

### Chapter Three

#### The Gendered Social Spaces in *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls*

*Space is socially constructed like the syntax of language, the spatial arrangement of our buildings and communities reflect and reinforce the nature of gender, race and class relations in society.*

(Leslie Kanés Weisman 2)

Since the 1970s, the radical geographers began to argue that space is a social construction rather than an immutable given. The relation between society and space should be more flexible and dialectic because the construction of concrete space always interacts with social relations. In other words, physical and social spaces depend upon and conform to our socially learned perception and values (Weisman 9). Like what Doreen Massey manifests, space is “conceptualized as created out of social relations” and it is “full of power and symbolism, a complex web of relations of domination and subordination of solidarity and co-operation” (265). However, among those researches, the theme of gender discriminations has rarely been taken into consideration. Therefore, since the late 1970s, the feminist geographers have begun to confront male-centered perspectives on landscape and elaborate these terms, such as gender difference, patriarchy, resistance, by examining the way in which power and knowledge are produced or reproduced through these concepts. Their research on the gendered social spaces lays bare the dichotomy of patriarchal discourse hidden in the spatial metaphors and the spatial experiences.

According to both social feminists' and feminist geographers' perspectives, analyzing the concept of the dichotomy is also essential because the dichotomies define "the way we conceptualize metaphysical space and physical space" (Weisman 11). Since the 1970s, many social feminists, including Kate Millet and Carole Pateman, have conducted the research about the private-public dichotomy in the patriarchal society. They unearth how women are not only excluded from public spaces, but also confined in private spaces. Millet discloses the connection between the public-private distinction and the patriarchal power in her famous book *The Sexual Politics* published in 1969. She denounces John Ruskin's lecture delivered in Manchester Town in 1864. Ruskin claims that home was "where women should stay, for only man could be the doer, the creator, the discoverer" (qtd. in Rose 18). On the contrary, woman was "passive, self-effacing, pious, and graceful" (qtd. in Rose 18). From Millet's aspect, the private was "an ideological prison" for women (Rose 18). Pateman also discusses the connection between feminism and spatial politics in her 1989 book *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political*. She declares, "the dichotomy between the private and the public is central to almost two centuries of feminist struggle" (Pateman 118).

Like Millet and Pateman, the feminist geographer Leslie Kanés Weisman maintains that the public-private distinction relates to the social utilization of the space and the oppressions for women. In her book, *Discrimination by Design*, Weisman crystallizes that the hierarchical power is shown in the utilization of space, which is determined by those who "have the power to define their society's symbolic universe" (2). In a patriarchal society, men are the dominant group of people who own the absolute power to define and control the space. As a result, the social, physical and metaphysical spaces are all of "the products of male experience, male consciousness,

and male control” (Weisman 10). Such hierarchical gender relationship is shown by the private-public distinction in the patriarchal society.

In addition, such private-public dichotomy is related to the spatial construction of masculinity and femininity throughout the gendered spatial experiences. The feminist geographer Gillian Rose reveals the different spatial experiences between men and women. In *Feminism and Geography*, Rose states, “when feminists talk about experiences of space, very often they evoke a sense of difficulty” (143). Such a sense of difficulty of space is caused by the male gaze at women’s body and the lack of mobility in the space for women. Rose contends, “Women of all kinds are expected to look right” for a masculine gaze (145). In both private and public spaces, women’s body feeling is constrained by the visual and moral surveillance of men. Moreover, women’s traditional roles are closely connected with private and domestic spaces. Women are never encouraged to transgress the distinction between public and private spaces because the “respectable” women would not be expected to wander around in public spaces, such as the streets and parks alone. On the contrary, men’s spatial experiences are related to their privilege to know and control spaces, such as adventures or conquests of unknown territories. In this regard, Rose explores “how the establishment of rational masculine identity involves rule over public space” (148). Consequently, while the male subjectivity is constructed by his power and capability to know and control spaces, the female subjectivity is related to their confined spatial experiences in the family household.

