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**On the Characterization of Working-Class Females
from the Perspective of Spatial Theory
—A Comparative Study of *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!***

在空间理论视角下解读工人阶级女性形象
—《嘉莉妹妹》和《计程车!》之比较

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On the Characterization of Working-Class Females
from the Perspective of Spatial Theory
—A Comparative Study of *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*

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Under the Supervision of

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ABSTRACT

Theodore Dreiser (1871—1945) is an outstanding American realistic writer in the early 20th century. Dreiser's first novel *Sister Carrie* (1900) narrates the country girl Carrie traded her body and emotions for fame and fortune. Helen Potrebenco (1940—) is a contemporary Canadian feminist writer. Potrebenco's left-wing novel *Taxi!* (1975) reflects social phenomena through recording the female taxi driver Shannon's personal experiences. Both novels center on the characterization of their respective working-class female protagonists to explore the defects of capitalist society, which paves a foundation for the comparative study of this thesis.

This thesis, taking spatial theory as guidance, and from the angles of urban space, social space and textual space, interprets the differences and similarities of the two working-class women Carrie and Shannon in life experiences and living conditions in *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*. In urban space, the different life attitudes of Carrie and Shannon are determined by industrial revolutions, urban structures and knowledge levels in their respective social backgrounds. In social space, Carrie and Shannon form distinct social consciousnesses under the influences of social classification and class incompatibility. In textual space, Carrie and Shannon are the lost persons whose similar identities are determined by society's main value orientations and people's alienated spirits. Based on a comparative analysis of the characterization of Carrie and Shannon, the thesis concludes that, the two novels and the two females illustrate various disadvantages of capitalist society, including serious gap in wealth, obvious class division, gender inequality from the development process of the social backgrounds of the United States and Canada respectively; and more significantly, they provide reflections, introspections and enlightenments for modern society.

Keywords: spatial theory; working-class women; *Sister Carrie*; *Taxi!*; comparative study

摘要

西奥多·德莱塞（Theodore Dreiser）是20世纪初美国现实主义小说家的杰出代表之一。其首部长篇小说《嘉莉妹妹》（1900）讲述了乡村女孩嘉莉来到大都市芝加哥借出卖身体和情感而获得名利的过程。海伦·珀特班克（Helen Potrebenco）是加拿大当代女性作家的代表之一。其左翼小说《计程车！》（1975）通过记录女计程车司机香农的亲身经历来反映社会现象。两部小说皆以工人阶级女性的人物塑造为焦点，来探寻资本主义社会的弊端，为本论文的比较研究奠定了基础。

本论文以空间理论为指导，从城市空间、社会空间和文本空间的角度，解读了《嘉莉妹妹》和《计程车！》中两位工人阶级女性嘉莉和香农的人生经历和生存状态之异同：在城市空间层面，两位工人阶级女性嘉莉和香农相异的生活态度由各自社会背景下的工业革命、城市结构及知识水平决定；在社会空间层面，嘉莉和香农截然不同的社会意识受社会等级划分和社会等级不相容性影响；在文本空间层面，嘉莉和香农相似的迷失者身份由社会主要的价值导向和人们异化的精神状态决定。通过对嘉莉和香农进行比较分析，本论文认为，在美国和加拿大的社会背景发展进程中，这两部小说及其两位女性形象分别揭示了资本主义社会中的多种弊端如贫富差距严重、等级划分明显、性别不平等；更为重要的是，这些所揭示的现象对现今社会具有反思和启示意义。

关键词：空间理论，工人阶级女性形象，《嘉莉妹妹》，《出租车！》，比较研究

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social Background and Ideology in *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*

Theodore Dreiser(1871-1945), one of the most remarkable American realist writers, published his first novel *Sister Carrie* in the early twentieth century, when the second industrial revolution was just coming to an end. The second industrial revolution was the transition from traditional agricultural society to industrial society in the period from about 1870 to 1900, which made heavy industry play a leading role in that American economy period. So, there was a dramatic increase in the number of factory workers with the vigorous development of heavy industry. Compared with the second industrial revolution, the third industrial revolution lasting from about 1940 until now marks the beginning of the information age. The thriving economy and flourishing scenes of science and technology make most people's attention turn to higher education instead of proficient skills. Therefore, Helen Potrebenko who is one of the Canada's most uncompromising feminist writers published her first novel *Taxi!*(1975) in *Pedestal* that is Canada's first female liberation newspaper with influence of the social background.

Obviously, it is no wonder that there are distinct and obvious ideologies developed by the influences of different industrial revolution periods for two writers and two working-class women in the two novels. As the second industrial revolution surged in Europe, American capitalist economy underwent a period of rapid and unprecedented development in the second half of the 19th century. However, the lower classes had been subjected to severe exploitation and oppression by those capitalists who used ruthless means to accumulate wealth during the same period. As a member of struggling on the edge of unemployment, Theodore Dreiser gradually realizes hidden harms that capitalists bring to society in the disguise of advocating democracy and then he creates

many naturalism works to straightly and truly show miserable experiences of the lower classes in the metropolitan cities. Furthermore, Dreiser's naturalism mainly discusses on environmental and genetic factors that hold a decisive position in shaping human beings, mainly deriving from Darwin's theory of evolution and Spencer's sociology. As a result, his works neither condemn all human actions nor praise their behaviors but mainly describe sufferings of the lower classes in accordance with objective facts in a straight writing style. In a word, it is obvious that Theodore Dreiser never denies the whole social system of capitalism.

On the contrary, Canadian female writer Helen Potrebenco has a stronger sense of socialism in comparison with Theodore Dreiser. It has been a primary task to focus on the development of culture, knowledge and information in the third industrial revolution. So, as a new intellectual woman, Potrebenco can examine and confront capitalist society in her own ways and realize and appreciate superiority of socialism. Potrebenco is considered as one of the new left-wing female novelists and well known for her numerous books including short stories, poems, novels and letters, most of which show the significant working-class urban feminist voice. New left wing literature not only witnesses and records brutality and evil of capital power, but also strongly exposes and tears capital power's hypocrisy and false morality lying under the veil of good reputation. Besides, new left wing literature mostly depicts the miserable life of people at the bottom, which advocates socialist consciousness.

At the beginning of novel *Sister Carrie*, the countryside girl Carrie sees roaring factories and towering smoke pipes on arriving in Chicago. Obviously, Chicago has developed into an industrial city under the influence of the second industrial revolution. As a young and innocent girl, Carrie doesn't form a complete and independent value and right social consciousness before coming to Chicago. Correspondingly, Carrie begins to pursue money and fame at all costs after witnessing the luxury and enjoyment in capitalist society, which leads to form the capitalist social consciousness. In contrast, Shannon in *Taxi!* is such a college educated woman as the author Potrebenco in the age of knowledge economy. Both of them have their own independent ideas, not affected by the external environment. Furthermore, Shannon, as a member of working class, suffers

exploitation and oppression of capitalism all the time and she realizes all sorts of malpractices that are brought by capitalist society. *The Making of the English Working Class* written by E.P. Thompson (1924-1993) is introduced into Canada from the US, which deeply influences the development of New Marxist historiography in Canada. In the 1960s, racial democratic movements and left-wing movements promoted the development of New Marxism in Canada. Therefore, working-class women at a higher education level are more likely to form a strong sense of socialism on the background.

1.2 Spatial Theory and Its Development

The development of spatial theory has a relatively long process. In the second half of the 20th century, some novels with the characteristics of breaking through the limitations of time and space received extensive attention among the field of western literary theory. The chronotope is firstly put forward by Russian literary scholar M.M. Bakhtin who refers that different literary genres operate with different configurations of time and space, which gives each genre its particular narrative character (258).

