

Chapter Four

The Possibilities of Solidarity and Alliance across Borders

I. Introduction

I have so far used Derrida's concept of conditional hospitality and Foucault's notion of Panopticon to explore Frears's *Dirty Pretty Things* that displays nation-states' rigid surveillance on legal and illegal asylum seekers in host countries. In my previous chapter, I have presented how the panoptic surveillance results in the deprivation of these asylum seekers' human rights because of their lack of citizenship as well. Brysk and Shafir's discussion of noncitizens and second-class citizens manifests the citizenship gap under the severe surveillance of nation-states. However, a significant form of solution also exists beneath the surface of the film. The structure of power lays in not only the panoptic surveillance of the apparatus but a counter flow of resistance and solidarity. The film exposes the inseparable relation between Britain and its immigrant culture and the necessity to redefine the frameworks of political judgment and the foundation of the moral order. Power is not merely dominant or negative. Power produces resistance to itself. The counter strategies and alliance among legal or illegal asylum seekers and foreign laborers reveal the possibility of solidarity across borders to strive for the human rights of the subordinated in the era of globalization.

In *Dirty Pretty Things*, though struggling against surveillance and exploitation, the marginalized group of Okwe, Senay, Guo Yi, Juliette, and Ivan¹ cooperate to form

¹ Ivan appears more self-interested, when compared with Juliette and Guo Yi. He always acts on the principle of not contradicting his own interests or safety. Ivan prefers minding his own business to getting himself involved in impertinent affairs in The Baltic Hotel. For example, when Okwe asks Ivan about the possibility "if someone came into the hotel, and did not leave again," Ivan advises him "if you [Okwe] want to stay, don't concern yourself with who comes and who goes."

an interdependent community beyond divisions of ethnicity, class and gender. The friendship between Okwe and Guo Yi is true regardless of their different ethnic backgrounds. Showing genuine concern for disadvantaged refugees, Okwe also helps those who suffer inflection from illegal and unsanitized organ transplant in exchange for passports. Moreover, Senay and Juliette sympathize with each other and become good friends. In the end of the film, that they cooperate to revenge Sneaky, the lackey of the white people,² is the most representative example of solidarity and alliance across borders. These marginalized people fight for themselves and reveal the dark side under Western civilization and hospitality. Therefore, though *Dirty Pretty Things* presents a cruel world of surveillance and exploitation, it unveils the possibility of solidarity and hopes for these marginalized people flow across borders. In this chapter, I argue that asylum seekers' counter strategies and solidarity contain the power to fight against exploitation in the era of globalization. Foucault's theory of resistance in power and Laclau and Mouffe's concept of radical plural democracy are helpful to the analysis of refugees' counter strategies and solidarity among different ethnicity, class, and gender in *Dirty Pretty Things*.

II. Michel Foucault's Idea of Resistance

Foucault transforms his focus from analyzing the discursive formation of power in *Discipline and Punish* in 1975 to the resistance in power in *The History of Sexuality* in 1976. Different from the traditional assumption of power as solely repressive and negative,³ Foucault suggests that power is positive and productive. Power is not an

² A noticeable phenomenon in *Dirty Pretty Things* is that some legal refugees or colored ethnic groups after getting legal status often become the lackeys of the white system. They serve the white people to exploit and control other asylum seekers and marginalized ethnic groups, such as Sneaky and the immigration officers in the film.

³ Michel Foucault challenges the traditional notion of juridical-discursive power and disagrees

object which is only possessed by someone or some groups. It is not negative but positive by nature. As stated in Chapter Two, Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* aims to investigate the establishment of power through external and internal mechanisms of surveillance. However, in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault focuses on the resisting side in power by challenging the discourse of sexuality in the Western culture. To him, resistance always goes with power.

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 [...] Their existence [The existence of power relationships] depends on multiplicity of points of resistance: these [multiplicity of points of resistance] play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These *points of resistance* are present everywhere in the power network. There is *a plurality of resistances*.... (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 95-6; emphases added)

However, resistance is by no means identical but is different in various conditions.

