

# The Story of Wine: Writing Construction and Interpretation of Tavern Spaces

Liangfan Qian<sup>1</sup> Xue Chen<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Yunnan University, Kunming, Yunnan, China

<sup>2</sup>Tianjin University of Commerce, Tianjin, China

## Article Info

31 March 2025

## Keywords

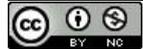
tavern space; wine; story; type scene

## Corresponding Author

Xue Chen

## Copyright 2025 by author(s)

This work is licensed under the  
CC BY NC 4.0



<https://doi.org/10.70693/itphss.v2i4.225>

## Abstract

The tavern space as a type of scene is widely present in literary works. Reviewing the writing of tavern space in the history of Western and Chinese literature, it is clear that it has undergone a transformation from overt storytelling narrative place - story occurrence place - story essence place - covert storytelling narrative place". The tavern space is constructed from a physical space centered on atmosphere and a spiritual cultural space centered on story". The carnival-like dissolution of life in tavern spaces, the foreign-related paralysis, and the reconstruction of hope make it an indispensable part of literary space. The "tavern space" in the annals of literature shines like a brilliant pearl, bearing the profound essence of human emotions and culture. From antiquity to the present, it has been not only a place for convivial drinking but also a haven for the soul and a vent for emotions. Here, the aroma of wine intermingles with the flavor of stories, creating a unique atmosphere where people find the essence of life amidst revelry and contemplation.

## 1. Introduction

Wine, as a beverage shared worldwide, exists widely in people's daily lives and literary works due to its uniqueness. The tavern space", as a place specifically for drinking, is also prevalent in literary writings throughout history and across cultures. From the literary writing of tavern spaces to characteristic studies and cultural interpretations, in fact, tavern space is an indispensable part of literary writing, characterized by both wildness and solitude; both liveliness and calmness; both absurdity and mystery, creating a dream-like atmosphere that captivates people from all eras and civilizations. As a type of space, the tavern space is irreplaceable and has played different roles in various periods.

The article delves into the multifaceted role of tavern spaces in literary works across different cultures and historical periods. It traces the evolution of tavern spaces from being overt storytelling venues to becoming covert narrative places, highlighting their transformation and significance in both Western and Chinese literature.

In Western literature, taverns initially served as gathering spots for storytelling, as seen in works

like Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. Over time, these spaces evolved into settings where stories unfolded, as depicted in Zola's *The Small Hotel* and Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*. By the 20th century, taverns became personal spaces for release and reflection, as exemplified by Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Kafka's *The Castle*.

In Chinese literature, taverns have a distinct trajectory. Early works like *The Plum in the Golden Vase* and *Water Margin* feature taverns as integral to the narrative, with characters like Li Xiaor and Lin Chong leaving lasting impressions. Modern and contemporary literature sees taverns influenced by Western concepts, transforming into bars that focus on individual experiences, as in Yu Dafu's and Lu Xun's works.

The construction of tavern spaces involves both physical and cultural elements. Physically, taverns are defined by their atmosphere, facilities, and staff. Culturally, they are centers for stories, which can be categorized into narrative stories, occurring stories, and the essence of stories. These stories are not just background but are central to the tavern's identity, providing a rich tapestry of human experiences.

The cultural interpretation of tavern spaces is equally complex. Taverns offer a space for the dissolution of everyday life, a place for the alienated to find temporary solace, and a venue for the reconstruction of hope through shared experiences and stories. This dual nature of taverns as spaces of both escape and connection is a recurring theme in literature.

The article concludes that tavern spaces, with their rich history and cultural significance, remain an indispensable part of literary narratives. They continue to be a fertile ground for exploring human emotions, social interactions, and the search for meaning in a complex world. This comprehensive analysis of tavern spaces provides valuable insights for scholars and readers interested in the intersection of literature, culture, and social spaces.

## 2. Literature Review

The representation of taverns in literature has long been a prism through which scholars examine cultural values, social dynamics, and human psychology. This review synthesizes key themes from existing research, highlighting the multifaceted roles of tavern spaces across literary traditions.

Alcohol and taverns often operate as dual symbols in literary texts. Smith (1985) identifies alcohol's transformative power in Shakespearean tragedies, where it serves as both a catalyst for moral collapse and a vehicle for transcendence. This duality aligns with Bakhtin's (1988) concept of carnivalization, where taverns become liminal spaces challenging societal norms through communal revelry. Brown (2003) extends this by analyzing Victorian novels, where shared drinks reinforce class rituals while also exposing underlying tensions, reflecting how taverns function as microcosms of broader social structures.

Thematic analysis reveals taverns as narrative engines. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (2010) uses intoxication to unravel character illusions, while Hemingway's expatriate bars in *The Sun Also Rises* (2019) symbolize post-war existential angst. These works illustrate alcohol's role in blurring reality and facilitating narrative revelations, as characters confront vulnerabilities under its influence. This narrative function deepens in modern contexts, where taverns increasingly reflect individual alienation. Carver's minimalist bars (White, 2015) and Kafka's surreal tavern in *The Castle* (2012) emphasize how drinking becomes a coping mechanism for rootless individuals, aligning with Böhme's (2018) "aesthetics of atmosphere" that links spatial design to emotional experience.

Cross-cultural perspectives reveal intriguing parallels. While Western taverns evolve from communal storytelling hubs to private retreats, Chinese literary taverns (e.g., *Water Margin*, *The Plum in the Golden Vase*) blend Confucian social rituals with Daoist transcendence (Ge, 2002). Modern Chinese works like Lu Xun's *Kong Yiji* (2005) mirror global trends, using taverns to critique societal fragmentation. These convergences suggest tavern spaces universally address human needs for connection and escape, even as cultural nuances shape their representations.

This synthesis underscores the enduring relevance of taverns as literary devices reflecting both continuity and change. Future research might explore intersections with digital spaces, where virtual taverns in fantasy literature (e.g., *Harry Potter*, *World of Warcraft*) redefine communal storytelling in the digital age, extending the legacy of these timeless spaces into new dimensions.

### 3. Writing of Tavern Spaces

Tavern”, inn”, bar and similar venues are gathering places that formed after the introduction of wine”, serving as fixed entertainment venues centered on the act of drinking, and endowing the places with more atmospheric meaning and economic value. In short, a tavern is a fixed place where people gather to drink.”

In literary works, the scene of a tavern appears frequently, and it can even be said that many classic events occur within taverns”. The tavern has become a type scene appearing in works from different countries, eras, and styles, leading to the emergence of different types of differentiation. Therefore, studying the tavern scene and defining its functions has become an inevitable topic in typology.

The tavern scene most commonly appears in novels, as they often use the tavern as a stage for events, allowing various action elements to operate according to their own logic and weave corresponding events.