The structure of space theory was firstly taken up by Gabriel Zoran in his *Towards a Theory of Space in Narrative* in 1984, which brings an important turning point for theories of western literature. Zoran divided the spatial structure of a text into three different levels: the topographical level, the chronotopic level and the textual level. Zoran states:

Topographical space is the space at its highest level of reconstruction, perceived as self-existent and independent of the temporal structure of the world and sequential arrangement of the text. (316)

Furthermore, the topographical space is distinct from the physical space especially in some cultural elements. Cheng Xilin compares the midwest of U.S. with the east of that through topographical space in *The Spatial Narrative in The Great Gatsby*. Making a comparison not only exists in visible objects that belong to physical space, but also exists in invisible matters that are from topographical space. Meanwhile, the topographical space contains many binary opposites, such as city and village, center and

periphery, inside and outside (Cheng 30).

In order to further develop spatial theory, Gabriel Zoran also proposed textual space theory that means the space represented by the text in his *Towards a Theory of Space in Narrative* in 1984. Zoran states:

Textual space is influenced by three aspects. The first aspect is language selectivity. The description of space is often ambiguous and unspecific because information of space cannot be expressed totally by language. So the detail of narration and the select of language determine the effect of reappearance of narrative space. The second aspect is linear time series. The order that language and information convey affects the direction and trail of space motion and change. The third is personage's visual angle structure. The perspective of text will affect the reconstruction of space in narration. (316)

For setting a solid frame structure of the spatial narrative, Henri Lefebvre who is an excellent French Marxist philosopher distinguished the concept of social space in *The Production of Space* in 1991. According to Lefebvre, the social space is the combination of the social property of a certain space and the product of a society (55). Furthermore, the social space structure usually shows the principle of right-centered operation in certain form of society. In the article *Review of the Production of Space*, Barmey Warf states:

Social space is absolutely not neutral and is usually fraught with contradictions and conflicts in the political field. Therefore every spatial order is the reflection to social interests and spatial relations that may be distorted in the service of rights. (111)

With the improvement of spatial theory, some topics on spatial theory are gradually extended to the field of architecture. In the second half of the twentieth century, urban space theory was introduced into western literary theory. What's more, the division of urban space is firstly brought forward by Chicago school of architecture based on the theory of ecology. A city can be divided into many zones that pertain to the arrangement of urban resources. Standing out the fierce competition on social identities and money, the rich and the rulers enjoy some privileges provided by spacious and

resource-rich regions while the poor and the lower class live in the crowded and resource-poor areas. Moreover, Henri Lefebvre analyzes three forms of urban space that are natural space, spiritual space and social space on the basis of philosophy methodology. In his opinion, the urban space is the three-dimension unity of natural space, spiritual space and social space (Lefebvre 56).

1.3 Basic Framework and Significance of the Thesis

Both Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* and Helen Potrebenco's *Taxi!* have dealt with the lower class in capitalist societies. Through the depictions of the two working-class women Carrie and Shannon, Dreiser and Potrebenco respectively illustrate the miserable living conditions and marginalized statuses in the male-dominated society and spiritual frustrations and confusions in capitalist societies of Carrie and Shannon. The portrait of the working-class women from the above three aspects totally shows the hardship and helplessness of the working-class under capitalist system to further reveal deceiving and ugly nature of capitalism. The thesis provides an exploration of the similarities and differences of working-class women from the perspective of spatial theory.

This thesis is divided into six chapters and the basic structure is as follows:

Chapter one introduces the social background and ideology in Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* and Potrebenco's *Taxi!*, streamlines the development of spatial theory and clarifies basic framework and significance of this thesis.

Chapter two generally reviews and comments studies on both Carrie in *Sister Carrie* and Shannon in *Taxi!* at home and abroad, which paves a foundation for choosing the topic of the thesis.

Chapter three mainly focuses on the urban space. The division of urban space proposed by the Chicago architecture school is manifested in the differences that exist in Carrie's attitude and Shannon's attitude to bourgeoisie's living conditions by describing and comparing the living spaces of those two working-class women in their metropolises and then analyzing the causes of being in the terrible and poor living conditions for Carrie and Shannon, two working-class women. Furthermore, different

attitudes towards capitalist living conditions are closely linked with the overall structure and spatial division of their cities.

Chapter four is concerned with the social space. The division of the class and the implication of power and identity are revealed in the marginalized statuses of those two working-class women. As the working-class women, Carrie and Shannon are in the narrow and terrible working spaces and they have unequal and male-dominated love relationships with capitalist men. But in this case, Carrie and Shannon, two working-class women show discrepancies in social consciousness. Carrie has capitalist consciousness while Shannon has socialist consciousness, which is related to different industrial revolution periods and social orientations.

Chapter five deals with the textual space, which is primarily about language in spatial form. Reminiscence and image are indispensable links in the switching of space, which could evoke the sense of space in a text. There are some reminiscences and recurring images about luxurious scenes and Carrie's pleasant days while there are some reminiscences and recurring images about unemployment working-class men who are only absorbed in alcohol and the depressing life of the lower class, thus further reflecting that the two working-class women Carrie and Shannon are victims under the capitalist system.

Chapter six draws a conclusion of the whole thesis. Based on the spatial theory and the comparative study, this thesis shows different attitudes towards bourgeoisie's living conditions and distinct social consciousnesses of those two working-class women, and further analyzes the reasons for forming their different attitudes and ideological consciousnesses. The writing purposes of this thesis are to reveal the malpractices of capitalist society and to explore the superiority of socialist society.

Through the comparison of the two novels that are associated with working-class women in different industrial revolution periods, it is clear to show richness of literary works and progress of time. There are several points to show the significance and creativity of this thesis.

By employing urban space, social space and textual space as the framework and based on the studies of Theodore Dreiser's novel *Sister Carrie* and Helen Potrebenco's

novel *Taxi!*, this thesis aims to disclose some social problems under capitalist system and analyze the causes of those social problems, such as, unemployment crisis, huge gap between the rich and the poor, obvious classification and gender inequality by comparing two working-class women in the art of spatial theory so as to demonstrate the superiority of socialist society with the guide of New Marxist relevant theories.

Meanwhile, the discrimination and inequality experienced by working-class women are reflected not only in class but also in gender, which can help us realize the bias and oppression imposed on male and bourgeoisie dominated society from the perspective of cultural phenomena. Furthermore, different attitudes to capitalist society and different social consciousnesses from working-class women in different eras are the reflection of social progress and improvement of people's conceptions, which can enhance people's understanding to economic and cultural characteristics in the periods of two industrial revolutions. The ultimate aim and significance of the paper are not to show sympathy for working-class women in their living conditions and working conditions, but to help people have an objective understanding to class structure, social ideology in different periods and social problems that are exposed under the capitalist system, and further to emphasize the necessity and feasibility of building up an equal socialist society with people's efforts.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Studies on Carrie in *Sister Carrie* at Home and Abroad

The image of Carrie has attracted wide attention from scholars both at home and abroad since *Sister Carrie* was published in 1900. The image of Carrie has been researched and explored to further show female's marginalized status in male dominated society and even the present situation of a country's development in a certain period. And many foreign writers and critics have conducted in-depth analysis from different views on the novel, such as ethical evaluation, American life and consumption theme.

First of all, the early academic research on Carrie at abroad began with the ethical evaluation. The foreign scholars who pay attention to Carrie's ethical aspect regard her as a "graceless and depraved woman". Some critical and derogatory words like "depressed" "disillusioned" and "sumptuous" are used to describe the novel's heroine (Pizer 12). However, with progress of society and change of people's consciousness, some foreign critics support and advocate Carrie's rebellious spirits that she manages to fight against some western inherent cultural concepts and takes a new look at inherent moral standard fame-worship in the American society. Sinclair Lewis in his Nobel lecture in 1930 mentions:

Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* came to housebound and airless America like a great free western wind, and to our stuffy domesticity gave us the first fresh air since Mark Twain and Whitman. (Cassuto and Eby 1)

Secondly, the image of Carrie played a vital role in showing American life at the end of the nineteenth century. A review in 1901 revealed that Carrie is completely free from the slightest trace of sentimentality or pettiness, and dominated everywhere by a

serious and strenuous desire for truth (Salzman 3). According to the mass-production trend in American society in the late nineteenth century, it was popular for most American people to live in luxurious hotels and enjoy food in fancy restaurants. Obviously, American's way of life not only was changed a lot, their belief but also was changed in that period. The changed belief at that time was showed in the novel, like the transition of the American dream, the fame-worship and wealth-worship, the endless pursuit for money and commodity in the decayed industrial city (Dai 177).