Some resistances⁴ are “possible, necessary, [and] improbable;” others are

that exercise of power is presumed to be only negative, formed through surveillance, discipline, punishment, and so on. Traditionally, the representation of power is always considered to be repression, domination, or submission. That is, power is defined as a thing that can abuse, control, and oppress. Foucault analyzes that the deployment of sexuality starts with a repressive hypothesis and is set by laws, rules, or orders. In other words, the only way for sex to be presented is to restrain itself under the shelter of the so-called legislation. Wearing the masks of laws, rules, and orders, power turns to be a force of forbiddance and regulations. Subjects of power are threatened by the punishment, which is taken as the instrument of laws. Through this process, they learn what is allowed to do and what is prohibited. If someone violates the laws, he is judged to be challenging power and must accept the punishment. This is the juridical-discursive conception of power. Such a power is proved to be negative and unproductive at all. See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, pp. 83-6.

⁴ According to OED, the word “resistance” is singular and uncountable, which means “power or capacity of resisting.” Only when in the physical sciences, resistance can be countable and uncountable, which means “the opposition offered by one body to the pressure or movement of another.” In the context of Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, the meaning of resistance is similar to the former one, the power or capacity of resisting. However, instead of using “resistance” in a singular form, Foucault in this book uses the plural form, “resistances,” to illustrate many forces of resistance in the mechanism of power. To Foucault, resistance is plural and is composed of diverse forces.

“spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent;” still others are “quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 96).

Foucault suggests that power is actually multiple and bi-directional. In his opinion, neither the juridical notion of power nor the discursive notion of power is able to fully examine power relations in society. Foucault overthrows the earlier assumption of mechanisms of power as omnipotent and omnipresent. Rejecting the idea of power as a possession of the privileged people and agents, Foucault asserts that power is the multiplicity of force relations. It should be bi-directional as an operation of both sides. Power is a set of actions upon other actions. Individuals are able to alter power relations. The subjects have the possibility to resist and change their statuses in power relations.

To sum up, Foucault moves away from the rhetoric of *Discipline and Punish*, where power seems to constitute individuals absolutely, to a position where individuals have the scope to refuse the regulation of apparatuses of power. As shown, before the maturity of the concept of resistance, Foucault puts his emphases on the forms of power exercise and the effects of power in *Discipline and Punish*. The techniques of disciplinary power chiefly attempt to domesticate individuals, such as prohibition, rejection, and surveillance. However, Foucault focuses on the active and intra-subjective relationships in *The History of Sexuality*. In Foucault’s theory, subjects can alter power relationships and actively resist the power relations. The subjects are able to resist and change their statuses in the power relations.

III. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s Proposal of Radical Plural Democracy

The existence of resistance and the multiplicity of powers from below are also declared in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s theory. Under the influence of

poststructuralism, new social movements and revitalized liberal democracy, Laclau and Mouffe add the insights of postmodern and poststructuralist approaches, offer a theoretical explanation of the new social movements, and even incorporate some of the contributions of recent theories of liberal democracy into the notion of radical plural democracy, a concept that aims to overthrow subordination, articulate differences and pursue freedom and equality. Influenced by poststructuralists' tenet to destabilize the possibility of a fundamental ontology to provide a solid ground for social life, Laclau and Mouffe's radical plural democracy protests objectivism and essentialism in traditional Marxism. For the aim of poststructuralism has been "the destabilization of all pre-given, self-enclosed unities, be they structures, signs or scientific discourses" (Torfing 55), Structural Marxism is problematic with its assumption of society as a given and total structure⁵ and premise of class as the only object of struggle.⁶ Structural Marxism does not take the differences in ethnicity, race, and gender into account but only discusses the relation between classes and economic production.