One’s spatial position interacts with the speaking positions in the hegemonic social structure. The feminist geographer Geraldine Pratt, in “Commentary: Spatial Metaphors and Speaking Positions,” unmasks the gendered spatial metaphors in the social spaces. She discovers three sets of spatial metaphors in popular use: “ones that

draw upon the rhetoric of mobility (for example, ‘nomadism’, ‘traveling’, ‘migration’, the ‘flâneur’); others that emphasise the position of marginality and exile; and a third that represents the borderland as a place” (Pratt 241). Pratt provides a perspective to elaborate the related cultural imagination and social relations within these spatial metaphors. These metaphors about movement reveal how mobility plays an important role in subjectivity and the possibility to physically and metaphysically transgress the boundaries and the distinctions between gender roles and spaces.

As shown above, the feminist geographers not only unfold the interrelations between space and society, but also relate those spatial metaphors to the feministic politics and criticisms. Space is never neutral in the social context because the gender power relations are inscribed in space. Moreover, space is one of the essences to construct the gender discourse in the patriarchal society. The private-public distinction physically and metaphysically facilitates the construction of masculinity and the stereotypical gender roles. Moreover, this private-public distinction also causes the different spatial experiences between men and women. While men are encouraged to go outside and explore the unknown territories, women are confined to the domestic spaces. Therefore, women are deprived of mobility because of men’s fear of the independence of female sexuality and of the possibility for women to transgress the boundary between private and public spaces. In this regard, the spatial metaphors about movement are potential approaches to explore the gender politics of space in the patriarchal society.

In what follows, I will discuss how spatiality of patriarchy is constructed by the private-public dichotomy in both Act Ones of *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls*. As to the analyses to Act Two of *Cloud Nine* and Acts Two and Three of *Top Girls*, I would explore how Churchill turns her dramatic devices into subversive spatial practices in

the following chapter. Compared with Act One of *Top Girls*, Act One of *Cloud Nine* emphasizes more how the public-private distinction causes the oppression to women. The spatial experiences between men and women depicted in Act One of *Cloud Nine* illustrate the stereotypical masculinity and femininity in the Victorian age. While the construction of masculinity is related to outdoor adventures and territorial conquests, the femininity is associated with the confined spatial experience and limited life in the private household. Such spatial confinement also reveals the constraint for women's sexuality.

Churchill in *Cloud Nine* focuses on how the private-public dichotomy is pertinent to the repression of female sexuality. She uses the spatial metaphors about movement in Act One of *Top Girls* to foreground the strict boundary between the private and the public spaces, and also to stress the importance of mobility as being a possible strategy to transgress the boundaries. The life stories of these female guests not only illustrate the oppression for women in history, but also manifest the possibility for women to cross the public-private dichotomy. However, those women who enter the public spaces are always forced to choose between the public careers and the personal family life.

### **I . *Cloud Nine*: The Spatial Construction of Masculinity and Femininity throughout the Private-Public Distinction**

In Act One of *Cloud Nine*, the private-public distinction parallels the two symbolic physical spaces in the play: the household and the African jungle colony. Women in the play are physically and metaphysically confined to the indoor household while men are privileged to enjoy the outdoor adventures and travels. Such distinction is the spatial construction of masculinity and femininity in the patriarchal

society. The male characters, including Clive, Harry Bagley and Edward, are free to construct and display their masculinity by means of such spatial metaphors and experiences as having outdoor adventures, traveling in the jungle, riding horses and exploring the unknown public spaces. On the contrary, the female characters, including Betty, Maud, Ellen and Victoria, can only construct and display the femininity by means of such spatial metaphors and experiences as confinements, household and indoor activities in the private spaces. Like what James Clifford observes,

The marking of ‘travel’ by gender, class, race, and culture is too clear... ‘Good travel’ (heroic, educational, scientific, adventures, ennobling) is something men (should) do. Women are impeded from serious travel. (qtd. in Wolff 122)

Men are privileged to own the mobility to cross with liberty between public and private spaces. While men have the power and knowledge to name and explore those unknown public spaces, women are only allowed to know their responsibility of raising children and doing housework at home.

In Act One of *Cloud Nine*, women belong to the safe and domestic private space because the outdoor public space is regarded as being full of danger. Although most of Act One takes place in the household, the outdoor space is manifested through the descriptions of the characters. Betty’s mother Maud describes her fear about the outdoor environment, when she says, “I knew it. I heard drums. We’ll be killed in our beds” (CN 10). Clive responds to Maud’s worry: “Of course you heard drums. The tribes are constantly at war, if the term is not too grand to grace their squabbles” (CN 10). In this regard, women are excluded from the dangerous outdoor public spaces. No matter what happens in the outdoor space, there is no necessity for women to

know because only men have the power and knowledge to deal with surviving in the public spaces. Therefore, when Betty says, “Clive tells me nothing” (CN 29), Maud responds to her, “You would not want to be told about it, Betty. It is enough for you that Clive knows what is happening. Clive will know what to do. Your father always knew what to do” (CN 29). In other words, men dominate the space outside.