Thirdly, some studies on the themes of consumption shed lights on the image of Carrie. Helen Ouliaei and Fatemeh Torki Baghbaderani's article "Consumer Culture in Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*" principally probes into Dreiser's dexterity in depicting Carrie's internal and external life with the guidance of Baudrillard's consumerism theory. Rong Jin makes a thorough analysis on Carrie's deception ways: silence and lies disclose that Carrie is the tragic character who is incapable of communicating with others and the sufferer of the wealth desire and consumer society in "Sister Carrie in Consumer Society as Seen from Deception Within Non-verbal and Verbal Framework and the Fulfillment of Desires".

In recent years, domestic research on Carrie have been more extensive and indepth. In China, the study on Carrie has been carried out from many different perspectives, such as feminist perspective, comparative perspective, ethical perspective, the theme of desire and consumerism.

In terms of the feminist perspective, some domestic scholars consider Carrie as a new woman in traditional society and a marginalized woman in patriarchy. Lin Xiaoqing's "An Analysis of *Sister Carrie* from Perspective of Female Growth" talks about the process of American women like Carrie taking their first real steps towards independence and highlights that men have key position in promoting female independence. Jin Huaifang and Hu Zongfeng's "Behind "New Woman"--A Review on *Sister Carrie* in Light of Feminism" reinterprets Carrie as a new woman who is courageous to challenge traditional moral norms, seek personal happiness and achieve self-fulfillment. On the other hand, the article points out that Carrie is always considered as "the second sex" in the text with the guidance of *The Second Sex* written

by Simon de Beauvoir. What's more, Wang Rong also illustrates and interprets the new female character of Carrie in "Image of New Woman Shaped by Theodore Dreise--*Sister Carrie*" from three aspects including self-actualization, self-choice and self-shaping.

In the perspective of the comparative study, some writers in China focus on the similarities and differences between Carrie and other women in capitalist societies. There are some articles on exploring Carrie and other women in capitalist societies from comparative perspective. Making a comparison with Carrie and Tess from three aspects that include personal character, social background and the love's conception, Lin Huizhen makes an elaborate explanation on the causes of different destinies of Carrie and Tess in "A Comparative Analysis of Heroines' Fate in *Sister Carrie* and *Tess of The D' Urbervilles*". There is also a comparison between two heroines in Jia Na's "Withered Flowers--a Comparative Analysis on Heroines in *Great Gatsby* and *Sister Carrie*". The article makes a comparison between similarities and differences of the contemporary young people in their views on love, values and money and then educates them to establish correct values so as to avoid wasting their youth due to emptiness. What's more, Zhang Hengchen's paper named " " Fallen" or the struggle: Maggie, Tess, Carrie sister of the Comparative Study" mainly talks about three characters' deprived life paths and finds out the reasons through the comparison and analysis of their experiences. At the same time, the paper also implies that their "depravity" is a limited and repressed way, which is the result of combining the spiritual awakening of these characters with their life choices.

In regard to literary ethics criticism, many domestic critics have begun to explore and analyze the moralities of Carrie and the mainstream group in that society. In such a situation, it is prevalent for literary circle in China to study Carrie's image from the view of ethics. Zhu Zhenwu makes an indepth analysis of the ecological environment of Chicago where Carrie lived, thus providing people with a revelation that the means to realize the spiritual redemption of people's return to nature and ethics is to reevaluate and revive the importance of ecological ethics in today's male-dominated society characterized by material production in "A City Immigrant in Crisis of Ecological

Ethics”. Besides, Jiang Dongli’s “An Analysis of *Sister Carrie* from Perspective of Literary Ethics Criticism” mainly explores Carrie’s ethical consciousness and ethical choice under the influence of consumerism on social ethics to further express Dreiser’s significant insight and sympathy.

Concerning the thematic studies on Carrie’s image, there are desire theme and consumerism theme. Wang Ganghua’s “Sister Carrie’s Desires and Motivations” mainly applies Jacques Lacan’s new psychoanalytic theory to analyze Carrie’s psychological process from the desire to meet her basic physiological needs to her self-shaping of her dream and finally to her endless desire. In addition, Ren Yanyan talks about Carrie’s everlasting desire from three aspects, development of industrialization and urbanization, consumerism and Carrie’s own consumption psychology in “An Analysis of Sister Carrie’s Desire”. Besides, Zhang Xiangting’s “Sister Carrie’s Desire-From the Consumption of Things to That of Signs” explains the evolution of Carrie’s desire from material consumption to symbolic consumption in terms of Jean Baudrillard’s consumption theory. Han Xiaocong’s “Envy and Doubt: Dreiser’s Literary Interpretation of Consumerism-Centered on the Image of Sister Carrie” analyzes the characteristics of consumerism reflected in Carrie and her surroundings and discusses the influence of consumerism on Dreiser and his attitude towards consumerism.

2.2 Studies on Shannon in *Taxi!* at Home and Abroad

Taxi! records the experiences of a feminist taxi driver named Shannon in Vancouver. There are some research on this novel and on protagonist Shannon at home and abroad. Based on the review of the literature on the novel, there are only two scholars. One is Anakana Schofield, a Canadian literary critic. The other is Wei Li, a Chinese scholar.

In terms of working conditions of the working class, Anakana Schofield discusses and analyzes the working-class’s harsh working conditions and unbearable workloads in the novel in her article “Reader, Hail That Cab!” published on Canadian magazine in 2009: *The Globe And Mail*. According to Anakana Schofield, the novel implicates that the working-class are oppressed by heavy work and they need humour and sincere

communications to release their pressures from work and life.

There has been insufficient studies so far on *Taxi!* in Chinese academia although the novel was published in 1975. A journal article entitled “On Socialist-feminist Thoughts in a Canadian New Leftist Novel, *Taxi!*” by professor Wei Li who is a pioneering one, illustrates the novel from the perspective of socialist-feminism. The article explores the themes of the novel, including unemployment, wars, wealth disparities, sex oppression and racial discrimination (39).

2.3 Review of the Studies on Spatial Theory

With the development of spatial theory all over the world, the study on spatial theory has been attached much importance to home and abroad. There are some influential studies in relation to the spatial theory in western literary, such as the third space, space poetics and hyperspace.

In terms of the third space, western scholars have made a great breakthrough and progress in the research of spatial theory. Edward W. Soja mainly discusses the spatial thinking, namely geographical or spatial imagination and reevaluates material and spiritual dimensions in space, to further seek new spatial thinking modes guided by Henri Lefebvre’s social space theory in *Thirdspace* in 1996.

In regard to the studies of space poetics and hyperspace, some foreign critics have applied the spatial theory to the exploration and analysis of poetry and different types of novels. Gaston Bachelard, a French philosopher, takes readers on an architectural journey to convey personal and emotional responses to buildings, both in prose and poetry in *The Poetics of Space* in 1958. Shahram Afrougheh takes space and place as the cultural symbol of literature, making it closer way to concrete reality, so as to arouse readers’ attention to all changes of space and place in the novel in his article “Space and Hyperspace in Fictional Dimension”.

In recent years, domestic studies on spatial theory have been carried out in innovative ways such as New Marxist space theory, blended space theory, psychological space theory and ecological space.

In the perspectives of New Marxist space theory and blended space theory, some

scholars in China employ the New Marxist theory and rhetorical devices to interpret the spaces in texts. Chen Ran links the space distribution between urban and rural districts in China with the “field” of the emergence and development of the New Marxist space theory, thus disclosing capitalist power and thought in Chinese cities and towns in “Space Theory of New Marxism and Reflection on China’s Urbanization”. In Wang Shaohua’s opinion, blended space reveals the conceptual integration in the process of the meaning construction of natural language. As the cognitive process of conceptual integration is also a part of metaphor phenomenon, blended space can be employed to explain the phenomenon in “The Explanatory Power of Blended Space Theory for Metaphors”.