In English, the term bar encompasses three words: Inn (a tavern or hotel that sells liquor), Tavern (a small inn that serves alcohol), and Alehouse (a beer house). These belong to the upper, middle, and lower classes, respectively, originating in ancient Greek and Roman times, the 12th century, and the 13th century. Indeed, the different types of taverns in Western and American literature correspond to these three states. In Western literature, a tavern originally served as a place for telling and listening to stories, where people could gather to hear tales. For instance, Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* (2014) unfolds its narrative within a tavern. In Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (2016) the traveling pilgrims gather more than once in a small tavern to share the stories they have heard, enjoying drinks after a day of weary travel while recounting the secrets of the world. In the second part of Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones* (2019), a Foundling, Jones seeks refuge in a small tavern, witnessing the secular life of the lower class represented by the tavern. Here, the tavern is referred to as either Inn or Tavern. As we enter the 19th century, the listeners in taverns gradually faded; it transformed from a place for telling and listening to stories into a place where stories happen. Zola's eighth part of *The Rougon-Macquart Cycle* series, *The Small Hotel* (2020), centers around a small hotel, depicting the struggles of the lower class. Simultaneously, there is extensive depiction of small taverns in Western literature: in Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (2015), Charles goes to a tavern for dinner; in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (2021), Raskolnikov frequently visits bars; in Hugo's *Les Misérables* (2015), Fantine moves through bars. At this time, the focus is primarily on Alehouse, with critical realism drawing attention back to the lower strata of reality, transforming the tavern into

a setting for stories rather than merely a narrative space. As we enter the 20th century, taverns breach the third wall, with many authors preferring to write in bars or cafes, such as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Camus, and Mahfouz. Under the Prohibition in America, Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1929) was inspired by Sloppy Joe's, an illegal bar. British poet Dylan Thomas famously collapsed outside a bar after overindulging at the White Horse Tavern, and his poems often reference alcohol and bars. The patriarch Ahmad in Mahfouz's Cairo Trilogy indulges in nightlife at bars. Clearly, modern authors of the 20th century viewed bars as venues for personal release, even transforming taverns into bars, stripping them of their lodging function and simplifying them to mere sites of communal revelry. Meanwhile, there's another aspect represented by today's light bars, which differ from the bustling bars. The core of a light bar lies in tranquility and solitude, allowing one to savor wine while extending personal sensory and life experiences. Such bars also appeared in the writings of 20th-century authors. Bunin's *The Water-Merchant* (1984) is a quiet and peaceful rural novel showcasing the fullness of life. Chandler's *The Long Goodbye* (1956) features the hardboiled detective Marlowe sipping drinks in bars. John McNulty's *This Tavern on Third Avenue* (2011) captures the diverse modern life of New York through a documentary lens. Kafka's *The Castle* (1925) portrays a quirky tavern where K falls in love with the tavern maid, expressing himself in an absurd setting. Regardless of the two different forms of taverns in 20th-century Western literature, they reveal a sense of disconnection from daily life, akin to Bakhtin's concept of carnivalesque."(2024) Whether it is a group's raucous celebration or an individual's chaotic solitude, it is distinctly different from ordinary life. The entire narrative of tavern spaces in the West revolves around people and stories, transitioning from telling and listening to stories to stories happening and ultimately to I am the story, echoing Western literary traditions.

In classical Chinese literature, tavern scenes appear repeatedly. In classical works, tavern is clearly derived from inn". Although the class attributes of the tavern itself may not differ significantly, endowing wine to the inn is undoubtedly a practice of shifting class focus downward. In essence, wine as a communicative tool carrying various cultural meanings, can appear extensively in inns rather than merely in banquets or aristocratic gatherings, representing a challenge. Thus, before the rise of secular literature, it is difficult to find the essence of wine in refined literature; rather, wine is widely present in the banquets of adding wine and lighting lamps to reopen the feast. Taverns appear in small numbers in Song dynasty short stories, but due to the format of talented scholars and beautiful women, they remain fixed above the notion of a banquet. In Yuan drama, taverns have already appeared on a large scale, such as in *Wang Can Ascends the Tower*, *Golden Phoenix Hairpin*, *Flowers of the Back Courtyard*, and *Combined Sweat Shirt* (1966), with the image of the shopkeeper already having its model and role. With the emergence of Ming and Qing novels, especially after the publication of *The Plum in the Golden Vase* (2020) and *Water Margin* (2018), secular culture rose significantly, allowing the writing of tavern spaces to develop. In *Water Margin*, the image of the shopkeeper is very vivid, with the most notable being Li Xiaor who Lin Chong meets, entering Chinese literary history with his clever and hardworking image; while Lin Chong walks slowly in the mountains, carrying a gourd of wine on the tip of his spear, with heavy snow falling behind him—this image has long been etched in the memory of the Chinese people. As for the wine shop in front of Jingyang Ridge, which early on waved the saying "Three bowls won't pass the ridge"(2018), it also became a backdrop in the story of Wu Song fighting the tiger. Therefore, the phrase "Cut two taels of cooked beef, warm half a jin of wine echoes throughout the book *Water Margin*". Aside from *Water Margin*, tavern scenes also appear in novels such as *Seven Heroes and Five Gallants* (1980),

*Three Words, Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (2022) shaping various images of taverns and shopkeepers, some cunning and slippery, some loyal and sincere, some extraordinarily clever, and some unremarkable. In the tavern, travelers and shopkeepers move toward unknown plots amid bursts of laughter and curses.

Entering modern literature, the status of taverns has been impacted by hotels and inns”, gradually transforming into the function of bars”, similar to Western taverns. During the transition between old and new cultures, taverns still occasionally appear in the works of writers. For example, Yu Dafu's novels often depict the image of expressing emotions through alcohol; the scenes in Lu Xun's *Kong Yiji* (2005) and *In the Wine Shop* are set in a tavern; there is also a small tavern in the commercial street of Mao Dun's *Lin Family Shop* (2017) ; the small tavern in Zhang Henshui's *Paper-Drunk and Gold-Dazzled* (2008) becomes a small building where Wei Ruibin reflects on fate. Meanwhile, Japanese authors also write about small tavern scenes, with descriptions of wine houses by Izumi Kyoka, Higuchi Ichiyo, and Kunitada Dokubo. Here, we can observe that the accommodation function of the tavern is hardly mentioned by writers anymore; instead, it is filled with a sense of self-numbing through alcohol.

In contemporary literature, the writing about taverns can be divided into two types. One type is the depiction of ancient taverns in retro fantasy novels. The most classic examples are Hong Kong martial arts novels, where Jin Yong, Gu Long, Liang Yusheng, and Wen Ruian often set their plots in taverns. In Gu Long's *Sentimental Swordsman, Ruthless Sord* (2013) and Li Xunhuan frequently battles enemies in taverns, often meeting new friends or foes there; even Li Xunhuan meets the most malicious character, Lin Xianer, in a tavern. Liang Yusheng's *Seven Swordsmen Leave Tianshan and Bride with White Hair* (2012), as well as Wen Ruian's *The Four Great Constables* series (2018), all feature rich tavern scenes. The most typical is Jin Yong; in *The Book and the Sword*, Li Ranchi's debut takes place in a tavern amidst a chaotic battle; in *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*, the Drunken Immortal Pavilion becomes a classic scene where the Seven Heroes of Jiangnan and Qiu Chuji gamble here about 18 years ago, and the disputes between the Seven Sons of Quanzhen and the Western Poison and Eastern Evil unfold here; in *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*, Qiao Feng and Duan Yu become sworn brothers in a tavern in Hangzhou; in *The Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, Hu Yidao and Miao Renfeng share mutual admiration in a tavern; in *The Smiling, Proud Wanderer*, Linghu Chong navigates through a tavern with Tian Boguan... Many classic martial arts scenes flow through taverns(2009). Not only in Chinese martial arts novels, but Western retro fantasy novels also abound with imaginations of ancient taverns. In works like Irving West's *The Virginian* (2010), the image of American cowboys is crafted, where cowboys drinking in taverns, even drinking milk, become classic plots, and even drawing guns at the slightest disagreement becomes an important aspect of the American Western spirit. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (2013) also features numerous tavern scenes, with strange drinks, quirky designs, and mysterious atmospheres becoming essential writing settings, leading to the continuous exploration of tavern scene values in many subsequent fantasy works, like J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* (2008), George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* (2013), and the *Witcher* and *World of Warcraft* game series... In retro fantasy novels, we can discover a more romantic side of taverns. The other type is the construction of contemporary bar scenes. In fact, driven by post-industrialization, human social division of labor has become increasingly clear, assembly line work has become more refined, and the trends of individualism and personalization are increasingly vigorous. The contemporary pursuit of excitement, pleasure, and life has made bars the absolute mainstream inherited from 20th-century literature. At the same time, this refinement has led

to a large-scale development of the narrative quality of bars”. Diana Setterfield’s *The Swan Inn* slowly (2021) tells a story relying on a 600-year-old tavern, returning to the act of storytelling itself; Richard Francis’s *The Old Spring Tavern* (2011) focuses on the modern significance of individual lives; and Tshering Rob writes about the strange lives in *The Robber’s Tavern* (2018) filled with the sweet aroma of barley wine ... In summary, the core of refined bar literature naturally focuses on individual lives and trajectories, paying more attention to telling and listening”. However, in front of more delicate services and more shy modern individuals, the days of sitting together in a tavern listening to stories are gone, replaced only by exchanges among a few people; the nature of gathering crowds has completely disappeared, just as modern residences resemble individual bird nests that lock away the fields where roosters and dogs can hear each other, and the stories here undergo a kind of reflexive narrative path.

