to asylum seekers and does not really provide enough economic support or basic protection to them. The insufficient economic aid forces these immigrants, either legally accepted by the British government or not, to work against the restrictions. The meager economic subsidy of forty pounds a week or even less actually compels the asylum seekers, for the sake of survival, to go against and beyond the mechanism of governmental regulation.

In addition to the deficiency in policies, in the film the British government does indirectly benefit from the production of illegal and legal foreign laborers. As Okwe says to the white organ buyer in the film, they, the stateless and marginalized people at the bottom of British society, are "the people you [the white Britons] do not see. We [Illegal and legal foreign laborers or other marginalized ethnic groups] are the ones who drive your [the white's] cabs. We [Illegal and legal foreign laborers or other

marginalized ethnic groups] clean your [the white's] rooms, and suck your [the white's] cocks." These foreign laborers, legal or otherwise, or other marginalized ethnic groups are often ignored while they actually contribute a lot to British society. Though these foreign laborers have an ambivalent status, they are one of major labor sources in Britain. Since Britain does rely on these asylum seekers and foreign workers, legal or otherwise, economically and socially, the government is suggested to pay more attention to the human rights of these people instead of merely tackling the issue on the basis of citizenship. This phenomenon reveals the need to develop alternative forms to deal with these noncitizens.

These illegal or semi-legal citizens in the film are proved as human as normal people in Britain. As an honest man, Okwe does not want to participate in Sneaky's organ trade from the very beginning. Senay is a devout woman, who does no harm to other people. Besides, the friendship between Okwe and Guo Yi is true and sincere without any exchange of interests. Senay and Juliette are not like demonized ethnic others in racism, but like ordinary women. All of these examples show that asylum seekers and refugees are just like any other Britons, whose humanity should be noticed in host countries instead of being ignored only on accounts of their semi-legal or illegal status.

From the analysis above, asylum seekers should not be deprived of their basic human rights only for their lack of citizenship. *Dirty Pretty Things* unveils that Britain faces the challenge to handle its citizens' citizenship and refugees' basic human rights simultaneously. In the space of The Baltic Hotel and the morgue in the film, we can see the difficulty in actualizing the ideal of asylum hotels in Britain in these two important settings. The glamorous hotel actually operates on the exploitation of cheap asylum seekers and foreign laborers. Although these foreign laborers are workers, not

tourists, in The Baltic Hotel, their predicaments as cheap laborers without basic protection in payments and security expose the problems of the citizenship gap between citizenship and human rights in the era of globalization, while the proper accommodation of refugees is actually carried out in Guo Yi's morgue. Both the exploitation in The Baltic Hotel and the ironic contrast of the morgue as a hospitable asylum hotel illustrate the difficulties in claiming the basic human rights of refugees. Although these legal or illegal refugees and foreign laborers sometimes bring over political, ethical and economic turbulence to host countries, they have already become an inseparable part to host countries economically and socially. Therefore, these legal or illegal asylum seekers' and foreign laborers' rights for protection in work and humanity call for the attention of the British government. It seems that Britain should endeavor to strike a balance between citizenship and human rights in the face of its citizens and foreign laborers and refugees within its borders.