Under the impact of theoretical articulations of the "new social movements," Laclau and Mouffe's notion of radical plural democracy also suggests the existence of multiple subjects and various interpretations in society instead of only focusing on

⁵ One of the problems of Structural Marxism is that it does not account for "the specificity of the political" (Torfing 19). As Jacob Torfing points out, "The state is determined by *objective structures* and merely reflects the objective interests of the dominant class...social classes are conceived as *mere bearers of the structure*, and their political struggle is merely a matter of advancing a *pregiven* interest" (19; emphases added). This lack of specificity of the political only touches the issue of class on the assumption of society as a given and total structure. Marxism asserts paradoxically the political is actually "determined by something that is not itself political, but rather social, and in the last instance, economic" (Torfing 19).

⁶ The other problem is that though the new social movements belong to oppositional and resistant movements and are easily identified as the traditional purview of the left, classical Marxism cannot include these movements without violating its tenets solely, which are on the basis of class struggle. As a result, despite its sensitivity to the role of social and material conditions in constructing social reality, traditional Marxism is silent on issues, such as the cultural construction of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality.

economic struggle as in classical Marxism. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, a cooperative work by Laclau and Mouffe, the plural and multifarious character of contemporary social struggles dissolves the “political imaginary” that people are “‘universal’ subjects” built on a “singular” “History” (2). The rise of “new social movements,” such as feminists, ecologists, and proponents of identity politics in race, ethnicity, or sexuality, unveils the variety of subjects in power relations in society. Structural Marxism focuses merely on a single factor, that is, material/economic conditions. The inseparable relation between new social movements and Marxism prompts Laclau and Mouffe to develop new politics, radical plural democracy.

Radical plural democracy is a revitalized theory of liberal democracy. Due to the fact that the left has invested too much in Marxism, instead of fully abandoning classical Marxism, Laclau and Mouffe revise Structural Marxism and revitalize the theory of liberal democracy. Influenced by Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony,⁷ Laclau argues that people should not conceive totality with a pre-given center but should think of it as the negotiation of “different and shifting relations of dominance between its constituent parts” (Torfing 28). Laclau and Mouffe claim it is impossible to maintain “a universal history,” “a single linear process of knowledge” (3) and a privileged position of “a universal class” (4). Laclau and Mouffe aim to recover the “plurality” in society (4). They seek to grasp the numerous “discursive,” “heterogeneous,” and “contradictory” voices (Laclau and Mouffe 4). Therefore, Laclau and Mouffe revise Structural Marxism and revitalize theory of liberal democracy.

Combining the features of deconstruction, new social movements and

⁷ The notion of hegemony is one of Gramsci’s important concepts, which “describes a complex, contradictory and only relatively unified ensemble of institutional orders of state, economy and civil society” (Torfing 28). In Laclau and Mouffe’s opinion, the concept of hegemony could be appropriated to supplement the deficiencies of Structural Marxism.

revitalized theory of liberal democracy, radical plural democracy endeavors to extend a maximum autonomization of freedom and equality to all areas of society. Radical plural democracy involves “the struggle for a maximum autonomization of spheres [of struggle: JT] on the basis of the generalization of the equivalential-egalitarian logic” (Laclau and Mouffe 167). In *Radical Democracy*, one of Mouffe’s individual publications about radical plural democracy, Mouffe also mentions that radical plural democracy, the struggles for freedom and equality, “should be deepened and extended to all areas of society” (39). That is, unlike traditional Marxism only contributing to freeing the disadvantaged laborers in economics, Laclau and Mouffe suggest to extend the tenets of freedom and equality to all marginalized people in society. In other words, radical plural democracy entails “the pluralization of democracy” and “the displacement of the Democratic Revolution to more and more fields of the social” (Torfing 256). The struggle for a radical plural democracy seeks to “displace the quest for freedom and equality to the economic sphere,” thereby “undermining the traditional private-public divide” (Torfing 256). The idea of radical plural democracy is the notion which is no longer lodged with particular agents constituted at a particular social level. Instead of establishing on the binary opposition as antagonisms, radical plural democracy supposes to be multiple and open, not prejudicial to some or all of the others.