Concerning psychological space theory and ecological space, there are only two scholars in China focusing on them based on the review of the literature on the novel. According to Wu Li, Gilles Fauconnier who is an American linguist proposes that psychological space is used to interpret the process of understanding language instantaneously. Based on a novel written by Hemingway, Wu Li explores the cognitive schema of psychological space theory and analyzes intentions of characters and relationships between characters in their discourses in “Interpretation of Cognitive Schema of Discourse Analysis under the Theory of Psychological Space”. Besides, Zhang Yuxing expounds regular patterns of urban ecological space development of cities and towns and makes corresponding ecological plannings in “Development and Planning Theory of Urban Ecological Space”.

As the above mentioned, it is apparent that the two female images in literature have received wide concern from the world. The research achievements of the two novels mainly include character, theme, writing technique. Theoretical methods are applied to the studies of the two novels, including feminist, comparative study and spatial theory. Although the literary works are linked with the marginalized female images, few scholars compare the different ideologies of the two working-class women living in capitalist societies. What’s more, *Taxi!* hasn’t be explored from the spatial theory so far. So, there still exist research space in illustrating the similarities and differences of the two working-class women in the two novels in spatial theory.

Chapter Three

URBAN SPACE

In the industrial revolution periods, a number of cities were built by people. Meanwhile the rise and development of cities accelerated the industrialization process of American society and many literary writers at that time brought the city into the theme of literary creation. City is one of the representatives of human society civilization. In *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*, the cities, as universal novel backgrounds, not only present objective geographical positions, but also reflect two protagonists' survival dilemmas and different social consciousnesses in urban space.

3.1 Living Space of Working-Class Women

Space is closely related to mankind. As French philosopher Gaston Bachelard states:

Without house, man would be a dispersed being. House maintains him through the storms of the heavens and through those of life. It is body and soul and the human being's first world. (7)

So, space is of great significance to human beings. It is not only the background of human existence, but also the existence itself. The thesis shows their respective living conditions through the descriptions of living houses, living environments and daily activities of Carrie and Shannon, as working-class women in cities. At the same time, their living spaces are a reflection of the structure and form of their respective urban spaces based on the theory of ecology and their living spaces are also an implication of their different attitudes towards bourgeoisie's living conditions.

3.1.1 Carrie in Chicago

Under the drive of the second industrial revolution, Chicago became one of the most representative industrial cities in the United States. At the beginning of *Sister Carrie*, country girl Carrie gets on a train and leaves home to make a living. The train goes by the flour mill where her father works and is steering for Chicago, the American metropolis, which symbolizes the beginning of Carrie's urban life.

In terms of housing conditions, Carrie lives in a simple and poor sharing apartment with her sister and brother-in-law. Carrie, a working-class woman, cannot afford to buy a house, or even rent the whole house in Chicago. What's more, their apartment is located in the West Van Buren Street where families of workers and clerks live. It is clear that her sister and brother-in-law are both members of the local working-class. As a typical working-class family, their house is pretty simple and poor. "The walls of the rooms were discordantly papered. The floors were covered with matting and the hall laid with a thin rag carpet" (Dreiser 12). In other words, these pieces of furniture are shoddy pieces of furniture that are improvised.

According to living environments, Carrie's life is surrounded by the environments that are filled with lures of luxury and pleasure. On one hand, worker's living district is close to the commercial and shopping district, so that Carrie can have access to the shopping mall, where the beautiful clothes and ornaments are an irresistible temptation for Carrie. In the text, Hanson tells Carrie the exact location of the business districts and further says "Lots of girls work there. You could get home easy, too. It isn't very far" (Dreiser 13). On the other hand, the pleasant social interactions of the respectable rich on the street are great temptations to Carrie. The life of the streets continued for a long time to interest Carrie. "She never wearied of wondering where the people in the cars were going or what their enjoyments were" (Dreiser 54).

In Carrie's daily activities, she lives a boring, frugal and circular life as she works in a factory. Carrie needs to pay four dollars for her board and room a week and only fifty cents to cover Carrie's clothes and amusements a week. So, in this case, Carrie can hardly afford any daily necessities or any amusements. Especially, Carrie has trouble in solving winter clothes with the blast of winter sweeping over Chicago. In this case,

Carrie is ill because of the failure to resist the cold and even worse so that she is replaced by other workers after a short break. Besides, she needs to work for a long time a day and the rest of time in her life is very little. “She was not very strong, sitting all day affected her back and she went to bed one night before Hanson” (Dreiser 43). In other words, she is like a working machine without any time and right to enjoy her own life.

3.1.2 Shannon in Vancouver

In comparison with Chicago during the second industrial revolution, Vancouver, one of the most important cities in Canada, makes a greater improvement on the development and construction of its economy, science and technology during the third industrial revolution. In such an era background, more workers are forced to leave factories as their jobs are replaced by machines so that the life of workers during the third industrial revolution is even more poor than workers’ during the second industrial revolution. So, it is obvious that Shannon, a working-class woman, is beset with the unemployment crisis, struggling to survive in Vancouver, the metropolitan city.

As for housing conditions, Shannon lives in a poor and crowded sharing apartment with her friends. Shannon has to pay a rental fee, just like Carrie. Shannon’s friend Bradley inherits a house from his aunt but he needs to pay exorbitant lawyer’s fees for the house’s transfer. Due to the high taxes of house’s transfer, Shannon undertakes a part of payments as the rental fee. Furthermore, internal conditions of Shannon’s renting house are as terrible as those of Carrie’s. “Shannon’s sharing house was really old. The basement leaked. The old furnace broke down” (Potrebenko 7). Sadly, neither Bradley nor Shannon can do anything about fixing the house. In addition, the house is used not only by Bradley and Shannon, but also by Bradley’s wife Evelyn and their baby, which implicates that Shannon’s housing space is crowded and narrow.

Shannon’s life is surrounded by the environments that are full of the baby’s happiness and company, which give Shannon’s terrible life a glimmer of light and hope. When the baby begins to talk, she still laughs a lot and often comes and visits Shannon. And gradually Shannon begins to realize that the baby becomes an indispensable part of

her daily life. As Gerald says to Shannon “I supposed next you’re going to tell me about the baby” (Potrebenko 54). One time when the baby abandons her own bed and brings her dolls into Shannon’s bed, Shannon feels “It was a pleasant interlude of unreality, and she remembered it hungrily for years afterwards” (Potrebenko 107).

In Shannon’s daily activities, she lives a monotonous, debt-ridden and depressing life when she works as a female driver. In *Taxi!*, Shannon refuses other male drivers’ and male passengers’ datings. “And her life is bored with evening of heavy drinking because those people consider her as a whore” (Potrebenko 23). Meanwhile, “Shannon loses track of her old friends and doesn’t make any new ones” (Potrebenko 8). In addition, Shannon’s hard-pressed pecuniary conditions make her desperate for life. Although Shannon is a full-time driver, “She still owes \$1,867.43 plus \$250.56 interest from students loans” (Potrebenko 7). What’s more, one time when Shannon has a quarrel with Bradley and Evelyn, Shannon says to Gerald “I hated them and moved out the apartment if I could afford to” (Potrebenko 7). How helpless and desperate the working-class woman Shannon is! Shannon has no any alternative to face heavy debts and low wages in her daily life.

The living conditions of Carrie and Shannon are embodied from housing conditions, surrounding environments and daily activities, which fully and vividly demonstrates the living hardships of working-class women in metropolitan areas.

3.2 Causes of Being Captured in the Situations

City is the production of the development of human civilization to a certain extent and can be regarded as an artificial spatial structure and social form. The appearance of urban space is an invasion and plunder to nature, and the symbol of city symbolizes the conquest of nature (Mitchell 21).

The extermination and obliteration to nature bring the indelible influence to the people in city, and they gradually suppress their natural attributes, thus leading to the imperfection of personality and the alienation of the sense of people’s identities. So, there is a close connection between the poor living conditions that Carrie and Shannon are trapped into from their urban space. Specifically, their overall urban structures and

their street divisions and spatial segregations are the main reasons for their terrible living conditions in their cities.