The literary function of the pub space has undergone a developmental transformation from a place for telling and listening to stories, to a place where stories occur, to a place for 'my story', and to a place for secretly listening to storytelling. This involves a shift from a manifest narrative space to a story occurrence space, to a story essence space, and to a latent narrative space. Of course, the developmental conditions vary by country and region; for instance, classical Chinese works skip the phase of manifest narrative space. Moreover, these four stages are not absolute but represent a mainstream literary thread, where several stages often merge together. This refers to the integration of different stages within the same work, such as in Western cowboy stories, where it can serve as both a manifest narrative space and a story occurrence space; it also reflects the stage differences across different works of the same era, such as the distinctions between popular literature and pure literature in contemporary literature.

In short, the spatial writing of pubs is widespread and has undergone significant functional transformations, which cannot be separated from changes in real life and the development of the times. As a specific type of space, the pub has indeed become one of the topics in comparative literary typology.

## **4. The Construction of Pub Space**

Ultimately, every literary work is a structured whole that generally belongs to a certain literary type. Based on these different literary types, writers categorize their activities accordingly. Our comparative scholars are of course studying these types as well”. As a type of space, the pub naturally shares similar characteristics. The core feature of a space lies in its components and construction methods. The writing of pubs also has similar components and structures.

### **4.1. Atmosphere: The Component of Pub Space**

The content of the pub space consists of the atmosphere created by the wine, the pub facilities, the owners, and the staff. These elements collectively form the entire space of the pub. Within the pub space, the most important aspect is the story”, which fills the space based on its context.

#### **4.1.1 Wine**

Wine is the core of the tavern, and as mentioned earlier, attributing wine to inns gives rise to a form of tavern. The function of wine is quite special. Ge Jingchun emphasizes: The influence of wine on the creation of Tang poetry has two aspects: one is the material aspect of wine's physiological

effects on poets, and the other is the spiritual aspect of wine culture's psychological effects on poets. Not only Tang poetry but also for any creator and any character, wine provides different influences from both physiological and psychological aspects. Physiologically, wine brings a dreamy sensation, dulling the speed and sensitivity of nerve responses. Thus, in *The Canterbury Tales*, the journey of pilgrimage ends with wine”, reflecting a physiological ease. In modern society, Japanese white-collar workers conclude their day with beer and late-night snacks, providing both refreshment in the summer heat and a way to relieve stress, which is why the detail of beer bubbles is frequently seen in Japanese anime. Psychologically, wine carries a cultural temperament that drives individuals towards madness (Ge, 2002), a behavior resulting from chaotic nerve disruptions, allowing us to shed the shackles of life and reach another sky beyond the world of living. Of course, different civilizations and eras have varying cultures surrounding wine; the wine culture of ancient Greece and ancient China, as well as that of the 18th and 19th centuries, are different. However, in literature, the tavern space must inherently include wine”. Without wine”, it loses its spatial uniqueness and becomes merely a gathering place, losing the necessity for interpretation. It can be said that it is the romance of wine that endows the tavern with its uniqueness.

#### **4.1.2 Tavern Facilities**

The tavern facilities have different specific contents in various eras. Regarding accommodation, in ancient taverns, which were inns that integrated lodging and dining, rooms became essential, as seen in the fight between Li Ruanzhi and others in *The Book and the Sword*. Modern bars, however, have eliminated the lodging function and only provide drinks. In terms of dining, some taverns highlight snacks for pairing with drinks. In *Water Margin* there is only cooked beef”, while in *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*, Huang Rong's demands of the Zhangjiakou tavern are quite challenging:

Hey, buddy, first bring four dried fruits, four fresh fruits, two salty and sour dishes, and four candied fruits... Eight dishes include flower-cooked duck, fried duck paws, duck tongue soup, drunken deer tripe, mandarin duck fried beef tendons, chrysanthemum rabbit shreds, exploded deer legs, and vinegar sauce pig trotters (2009).

In modern taverns, there are rarely side dishes, and even if there are, they are just common snacks. The entertainment aspect has greatly strengthened. In Western American taverns, entertainment has become a necessity, with common casino facilities like rotating wheels and chips frequently appearing; the *Hearthstone* card battle in the *World of Warcraft* series takes place in taverns. In modern bars, music, drinking games, and even gambling has become standard features. In terms of service, the requirements for modern taverns are far greater than those of ancient ones; in ancient times, just having tables and chairs was enough, while modern ones require distinctive and comfortable furniture. In ancient times, any alcohol sufficed, with the highest demand being for good wine”, whereas modern establishments required various types of drinks, as well as ice, lemons, and other supplementary items.

Despite the significant differences in tavern facilities between ancient and modern times, how to fill these facilities and arrange the layout to fit the plot development has become a necessary lesson for writers and a major test in utilizing genre spaces to showcase the storyline.

#### **4.1.3 The Shopkeeper and Service Staff.**

While the shopkeeper may not always appear, the service staff certainly do, with the shop boy being the most common figure in ancient Chinese inns. In Yuan opera, they often appear as clean or

clownish characters, reciting entrance verses that mostly self-deprecate their goods or their profession. For instance, in *Wang Can Ascending the Tower*, the shop boy sings: In front of the inn, there's a three-foot cloth; people come and go seeking the host. A hundred jars of good wine are made, yet ninety-nine jars taste like vinegar.” (1966) Undoubtedly, this is filled with comedic effects, but it is also bittersweet. In fact, most service staff belong to the lower class, and Zola's *The Little Hotel* directly portrays the tragic lower-class characters. The tavern relies on such service staff for maintenance and service to continue operating. Essentially, the staff of small establishments carry a kind of tragic sentiment of the lower class, whether in taverns, tea houses, or post stations. In Jin Yong's *The Deer and the Cauldron*, after the chaos caused by Chen Shiba and Wei Xiaobo, only the waiter is left to clean up the mess; Lao She's *The Teahouse* has gone through many hardships and setbacks; Pushkin's *The Stationmaster* portrays the tragic fate of the first little person”.

In contemporary literature, the tragic service personnel have transformed; with the proliferation of individualism, it is not just the taverns themselves that have been liberated. Today's bartenders are characterized and elegant, and there are even bartenders who view mixology as an art. Individualization and refinement are once again showcased in modern times.

#### 4.1.4 Atmosphere

German aesthetician Gernot Böhme proposed Aesthetics of Atmosphere Atmosphere”(2018), as a meteorological concept, was initially applied to the atmosphere. Böhme, based on the concept of ecological natural aesthetics”, proposed that perception fundamentally is the way a person bodily engages with something or someone, or the way one is situated in a particular environment. The first object of perception is the atmosphere. In fact, this reflects a modern sensibility shift based on the aesthetics of interior space.