With aforementioned characteristics of diversity and heterogeneity, radical plural democracy aims to fight against subordination, to articulate differences and to pursue freedom and equality. First of all, radical plural democracy is to rebel against subordination. As Mouffe remarks, all positions that have been constructed as “relations of domination/subordination” should be “deconstructed” (*Hegemony and New Political Subjects* 95-6). The idea of democratic discourse, which views the

relation between domination/subordination as discursive formation, extends its influence in the equality in political democracy and socialism, moves to the level of the economy, and then turns into other sexual and racial relations, etc (Mouffe, *Hegemony and New Political Subjects* 96). That is to say, radical plural democracy puts different kinds of democratic struggles against sexism, racism, and new forms of subordination under its banner. Rather than seeking to dissolve “political conflicts and antagonisms” within the frameworks of “a consensual and deliberative democracy,” Laclau and Mouffe assert the best way is “to find ways of making social antagonisms compatible with *pluralist* democracy” (Torfing 255; emphasis added). As Mouffe further explains, within such an agonistic democracy, radical plural democracy turns the antagonisms into “adversaries whose politics we might disagree with, but whose existence would be legitimate and should be tolerated” (“Introduction” 4). Radical plural democracy “take[s] an active part in *the interpretation and constant re-enactment of the rules of conduct and the correlative ethico-political principles*” (Torfing 271; emphases added). By so doing, this new politics of radical plural democracy will “secur[e] a political consensus on basic democratic values and procedures” and “allow dissent over the interpretation of the precise political choice between different ways of organizing society” (Torfing 255). That is, radical plural democracy proposes that any dominant relations of subordination and exploitation should be abolished. Adversaries and various struggles should be presented and tolerated in society.

Secondly, radical plural democracy aims to articulate differences in social struggles. Laclau and Mouffe claim that traditionally liberal democracy and deliberative democracy oppress diverse opinions among different groups of races, classes and genders in their attempts to build the consensus. In Laclau and Mouffe’s

opinion, democratic citizens are “neither mere bearers of universal rights nor servants of a state governed by a substantive conception of the common good” (Torfing 271). Mouffe explicates that these democratic citizens should be “common political identity of persons who might be engaged in many *different* communities and who have *differing* conception of the good, but who accept submission to certain authoritative rules of conduct” (*Citizenship and Political Identity* 30-1; emphases added). Built on the assumption of the existence of other repressing power relations in society, in Laclau and Mouffe opinion, these oppressive relations should be made visible, re-negotiated and altered. By building democracy around difference and dissent, oppressive relations of power are able to come to the forefront so that they can be challenged. In Mouffe’s terms, “the identities qua individual and qua citizen are preserved, and none is sacrificed to the other; they coexist in a permanent tension that can never be reconciled” (*Citizenship and Political Identity* 32). Individuality, diversity and differences should be all presented in society, not to annul one another. A new “common sense” is necessary to transform the identity of different groups so that “the demands of each group could be articulated with those of others according to the principle of democratic equivalence” (Mouffe, *Radical Democracy* 42). Dependent on plural differences, radical democracy is the acceptance of difference, dissent and agonism.

Thirdly, radical plural democracy seeks for freedom and equality for all. The idea of citizens in a liberal democratic regime is based on the principles of freedom and equality for all instead of a substantive and dominant idea of the good. A radical democratic citizenship will “challenge illegitimate subordination in all social spheres,” where every sphere needs the guide of “the principles of freedom and equality” (Mouffe, *Citizenship and Political Identity* 31). Radical plural democracy

detests subordination and longs for freedom and equality. These principles, in Ludwig Wittgenstein's terms, are called "a grammar of conduct," the notion of "the individuals' recognition of the ethico-political principles embodied in this grammar of conduct that constitutes them as citizens with both rights and obligations" (Torfing 269). The deconstructive reworking of the liberal and communitarian notion of democratic citizenship suggests envisaging democratic citizenship "as a form of political identity that is created through identification with the political principles of modern pluralist democracy, i.e. the assertion of liberty and equality for all" (Mouffe, *Citizenship and Political Identity* 30).