3.2.1 Overall urban structure

The industrial revolution and the level of economic development have a great impact on the overall structure of a city. In the two texts, the urban structures of Chicago and Vancouver at that time were shaped by the economy.

After the second industrial revolution, the United States transformed into a city-centered country from an agriculture-dominated country. The high efficiency of the mechanized tools promoted surplus rural labors to pour into cities, thus the population of cities was expanded rapidly. So, the overall urban structure of Chicago, an American industrial city, was well established under the influence of population expansion.

In 1925, American sociologist E.W. Burgess put forward the concentric zone model according to the spatial differentiation model of Chicago's land use and social economy. This theory refers to the structure pattern of concentric circle extending outward around the center of the city. In Burgess's opinion, the city should be divided into five concentric areas: central business district, transition zone, workers' residential area, good residential area and commuting area.

Apparently, there is only one common center surrounded by all areas of Chicago in *Sister Carrie*. In the novel, the whole city's center is central business district. Accordingly, "In the central portion was the vast wholesale and shopping district, to which the uninformed seeker for work usually drifted" (Dreiser 16). In particular, according to Burgess's concentric zone model, the development trend from the central CBD to the periphery is in turn four other areas. So, the CBD, the only common gathering place, is accessible and unlimited to anyone who is willing to spend. In the text, when Carrie enters the CBD, "She sometimes can meet the factory girls whose clothes were faded" (Dreiser 83) or "a rich lady who was in an elegant coach, with a prancing pair of bays" (Dreiser 74).

On the contrary, Vancouver's overall urban structure is relatively loose with multiple centers in *Taxi!*. In the novel, Vancouver is mainly divided into two parts, West

End and East End. In Shannon's opinion, the West End is the paradise which the rich and the middle class live in while the East End is the hell which the poor and the colored live in. Besides, the bourgeois and the working-class who are from different streets regularly go to their own centers that are built for their recreation and consumption respectively. The rulers live in Shaughnessy and drink at the Vancouver Club in the West End while most drivers drink at the the Black Angus in the East End when they have a meeting or have a rest.

3.2.2 Street division and spatial segregation

The people who have more money and powers can occupy the more desirable zones in a city. In *Introduction to the science of Sociology*, Robert Ezra Park claims "competition is created by groups fighting for urban sources, which leads to a division of urban space with the more desirable zones imposing higher rent" (22).

Chicago can be separated mainly into three zones under the guidance of Park's more desirable zones in street division, which implies that there are huge discrepancies in living conditions between the working class and the capitalist class. First, CBD, the Chicago's center, is located in Franklin Street, which holds advantage conditions in location from the perspective of concentric zones model. Next, the area that is closest to the center is workers' residential area. In the text, Carrie lives in the Van Buren Street inhabited by families of laborers with constant noise pollution. In the workers' residential zone, the noise is mentioned as Carrie has first dinner at her sister's apartment. "The sound of the little bells upon the horse-cars, as they tinkled in and out of hearing, was as pleasing as it was novel" (Dreiser 11).

According to concentric zones model, the more peripheral area to the center is called the good residential area that is also mentioned in *Sister Carrie*. Usually, most residents living in the good residential area are rich in the bourgeoisie. In the novel, "Hurstwood's residence on the North Side, near Lincoln Park, was a brick building of a very popular type then, a three-story affair with the first floor sunk a very little below the level of the street"(Dreiser 88). Obviously, Hurstwood's residence is located in the good residence area that is independent and surrounded by plants and amusement

facilities. So, the noise pollution of workers' residential area is serious while good residential area is quiet and beautiful in terms of the environment.

Vancouver's street usually can be divided into two parts: the East End and the West End, except for some exclusive streets that belong to the local rulers in *Taxi!*. Joseph Frank interprets that the juxtaposition is a key point in literary space in *The Idea of Spatial Form* (31). Helen Potrebenko resorts to her narrations to show the art of the urban space in *Taxi!*. In the text, she juxtaposes the East End and the West End as regard to the facility and the environment to imply the gap between the poor and the rich. There are some evidences to support the discrepancies between the East End and the West End in the same street in facility and environment. In facility, most middle class people who live in the West End drive their own cars to go outside or only take taxies unless they have something urgent to do whereas the colored like Chinese women often sit in groups on the grey pavement in the East End waiting for the truck to work. "Some with tools, all with big hats, wait for the trucks to go to the work" (Potrebenko 51). In addition, Shannon's favourite streets are Elliot, Blenheim, 16th Avenue, where "Big old trees hung over the West End" (Potrebenko 51) in environment. However, "There are just the grey shimmering heat from the pavement in the East End" (Potrebenko 51).

According to spatial segregation, Lefebvre states:

On one hand, decision-making centers with certain unknown powers have been formed with centralizing powers, wealth and information; On the other hand, breaking up the old urban structure and then making it possible to form all kinds of segregation would result in people being separated mercilessly from each other in space. (54)

In those two novels, some visible and invisible barriers are mentioned to segregate people in living space mercilessly. There are visible and invisible spatial segregations between workers' residential area and good residential area in Chicago. Apparently, some visible segregations like plants and fences are used to separate good residential area where the rich and bourgeoisie live from other areas. "There was also a small rear yard, walled in by the fences of the neighbors and holding a stable where he kept his

horse and trap” (Dreiser 88). Furthermore, workers’ residential area is closest to good residential area among all areas from the perspective of E.W. Burgess’s concentric zone model. Obviously, the clues from the text and Burgess’s theory prove that visible space segregations are mainly built to separate workers’ area from the living area which belongs to the rich and bourgeoisie. Besides that, there also exists invisible space segregation-areas division between those two living areas. According to Burgess, Chicago’s urban overall structure was concentric in 1900s and good residential area was located in the outer area of workers’ residential area and was further away from center in order of five areas from center to periphery (21). In this case, there is no possibility for the working class to pass through good residential area frequently because good residential area is out of workers’ living area, consumer and entertainment area.

There also exists space segregations between exclusive street and public street in Vancouver from the perspective of spatial segregation. The clues can be found that most of big bourgeois people live in Shaughnessy and some petty bourgeois people live in the British Properties where houses are decorated with beautiful gardens and trees. So, capitalists isolate areas outside their living space in the way of using barriers, such as gardens, grasslands and fences. However, “The blind, the crippled, the old and the sick are at Columbia and Hastings” (Potrebenko 69). These people live here because they cannot afford to live anywhere else. Besides, some street people go home in winter and live on the street in summer. Obviously, the lower class and the working-class are confined to the same area in the way of dividing the blocks.

It is obviously found that street division and space segregation are the concrete manifestations of the division between the poor and the rich, and between the bourgeoisie and the lower class in the two novels. Furthermore, street division and space segregation reflect the unequal distribution of living resources between the rich and the poor, and between bourgeoisie and working class, thus exacerbating the gap between the rich and the poor and intensifying contractions between different classes. In this case, it is inevitable for Carrie and Shannon, as poor working-class women, to have hardships in their living conditions.

3.3 Different Attitudes towards Capitalist Living Conditions

Although Carrie and Shannon are both working-class women in metropolises and their living conditions are poor and terrible, Carrie and Shannon hold completely different attitudes towards the living conditions of capitalism.

3.3.1 Carrie's desire

Carrie has a strong desire for the capitalist way of life. In her daily life, she always admires and imitates the capitalist lifestyle. In the text, Carrie makes many petty-bourgeois friends like Mrs.Hale and the daughter of a railroad treasurer and she gives a heartfelt sigh about the life of bourgeoisie when Carrie moves into the apartment that Drouet prepares for her. "The glow of the palatial doors was still in her eye, the roll of cushioned carriages still in her ears" (Dreiser 123). So, it is no doubt that the prosperous appearance of the city and the luxury of the rich arise Carrie's desire and admiration. Furthermore, the city, not only as a scene, but also as a kind of personification power, plays a decisive role in Carrie's gradually expanding desire, and the public material inducement makes Carrie lost in the desire.