Within the tavern”, an atmosphere naturally emerges, guiding customers toward a sensuous aesthetic experience. In other words, the characters are not just drinking; they are absorbing the intoxicating atmosphere of drinking, feeling the frenzy, and enjoying the emotions like joy, sadness, and loneliness alongside other characters and their stories. The elements of the tavern's atmosphere come from the first three.

It is worth mentioning that the tavern”, as a type of scene, differentiates into various types and styles due to its distinct atmospheres. After the author's crafting, the different atmospheres have given each tavern its unique style, so much so that when we mention a specific tavern, we can envision its particular setting.

Of course, it can be said that the wine, tavern facilities, shopkeepers, and service staff are meant to create the atmosphere of the tavern, and this atmosphere is laid out for the sake of the 'story’.

#### 4.2 Story: The Way the Tavern Space Is Structured

The classification of tavern space can be divided into physical space and spiritual cultural space from a qualitative perspective. Atmosphere becomes the way the physical space of the tavern is composed, while story becomes the way the spiritual cultural space of the tavern is composed. If no events occur and no generation in the sense of narrative happens, then the tavern is simply a place, no different from any other place. However, in literary writing, the most important aspect of tavern space is its stories with different dimensions. The author believes that the story of a particular scene can be divided into three types: narrative story, occurring story, and the essence of the story.

The narrative content of the story narration refers to events happening outside the current tavern

space. For example, in *The Return of the Condor Heroes* (2009), Guo Xiang is trapped in a small tavern at Fenglingdu with Guo Fu due to snow and wind, and everyone gathers around the stove to start telling stories. The story about 'The Condor Hero' does not occur within this tavern at the moment but happened in other places in the past, thus belonging to story narration.

The narrative content of story occurrence refers to events happening within the current tavern space. For example, in *The Legend of the Condor Heroes* (Jin, 2009), the Seven Masters of Quanzhen, Huang Yaoshi, Ke Zhen'e, Guo Jing, and Ouyang Feng, along with King Jin and his henchmen, engage in a struggle in the Zui Xian Lou tavern, including Ouyang Feng using smoke and snakes to force them out of the tavern. This plot belongs to the events occurring within the tavern at this moment.

The narrative content of the story essence is limited to drinking, with almost no other events occurring; however, the act of drinking is undoubtedly the focal point of the story. For example, in Yu Dafu's *Sinking* (2000), the protagonist simply goes to a small tavern to drink without any obvious events occurring. Yu Dafu uses this as a representation of the marginal figure, expressing his distress and troubles to the reader through the 'wine'.

Of course, merely narrating the essence is still insufficient. Contemporary literature has a tendency to return to storytelling, but this tendency gradually manifests on the side of the narrator or the audience, often presenting the story through psychological representation, which is known as implicit storytelling. The model of numerous listeners and narrators represents explicit storytelling. Although implicit storytelling does not involve the act of narration from the narrator's perspective, in the eyes of the potential audience, namely the readers, the narrator has indeed performed the act of narration.

Although the ways of unfolding the three types of stories are not the same, in specific texts, they often represent a comprehensive expression of multiple types of stories. As previously mentioned, while the three types of storytelling dominate at different stages, in specific texts, they intertwine and play a role in the narrative, which is built upon the spiritual and cultural space constructed by 'stories'.

### **4.3 The Symbiosis of Atmosphere and Story: Interactive Mechanisms and the Deepening of Genre Scenes**

The uniqueness of tavern space stems from the dynamic symbiosis between "atmosphere" and "story". The two do not exist in isolation, but through the interpenetration of sensory stimulation in the physical space and narrative construction in the mental space, they jointly shape the literary function of the genre scene. Taking Bakhtin's theory of "carnivalization" as a framework, we can further analyze the interaction mechanism between the two: the 'carnivalized' atmosphere of the tavern provides the soil for the generation of the story by breaking the daily order; and the story reinforces the subversive nature of the atmosphere through the specific plot to form a "disintegration-restructuring" relationship between the two. The story reinforces the subversive nature of the atmosphere through specific episodes, forming a cycle of "disintegration-reconstruction".

#### **4.3.1 Carnivalized Narrative Practice: The Dissolution of Hierarchies from The Canterbury Tales to The Water Margin**

In the literary landscape of *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Water Margin*, the tavern space becomes a unique field for dissolving social hierarchies and reconstructing the cultural order through the

narrative practice of carnivalization. During the journey of Chaucer's pilgrims from London to Canterbury, the tavern is not only a resting place, but also a temporary “anti-structural space” where the majesty of knights, the holiness of nuns, and the shrewdness of merchants are dismantled one by one by the ecstasy of alcohol and the freedom of narrative. The majesty of knights, the sanctity of nuns, and the shrewdness of merchants are dismantled by the ecstasy of alcohol and the freedom of narrative. When the miller teases the carpenter's stupidity with vulgar “dirty stories,” and when the Bass woman challenges male morality with bold sexual declarations, the clamor and the smell of alcohol in the tavern seem to provide immunity for the transgression of language. What Bakhtin calls “orgiastic disintegration” is here symbolized by physical indulgence (drunkenness, laughter, physical collision) and narrative transgression (dirty jokes, satire, anti-clerical discourse), and the strict hierarchy of official culture is replaced by the folk culture of jokes and banter in a kind of “upside down world”: the prayers of the nuns are replaced by the prayers of the carpenters. "Nuns' prayers are drowned out by miller's tales of debauchery, and knights' honor is deconstructed by merchants' mercenary calculations. This subversion is not accidental, but an essential property of the tavern space - it provides an outlet for the release of repressed folk voices through the cacophony of the physical environment (the clinking of glasses, the shouting of drunks, the crackling of the fire) and the relaxation of the spiritual atmosphere (the anesthesia of alcohol, the shelter of the night, the transience of the journey). As Bakhtin emphasizes, the “laughter” of the carnival has the power to “degrade, secularize, and carnalize,” and it is through the ‘degradation’ of the sublime (e.g., the parody of chivalry) and the “parody of chivalry” that the tavern's storytelling becomes a source of release for repressed folk voices. It is by “downgrading” the sublime (such as the parody of chivalry) and “elevating” the vulgar (such as the frankness of marketplace desires) that the storytelling in the tavern accomplishes the temporary dissolution of the hierarchical order.

In the Oriental context, the "Three drinks at this inn, and you'll never cross the ridge." restaurant in *Water Margin* has interpreted the local logic of revelry in another way. Wu Sung's feat of fighting a tiger with his bare hands after drinking eighteen bowls of wine is ostensibly a physical conquest of the “power of wine,” but in fact it implies a mockery of the authority of the government - the warning on the flag, “Three bowls of wine, but no post,” was meant to be a regulation for pedestrians. The warning of “three bowls but no post” on the wine flag is a regulation for pedestrians, but it is completely subverted by Wusong's boozing and tiger-fighting behavior. The Jianghu style of “eating meat and drinking wine in large bowls” in the tavern is in sharp contrast to the official culture of Gao Ziang and Cai Jing, which is characterized by the bureaucratic red tape of the powerful and noble class. The scene of Lin Chong drinking alone in the tavern before he went to Liangshan in the snowy night is more symbolic: in the snow and wind, a pot of cold wine, a spear, individual humiliation (framed by Gao Yannei) and collective anger (the ambush of the Liangshan Gathering) are quietly intertwined under the catalytic effect of alcohol. Here “wine” is no longer just a pastime, but the fuel of “righteousness” - it sublimates personal hatred into the righteousness of acting on behalf of heaven, and transforms individual tragedy (Lin Chong's stoicism) into group resistance (Liang Shan's assembly of heroes). The transformation of the “spirit of the god of wine” in the Oriental narrative, as pointed out by Lee Ou-fan, is revealed here: unlike the comedy of carnal indulgence in the Western carnival culture, the carnivalization of *Water Margin* tends to be more of a “tragic outburst”, with drunkenness in the tavern being a manifestation of heroism (e.g. Lu Zhiqi's) and a manifestation of his heroic spirit (e.g. Lu Zhiqi). The drunkenness in the tavern is not only the manifestation of heroism (such as Lu

Zhishen's drunkenness in beating the door of the mountain), but also the pathos of having no place to put under the oppression of the system (such as Song Jiang's antiphonal poem in Xunyang Building). This narrative strategy of “seeing the truth in drunkenness” makes the tavern a gray area where folk ethics and official laws meet - where alcohol blurs the line between legal and illegal, and the story completes the secret rebellion against the orthodox values by means of drunken words and phrases.

