

Chapter Four

The Subversive Spatial Practice and Heterotopia

To change life [...] we must first change space.

(Lefebvre 190)

*Churchill creates a space for dialogue and
change outside the theatre as well as in it.*

(Merrill 89)

In Chapter Three, I focused on the social discriminations and limitations for women that reflect on women's spatial experiences and related spatial metaphors, such as the public-private dichotomy and the connection between mobility and female subjectivity. Departing from the articulation of the oppressed social space for women in Act One of *Cloud Nine* and Act One of *Top Girls*, Churchill changes her stress to subversive political strategies and spatial practices in Act Two of *Cloud Nine* and in Acts Two and Three of *Top Girls*.

When commenting on Churchill's drama, Elaine Aston states, "the political is as much a subject of her theatrical apparatus as it is of her dramatic content" (*Caryl Churchill* 19). Churchill's dramatic strategies and her intentions are always political and disturbing. By using the spatial tactics, she politically and explores the possibility of creating subversive social spaces in *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls*. This chapter sets its goal in analyzing how Churchill's theatrical strategies are also potential spatial practices that create the rupture to transgress the unfair restrictions and discriminations in the patriarchal and heterosexual society. Before the discussions, a space is needed for spatial theory explored by Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault,

which will aid on understanding the subversive spatial practices and strategies in Churchill's *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls*.

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre questions the traditional science about space that establishes on its transparency from the epistemological perspective. He discusses the inseparable relationships among these physical, mental and social spaces. According to him, "each of these two kinds of spaces involves, underpins and presupposes the other" (14). Being a Marxist, Lefebvre particularly is concerned about the production relations between society and space. He claims that different modes of production create different kinds of spaces in society. Therefore, his theory about space aims to not simply read the codes in space, but also display the process about how social spaces are constructed. In this regard, space is not merely a field of conflicts displayed between classes, but it also actively participates in the process of constructing social hierarchy system. Like what Helene Liggett claims, space is "an active component of constructing, maintaining, and challenging social order" (245). By this process, Lefebvre claims the threefold dialectics of spatialization: spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. According to Lefebvre, the definitions of these three essences of the spatial triad are:

1. *Spatial Practice*, which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*.
2. *Representations of space*, which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to

knowledge, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations.

3. *Representational spaces*, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces). (33)

In other words, spatial practice involves human activities in certain social space, including production, utilization, control, and the movements of appropriation.

Representations of space are the space constructed through the discourse by city planners and bureaucrats. As to representational spaces, they are the spaces of imagination based on our daily life. For instance, the works of artists, photographers, filmmakers, and poets may be regarded as the representational spaces that open up other possibilities to think about spaces.

Among these three essences of the spatial triad, spatial practice focuses on how people's daily activities in physical spaces manifest the process the production of social spaces. Lefebvre explains,

The spatial practice of a society secrets that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it. From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space. (38)

Throughout the process of mastering and appropriating certain space, the spatial practice produces the social relations and creates new social meanings of certain space. Therefore, spatial practice refers to human being's concrete actions in certain space in order to politically appropriate the social meaning of space and reproduce the changes

of social orders.

As Steve Pile argues, “radical geography needs to understand how the multiplicities of power operate with, off, and against each other” (*Antipode* 265). He presents the relationships among political identities, political spaces and radical politics in the introduction of *Geographies of Resistance*. In light of Lefebvre’s interrogation about the silence of users within the abstract space, the geography of resistance is produced by the subversive spatial practices that attempt to challenge the original social order through the spatial strategy of occupying a certain physical space. In *Discrimination by Design*, Leslie Kanés Weisman mentions one event that happened on New Year’s Eve of 1971. Seventy-five women took over an abandoned building owned by the city government of New York in order to manifest their appeals. They realized that access to space leads to social status and power, and changing the allocation of space is related to changing society (Weisman 1).¹ Manifestations like this case are the concrete spatial practices whose original spatial meaning is appropriated for the oppressed to gain more freedom and fair rights in society.