The causes of Carrie's desire are chiefly divided into two parts. One is the external factors. The other is the internal factors. In terms of external factors, Carrie lived at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. At this time, the process of industrialization and urbanization in the United States reached an unprecedented level. Meanwhile, American consumer culture was booming. Specifically, from the view of urban space, the division of concentric overall structure of Chicago makes the living environment of the working-class fall into a bad condition, but the whole concentric structure allows everyone to have access to CBD, which awakens consumption consciousness of all people. Mass consumption makes Puritan ethics be replaced by consumption hedonism advocating hedonic and luxurious lifestyle. Thus people focus on desire and sensory satisfaction. Similarly, the concrete embodiment of capitalist lifestyle is the same as the concept of consumption hedonism. In this case, working-class woman Carrie has a desire to pursue living conditions of capitalism.

In regard to internal factor, American women in the late 19th century became more

independent and paid more attention to their own feelings (Beauvoir 29). In the early 19th century, the idealism restricted women's physical and mental development. They need fulfill the duty of feeding, caring for their husbands and children. By the late 19th century, the number of women in factories was increasing. Carrie in the novel left her hometown to pursue her own happiness. It is noted to find that some women in the United States got rid of the family bondage and became new women with independent consciousness and self-concern at that time. Therefore, it was natural for Carrie, a working-class woman concerned with her own feelings, to yearn for a comfortable and elegant life.

3.3.2 Shannon's sarcasm

Compared with Carrie's desire for capitalists' living styles, Shannon is inclined to hold an opposite attitude to them, which is expressed by her sarcastic narratives in *Taxi!*. Some clues can be found to prove her attitude in *Taxi!*. When it comes to the areas where capitalists lives, she sarcastically narrates that "The big bourgeoisie stay deliberately invisible so that the people won't know who the enemy is" (Potrebenko 65). It is implied that most people are hostile to capitalists and even their living areas, in terms of Shannon's narrations. So, to prevent poor classes from retaliating against the bourgeoisie, they make their house impregnable. To Shannon's sarcasm, there was a stone fence around the property, and Shannon drove around it twice before there really was an entrance, when she drove a lady who lived in the small area of Belmont Drive where the ruling class lived back to her house. The obvious division in Vancouver is a sign that the bourgeoisie discriminate against and exclude the working class and the bottom class. In the same way, the working class and the lower class, who cannot be treated kindly, are bound to treat the haughty bourgeoisie with contempt. It is self-evident that the working class woman Shannon has defiances to them.

The causes of Shannon's sarcasm are composed of the external factors and the internal factor. In terms of external factors, Shannon lived in Canada in the middle and late 20th century when the process of industrialization and urbanization in Canada tended to be slow and unemployment rate of Canadian workers continued to rise.

Specifically, according to urban space theory, Vancouver's loose urban structure with multiple centers as well as obvious, malicious and hostile space segregations in the second half of the twentieth century straightly unfold the insurmountable gap in living conditions between rich capitalists and the poor working-class so that Shannon, as a working-class woman, holds a disgusted and sarcastic attitude towards capitalists' living conditions. Concerning the working-class unemployment, in the 1970s and 1980s, the cyclical problems of the capitalist world economic development and the impact of the oil crisis led to severe stagflation in Canada. Stagnant production and slowing growth in foreign trade contributed to rising unemployment among the working-class. In this case, the career crisis curbed the desire of the working-class to consume.

From the perspective of the internal factor, the female consciousness in the middle and late 20th century shifted from focusing on their own developments to focusing on the external world under the influences of the Marxist theory and the third wave of feminism. Women are increasingly aware that they have been discriminated against economically, socially and politically. It is obvious that women have begun to pay attention to the real world at that time and become an independent woman with a broad vision. Therefore, as a working-class woman who focuses on the realistic society, Shannon is able to criticize the extravagant lifestyle of capitalism through the disguise of the hypocrisy of capitalism.

Chapter Four

SOCIAL SPACE

As Lefebvre states that “Social space is a social product. In addition to being a means of production, it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power” (16). Social space can be viewed as a space characterized by the class and status with the result of forming certain interpersonal relationships. In *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*, the working class status of Carrie and Shannon makes them be marginalized in the male-dominated capitalist society with variations of social spaces, especially working space and emotional space.

4.1 Marginalized Status of Working-Class Women

Social space is a comprehensive space, which is comprised of numerous networks and channels (Lu 134). Numerous networks and interpersonal relationships have been embodied in a variety of manifestations of social space, which mainly include public space, working space and emotional space. As working-class women, Carrie and Shannon are marginalized especially in working space and emotional space in *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*.

4.1.1 Carrie’s working space in a factory

Working space refers to the area where laborers work to earn a living. Carrie’s working space is in a factory. With the prosperity of the second industrial revolution, many factories in metropolises employ a large number of labors. As a working-class woman, Carrie only finds a job as a female worker in a shoe factory because she hasn’t any work experience when she comes to Chicago. As soon as Carrie enters the shoe factory, Carrie realizes that her working conditions are terribly poor.

There are vivid descriptions about the poor working environment in the shoe

factory and a heavy workload that Carrie is forced to undertake by capitalists in *Sister Carrie*. For working environment, Carrie works in the shoe factory with constant noises and obnoxious odors. In Carrie's eyes, "There was a large, low-ceiled room, with clacking, rattling machines at which men in white shirt sleeves and blue gingham aprons were working" (Dreiser 37). And as the working hours go on, Carrie feels that "The room was not very light, which had a thick odour of fresh leather" (Dreiser 39). As for Carrie's extreme workloads, Carrie and the workers have to work continuously all day, and the rest of the day is only half an hour of lunch. In the text, the clues can be found "When the short half hour was over, the wheels began to whirr again" (Dreiser 43). Moreover, there are foremen to supervise and urge workers all the time to extract the maximum surplus value of workers. In the text, when Carrie is fumbling at the little clamp, a foreman said "Start your machine. Don't keep the line waiting" (Dreiser 39). In addition, the extension of labor hours and the aggravation of the amount of work from capitalists do great harm to the laborers' health. "After working, Carrie was weak. Her eyes were tired" (Dreiser 40).

It is not hard to find that Carrie, as the working-class in the factory, is trapped into the harsh working conditions. What's more, Carrie is also one of the representatives of women in working-class. So, she suffers not only from capitalists' squeeze in terms of working conditions, but more seriously, from unbridled teasing and harassment by working-class men in the shoe factory. In the text, "Another young man poked her indifferently in the ribs with his thumb but she turned about, indignation leaping to her eyes" (Dreiser 43).

In general, Carrie in the factory is not only physically and continuously exploited by the capitalists, but also mentally and occasionally tortured by male workers, which means that Carrie is in a weak position in her working space.

4.1.2 Shannon's working space in a taxi

Shannon's working space is in taxi, which is more narrow than Carrie's, but Shannon's visual perspectives are extremely wide. Moreover, workers in most factories have been replaced by automated machines under the tide of the third industrial

revolution, resulting in a sharp decline in the number of workers needed in most factories. At the same time, flexible taxies supplant the widespread and bulky transports of the second industrial revolution-carriages. In this case, Shannon cannot find a job in a factory as easily as Carrie does so that she has to continue with her former part-time job-driving her taxi. Obviously, compared with Carrie's working conditions in the factory, Shannon's working conditions are more terrible and hard in the taxi.

There are some clues to support Shannon's hard working conditions in the text. For extreme workloads, it is mentioned that "Labour laws are never enforced except against workers, so there is no protection for cab-drivers and it leads owners into excess of abuse, and all the working conditions are not available to cab-drivers" (Potrebenko 17). And even "Sometimes they take days off because they have to cater to their diminishing strength" (Potrebenko 17). It is obvious that taxi drivers are squeezed infinitely, resulting from they working more hours than the workers in factories and then taking extremely heavy workloads.