### 4.3.2 The Alienation of Modern Bars: From Collective Carnival to Individual Introspection

In Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*, the difference in the functions of tavern spaces maps out the profound shift from collective carousing to individual introspection in the twentieth-century society. The hustle and bustle of Parisian bars in Hemingway's novel epitomizes the spirit of the “lost generation” after World War I. Jack and his friends drink and talk about fights in the smoky “Dingo's Bar” or “Café Séléicité”, which are also known as “Café Séléicité”. Jack and his friends in the smoky “Dingo Bar” or “Café Sellecket” drink heavily, talk about bullfighting, and become entangled in confusing emotional relationships, ostensibly continuing the traditional tavern's carnivalesque grouping characteristics - the sound of clinking glasses, unrestrained laughter, and the intimacy of physical contact, constituting a kind of false community. However, this collectivity has long since been hollowed out by the trauma of war. Alcohol ceased to be a medium for connecting the group and became a tool for paralyzing memory. As Malcolm Cowley puts it in *The Return of the Exiles*, the post-war generation “used Parisian bars as mobile sanctuaries, pouring whiskey and champagne to create a transparent wall of isolation from reality”. The love triangle between Brett and Cohen, the self-deprecation of Mike's bankruptcy, and the metaphor of Jack's sexual impotence all expose the spiritual wasteland beneath the surface of the revelry. The more intense the clamor of the pub, the deeper the loneliness of the characters - when Jack sits alone at the bar late at night, staring at the remnants of the wine in his glass, the collective mask of revelry suddenly falls off, revealing the essence of the post-war generation of the “hollow people”: what they fill with alcohol and clamor is nothing more than a “myth without substance”, a “myth without substance”. What they filled with alcohol and noise was nothing but a “myth without substance” (T.S. Eliot).

In Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*, the tavern completely loses its social trappings and is transformed into a “psychological mirror” that reflects individual loneliness. Amelieu, the pub where Watanabe and Naoko meet, is deliberately stripped of the hustle and bustle of a traditional izakaya: the low-hanging warm yellow light filters out the outside world's noise, the piano music of jazz musician Bill Evans floats in the air like a mist, and the intimate booth design wraps the interlocutors in a cocoon of isolation. Here, drinking is no longer a group ritual, but a medium for individuals to confront themselves. Naoko's fear of death and Watanabe's confusion about growing up slowly seep out of the whiskey glass as the water condenses on the wall - each sip is like swallowing an unspoken secret. Haruki Murakami reveals the dilemma of “atomization” of human relationships in the post-industrial era through the “de-socialized” space of the tavern: when the Edo period izakaya scene of craftsmen drinking around the fireplace and sharing stories of the city has been replaced by the convenience store and vending machine, the modern man can only live in the isolated island of the bar. The modern man can only chew on his private traumas in the isolation of the bar. Kenichi Sato points out in *Urban Solitude and Modernity* that the essence of this “introspective drinking” is “the disconnection of the self from the other,” and that the pub has degenerated from a

“microcosm of society” to a “projector of the self,” and that the pub has become a “microcosm of society” and a “projector of the self. The tavern degenerates from a “microcosm of society” to a “projector of the self”-Naoko's talk of death, Watanabe's memories of Kizuki, and Midori's father's silence before his death become the silent cracks spreading on the tavern's walls, and ultimately point to the spiritual abyss that modern people can't share. The difference between the two is not only a contrast of literary styles, but also a specimen of the spiritual symptoms of the two eras: in Hemingway's bar, the remnants of collective revelry are still struggling, trying to resist nothingness with the temperature of the group; while in Murakami's tavern, even this struggle has cooled down, and the only thing that is left is the soft sound of ice cubes melting in the cups, which proclaims the individual's complete estrangement from the world.

### **4.3.3. Spatial Dialectics of Atmosphere and Narrative: From Sensory Experience to Meaning Production**

In the spatial dialectics of the tavern, the intertwining of material design and sensory experience has become the core mechanism of narrative meaning production. In the spatial dialectic of the tavern, the interweaving of material design and sensory experience becomes the central mechanism for the production of narrative meaning. The open wooden tables and high beams of the traditional inn-type tavern are not only physical features of the architectural structure, but also catalysts for the group narrative. The round table in the Green Dragon Tavern in *The Lord of the Rings* acts as a narrative magnet, drawing Frodo, Gandalf and the eager Hobbits into the same magnetic field of the story - the smoke rising from Gandalf's pipe as he lights it outlines the shadows of Mordor in the candlelight; The clinking of beer mugs and the rough melody of Dwarven songs put a seemingly casual disguise on the plot to destroy the Lord of the Rings. The transparency of the open space is transformed into narrative tension: every whisper may be inadvertently captured by the drunken man at the neighboring table, and every meeting of eyes may trigger a new alliance or betrayal. This spatial characteristic is in line with Edward Sawyer's theoretical presupposition of the “third space”: the tavern, as a place that is “both real and imagined”, and the wear and tear marks on its wooden benches, are not only the evidence of the friction between the bodies of countless travelers, but also a breeding ground for adventure stories. When the public nature of the physical space (shared tables, open fires) collides with the private nature of the psychological space (intrigue, love, hatred), the narrative acquires a unique ability to proliferate - just as Bilbo Baggins overheard a few words in the Green Dragon Tavern, which ultimately evolved into an epic poem that traveled across the continent of Middle-earth.

And the modern bar, with its booths and private compartments, reconfigures the grammar of narrative through the division of space. The leather booths of the Dancer's Bar in Raymond Chandler's *The Long Goodbye* are like miniature theater boxes, cutting Marlowe's conversations with various characters into isolated one-act plays. The low ceilings and dark red lighting compress the exchanges into whispers, and the lipstick on the rim of the whiskey glass seals the secret exchanges. This design forces the narrative to shift from a “group chorus” to a “double monologue” - as Marlowe and Terry Lennox drink in the shadows of the booth, each tentative question is like a dagger stabbing into the velvet curtain. Each probing question is like a dagger piercing the velvet curtain, and the cramped space amplifies the game of lies and truth. The “spatial triadic dialectic” emphasized by Sawyer is revealed here: the materiality of the tavern (the touch of leather, the burning sensation of whiskey) and the spirituality (doubt, loneliness, the desire for salvation) react

chemically through the presence of the body, generating the “third meaning” that transcends physical boundaries. ". This kind of spatial narratology reaches its extreme in Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*: every display in the old bar in Istanbul (hairbrush, cigarette butts, salt shakers) becomes an archaeological layer of memory, and the triviality of materiality and the grandeur of emotion reach an eerie reconciliation in a glass of wine.