Like Lefebvre, Foucault argues the space in which we live is never simply an empty void, but instead, we live in “a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another” (23). While Lefebvre explores the inseparable connection between space and society, Foucault pays more attention to the interrelations between different social spaces. In 1986, Foucault provides the definition of heterotopias in his “Tests/Contests: Of Other Spaces.” He explains that heterotopias define and crystallize the interrelations about how those placeless social spaces designate, mirror, or reflect with each other in daily

¹ The group of these seventy-five women is called “Fifth Street Women.” In their statement “The Militant” for this manifestation in 1971, these women claim that they take over this building because in New York City, there is no such public space for them to survive, grow and be themselves. For further reference, please see Weisman, “Introduction: The Spatial Dimensions of Feminism” in *Discrimination by Design*.

lives. From this regard, his spatial term of heterotopia functions not only as the perfect counter-site of the real society, but also as a mirror to reflect the invisibility of the oppressed in reality. Heterotopia constructs the imaginary site that aims to mirror out the apparatus in the real space. On the one hand, heterotopias are unreal spaces that “represent society itself in a perfect form, or else society turned upside down. On the other hand, heterotopias are “something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault 24). It creates not only the space of illusion, but also the space of another real place. In this regard, the essential function of heterotopia is like a mirror. Foucault claims,

The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there. (24)

Foucault’s heterotopia is a kind of subversive representational space. It not merely becomes a counter-site space of real society, but also functions as the mirror that reflects things’ absence or presence in the real world. In brief, both Lefebvre’s theory of spatial practice and Foucault’s theory of heterotopia can help us see more clearly how space in the real world interact with society and how space is manifested in different periods and times. In this chapter, I attempt to employ Lefebvre and Foucault’s spatial theories to scrutinize the subversive spatial practices and strategies in *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls*.

In Act Two of *Cloud Nine*, Churchill produces a space that not only embraces all kinds of sexual identities, but also mirrors the sexual apparatus in the heterosexual

society, such as Act One of *Cloud Nine*. As to *Top Girls*, Churchill's spatial and theatrical strategies represent an office space that is totally occupied by women in Act Two. In this act, the visibility of female workers mirrors the invisibility of women in the male dominated working space. Churchill's spatial practice constructs the imaginary geographies in order to change, or improve, the oppressed minorities' living space and social positions in the actual world.

I . The Subversive Spatial Practice, Geography of Resistance and Heterotopia in *Cloud Nine*

In Act Two of *Cloud Nine*, Churchill's theatrical strategies throughout the act are the spatial practices to produce the space of the free sexual identities and boundless sexual desires. Such subversive spatial practices transform public spaces into political geography of resistance and produce new spaces in terms of mastering and appropriating the original meaning and usage of certain space. Act Two of *Cloud Nine* takes place in a park, a space where homosexual and female sexual desires are freely expressed, played out, negotiated and formed. Therefore, Act Two becomes the geography of resistance for the sexual minorities to create the aggressive visibility of their sexual desires in public spaces.

American socialist Galen Cranz studies the politics of design in the urban parks of America in her book, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* published in 1982. She uncovers the political controlling intentions hidden behind the design of urban parks for the elders, children, women, handicaps, criminals and other social minorities. According to Cranz's research, for its frequent use by families, good women and dutiful children, "parks had to be respectable settings for middle-class women, safe resorts for unprotected ladies, women, mother, wives, and

children” (203). Obviously, people’s behaviors in different kinds of spaces are regulated by different social manners. However, the behaviors of those characters in the park of Act Two of *Cloud Nine* don’t follow the standard of decency from the heterosexual upper and middle classes perspective.

The park in Act Two of *Cloud Nine* is a potential heterotopia, which provides chances for the sexual minorities to openly and freely express their sexual desire. In Act Two of *Cloud Nine*, the utilization of public space is transformed into a space where gays and lesbians openly encounter lovers. In the beginning of Act Two, Lin, a lesbian single mother, boldly and openly expresses her admirations to Victoria and invites her to go to the movies with her on Friday night:

LIN. [...] I really fancy you.

VICTORIA. What?

LIN. Put your book down will you for five minutes. You didn’t hear a word I said.

VICTORIA. I don’t get much time for myself.