At the same time, the heavy burden of work also brings great damage to cab drivers, both physically and mentally. In physical conditions, their bodies break down sharply in the inhuman working conditions. "They suffer the appalling fatigue and their stomachs start rotting from coffee and tension" (Potrebenko 15). In mental conditions, firstly cab drivers has an empty spiritual world. As Shannon describes that "There are no more dreams and no more parties for drivers" (Potrebenko 15). Their monotonous and boring work breaks out into maniacal bitterness. Cab-drivers are just like the robots who continue with the single job endlessly without any entertainments and ideas. Secondly, cab-drivers suffer from social prejudice and discrimination because most of them are the colored and immigrants. In *Taxi!*, when the colored and immigrants are not green drivers, they soon discovered that "Whatever they do, good or bad, they'll still be treated like dirt" (Potrebenko 14).

Besides that, Shannon, as a member of the few female drivers in Vancouver, suffers insults from male passengers. Most male passengers assume that Shannon is a free whore rather than a cab-driver. Once, a male passenger invited Shannon to have a sex but Shannon refused him and told that "There's hookers all over Davie and

Granville and I'm a cab-driver" (Potrebenko 29). Ironically, the male passenger said that "I wasn't meaning you were a hooker but I wouldn't pay for it" (Potrebenko 29). Compared with the insults to Carrie, the insults to Shannon by male passengers are more naked and straightforward. It is fair to say that male passengers regard women as sexual tools instead of human beings like them.

In general, Carrie in the car is considered as a making money tool by car owners and a sexual tool by male passengers, which means that Shannon is in the position of powerless resistance in her working space.

4.1.3 Carrie's subsidiary love

From emotional space, Carrie and Shannon, both working-class women, are in love with petty bourgeois men in those two novels. According to Marx, the petty bourgeoisie is a social group based on the individual ownership of the means of production and individual labor and lies between capitalists and proletarians, which mainly includes the vast number of intellectuals, small handicrafts, small businessmen and freelancers. In other words, they generally neither are exploited nor exploit others. As laborers, they tend to be in the thoughts of the proletariat while as privateers, they are inclined to those of the bourgeoisie, highly susceptible to them.

Both Carrie and Shannon have emotional entanglements with petty bourgeois men with a capitalist sense of pleasure in life but they are marginalized in the love that transcends the class hierarchy. However, Carrie and Shannon hold contrasting attitudes towards the unequal love.

Specifically, Carrie is subsidiary in love with two petty bourgeois men and holds obedient attitude to that love. In order to escape poor living conditions and live a rich life immediately, Carrie is attached to petty bourgeois men with money and status. In love, however, the petty-bourgeois men only regard Carrie as a beautiful work of art and keep her in a fine house for satisfying their appetites for pleasures and sexual desires, which implies that they have no sincerity for Carrie. At first, Carrie is seduced by Drouet who is a travelling canvasser for a manufacturing house. When Carrie lives in the fine house that Drouet prepares for her and then she has relations with him,

Carrie asks Drouet when they would get married. Drouet answers perfunctorily “When I get back from my Denver trip in January, we’ll do it” (Dreiser 101). However, when Drouet comes back from the business trip, he says to Carrie deceptively “If that little real estate deal I’ve got on goes through, we’ll get married” (Dreiser 142). In other words, he preferred the freedom of his life to any legal restraint.

Compared with Drouet who enjoys Carrie’s love and dates with other women freely, Hurstwood, a married man, who cheats on Carrie’s love increasingly sees Carrie as an object of his affections. As Carrie is deceived by Drouet, Hurstwood who is a manager of Fitzgerald and Moy’s begins to pursue Carrie in the heat of money and tenderness. Gradually, Carrie is deeply rejoicing the love from Hurstwood. As yet, “Hurstwood had only a thought of pleasure without responsibility. Carrie’s love represented only so much added pleasure” (Dreiser 139). However, when Carrie knows Hurstwood has married, she doesn’t leave Hurstwood for living a good life. And then Hurstwood absconds with funds to New York with Carrie. It is obvious that poor Carrie is still subsidiary in love with two petty bourgeois men. In other words, Carrie is merely a beautiful toy for petty bourgeois men to amuse them in the love game that she volunteers to join in.

4.1.4 Shannon’s rational love

Although Shannon falls in love with a broke, she can realize that class-crossing love won’t be lasting, in which she, a working-class woman, will be dominated by capitalist men. Compared with Carrie’s subsidiary and obedient love attitude to petty bourgeois men, Shannon prefers to a self-reliance love and she holds a rational love attitude for the petty bourgeois man.

Shannon’s self-reliant love can be analyzed in economically. Shannon can support herself and even help the petty bourgeois man’s son named Gerald who’s away from home in economically in comparison with Carrie’s economic over-dependence on the petty bourgeois men in the love. Shannon falls in love with Gerald secretly. In the text, Shannon loves Gerald without asking for anything in return, and even giving everything for him. In the text, due to Shannon’s love to Gerald, Shannon often tries her best to

help Gerald in economically. One time when Shannon visited Gerald and she gave Gerald \$20, he asked her how come she could do that after what she had to do to earn it. “She said it doesn’t matter. Her gut ached and her back ached and Gerald needs new shoes” (Potrebenko 62).

Besides that, Shannon has a rational attitude to that crossing-class love in despite of being in the marginalized and poor class. Shannon is pretty objective to recognize the discrepancies between her and Gerald in class. There are some obvious clues that can be found in *Taxi!*. In economically, Shannon has to be a cab-driver to afford her expenses in daily-life while some poetries and novels occupy Gerald’s whole life without any worries about money. As Shannon narrates that he has got a cheque to cover the fare home from his mother and a job offer from his father. So in this case, Shannon is always afraid of being betrayed by Gerald because she wishes he hasn’t chosen this time of economic distress to rejoin the decent citizenry. In hobbies, Shannon prefers to pay more attention to the real world, such as politics and wars. On the contrary, Gerald is always rapt in the unreal world, such as poetries and novels. Once Shannon persuaded Gerald to live a more realistic life, she said to Gerald, “If you ate better, you’d read Marx and get a job” (Potrebenko 87).

To sum up, Carrie and Shannon, as working-class women, have poor working conditions in their working space and unequal love relations with petty bourgeois men, which totally shows that they are in the marginalized status in social space.

4.2 Causes of Being in the Marginalized Status

According to Lefebvre, the social structures can be comprised of the distinctions of class and status, resulting in the inequality of social relations and interpersonal relationships in social nets (55). In *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*, the characters of social structures are manifested in the bases of social classification, incompatibility of social class and inequality of two genders, which also are the causes of being in the marginalized status for those two working-class women.

4.2.1 Bases of social classification

According to the bases of social classification, Carrie and Shannon are classified as laborers from the foot of the social ladder so that they cannot receive proper respects in working space and emotional space.

With boom of the second industrial revolution and establishment of business center and influence of the American dream on people's worship of money at the end of the nineteenth century, Chicago's social classification was mainly characterized by material wealth in legal ways or illegal ways. In the text, when Carrie firstly comes to Chicago, she is a pure working-class girl. She works for a shoe factory with earning four and a half a week. Obviously, Carrie's meagre labour income divides her as the oppressed working-class group. However, Carrie's class is changed immediately when she becomes a rich and famous actress in New York. Carrie becomes a real propertied class woman who can look about the dresses, jewelry and furniture she owns at any time. At the same time, she makes many friends who are the same class with her. "They would bow and smile in acknowledgment of her success" (Dreiser 524). So, the worship of money is the prevailing custom in the whole American society.

In contrast, there also was its own social classification in Vancouver in the second half of the 20th century, with more emphasis on traditional inheritance of property and acceptance of occupation. In Shannon's eyes, there are four classes in Vancouver. The local rulers and bourgeois men make money by inheriting their ancestors' properties, such as rum-running and war-profiteering. After them, there is the middle class called the rising bourgeoisie who make their money by technological skills. "And then the largest group in four classes is the working-class, such as most women, fishermen and taxi drivers" (Potrebenko 66). Most of them make a living by their labors. "The lowest and the most special group is lumpen-proletariat such as, dope pushers, bootleggers and the professional thieves" (Potrebenko 67). They have more money than even the middle-class but they must live in the slums because it is easier to hide there and that's where their customers are. There is, further, a peculiar synergistic relationship between them and rulers because of their illegal and dirty work for rulers. Apparently, through analyzing main four classes in Vancouver and especially comparing the middle-class

with the lumpen proletariat, it can be found that the divisions of class are mainly in accordance with the traditional inheritance of property and decent identification. According to that classification, Shannon's job cab-driver is inglorious in Vancouver, thus as a working-class woman, she won't be respected accordingly.