The male privileged spatial metaphors and experiences indicate that power and knowledge are closely associated with the spatial construction of masculinity. The white male characters, including Clive and Harry Bagley, are playing the significant role: the explorer in Africa. Exploration and adventure are the spatial metaphors that are constantly related to the male spatial experience. Men are encouraged to occupy the unknown spaces and not to stay in the private spaces, such as household. In the beginning of the play, when Clive represents himself, he says, “I am a father to the natives here. And father to my family so dear” (CN 1). In other words, Clive constructs his traditional masculinity in his control over the native in the colony. His travel between his own household and the native tribes demonstrate men’s absolute mobility. As to another male character Harry Bagley, he is the idealistic male model in this aspect because he devotes his life to the adventures in the jungle. While describing his life, Harry says, “I haven’t slept in a house for six months” (CN 13) and “I’m not used to sleeping in a house” (CN 24). According to Betty, “He lives a very rough life” (CN 9). Therefore, Clive praises Harry and he wants his son Edward to be like him. In Act One Scene Four, Clive also shows his admiration for Harry Bagley when he says, “I envy you going to the jungle, a man’s life” (CN 39). In another case, Clive also says, “Think of the comradeship of men, Harry, sharing adventures, sharing danger, risking their lives together” (CN 40). The ideal life for men is to seek outdoor adventures, to take risk in the dangerous circumstances. Harry describes his

adventurous life in the jungle, “Built a raft and went up the river. Stayed with some people. The king is always very good to me. They have a lot of skulls around the place but not white men’s I think [...]” (CN 13). In brief, in the patriarchal society, to be away from the private space is a privilege for men and their outdoor adventures reinforce their male spatial domination.

While masculinity is constructed by the spatial exploration, femininity is associated with the private spaces. For a Victorian husband, the home is his “castle,” a place where “his authority and rule were unquestioned, his control over family decisions absolute” (Weisman 87). Clive describes, “Ah what a haven of peace to come home to. The coolth, the calm, the beauty” (CN 4). Compared with men who have outdoor adventures, women are believed to belong to the safe household and their social roles are also attached to such private spaces. The dialogue between Betty and Harry indicates that women are spatially and morally constrained to the family and household:

BETTY. Do you think of me sometimes then?

HARRY. You have been thought of where no white woman has ever been thought of before.

BETTY. It’s one way of having adventures. I suppose I will never go in person.

HARRY. That’s up to you.

BETTY. Of course it’s not. I have duties. (CN 13)

Even if Betty wants to go seek adventures in the jungle, she knows she can’t because she has family duties to fulfill. Moreover, Maud tells Betty, “You are looking very pretty tonight. You were such a success as a young girl. You have made a most fortunate marriage. I’m sure you will be an excellent hostess to Mr. Bagley” (CN 9).

Maud's praise to Betty clearly explains that all of these female roles as well as constructed femininity are closely related to household, such as being a mother, a wife and a hostess.

Women's lack of mobility in physical perspective is associated with their confinement of sexuality. As Weisman declares, "a woman's sexuality is defined by her spatial location: that the virtuous woman is found in the nuclear family house, the whore in the house of ill-repute and in the embodiment of any woman who dares to walk the streets at night" (2-3). In Act One of *Cloud Nine*, Betty's physical immobility is paralleled to the passivity of her female sexuality. The following conversation between Betty and Harry reveals how the spatial imaginations is much related to sexuality:

BETTY. Where have you been?

HARRY. Built a raft and went up the river. [...]

BETTY. When I'm near you it's like going out into the jungle. It's like going up the river on a raft. It's like going out in the dark.

HARRY. And you are safety and light and peace and home.

BETTY. But I want to be dangerous. (13-4)

The spatial imaginations that Betty tells to Harry in this conversation indicate her desire to voice her oppressed sexuality. Being a traditional Victorian woman, Betty always belongs to "safety and light and peace and home" (CN 13) and her confined body in the private space corresponds to her constrained sexuality. Betty's desire to go to outdoor jungle suggests that she wishes to have not only physical mobility to leave the household, but also the freedom to express her sexuality.