LIN. Do you ever go to the movies? (CN 50)

In this public space, Lin boldly reveals her own sexual identity naturally in front of Victoria who obviously is a heterosexual woman. Lin even asks Victoria, “Will you have sex with me?” (CN 57). After Victoria answers, “I don’t know what Martin would say. Does it count as adultery with a woman?” (CN 56), Lin responds, “You’d enjoy it” (CN 56). A divorced lesbian woman publicly courts another married woman and openly asks her to have sex with her in the park. Therefore, such publicity of lesbian mother and homosexual lovers is the subversive spatial practice that surely challenges the morality of the heterosexual society.

In addition to lesbian lovers, another sexual minority group appearing in the park

are gays, including Edward and his lover Gerry. Although Edward and Gerry are not like the other homosexual couple Lin and Victoria, who express their homosexual desire in public, they have mentioned many public spaces where they construct their homoerotic communities and freely express their sexuality. Several of Gerry's monologues in Act Two disclose that gays encounter lovers and have sex in such public spaces as parks, pubs, saunas and trains.

Gerry's first soliloquy describes the experience of picking up a stranger on train to have sex. He narrates, "[...] The train from Victoria to Clapham still has those compartments without a corridor. As soon as I got on the platform I saw who I wanted. [...] I stared at him and he unzipped his flies. Then he stopped. So I stood up and took my cock out. He took me in his mouth and shut his eyes tight. [...] I saw him at Victoria a couple of months later and I went straight down to the end of the platform and I picked up somebody really" (CN 59). It is obvious that Gerry uses to pick up lovers in the train and enjoys such "private public" sex. Furthermore, in Act Two Scene Three when he is in the park, Gerry also says, "I come here sometimes at night and pick someone up. Sometimes I come here at night and don't pick anybody up. I do also enjoy walking about at night. [...]" (CN 77). He often walks in the park and picks up strangers to have sex. Accordingly, there must be many gays like Gerry who look for lovers so he says that it is never difficult to find a partner. During his conversations with Edward, they both mention about pubs and saunas. For instance, when Edward works in the park, Gerry tells him that he is "going to the pub" (CN 58). Moreover, Gerry also says, "For a start I'm going to a sauna. Then I'll see" (CN 70). Then, the conversation between them also mentions about their habit to go to sauna:

GERRY. I was passing the park anyway so I thought I'd look in. I was in the sauna the other night and I saw someone who looked like you but it

wasn't. I had sex with him anyway.

EDWARD. I do go to the sauna sometimes. (CN 81)

Throughout the descriptions of experiencing private sex in these public spaces, Gerry spatially maps out the erotic landscape in London. Having private sex is an aggressive spatial practice that reproduces new social meanings for these spaces. Just like Taipei 228 Peace Commemoration Park in Taiwan, it has become a paradise for gays to look for lovers, and their public sex is a spatial practice the same as what Gerry and Edward have experienced in Act Two of *Cloud Nine*.² Such spatial practice produces new social meanings for these public spaces, which becomes the geography of resistance that creates spaces for gays to freely express their sexual identity and desire. The park in Act Two of *Cloud Nine* becomes a ground for struggle because it radically challenges the existing norms, especially the sexual behavioral codes in the heterosexual patriarchal society.

Lin's public flirts in the park, and Gerry's monologue about his intercourse with the stranger on train and the action of seeking lovers in pubs and saunas are the concrete spatial practices that not merely break through the silence and taboos surrounding the heterosexual issues, but also violate the social order in the traditional heterosexual society. As Jean-Ulrick Désert finds it, "Sometimes the inequality is blatant, such as public kissing, which is socially or legally tolerated between heterosexual couples but violently suppressed between the same-sex couples" (19).

² Taipei 228 Peace Commemoration Park (二二八公園) is the representative example of spatial practice in Taiwan. In terms of occupying this public space, gays have radically changed the original social meanings and utilizations of this park. There are many literal texts in Taiwan that employ in this park as their background and discuss about gay sexuality and social discriminations. The most famous one is *Crystal Boys* (孽子) which is written by Pai, Hsien Yung (白先勇) in 1983. There are also some theatrical works about gay issues. For instance, in 2002, The Party Theatre Group (同黨劇團) produced the play *Eden* (新天堂公園). It is about conversations between two homosexual men who accidentally meet in a park. By using the dramatic device of multiple casting, two actors play six different roles and discuss about gay lives, AIDS and Taipei 228 Peace Commemoration Park. For further reference on those theatrical works, please see Liao Ying Chih's (廖瑩芝) MA thesis in 2000, which is titled as *The Research of Taipei Gay Theatre in 90's*.