Noticeably, in *Hegemony and New Political Subjects*, Mouffe additionally points out "solidarity" (100) as an important notion of radical plural democracy. To combine equality and liberty successfully, solidarity requires transcending a certain individualistic conception of rights and suggests the rights of certain subjects "should not entail the subordination of the rights of others" (Mouffe, *Hegemony and New Political Subjects* 100). In other words, alliance and solidarity reject subordination of any dominant ideology. To manifest the ideal of radical plural democracy, people should cooperate with others without any subordination or hierarchy.

As shown above, under the influence of poststructuralism, new social movements and revitalized liberal democracy, Laclau and Mouffe's proposal of radical plural democracy strives to overthrow subordination, present differences, seek for freedom and equality, and form solidarity. To realize the notion of radical plural democracy, Laclau and Mouffe suggest deconstructing consensual "democratic citizenship" (Torfing 271) and fully accepting differences, open to various correlative interpretations. Through the expansion of a chain of equivalence between workers, women, gays, blacks and others, the marginalized groups in society can cooperate to

overthrow any forms of subordination. Radical plural democracy works for a maximum autonomization of freedom and equality all over society. In the era of globalization, Laclau and Mouffe's proposal of radical plural democracy is especially useful for the subordinated people of different ethnicity, class and gender to fight against subordination and exploitation.

IV. Counter Strategies and Solidarity as Resistance in *Dirty Pretty Things*

In *Dirty Pretty Things*, to face the British government's utilitarian use of their cheap labors without providing them with their due rights and protection, asylum seekers cooperate to fight against surveillance and exploitation with counter strategies and solidarity. Certainly the characters in *Dirty Pretty Things* are circumscribed by different surveillance mechanisms, such as the immigration officers, the work site (the hotel), and other supervision techniques like video cameras; however, these systems and devices of surveillance fail from time to time, either out of the systematic deficiencies or out of the resistance enacted by characters.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the British government, which benefits indirectly from asylum seekers' labor, does not solve problems of its institutional failure to grant asylum seekers with sufficient provisions or give them protection of human rights. On the one hand, although the British government displays hospitality by accepting these asylum seekers, it does not really provide enough economic support or social welfare to them. The scarce economic aid forces these immigrants, either legally accepted by the British government or not, to work illegally. On the other hand, it is a fact that Britain still relies on the labor of these legal or illegal refugees; thus, it is unwise for Britain to neglect this problem only because these foreign laborers are not their citizens. In other words, the deficiencies in the British

government to deal with these problems effectively are made use of by unworthy businessmen or capitalists to exploit asylum seekers.

These drive the marginalized asylum seekers to adopt counter strategies so as to rebel against inhuman exploitation. As a result, in *Dirty Pretty Things* the phenomena that refugees still manage to enter and work illegally no matter how rigid the British government's prohibitions are reflect that asylum seekers are compelled to fight against surveillance and exploitation with counter strategies by themselves. Refugees' illegal entry and work unveil the collapse of the surveillance mechanism. This also reflects there is always a gray area, which escapes and deceives power's detection and control. To fight against surveillance, these refugees still have counter strategies. In the film, the space of the hotel is secretly taken as a place for illegal organ removal. In the hotel rooms, the illegal surgical operations and organ trade signify the impossibility of the omnipresent surveillance. Though the private surgical operations and organ trade are labeled illegal as the target of socio-political prohibition, the prevalence of the organ operation and trade, known almost by every character, mocks and destroys the authority of the surveillance system. As Foucault indicates, there are actually ambivalent areas and counter strategies that escape the surveillance of power.

