

Abstract

This thesis is to examine Caryl Churchill's subversive temporal and spatial devices on stage in *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls*. The chronotopes of the two plays articulate how people's states of beings interact with the external social and cultural conditions, especially during the 1980s in London. Both plays crystallize the space politics full of gender discriminations in the patriarchal society. In addition, Churchill's dramatic devices are the subversive spatial practice that transforms the gendered spaces into the sites of resistance in order to manifest her protest and seeks more possibilities for the gender roles in the future.

There are five chapters in this thesis. Chapter One is an introduction, including the overview of two plays and the review of numerous analyses in the past two and half decades. In Chapter Two, Churchill's theatrical temporal and spatial devices, including setting, synchronism, and anachronism in *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls* construct chronotopes that lay bare the special social and cultural condition in a certain historical moment. Those chronotopes demonstrate how Churchill unifies people's internal states of being and the external political structures together. Moreover, by presenting the chronotopes, Churchill criticizes the slowness of the progress in gender politics and the possible backlash about women's right in the 1980s.

In Chapter Three, I analyze how the spatiality of patriarchy constructed by the private-public dichotomy in both Act Ones of *Cloud Nine* and *Top Girls*. The spatial experiences between men and women depicted in Act One of *Cloud Nine* illustrate the stereotypical masculinity and femininity in the Victorian age. The spatial metaphors about movement in Act One of *Top Girls* expose the strict boundary between the private and the public spaces, and foreshadow the importance of mobility as being a possible strategy to transgress the boundaries.

Finally, Chapter Four is the analysis about how Churchill subversively and politically explores the possibility of creating new social spaces in the park space of *Cloud Nine* and the office space of *Top Girls*. Her theatrical strategies are potential spatial practices that create the rupture to transgress the unfair restrictions and discriminations in the patriarchal and heterosexual society. The final chapter concludes that Churchill's dramatic devices about time and space are the subversive strategies to conduct her observations and criticisms about the unfairness in society.