Gill Valentine also mentions about one event in November 1991 about a lesbian couple who were thrown out of a supermarket in Nottingham for kissing in the store (9). She discovers that those public places, such as streets, shops and cafes, are not “asexual” (Valentine 146). Instead, they are assumed to be ‘naturally’ or ‘authentically’ heterosexual. Therefore, the kiss between two lesbian lovers causes panic because it appears in the space where it doesn’t belong (qtd. in Valentine 146). The conversation between Lin and Edward indicates such hidden risk of exposing their homosexual identities in public:

LIN. You’re gay, aren’t you?

EDWARD. I beg your pardon?

LIN. I really fancy your sister. I thought you’d understand. You do but you can go on pretending you don’t, I don’t mind. That’s lovely Cathy, I like the green bit.

EDWARD. Don’t go around saying that. I might lose my job. (CN 52-3)

Although in reality in public there are still dangers and discriminations for the homosexuals, Churchill in her play challenges the heterosexual patriarchal world through directly representing the visibility of these homosexuals.

In Act Two of *Cloud Nine*, the sexual minorities which appear in the park include not only lesbians and gays, but also heterosexual women. Unlike the surprising appearance and free expression by the homosexuals, Betty’s frequent appearance in the park is still a significant spatial practice because it suggests that she is different from the woman in Act One whose life is confined to household. Some scholars declare, “Boundaries separating public and private realms have shifted radically over the past three centuries” (Ingram et al. 297). In Act Two, Betty no longer plays the traditional female role of a faithful wife and dutiful mother at home; instead, she

decides to get a divorce and lives alone. Her personal transgression between public and private spaces both physically and mentally exhibits the same transformation in real society. Moreover, she also participates in this political action of changing social meanings of this space in terms of occupying this public space. Her spatial practice includes not only her physical appearance in the park, but also her soliloquy of her sexual desire. She retraces the memories about the first masturbation in her childhood, “I used to touch myself when I was little, I thought I’d invented something wonderful. I used to do it to go to sleep with or to cheer me up. [...] And one night in bed in my flat I was so frightened I started touching myself. I thought my hand might go through space. I touch my face, it was there, my arms, my breasts, and my hand went down where I thought it shouldn’t, and I thought well there is somebody there. It felt so sweet...[...].” (CN 82). Her soliloquy is not only the spatial exploration of her female body, but also the significant spatial practice that indicates the liberation of her sexual desire. Compared with Betty in Act One who confesses to Clive her sin of desiring Harry, Betty in Act Two is no more a woman who dares not explore her sexual desires. Instead, she says, “I used to think Clive was the one who liked sex. But then I found I missed it” (CN 82). In brief, Churchill’s dramatic strategy of Betty’s frequent physical presence and her bold monologue in Act Two manifests that heterosexual women’s body and sexuality are no longer confined to the private spaces, such as the domestic household in Act One of *Cloud Nine*.

According to Foucault, heterotopia’s function “unfolds between two extreme poles” (27). The first one is to “create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory” (Foucault 27). As to the second one, it plays the role to “create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and

jumbled” (Foucault 27). Act Two of *Cloud Nine* also has these two functions of heterotopia. On the one hand, compared with the reality during the 1980s, Chapter Two of *Cloud Nine* is a heterotopia that creates an illusion that all kinds of sexual identities have secured the free expression of their sexuality, including heterosexuals (Martin and Betty), gays (Gerry and Edward) & lesbians (Lin), and bisexuals (Victoria). Churchill mentions about the discussion that inspires her to write *Cloud Nine*:

When the company talked about their childhood and the attitudes to sex and marriage that they had been given when they were young, everyone felt that they had received very conventional, almost Victorian expectations and that they had made great changes and discoveries in their lifetime. (qtd. in Cousin 42)

Accordingly, when Churchill wrote this play in 1979, people already felt the sexual politics was very different from those conventional heterosexual and patriarchal perspectives that they were educated in their childhood. Heterotopia is like those women and gays & lesbians movements that force society to recognize their undeniable existence and their sexual desires. Physically, this heterotopia in the theatre is an illusion, but comparatively, for those who still deny seeing the changes in reality, the aggressive visibility of the homosexual and female sexuality in Act Two of *Cloud Nine* makes our real world more like an illusion.