Marginalized people's counter strategies in the film acts as the resistance to fight against surveillance and exploitation. In Foucault's terms, "where there is power, there is resistance" (*History of Sexuality* 95). These "points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network" (*History of Sexuality* 95). According to Foucault, resistance inherently exists in the mechanism of power.

In *Dirty Pretty Things*, in addition to counter strategies, asylum seekers also oppose surveillance and exploitation with the strategy of solidarity. Solidarity gathers the manpower of asylum seekers and marginalized ethnic groups together and helps

them to establish a community of their own. Laclau and Mouffe's notion of radical plural democracy is useful to provide one possible solution for exploitation and organ trade of these asylum seekers and foreign laborers in the film. In the era of economic globalization, everything can be exchanged in the logic of capitalism and become commodities. To those marginalized and disadvantaged people, they have nothing but their physical labor, sex, and even body organs to sell in order to survive, such as Juliette, Senay, and other asylum seekers. This phenomenon of commodification of bodies and organs degrades humanity and ethics to the extreme. For Laclau and Mouffe, the problem of traditional liberal democracy is that it draws "a rigid line of demarcation between the public sphere of democratic politics and the private sphere of economic liberalism" (Torfing 256). Traditional democracy suggests no interference in both democratic politics and free market, hence sacrificing the rights of the people of marginalized ethnicity, class and gender. Therefore, Laclau and Mouffe think that equality is as important as freedom in the politics of democracy and attempt to spread "freedom and equality to the economic sphere" (Torfing 256). They suggest putting an end to the "capitalist relations of production" (Torfing 256) and adding "a socialist dimension" (Torfing 256) in their proposal of radical plural democracy. In the film, the solidarity of legal and illegal refugees and other marginalized ethnic groups in their daily lives actualizes Laclau and Mouffe's ideal of radical plural democracy as a way to fight against exploitation and inhuman organ trade in the era of economic globalization. The asylum seekers and marginalized ethnic groups help and support one another and form a network of cooperation on their own by disarming their prejudices and sympathizing with one another. As David Denby comments, the film "chronicles the way that exploited people take care of one another, exchanging favors while finding the holes in the porous British welfare system" (100). Though *Dirty*

Pretty Things is a dark and revealing movie, the ending offers a measure of hope and reveals the concern for marginalized people. These marginalized people are willing to cooperate and realize the ideal of radical plural democracy beyond any forms of divisions.

The characters in the film wage personal or communal battle to resist surveillance and exploitation. Okwe manifests the essence of radical plural democracy, alliance, to sympathize with the marginalized people and fight against subordination. Okwe gets along with Senay well and takes care of her, such as making lunch for her. Due to the systematic deficiencies for the British government to take the rights of foreign laborers and refugees, illegal and otherwise, into consideration, Okwe is willing to help to cure those who dare not go to the hospital for their lack of citizenship or legal status. Similarly, though not agreeing about cab-drivers' action, Okwe helps his taxi co-workers for signs of venereal disease, and heal them with his medical skills. Okwe also runs the risk of stealing the medicine from the hospital for the anonymous African refugee. Rejecting sexism, racism and any forms of subordination, Okwe is on the side of those who are subordinated under different kinds of domination.

Guo Yi also embodies the ideal of radical plural democracy and helps the marginalized people in London. As a typical model of alliance and mutual support, Guo Yi does his best to help the marginalized people. Guo Yi makes friends with Okwe and develops precious brotherhood with him regardless of their different ethnic backgrounds. Guo Yi helps Okwe to get medicines to treat other refugees and foreign laborers. He is also Okwe's good friend in many ways. For instance, Guo Yi often plays chess with Okwe so as to exchange information about daily lives, such as answering Okwe's questions on the validity of organ trade. Guo Yi also provides his

place as Okwe's and Senay's temporary stay for night in the morgue and even tries to help Senay settle down in his cousin's house in Chinatown. Besides, Guo Yi always comforts and teaches Okwe how to survive in London. He plays an important role in assisting Okwe throughout the film.