The weaving of soundscapes further deepens the layers of spatial narrative. In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald casts the syncopation of 1920s New York bar jazz and the clinking of champagne glasses as the aural totem of the “Hustle and Bustle Era” - the glissando of the saxophone fluctuates like the curve of the stock market, and the dense frequency of the clinking sounds is a metaphor for the wealth of the world. The dense frequency of the clinking of glasses is a metaphor for the expansion and bursting of the wealth bubble. This orgy of sound is not mere background noise, but an invisible driver of the narrative: when Gatsby raises his glass at the bar, the distant melody of *Rhapsody in Blue* masks the trembling of his vocal cords, and the gorgeous weave of the music forms a piercing counterpoint to the barrenness of his heart. In contrast, the tavern in Kafka's *The Castle* creates a sense of narrative suspension with its paucity of sound - what K encounters in the Prague-style tavern is the occasional popping of the fireplace woodstove and the sudden ringing of the church bells. This fractured soundscape acts as a narrative hiatus: each ring of the bells is like a roll of the dice from God, interrupting K's conversation with the villagers and throwing him back into the chaos of the bureaucratic maze. What French sound theorist Michel Chion called “auditory perspective” is here reversed: the sound in the tavern is no longer an appendage of the environment, but a measure of the depth of human nature - in the silence of *The Castle*, the sound of K's laryngeal knots as he swallows his beer is infinitely amplified, exposing the depth of the individual in his own skin. is infinitely amplified, exposing the individual's physiological fear of being crushed by the system.

From the collective resonance of the wooden tables to the secret dealings in the shadows of the booths, from the clamor of jazz to the piercing of bells, the sensory experience of the tavern space is always in a hidden tug-of-war with the narrative. The angle at which each glass is placed, the refracted path of each ray of light, and the vibration frequency of each sound wave are all quietly reshaping the meaning of the story. When Hemingway described the “nothingness” of the Midnight Café in *A Clean and Bright Place*, the clinking of empty wine bottles and the buzzing of electric filaments had already poured the absurdity of existentialism into every fissure of the space - the café thus transcends the function of a scene and becomes an ontological device for narrative. The tavern thus transcends the function of scene and becomes an ontological device for narrative.

## 5. Cultural Interpretation of Tavern Space

The tavern space is undoubtedly special, and its formation is certainly not coincidental; rather, it is based on its internal operational logic. The 'tavern space' maintains a unique position in the literary world through its carnival-like dissolution of life, foreign-style paralysis, and hope reconstruction, resembling a small boat on a void lake, steadfast yet precariously navigating the shores of life.

### 5.1. The Dissolution of Carnivalized Life

Bakhtin's theory of carnival provides a deep philosophical foundation for the interpretation of tavern space. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, he emphasizes that "the life of the carnival is a life out of the ordinary, in a way a 'turned life' 'a life in reverse.'" The essence of this “life in reverse” lies in the subversion of hierarchy - in Carnival, "everything that is sacralized, programmed, and ossified by the hierarchical worldview is shattered and replaced by a dynamic, polyphonic, contradictory feelings of the world." Group drinking in taverns is a miniature practice of this

“carnavalesque life”: when people raise their glasses and drink together, alcohol not only paralyzes the nerves, but also loosens the shackles of identity in the daily order. As Bakhtin puts it: “In the square of the Carnival, in the temporary abolition of all hierarchical differences and barriers between people ..... there is a special kind of ideal and realistic interaction between people that is impossible in ordinary life.” The essence of this kind of interaction is the same in the snowy night drinking of Lin Chong in *Water Margin* and the pilgrims' clamor in *Canterbury Tales* - whether it's the fast and furious martial arts of the Orient or the meat and giggles of the Middle Ages in the Occident, the tavern has become a place where “official culture” and “folk culture” can meet. The tavern has become a battleground between “official culture” and “folk culture”.

The fable in *Zhuangzi · Qiwulun*, “Whoever dreams of drinking wine, hunts in the field; whoever dreams of hunting in the field, cries in the field”, is exactly the same as Bakhtin's theory of revelry to form a cross-temporal dialog. Zhuangzi's “weeping” does not originate from the absurdity of the dream, but is rooted in the fundamental doubt of the reality after awakening - when the individual realizes that the pleasure of “drinking” and the “hunting” are not the same as the ‘drinking’ and the “hunting”, the individual will not be able to enjoy himself or herself. When the individual realizes that the pleasure of “drinking” and the passion of “hunting” are but illusory bubbles, the certainty of daily life collapses. This skepticism is collectively redeemed in the tavern: just as Guo Xiang's “appearance of the divine warrior appeared uncontrollably in her mind” when she heard of his exploits in the Fenglingdu tavern, her imagination not only yearns for the legend of the warrior, but also reconstructs the meaning of her own existence through the narratives of others. Bakhtin points out that an ecstatic worldview “is not abstract thought, but concrete, sensual ‘thought,’ ‘thought’ that is thought and experienced with the whole flesh, with the whole senses”. The drunken narrative in the tavern is precisely the materialization of this “carnal thought”-when Guo Xiang is piecing together Yang's image in the narratives of the crowd, she is actually using her senses to reconstruct an “orgy-ized second world” that is more real than reality, a world in which the “carnalized second world” is more real than reality. “In this world, she temporarily breaks free from Guo Fu's shadow and her parents' expectations, and transgresses the boundaries of the self by ”drinking stories.

The nocturnal nature of the tavern further strengthens its qualities as a “carnival space-time body”. Bakhtin once described the “temporal specificity” of the carnival: it is “not natural time, nor labor time, but the ‘threshold time’ when human beings are temporarily free from social constraints”. This echoes the opening hours of the tavern - the pilgrims of the *Canterbury Tales* trudge along the canonical pilgrimage route by day, but at night they playfully deconstruct the authority of the Church in the tavern; the modern urbanite is trapped in the Weberian “iron cage of reason” during the day, and at night he is in the “iron cage of rationality,” and at night he is in the “iron cage of reason,” and at night he is in the “iron cage of rationality. During the day, modern urbanites are trapped in the Weberian “iron cage of reason”, but at night they are catalyzed by alcohol and practice Nietzsche's “spirit of the god of wine” in the pubs. This dichotomy between day and night is presented in Bakhtin's theoretical framework as a tug-of-war between the “official time” and the “carnival time”: the orderly existence in the daytime requires Apollonian rational restraint, while the nighttime tavern revelry unleashes the Dionysus-style instincts of life. instincts. As he points out in his analysis of Rabelais: “In the image of the carnival diet, the material-physical element appears in a highly exaggerated form ..... The image of devouring the world, of digesting it, acquires a cosmic scale.” The resonance of spirits and electronic music in modern bars is a contemporary variation of this “carnal devouring of the world” - when the low-frequency vibrations of the DJ booth and the burning sensation of tequila are applied to the writhing bodies on the dance floor, the individual, through the extreme experience of the senses, briefly realizes a symbol of the alienated reality. The individual, through the extreme experience of the senses, achieves a symbolic devouring of the alienated reality.

## 5.2 The Paralysis of Alienation.

If we say that the core function of alcohol lies in dissolving the everyday and achieving revelry, then it seems that one can achieve this effect without a tavern, using parties, banquets, and family dinners instead. However, what the tavern aims to dissolve is not just the routine of daily life, nor just the ordinary fatigue and toil. More importantly, it addresses the sorrow of the foreigner;” (2014) in the tavern, travelers rely on the numbness of alcohol to alleviate the loneliness of being alone in a foreign land as a stranger” (1997).