On the other hand, like another function of Foucault’s Heterotopia, Act Two of *Cloud Nine* constructs a perfect space that mirrors the absence of other sexual identities in the patriarchal heterosexual society. Foucault notes, “This latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation” (27). Compared with the real world, this perfect illusion in Act Two of *Cloud Nine* mirrors the absence of

such free space for women and homosexuals to express their sexual identities and desire. In comparison with those suppressed in reality and in Act One of *Cloud Nine*, this perfect space in Act Two is a world of compensation for those oppressed in reality. Moreover, this ideal space in Act Two of *Cloud Nine* is a heterotopia, which mirrors the invisibility of the repressed sexual minorities in Act One of *Cloud Nine*. Obviously, Act Two is a perfect space compared with the patriarchal and heterosexual world in Act One. Most characters in Act One appears in Act Two, but they are very different from themselves in the previous act. Besides, Churchill's other dramatic strategies, such as the spatial and temporary ruptures make these two acts paradoxically similar, but also opposite to each other. Especially when two Bettys embrace with each other in the end of Act Two, it is obvious that the relation between these two acts is just like a mirror relation.

II. The Subversive Spatial Practice, Geography of Resistance and Heterotopia in *Top Girls*

Similar to *Cloud Nine*, Churchill's theatrical strategies in *Top Girls* are powerful spatial practices that subversively transform the public spaces as sites of resistances. One of the most significant theatrical strategies in this play is that all the characters are female and they are all played by women. Such absence of male characters in certain social space becomes Churchill's spatial practices that challenge the stereotypical impression and ideology about certain social spaces.

In Act Two of *Top Girls*, Churchill represents how women occupy and appropriate a typical public working space, an office in London city. There are multiple meanings in these spatial practices. Like what Affrica Taylor states, "The occupying of space is an assertion of power and continual displacement is power's

spatial effect“ (130). The most obvious and powerful spatial practice is to represent an office occupied by women and it clearly unearths men’s anxiety about the possible future that women might take over the male-dominated public space. The example in *Top Girls* is Howard Kidd, an absent male employee in the office. He doesn’t appear in the office because he is sick. Ironically, the cause of his sickness is a result of the frustration from learning that Marlene becomes his supervisor. Howard is too proud to bargain with Marlene. Instead of coming to argue with Marlene himself, he stays at home. The one who comes, however, is his wife, Mrs. Kidd. Therefore, Howard’s anxiety is expressed through his wife Mrs. Kidd’s presence. Mrs. Kidd says, “You mustn’t tell him I came. He’s very proud” (TG 59). Once he shows up, it will mean that he admits his failure. Therefore, Mrs. Kidd defends for her husband saying, “[...] what’s it going to do to him working for a woman? I think if it was a man he’d get over it as something normal” (TG 58). Apparently, Mrs. Kidd participates in the conspiracy to normalize her husband’s discrimination and bias against career women. Therefore, she blames Marlene: “It’s not that easy, a man of Howard’s age. You don’t care. I thought he was going too far but he’s right. You’re one of these ballbreakers / that’s what you are. You’ll end up miserable and lonely. You’re not natural” (TG 59). After women occupy the space that originally is privileged for men, men refuse to enter such space because entering such space is a kind of action to admit their weakness and humiliation. As a consequence, the office dominated by women is a spatial practice that not only challenges people’s typical impression, but also transforms itself into geography of resistance.