Juliette acts in accordance with the ideal of radical plural democracy and cares about Senay with her kindness as well. As a goodhearted and helpful friend of the marginalized people, Juliette is on the side of the disadvantaged ethnic groups. For example, after learning the event that Senay is threatened to have sex with Sneaky, Juliette is also kind and considerate so as to make Senay accept her sincere comforts, pills and cigarettes. They form genuine sisterhood as a pair of "whore and virgin."

Ivan, though being a self-centered porter, is willing to cover Senay and Okwe to escape the surveillance of the immigration officers, whose conduct also displays solidarity. While the two IED officers are waiting in the hotel lounge for Senay to catch her red-handed, Ivan stops her from entering the hotel in time so that she will not get caught by the immigration officers. The intellectual reaction of Okwe and the cooperation of Ivan altogether shield Senay from the pursuit of the system.

In the film, other minor characters are also willing to help Okwe, such as the non-white café owner. The café owner provides Okwe with a plant of caffeine as a stimulus to keep him awake, gives him sneakers in Okwe's process of escaping immigration officers, and cares about his condition sincerely. As shown, in daily lives legal and illegal refugees and other marginalized ethnic people help one another and manifest the spirit of radical plural democracy.

To these asylum seekers, these different forms of daily solidarity, which seem to be tiny and superficial ordinarily, are congregated as strong manpower and support systems to fight back at the end of the film. Actually the ultimate rebellion against

Sneaky results from the turning point that Senay is forced to give her virginity to Sneaky and sell her kidney as the bargain for a new passport. In the film, Senay's loss of precious virginity could be taken as serious violation of human rights. From a human heart stuck in the toilet in one of the hotel rooms, the anonymous African refugee who undertakes unsanitized kidney removal, the African woman who pleads Okwe to operate for her, to Senay's decision to exchange her kidney for passport, Okwe undergoes torture of witnessing how these asylum seekers are driven to exchange their organs for passports or money to escape their predicament. These all make Okwe determine his role as a guide of the marginalized and disadvantaged groups to punish Sneaky, the agent of inhuman organ trade, and to symbolically resist organ trade and exploitation enacted upon them.

Because of his background as a well educated elite and his profound medical knowledge, Okwe is highly conscious of the hard lives of these people flow across borders and bears in mind the uneven power relation between the major white people and the minor and disadvantaged ethnic groups. He is willing to lead asylum seekers and marginalized ethnic groups to rebel against institutional deficiency and exploitation. Under his leadership, refugees' solidarity becomes a powerful means of fighting against subordination and exploitation by combining the power of people of different ethnicity, class, and gender. The mutual support between Okwe and Senay acts as a good example of alliance and solidarity beyond gender and ethnic differences. As Desson Howe argues, that the relationship between Okwe and Senay is not like lovers, but "allies in a tense, sleepless universe" and one can only feel safe and secure "unless you have friends and love" (T.37). Although both of them are from different backgrounds and with different aspirations, they rely on each other. Okwe and Senay are in a relationship which is not about passion but rather about being there for each

other. Solidarity, the very essence of radical plural democracy, is a way of fighting against subordination and exploitation.

The most helpful figure in the film is Guo Yi, who is generous to help Okwe and Senay in danger of losing his own job. The reasons that Guo Yi helps Okwe are probably two fold. Firstly, they are bosom friends. Secondly, Guo Yi identifies with Okwe for they both are from the elite class (doctors) in their home countries but now are both at the bottom of their host countries. Although staying low and reserving in some ways, Guo Yi is willing to assist Okwe and Senay to overthrow subordination and fight against exploitation regardless of their different backgrounds.