As mentioned earlier, in ancient taverns, they often simultaneously served the function of an inn, which can frequently be found in classical works. The background in *Wang Can Ascending the Tower* shows Wang Can far away in a foreign land, expressing his feelings as he climbs: The plain stretches far, and my gaze reaches; the Jing Mountains hide the high peak.”(Zheng Guangzu,1966) In *The Adventures of Tom Jones*(2019), Jones inevitably longs for home, for Sophia, for his uncle; Huang Rong, accompanied by Guo Jing, weeps in distress after ordering many delicacies, due to her longing for her father after running away from home.

Entering contemporary times, there seems to be no connection between taverns and the theme of leaving home”; taverns have become an important part of urban life. However, at this point, the barrier between people is like a sad thick wall. Individual lives face greater challenges of loneliness. The Austrian poet Trakl has a line: The soul, a stranger on earth”(Georg Trakl,2014); at this moment, the individual has become a lonely soul, estranged from the world. It is difficult for the soul to find a home or refuge between heaven and earth, and the increasingly exhausting modern life causes everyone to escape from their essence as a human being, becoming strangers struggling on the line of survival.

In this context, discussing the tavern becomes a form of self-numbing for the strangers. The strangers need a place, a space that can accommodate them, to alleviate their inner emotions as they move towards desolation. The tavern embraces us, and alcohol acts as an acute painkiller that numbs us; at least in those dreamy moments, we do not feel lonely. We may be passionate about the dance floor, or perhaps we might return to the past at the bar.

However, in essence, the tavern”, especially the modern tavern”, pulls us further away with an industrial means, causing the soul to drift even further on the earth. Because, compared to ancient societies that could rely on stories for imagination, modern people only treat stories as stories, even though they are experiencing the stories themselves. After the revelry in the tavern”, confusion deepens.

### **5.3 The Reconstruction of Hope Through Drunken Words**

The wanderers who experienced a sorrowful revelry in the tavern may not realize that the solution to their problems lies within the tavern, within wine”, and within the essence of the wanderers own stories.

In *Zhuangzi: Parables* (2020), it mentions: Drunken words rise with the sun, harmonizing with the heavenly seams, flowing freely, extending throughout the year. The term zhi refers to a wine vessel, and 'drunken words' denote the ramblings after drinking, describing Zhuangzi's nonsensical remarks. Mǎn yǎn means unsteady flow, wandering freely, and qióng nián refers to the end of one's life. This sentence means: Unintentional words emerge endlessly, conforming to the boundaries of nature, drifting and wandering throughout life. Cheng Xuan ying's commentary explains: When the vessel is full, it spills; when empty, it tips upward, the empty and full defer to things, tipping and rising according to people. This refers to the aimless language that emerges after drunkenness, lacking a fixed purpose and intention, nonsensical, illogical, and irrational.

In fact, this type of drunken words coincides with the stories in the tavern, blending narrative, occurrence, and the essence of the story. At this moment, as well as the past and future, all events in 'narrative discourse' seemingly become purposeless speech, and within these languages, humanity strolls towards the future. The language after drinking must arise within the tavern, for it possesses

that surreal atmosphere and all-encompassing stories. Only in the tavern's environment can the wanderers shed their disguises, abandon reason, and embrace a sensibility that leads to their purposeful existence, namely, their essence of being here". The literary space desired in the tavern is, in fact, a fantasy space constructed through drunken words, relying on collective revelry to create a small society where we can better perceive complex human interactions and resilient humanity.

Therefore, the carnival-like life dissolution of the bar space, the alien-like paradox paralysis, and the hope reconstruction of drunken speech make it an indispensable part of the literary space. In fact, Long Diyong (2018) believes that the concept of 'theme' (topic) is developed from the concept of 'place' (tops). The works related to the bar scene also carry a hint of collective revelry, a touch of alien nostalgia, and a few strands of drunken speech calling.

## **6. Aftermath: Cyber Tavern: Virtual Reconfiguration of Postmodern Space and the Anxiety of Authenticity**

In William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, the virtual bar "Night City" subverts the physical logic of the traditional tavern with its cold data texture. When Keith dives into Cyberspace via a brain-computer interface, his senses no longer receive the touch of the wooden bar or the burn of the whiskey, but rather the "pulse of neon code" and the "vertigo of holographic projections. -Alcohol is replaced with a stream of data that mimics the release of dopamine, and the ritual of raising a glass is reduced to an exchange of information between incarnations. Jodie Foster pointed out sharply in *Tavern Spaces in Posthuman Narratives* that such "dematerialized" revelry is essentially a kind of "collective hallucination": when the physical body is stripped down to redundant hardware, the indulgence of consciousness in the virtual tavern is nothing more than an algorithmic, carefully designed emotional package. The rules of anonymized communication allow each individual to be anonymized and to be able to communicate with others. The anonymizing rules of communication make each incarnation a fluid symbol, and the "stories" talked about at the bar can be the criminal plans of hackers for hire, or fragments of forged memories - like Gibson's artificial intelligence! "Winter Silence, as a bartender, wanders through the labyrinth of data, mixing human desires and fears with the precision of a cocktail recipe. The paradox of the virtual tavern is that it inherits the traditional tavern's function as a "story exchange" while technologically dismantling the story's roots of authenticity: when a cyberpunk brags about hacking into Tokyo's power grid, the listener has no way of telling if it's a true crime story or a paid-for crime story. This is a true crime story or a paid subscription narrative plug-in.

Neal Stephenson takes this anxiety of authenticity to the extreme in *Snow Crash*. "The Black Sun bar in the Metaverse is no longer content to serve virtual alcohol, but to reconfigure the space as a battleground for capital and code. Hackers are not trading intelligence or weapons here, but "virtual drugs" - a kind of encryption program that can tamper with sensory protocols. Customers who drink this "digital tequila" briefly gain firewall vision or a neural interface that enhances arithmetic, but only at the cost of opening up permanent access to cortical data to back-end systems. Stephenson uses this as a metaphor for a new kind of exploitation in postmodern society: as the social function of the pub is co-opted by platform capital, every virtual binge becomes a ritual harvesting of user data. The neon slogan "Drink the future, spit out the past" bouncing on the wall of the bar is like a delirious declaration of techno-utopians - it tempts individuals to exchange their memories and privacy for instantaneous transcendental experiences, and ultimately alienates "drinking" into a self-exploitative experience. It seduces individuals to exchange memory and privacy for instantaneous transcendental experiences, ultimately alienating "drinking" into a digital sacrifice of self-cancellation.

This alienation is made fleshier in *Cyberpunk 2077's* "Afterlife Bar". When the player orders under the moniker "Johnny Silverhand," he or she receives not only a cocktail bearing the name of the legendary rock star, but also a collective memory that has been commodified - a glass of liquid

nitrogen fumes and synthetic adrenaline that mimics the adrenaline that burned when Johnny rebelled against corporate tyranny. adrenaline that burned when Johnny rebelled against corporate tyranny. However, the essence of this symbolic consumption is the vacuum-packaging of memories: each name on the list corresponds to a myth of resistance that has been co-opted by capital, like an expired dream chip frozen in a freezer in the basement of a bar. In the side quest “The Beast in the Heart”, bartender Claire's revenge narrative exposes the emotional poverty of cyberspace: the duel she plans for her late husband is just a plot script nested in code; when the player chooses to fight violence or deal with it coldly, both endings point to the same kind of futility - whether it's killing the enemy or turning the tables on him, the player is left with no choice but to kill the enemy. -whether it's killing the enemy or turning away, Claire's pathos has been pre-written as a downloadable emotional module. This echoes Baudrillard's warning in *Mimesis and Simulacra*: when the boundary between the real and the virtual collapses, the tavern is no longer an imitation of reality, but a model room for the “hyperreal”. Under the scarlet light of the Afterlife, the degree of prosthetic modifications (e.g., mechanical eyes, subcutaneous armor) of each character and their social credit scores form a cruel irony: the more one pursues to “strengthen” the physical body, the more one highlights the mutilation of the soul; the more one indulges in socializing in virtual pubs, the more one reveals the loneliness of one's existence. The more one seeks to “strengthen” the body, the more one's soul is crippled.