The education of socialization in the family reinforces the public-private distinction. In Act One of *Cloud Nine*, Clive's teachings to his son Edward and

daughter Victoria are the process of socialization. These two different teachings ensure that next generation will maintain the solidarity of such public-private distinction in the patriarchal society. In his famous article “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation),” Louis Althusser asserts that the ruling class in any society enforces its ideology by RSAs, the Repressive State Apparatuses, or ISAs, the Ideological State Apparatuses.<sup>1</sup> In a capitalist society, school and family are the educational ISAs that contribute to “the reproduction of relations of reproduction” (Althusser 133). Just like Clive announces to the audiences in the opening scene of *Cloud Nine*, he says, “My son is young. I’m doing all I can to teach him to grow up to be a man” (CN 2). Such ideologies about the gendered spatial experiences are continuously reproduced by their education as early as childhood.

In Act One Scene One, Clive asks Edward, “Did you go riding” (CN 8). Apparently, riding is a typical masculine spatial metaphor because it suggests the physical mobility to explore the outdoor environment. Like what Weisman observes, boys are taught to be spatially dominant because they are encouraged to be “adventurous, to discover and explore their surroundings, and to experience a wide range of environmental settings” (24). Men and boys, including Clive and Edward, are encouraged to embrace outdoor public spaces so Edward learns how to go horse riding, play a ball and play hide and seek, which are all closely connected to the access to and privilege of outdoor mobility and public spaces. Moreover, Edward also reveals his desire of having adventures when he tells Harry, “I don’t mind being

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Althusser is a structuralist Marxist who analyzes the relations between State and subject (between government and citizen). He mentions two major mechanisms to insure that people within a State behave according to the rules of that State. The first one is called the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs), which can enforce people’s behavior directly, such as the police and prison system. The other one is called the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). They are institutions that generate systems of ideas and values, such as schools, religions, the family, politics, arts, sports, etc. The basic difference between the RSAs and the ISAs is that “the Repressive State Apparatus functions by *violence*, whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function by *ideology*” (Althusser 145).

awake because I make up adventures. Once we were on a raft going down to the rapids. We've lost the paddles because we used them to fight off the crocodiles [...]" (CN 24).

While boys and men embrace outdoor life and explore the public spaces, girls are raised to accept spatial confinements because their spatial range is limited to the "protected and homogeneous environment and immediate neighborhood" (Weisman 24). When Edward looks for playing the ball with someone, women and girls are not considered his choices of playmates:

EDWARD. Mama, don't play. You know you can't catch a ball.

BETTY. He's perfectly right. I can't throw either.

EDWARD. Ellen, don't you play either. You're not good. You spoil it.

BETTY. Ellen come and sit with me. We'll be spectators and clap. (CN

18)

Unlike Edward who can enjoy riding and playing the ball and hide and seek, Victoria never actively participates in any outdoor activities throughout the whole Act One. Although she is played by a dummy because of her young age of two, it is very apparent for the spectators to view this dummy Victoria symbolically. She is a "doll" like Nora in *A Doll's House*; moreover, she has to be "silenced" and remain confined to immobility, the household and the private. Hence, the contrasting ways between how Clive teaches Edward and Victoria reinforce the same gender hierarchy in children's spatial experiences.

In brief, Act One of *Cloud Nine* explores how the physical and the social spaces interact with each other and produce spatial experiences and metaphors. The male characters, such as Clive and Harry, are privileged to public spaces and such spatial metaphors as adventure, travel and conquest of unknown territories. As to those

female characters, their life and sexuality are spatially and metaphysically confined in the private spaces. Such myth of a public-private dichotomy continues throughout the process of socialization in family education.

## II. *Top Girls*: Women's Impasse Between Private and Public Spaces

While Act One of *Cloud Nine* explores how the public-private distinction results in different spatial experiences and metaphors between men and women, Act One of *Top Girls* depicts the same patriarchal public-private dichotomy leading to the emotional and physical impasse for women. The combination of these five very different guests makes Act One of *Top Girls* a kaleidoscope, which presents a universal female experience and a long history about the confined spatial experiences and the lack of mobility in private spaces. While Dull Gret and Patient Griselda represent two extreme feminine archetypes, a woman warrior and an obedient wife, other three guests, including Pope Joan, Isabella Bird and Lady Nijo, attempt to transgress the boundary between public and private spaces. Their spatial experiences are closely related to the spatial metaphor of traveling and exile. However, although they prove that women can successfully enter the public spaces physically and metaphysically, they are forced to cut connections with the private spaces physically and emotionally. Their stories foreground the same dilemma for Marlene who is a career woman living in London in 1982.