There are minor characters who help Okwe and Senay in *The Baltic Hotel*, such as Juliette, Ivan, the laundresses in *The Baltic Hotel* and the cab controller. Juliette helps Okwe with bringing medicine to Senay and helps Okwe in the process of Sneaky's kidney removal as revenge and punishment. Ivan also helps to watch out the door in the process of kidney removal and cooperates with the marginalized people to fight against subordination and mistreatment. The laundresses in *The Baltic Hotel* help Okwe and Senay as well. They assist in asepticizing the implements of operation. The last favor comes from Okwe's cab controller, who provides Okwe with the best car at his service. These people's cooperation embodies the resistant power and solidarity arisen outside laws.

Solidarity and cooperation are "unification of different kinds of democratic struggles against sexism, racism, and new forms of subordination under the banner of radical plural democracy" (Torfing 257). As Laclau and Mouffe's proposal of radical plural democracy indicates, these minor ethnic groups cooperate to overthrow subordination, declare their differences and fight for freedom and equality beyond limitations of their different ethnicity, class and gender. Though most of the characters

in this film are from the margins of society, they struggle against brutality and discriminations and form an interdependent community so as to actualize the ideal of radical plural democracy.

Solidarity and alliance beyond ethnic, class and gender differences act as means of resistance in the era of globalization. As A.O. Scott suggests, “solidarity” is significant for it seems “less like a moral nicety than a necessary tactic for survival” (2+) in a capitalistic country which exploits immigrant laborers. The “illegal, all-but-invisible” residents in London form “a motley, resilient community” and fascinate its audience by “small gestures of concern and support” (Scott 2+). Although *Dirty Pretty Things* presents a bleak twilight world of cruel exploitation, Beverly Andrews also contends that one of the most inspiring aspects of the film is “the solidarity that exists between the various characters despite their cultural and religious differences” (61). It is this desire to “help and support each other” that provides the film with “ray of light” (Andrews 61). The film turns the dark and stingy belly of London into a living and breathing place that people live and stick together until the very end.

Taking revenge on Sneaky and cutting off his kidney, these marginalized refugees claim their existence to the anonymous white buyer, in Okwe’s terms, “We [Illegal and legal foreign laborers or other marginalized ethnic groups] are the people you [the white] don’t see. We are the ones who drive your cabs. We clean your rooms, and suck your cocks.” Instead of merely being oppressed and exploited by the capitalistic society silently, Okwe bravely cries out for justice and articulates their existences to the white man. Deprived of their basic rights, these noncitizens and marginalized people resist and fight for themselves. Solidarity in *Dirty Pretty Things* fits in with Laclau and Mouffe’s concept of radical plural democracy. As Laclau and

Mouffe suggest, radical plural democracy demands “a certain degree of openness and ambiguity in the ways the different subject-positions are articulated” (Mouffe, *Radical Democracy* 35). Radical plural democracy not only means that the marginalized people have to fight against subordination so as to be the masters of themselves, but also suggests that the marginalized ethnic groups could articulate themselves instead of being silenced. Their voices should not be subsumed in the mainstream of the majority. Solidarity and alliance of refugees and marginalized ethnic groups in the film actualize the ideal of radical plural democracy, the acknowledgement and existence of multiplicity, plurality, and conflicts, successfully. These marginalized people cooperate to fight against subordination. Their mutual respect and understanding manifest the articulation of differences and the pursuit for freedom.

From aforementioned analysis, *Dirty Pretty Things* proves Foucault’s argument of the resistance in the exercise of power and Laclau and Mouffe’s concept of radical plural democracy: marginalized people’s counter strategies and solidarity manifest a new possibility of alliance beyond borders in the face of globalization. Asylum seekers’ counter strategies and resistance against surveillance and exploitation expose the gaps and deficiencies in the institutions of nation-states in the era of globalization. The asylum seekers form a new type of solidarity by disarming their prejudices and mutually helping one another. A new alliance and solidarity beyond limitations of ethnicity, class, and gender is thus made possible in the era of globalization.