Just as the male dominated public space is transformed into a ground of resistance, the interviews in Act Two of *Top Girls* are spatial practices that appropriate male dominated office space into feminine space. In this feminine space, these women

who come to seek for jobs not only express their desire to change their lives, but also endeavor to break the limitation for women in the working field. All of these three women, Jeanine, Louise and Shona, come to look for chances to change their lives. In the first interview, Jeanine reveals her desire to travel and make more money, because her job as a secretary is not the one with prospects. She might stay in the same position for many years without any promotion, like her colleague Miss Lewis who “is secretary to the managing director and she’s been there forever” (TG 30). In the second interview, a handicap woman Louise has been very loyal to the one job, but she finds out the cruel reality that nobody really cares about her labor and talent in the work. She complains, “I feel I’m stuck there. I’ve spent twenty years in middle management. I’ve seen young men who I trained go on, in my own company or elsewhere, to higher things. Nobody notices me, I don’t expect it, I don’t attract attention by mistakes, everybody takes it for granted that my work is perfect. [...] They will see when I’ve gone what I was doing for them” (TG 52). Louise is similar to those traditional housewives who want to leave home sometimes because their hard work is not recognized by others. They hope that their departure could bring more respect and recognition from people around them in the future. Shona is a twenty-one-year-old young woman who seems to drive around to sell grocery. It is obvious that she lies to Nell about her working experience and professional certificates. However, she also feels stuck and her only choice is to fake her résumé to say that she is a twenty-nine-year-old woman with four years of working experiences.

Originally, this space of interviews is supposed to be potential for a feminine space where women can create their own communities and challenge the patriarchal authority. However, it is ironic to see that from the reactions of Marlene and Win, these clever women simply internalize the capital value system to judge women and

they do nothing to resist the patriarchal hegemony. For instance, in the first interview, Marlene suggests Jeanine to take off her ring because “there’s no need to mention it when you go for an interview” (TG 31). Her choices for Jeanine are to be the secretary to a male marketing manager of the lampshades or knitwear company. These choices are not with much prospect at all and it suggests that Marlene’s point of view is the same as those of the men who always ignore Jeanine’s working ability and request her to adapt to male expectations.

In the second interview, Louise is a forty-six years career woman who feels stuck because she has spent twenty years in middle management from the age of twenty-seven. She wants to quit this job without future perspectives because everyone in the office takes her perfect work for granted. However, Win tells Louise, “Let’s face it, vacancies are going to be ones where you’ll be in competition with young men. And there are companies that will value your experience enough you’ll be in with a chance. There are also fields that are easier for a woman, there is a cosmetic company here where your experience might be relevant” (TG 53). She doesn’t care about the mistreatments and ignorance that Louise experienced in the past. Furthermore, judging from men’s view on women, she indifferently suggests her to have an easier but superficial job in a cosmetic company. Just like Marlene, Win also regards Louise not as competent as men. None of these officers in Top Girls Employment could provide a good chance to these job seekers. Nor do they really care about these fellow sisters’ benefits at all. As what Paul Rosefeldt asserts, “the patriarchy can assure its ideological repression of women by turning them into doubles of the patriarchal oppressors” (128). The act of women occupying the male-dominated space is not simply equal to the absence of patriarchy; it also proves that everything is influenced by patriarchy everywhere.

From Foucault's perspective, Act Two of *Top Girls* is a significant heterotopia. On the one hand, the office space in Act Two without any male employees plays the same role as Foucault's heterotopia for its ability "to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled" (Foucault 27). Compared with the real world, the totally female dominated working space in Act Two is a perfect paradise because women there not only physically occupy this space, but also take over the control and power. However, the aggressive visibility in the theatre space ironically mirrors the invisibility of those women who can have no access to top jobs in the real working space. Like what Jasbir Jain describes, Marlene's office is a "limited space where competition and aggression and violation of territorial rights go hand in hand" (328). Although more and more women became part of the work force during the 1970s, the ironic part is that only those women who have few or no family responsibilities can achieve the same career success as Marlene. For instance, two other office ladies in Marlene's agency are also willing to forsake their responsibilities. The conversation between Nell and Win in *Top Girls* Employment Agency indicates that they choose to work and not to get married or raise children:

NELL. Derek asked me to marry him again.