In this act, these women from the past constitute a brief history about women's universal oppression under the public-private dichotomy. Different from Pope Joan, Isabella Bird and Lady Nijo, neither Dull Gret nor Patient Griselda struggle between the private and public spaces. They represent two kinds of extreme female roles: a warrior, and a perfect wife and daughter. Also, these two women are "fictions

invented by a male imagination” (Thomas 180), which suggests that they are the productions of men’s idealization. In the painting, Dull Gret, in an apron and armour leads a crowd of women charging through hell and fighting the devils. Such powerful woman warrior figure is rare in both western and eastern histories.<sup>2</sup> Dull Gret doesn’t talk much in the whole Act One, but in the end of the party, she recites how devils (soldiers) cruelly destroy her village and how other women in the village decide to “pay the bastards out” (TG 28). It is possible that the playwright hints at the parallel between devils and men. In this case, Dull Gret’s attitude toward men might also suggest a kind of radical and essential feminism.

Compared with other guests in Act One, Griselda is a conventional woman whose life is always confined in the private spaces. From both mental and physical points of views, she never has any mobility in her whole life. For example, her marriage is based on the request of Marquis Walter. Moreover, her daughter and son are taken from her when they are very young. No matter how, Griselda still firmly believes, “But of course a wife must obey her husband. / And of course I must obey the Marquis” (TG 21). As Rosefeldt observes, “the hierarchies of class and gender are too strong for Griselda, who can only see herself as a submissive daughter, an obedient wife and a loyal subject” (130). Her only resistance is to think “it would have been nicer if Walter hadn’t had so” (TG 27). Although the ending of her life story is a happy family reunion, Griselda represents a kind of typical legend narrated from the patriarchal perspective that attempts to educate women to be a passive and patient wife. However, in the reality of modern time, women are escaping from these two kinds of archetypes and are beginning to struggle for a balanced point between

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the most representative woman warrior in western history is Joan of Arc (1412-1431). In the Chinese history, there are Mulan (花木蘭) and Leung Hung Yuk (梁紅玉, ?-1135). However, while the real historical existence of the former is dubious, the real reason that they become heroines is still for protecting their father and husband.

public and private lives.

The traditional female role in the patriarchal society is strictly attached to the private spaces where women lose their mobility, the access to public spaces for knowledge and the control of their body and sexuality. For instance, Pope Joan, disguised as a man, is thought to have been Pope between 854-856. When she is twelve years old, she begins to disguise herself as a boy because she wants to have access to public spaces. Joan explains, “Also women weren’t / allowed in the library” (TG 8). She is denied entrance to a library on account of her gender. In her *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf mentions the similar experience of being refused entry to a college library because “ladies are only admitted to the library if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction” (9). Joan and Virginia Woolf share the same spatially confined experience. The library, a public space, is the access to knowledge, but for many years in history, women were not allowed to enter it. Because of this experience, Joan decides to disguise herself as a man and travel to Rome in order to satisfy her strong aspiration for knowledge.

While the fictive Pope Joan begins to travel since she is twelve, the historical Isabella Bird, a female Victorian world traveler from Edinburgh, is expected to lead a traditional life of a clergyman’s daughter. Her father has educated her in the traditional way, but she gradually finds out that she prefers to have a rough open-air life. She recalls the memories about her father’s teachings, “I tried to be a clergyman’s daughter. Needlework, music, charitable schemes. I had a tumor removed from my spine and spent a great deal of time on the sofa. I studied the metaphysical poets and hymnology. / I thought I enjoyed intellectual pursuits” (TG 3). Women in the Victorian age were always taught to participate in those indoor activities, such as doing housework and reading poetry. However, Bird is puzzled about embracing

such life because she knows that she is “more suited to manual work. Cooking, washing, mending, riding horses. / Better than reading books”(TG 4). According to her comments, life in her hometown is dull and stationary. She expresses her deep frustrations about such spatial and social constraints for being a Victorian lady. She protests, “How can people live in this dim pale island and wear our hideous clothes? I cannot and will not live the life of a lady... Why should I? Why should I?” (TG 26). Obviously, the traditional female role gives Isabella Bird a confined and boring spatial feeling and she would rather embrace the activities in the public spaces.