These literary and media reproductions of the cyber tavern together outline a spiritual picture of postmodern society: in the orgy of data flow, human beings are “downgrading” in the name of “upgrading”. When the temperature of flesh and blood catalyzed by alcohol in traditional pubs is replaced by the precise stimulation of algorithms, and when the ritual of raising a glass and drinking together is degraded into the data synchronization of neural interfaces, the so-called “story exchange” is nothing but a new type of labor of information capitalism - every click of each user in front of the virtual bar is contributing to the development of the virtual world. Every click of the user in front of the virtual bar is welding new steel bars for the cage of “hyper-reality”. In the depths of this cage, Baudrillard's prophecy of the “devouring of reality by the image” is unfolding: the neon of the night city, the venom of the black sun, and the spirits of the afterlife are all two sides of the same coin - one side bearing the lure of the technological singularity, and the other bearing the epitaph of the dying of human subjectivity. The other side bears the epitaph of the withering away of human subjectivity.

## 7. Conclusion

In summary, the bar space is a type of space with a rich writing history, undergoing a complex evolution, relying on a physical space centered around atmosphere and a spiritual cultural space centered on story to provide a setting for various classic events. It has rich cultural interpretations, The carnival-like life dissolution, alien-like paradox paralysis, and drunken speech hope reconstruction of the bar space vividly present one aspect of human society. It is believed that in human literary writing, the bar space" will become a widely written and applied type of scene.

The "tavern space" in the annals of literature shines like a brilliant pearl, bearing the profound essence of human emotions and culture. From antiquity to the present, it has been not only a place for convivial drinking but also a haven for the soul and a vent for emotions. Here, the aroma of wine intermingles with the flavor of stories, creating a unique atmosphere where people find the essence of life amidst revelry and contemplation.

Taverns have witnessed countless joys and sorrows, reflecting the evolution of civilization from ancient Greece and Rome to the modern metropolis. Like a miniature model of society, they mirror the spirit of the times and the complexity of human nature. In these spaces, both heroes and commoners find their place, achieving resonance and redemption through wine and tales.

In contemporary society, despite the dramatic changes in lifestyle, taverns remain a refuge for the

soul. They exist in more diverse forms, from traditional bars to modern cafes, from bustling nightclubs to tranquil book bars. The tavern space continues to evolve, but its core value providing a place for people to temporarily escape reality and find solace remains unchanged.

Looking to the future, the tavern space will continue to hold a significant place in literary creation. It is not only a stage for stories but also a vessel for the transmission of human emotions and culture. In this fast-paced era, the longing for spiritual sustenance grows stronger, and the tavern space will continually be endowed with new meanings and values, serving as a bridge that connects the past with the future and reality with dreams. Let us continue to write our own stories within the warm embrace of taverns, preserving the eternal spirit of human culture.

### **Acknowledgements**

I owe my deepest gratitude to Professor Zhang Jilian, whose captivating lectures on comparative literature and the history of foreign literature opened a window to a rich tapestry of stories, cultures, and ideas from across the globe. His passion for literature sparked my own curiosity and inspired me to explore beyond the surface of texts. My heartfelt thanks also go to Professor Xiang Li, whose thought-provoking lectures on aesthetics were like a masterful symphony, blending philosophy and art in ways that left a lasting imprint on my understanding of beauty. Lastly, I am profoundly grateful to Professor Xie Xuemei, whose illuminating lectures on comparative poetics brought a vivid interplay of words, cultures, and emotions to life, making even the most abstract theories feel tangible and alive. Their wisdom and enthusiasm have not only enriched my studies but also encouraged me to see the world of literature through a more nuanced and vibrant lens.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

### **References**

- Bakhtin, M. (1988). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. Shanghai: SDX Joint Publishing Company.
- Bakhtin, M. (1988). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. Beijing: Sanlian Bookstore.
- Bakhtin, M. (2024). *Selected works of Mikhail Bakhtin* (Qian Zhongwen, Trans.). Xi'an: Shaanxi Normal University Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (2001). *Imagery and simulation*. Nanjing: Nanjing University Press.
- Böhme, G. (2018). *Atmosphere aesthetics: Lessons, aesthetics, and the social life of art*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House.
- Brown, J. (2003). Social hierarchies in Dickens' taverns. *Dickens Society Journal*.
- CD Projekt Red. (2020). *Cyberpunk 2077*. Warsaw: CD Projekt.
- CD Projekt Red. (2020). *Cyberpunk 2077* [Video game]. Warsaw: CD Projekt.
- Chen, G. (2020). *Zhuangzi modern translation*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Chen, G. Y. (Trans.). (2020). *Zhuangzi: A new translation with contemporary annotations*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Cowley, M. (1989). *The return of the exile*. Beijing: Sanlian Bookstore.
- Etiemble, R. (1985). *Comparative literature research translation collection*. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House.
- Fitzgerald, F. S. (2004). *The great Gatsby*. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House.
- Foster, J. (2021). Tavern spaces in posthuman narratives. *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 15(2).
- Foucault, M. (1984). The space of the other. *Philosophical Studies*, (2), 12–25.
- Ge, J. C. (2002). The influence of liquor drinking and the spirit of liquor culture on Tang poetry. *Journal of Hebei University (Philosophy and Social Science)*, (02), 59–64.
- Gibson, W. (2013). *Neuromancer*. Nanjing: Translation Publishing House.
- Hemingway. (2006). *The sun also rises*. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House.

- Jia, H. (2018). Sensibility—The contemporary form of aesthetic tradition: A study on Gernot Böhme’s “atmosphere aesthetics”. *Literature and Art Research*, (01), 17–26.
- Jin, Y. (2009). *The legend of the Condor heroes*. Guangzhou: Guangzhou Publishing House.
- Johnson, R. (2010). Alcohol and tragedy in *The Great Gatsby*. *American Literature Review*, 45(2), 89–105.
- Li, O. (2005). The spirit of wine in modern Chinese literature. *Literary Review*, (4), 23–37.
- Long, D. (2018). *A study of spatial narrative*. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company.
- Murakami, H. (2007). *Norwegian forest*. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House.
- Sato, K. (2019). Urban solitude and modernity. *University of Tokyo Department of Literature Chronicle*, (3), 45–67.
- Shi, N. A., & Luo, G. C. (2018). *Water margin*. Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House.
- Smith, J. (1985). *The role of alcohol in literature*. New York: Literary Press.
- Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Stephenson, N. (2018). *Snow crash*. Chengdu: Sichuan Science and Technology Press.
- Trakl, G. (Author), & Xian, G. (Trans.). (2014). *The poems of Georg Trakl*. Beijing: TheCommercial Press.
- Turner, V. (1969). *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Wang, W. (Author), & Chen, T. M. (Ed. & Annot.). (1997). *The collected works of Wang Wei (Complete four volumes)*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- White, L. (2015). Carver’s bars: Alcohol and existentialism in contemporary fiction. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 61(3), 456–472.
- Yu, D. (2000). *Sinking*. Beijing: Writers Publishing House.
- Zhang, G. (Ed.). (1957–1958). *Wang Can ascends the tower*. In *Guben opera series*. Editorial Committee of Guben Opera Series.
- Zhao, P. (2009). *Research on the image of businessmen in Yuan miscellaneous drama*. Yangzhou: Yangzhou University.