WIN. He doesn't know when he's beaten.

NELL. I told him I'm not going to play house, not even in Ascot.

WIN. Mind you, you could play house.

NELL. If I choose to play house I would play house ace.

WIN. You could marry him and go on work.

NELL. I could go on work and not marry him. (*TG* 48)

Marlene herself is also a workaholic who "never talks about her family" (*TG* 66).

These successful career women earn the right to appear in the male dominated office space in terms of giving up family and marriage responsibilities in their lives.

Churchill also mentions in the interview with Kathleen Betsko and Rachel Koenig, “Though I remember before I wrote *Top Girls* thinking about women barristers – how they were in a minority and had to imitate men to succeed – and I was thinking of them as different from me” (76). This well-arranged space is like a mirror that faithfully reflects the absence of traditional domestic women in the working spaces, especially the one at the top positions.

On the other hand, compared with Act Three of *Top Girls*, Act Two of *Top Girl* is a heterotopia that also plays the role of compensation at the same time. From Angie’s point of view, Marlene’s office in Act Two is a perfect paradise. Compared with her life in the country with Joyce, the office space in Act Two makes up for all that she wants in her life, such as money and power. Angie reveals her admiration to Marlene after she has witnessed how Marlene deals with Mrs. Kidd in a tough way. She desperately wants to stay in this Top Girls Employment Company:

ANEGIE. I think you were wonderful.

MARELENE. I’ve got to go and do some work now.

ANGIE. You told her to piss off.

MARELENE. Will you come back later?

ANGIE. Can’t I stay here? (*TG* 59-60)

One year ago, Marlene ever visited Joyce and Angie. Since that day on, Angie has begun to plan her journey to leave home and visit Marlene in London. One can easily understand why Angie called that day “the best day of my whole life” (*TG* 56). This is because to Angie Marlene represents a possible future full of chances and power. However, the conversation between Marlene and Joyce in Joyce’s kitchen in Act

Three reflects the reality that Angie has no chance to enter the world depicted in Act Two:

MARLENE. If they're stupid or lazy or frightened, I'm not going to help them get a job, why should I?

JOYCE. How about Angie?

MARLENE. How about Angie?

JOYCE. She's stupid, lazy and frightened, so what about her? (TG 86)

This conversation between Joyce and Marlene about the future of Angie echoes what Marlene tells to Win, "She is not going to make it" (TG 66). Compared with Act Two, Act Three points to the absence of better future for those women without strong confidence, attractiveness and ambition, such as Angie. Therefore, in the end of the play, Angie comes back to the kitchen as if she just wakes up from a nightmare:

ANGIE. Frightening.

MARLENE. Did you have a bad dream? What happen in it? Well, you're awake now, aren't you pet?

ANGIE. Frightening. (TG 87)

If those Top Girls in reality are just like Marlene who believes in Thatcherism and has no contribution to helping other women, there is no possibility for Angie to enter the "perfect" world in Act Two. Like what Michael Swanson analyzes, Angie is a victim who is not only mistreated by Joyce, but also ignored by her real mother Marlene, who judges her abilities from the male standard (56). From this perspective, Act Two becomes the true nightmare and bleak future for Angie.

In conclusion, this chapter analyzes Churchill's subversive spatial practices in *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls*. Like what Weisman comments, "Doubtlessly, the appropriation of space is a political act" (1). Being a socialist feminist, Churchill's

theatrical strategies appropriate the original meaning of the social spaces and turn her theatre into a political action. In Act Two of *Cloud Nine*, the park becomes the stage for homosexuals and women to express their desire and to establish the visibility and normality in real society. In Act Two and Act Three of *Top Girls*, the representation of female dominated office is the geography of resistance, but Churchill also reminds us that if those men-like women physically occupy these male privileged spaces, it won't promise a better future for most women. The male dominated office space firstly becomes the object that women try to fight against and it is occupied by those ambitious and outstanding women. However, Churchill points out that there is the hidden danger for this ground of resistance to become the sites of oppression when those privileged women are internalized by the capitalistic values. Through these unique theatrical strategies and subversive spatial practices, she successfully produces the geography of resistance and heterotopia in both plays.