Before Lady Nijo becomes a vagrant nun who travels the country on foot and walks every day for twenty years, she is an Emperor’s courtesan who shares with Isabella Bird the same spatial oppressions and lack of mobility. Her father is a religious man and a poet. When she is fourteen years old, she becomes one of those maidens who are sent to the Japanese Emperor at court. Her father tells her, “Serve His Majesty, be respectful, if you lose his favour enter holy orders” (TG 3). The identity of being an Emperor’s courtesan indicates immobility in female sexuality because she has to passively wait for his coming. She describes, “I belong to him, it was what I was brought up for from a baby. I soon found I was sad if he stayed away. It was depressing day after day not knowing when he would come. I never enjoyed taking other women to him” (TG 3). The Emperor controls her life spatially and mentally. Therefore, she states, “There was nothing in my life, nothing, without the Emperor’s favour” (TG 12). Although Lady Nijo has some secret lovers, her children are taken from her because she can’t lose the Emperor’s favor. In the end of Act One, she cries out her mourning over losing children, “Nobody gave me back my babies” (TG 25).

Instead of passively accepting their traditional female roles, Pope Joan, Isabella

Bird, and Lady Nijo refuse to be restricted to the household and their lives are related to the spatial image of transgression between the private and the public spaces. Like what Pope Joan says, they are kind of heretics in the patriarchal society because they dare to transgress the rigid private and public distinction. Her cross-dressing is her canny method to successfully transgress the boundary between the private and the public in the patriarchal society. Her hard work and erudition make her a famous speaker at the Greek School in Rome. She remarks, "Pope Leo died and I was chosen. All right then. I would be Pope. I would know God. I would know everything" (*TG* 12). She proves to be "unwomanly" and seeks to realize herself in the public space.

Unlike most women in the Victorian age, Isabella Bird refuses to have the confined and immobile life in the household.<sup>3</sup> She chooses to have various adventures because her memory about the first travel is cheerful: "It was on the trip from Australia to the Sandwich Isles, I fell in love with the sea. There were rats in the cabin and ants in the food but suddenly it was like a new world. I woke up every morning happy, knowing there would be nothing to annoy me. No nervousness. No dressing" (*TG* 8). After her first travel, she begins to have numerous outdoor adventures and publish her writings about what she has seen and experienced in her travel.<sup>4</sup> She is proud of experiencing those difficult situations in her adventures: "Such adventures. We were crossing a mountain pass at seven thousand feet, the cook was all to pieces, the muleteers suffered fever and snow blindness. But even though my spine was agony I managed very well" (*TG* 13). Those adventures and travels

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<sup>3</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, some Victorian ladies, such as Isabella Bird, Isabelle Eberhardt, Mary Kingsley, Freya Stark, Marianne North and Edith Durham, left home to travel around the world in the most difficult and challenging circumstances (Wolff 125).

<sup>4</sup> In 1873, Isabella Bird had her first travel to the Sandwich Islands and at the same year, she published those letters that she sent to her sister Hennie. After her first book, *Six Months in the Sandwich Island*, she continued her overseas adventures and published famous books, including *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879) and *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (1880).

bring Isabella Bird the openness in both her spirit and body. In brief, Isabella Bird transgresses the spatial and spiritual boundaries between private and public spaces in terms of her fearless adventures and travels.

Sharing the same spatial metaphor and experience with Isabella Bird, Lady Nijo walks through Japan after the deaths of the Emperor and her father. She recounts, “Out of favor but I didn’t die. I left on foot, nobody saw me go. For the next twenty years I walked through Japan” (*TG* 12). Lady Nijo recollects the difficult situations along the journey, “Since I was ill for four months lying alone at an inn. Nobody to offer a house to Buddha. I had to live for myself, and I did live” (*TG* 13). Although she has encountered desperate occasions, like Isabella Bird, she survives and continues her journey. When she recalls the memories about some spectacular scenes, she says, “New sights. The shrine by the beach, the moon shining on the sea [...]” (*TG* 13). Instead of passively staying at court, Lady Nijo chooses to travel and her journey also reflects her determined mind and relish for new sights. In other words, like Pope Joan and Isabella Bird, Lady Nijo also becomes a heretic in the patriarchal society because her twenty years of journey on foot through Japan shows her autonomy and mobility to step into the public spaces.

Pope Joan, Isabella Bird and Lady Nijo are similar to each other in their transgression of breaking the boundary between the private and public spaces. Sharing the same spatial experience of traveling, these women prove that they can obtain great achievements in the male dominated public spaces. These three female characters prove that women can have great achievements in the public spaces. Pope Joan wins power and knowledge in Rome. Lady Nijo and Isabella Bird, experience outdoor adventures and exploration to the unknown territories. In contrast with traditional women whose lives are confined in the private spaces, these three characters make it

in the public spaces. Like these three extraordinary women, Marlene is also mobile. Although she doesn't mention about her job in L.A., Marlene once sent a postcard to Angie and Joyce with the picture of Grand Canyon.<sup>5</sup> The spatial image of traveling not only indicates the mobility to transgress boundaries, but also exhibits her active attitude and the determined mind.

However, those women, though able to transgress the boundaries between the private and public spaces, have to face the same sacrifice in the patriarchal society. The stories of Pope Joan, Isabella Bird and Lady Nijo in Act One of *Top Girls* foreground Marlene's dilemma about living between private and public spaces. According to Reade W. Dornan, those "transgressional" women have "cut themselves off from normal relationships with men, women and children" and have made a choice that "require[s] suppression of common human impulses: the desire for intimacy, a trust in family ties, and concern for others" (1615). Like what Pope Joan says, "[...] I shouldn't been a woman. Women, children and lunatics can't be Pope" (TG 15). After she is found to be a woman, she tells them that, "They took me by the feet and dragged me out of town and stoned me to death" (TG 17). The cruel price that she pays for her behavior of entering the public space is isolation from her own female body and her own life. Although Isabella Bird enjoys her adventures, she feels sad when her sister and her father die. She laments, "I longed to go home, / but home to what? Houses are so perfectly dismal" (TG 7). After her sister Hennie died in 1881, Isabella Bird married doctor John Bishop and in the play, she admits, "I swore to obey dear John, of course, but it didn't seem to arise. Naturally I wouldn't have wanted to go abroad while I was married" (TG 21). Even though Isabella Bird is a famous lady traveler during the Victorian age, she still had to give up her adventures after she got

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<sup>5</sup> In Act Three, Angie mentions, "You was in America or somewhere. You sent a postcard" (TG 74). Marlene writes in this postcard, "Driving across the states for a new job in L. A. It's a long way but the car goes very fast. It's very hot. Wish you were here. Auntie Marlene" (TG 75).

married. During her marriage days, she gave up her adventures and felt ill again. After her husband's death in 1886, Isabella Bird got the opportunity to continue her life of adventures and writing career again. When Lady Nijo decided to begin her journey, her father, the Emperor, her lover and her children had all been taken away from her. As to Marlene, "Like Nijo, Marlene gives up her daughter to a woman who has no children (her sister Joyce) so she can hold a position of status in a man's world" (Rosefeldt 133).

In conclusion, by applying the feminist geographers' critiques about the spatialization of patriarchy to interpret Act Ones of *Cloud Nine* and of *Top Girls*, I lay bare the interrelations between space, society and gender. More importantly, the feminist geographers' elaboration on the importance of spatial experience and metaphor in the gender issue provides another perspective to scrutinize the important role space plays in the construction of masculinity and femininity in the patriarchal society. In Act One of *Cloud Nine*, the spatial metaphor of adventures in the jungle exemplifies the ideal model of man's life. Comparatively speaking, women are taught to stay home. Their living space as well as their female sexuality, is confined to the private space. In this regard, the spatial experiences, metaphors and imagination interact with the traditional gender role in the private-public distinction. The ability of mobility, however, not only interacts with sexuality, but also indicates the possibility for women to transgress the boundary between the private-public distinctions in the patriarchal society. In Act One of *Top Girls*, Marlene and her guests offer themselves as evidence to verify the importance of mobility and they all confront the same impasse women confront when crossing over the private spaces. The ability of transgression is parallel to their achievements that are originally only given to men. However, they are also forced to cut off their emotional and private connections with

family and children. The chronotopes in both *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls* suggest space is so highly gendered that it has always been a contesting site for women to confront themselves.