4.2.2 Incompatibility of social class

In *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*, the working-class members Carrie and Shannon are both marginalized in their working places, which is mainly caused by the incompatibility between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This conforms to what Marx revealed in *Das Kapital*. The main idea is that the incompatible relationship between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is determined by economic interests.

By analyzing the surplus value, *Das Kapital* reveals the irreconcilability of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The production process of surplus value is the combination of means of production and labor force in the hands of capitalists. In this seemingly fair process, workers get wages and their labors are compensated, but capitalists get much more over the value of labor. In essence, it is proved that capitalists gradually accumulate large amounts of capital and material wealth in the process of exploitation. The form of exploitation in which capitalists rely on workers' wage labor to obtain surplus value aggravates the work burden and poverty of the working class and eventually leads to their incompatible relation with the bourgeoisie.

Obviously, there are some clues about capitalists' exploitation to surplus value of the working class in *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*. In describing Carrie's working conditions in the shoe factory in *Sister Carrie*, Theodore Dreiser mentions that "The new socialism which involves pleasant working conditions for employees had not then taken hold upon manufacturing machines" (Dreiser 41). What's more, capitalists has a common idea that the most profit is gained by giving workers less pay and forcing them to do as much work as possible. So, contradictions between the working-class and the bourgeoisie under extremely unequal economic status will be accumulated and deepened day by day. In *Taxi!*, the surplus value of cab drivers is squeezed severely by

the cab owners. Shannon narrates that all the working conditions taken for granted by all other workers are not available to cab-drivers. The working conditions that all cab drivers are not entitled to include: the forty-hour week, eight-hour day, holidays, lunch breaks, income tax deductions, vacation pay, minimum laws and safety regulations.

Yet, the problems of factory workers and cab-drivers are not only caused by factory owners and cab owners, but actually, by the nature and system of the society. According to Marx's *Das Kapital*, to solve contradictions between the working-class and capitalists, the only way is to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie and eliminate the ownership of property materials, which can make the proletariat free from their cruel fates and achieve real liberation. So, it is inevitable to witness demise of the bourgeoisie and victory of the proletariat in the future. Furthermore, all of those explain the historical transitory of capitalist system and the historical inevitability of being replaced by socialist society. According to Marx, one of the basic characteristics of the ideal of socialist society is that individual consumer goods are allocated according to his ability and need. Just as Shannon expects that "If this was a decent(socialist) society, all drivers would own the portion of the shift they drive" (Potrebenko 17).

4.2.3 Inequality of two genders

One of Simone de Beauvoir's most famous claims in *Second Sex* is that "On ne naît pas femme, on le devient" (96). The sentence means that one is not born as a woman, but becomes one. Women here do not refer to biological gender, but rather to the traits that are given behind biological gender. In other words, femininity is not born, but acquired by the environment.

In the history section of the *Second Sex*, Beauvoir points out that the most fundamental reason for forming this characteristic of women is the patriarchal social system. She believes that in a society ruled by that culture, the relationship between men and women is always asymmetrical. Men always exist as subjects of self, while women always exist in the form of "other" who adheres to men because they are in the social system constructed by men. In patriarchal society, men are often considered to have a higher status than women, and they enjoy the dominant power over economic,

political and social status. Men deprive women of their economic and political status by restricting their rights to education and career choice. Men's dominance allows them to express a strong desire for material wealth and sexual pleasure. Therefore, it is more accurate to say that men judge women according to their own requirements. However, women's physical and spiritual needs are often ignored and they are only regarded as tools to meet men's desire. Obviously, America was not only an industrial society, but also a patriarchal society in the end of the nineteenth century. Victorian ideals still had dominated American society, at least among the middle and upper classes in the 19th century (Thomas 19). In particular, Victorian women were described as piety, purity, submission and domesticity in "Cult of True Womanhood".

In *Sister Carrie*, Carrie reserves submission and domesticity of the Victorian women mentioned above. Submission refers to women's negative reactions to men's actions and decisions. Carrie spontaneously yields to Hurstwood's self-determination in *Sister Carrie*. Carrie has no idea of leaving Chicago for New York until she is tricked and coaxed by Hurstwood into the train out of Chicago. Moreover, Carrie doesn't get out of the train immediately when she realizes that she is deprived by Hurstwood, but agrees to go to New York with him under his duplicity. For domesticity, it refers that home is the women's only domain in their daily life. As soon as Carrie clings to Drouet and Hurstwood, two men who pay for her daily expenses, she leaves the shoe factory and comes to the houses that they rent for her. In the house, Carrie spends her days in thinking about her dress to please men or contemplating in the face of helplessness and pain.

Therefore, women can only develop by relying on men, which makes the existence of women in society still keep secondary, passive and subordinate. In addition to women's own characteristics, the more important cause of gender inequality is the oppression from the male-dominated society. In *Taxi!*, the oppression for women in the male-dominated society can be seen everywhere from the perspective of Shannon, a female cab-driver. In life, Shannon always hears women cry and beg for mercy when they get beat up on morning streets. According to Shannon's narration, "it's only illegal to beat up men, and it's illegal to kill women" (Potrebenko 27). So, few men would get

jailed for raping and abusing women while women only endure violence from men because women never be not given the protection they deserve in strength and law. In occupation, there are better jobs around for men than women. All women have no choice for jobs because it's a job like any other job so for a woman. Especially, most women at Columbia and Hastings are professional prostitutes. According to Shannon, "If they had any power, they wouldn't be there" (Potrebenko 68). In other words, they are made into prostitutes whether they want to be or not under the pressure of life. In spite of the way women are treated, there are considerable ridicules about them from the outside. The most common ridicule is that the money only comes before a woman becomes a prostitute, and in most cases it is only the promise of money. In fact, a prostitute doesn't make all that much because pimps take most of it and most of hookers do that, just to feed themselves.

4.3 Discrepancies in the Social Consciousness

As Marx says: "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (82). In two texts, Carrie and Shannon, two working-class women, are in different periods of capitalist society, thus their manifestations on social existence are not the same, which promotes them to form different social consciousness.

4.3.1 Carrie's capitalist consciousness

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Carrie lived in the United States influenced by the second industrial revolution. In the period, the industry of American metropolis developed rapidly and economy rose greatly and per capita consumption level rose step by step. At the same time, American society was rife with moral degeneration. People regarded wealth and freedom as the absolute life goal of American dream, abandoning the positive concepts of original American spirit. As a result, the main idea of American dream evolved into a pursuit of success. Americans began to be lost in capitalist society, dreaming of becoming millionaires overnight suddenly so that money was the goal and standard of success for all Americans and the wealth idea was

rooted in the concept of American culture in the early 20th century. So, it is clear that Carrie is also greatly affected by the atmosphere. In *Sister Carrie*, Carrie envies the bourgeois way of life and longs to possess fancy clothes and luxurious houses immediately. In money-ship capitalist society, Carrie is changed from a pure and simple country girl to a “one dimensional person”. The “one dimension” means a transcendental force which manipulates and assimilates the capitalist social system and causes the majority of people to lose their critical consciousness (Marcuse 93).

4.3.2 Shannon's socialist consciousness

In contrast, Neo-Marxists believe that it is necessary for a small number of non-dimensional intellectuals to disclose dimensional society and culture and then enlighten people's critical thinking in order to change the “dimensional society”(Li 59). In *Taxi!*, the third industrial revolution accelerates the arrival of the era of knowledge economy. At the same time, Shannon, a well-educated female, has independent and critical ideas due to the introduction of New Marxism and left-wing ideas and the development of women's movement. In the text, there are some clues to prove that. When a passenger who works for an oil company tells Shannon that sheik makes huge profits every year, Shannon wondered “How the sheik got to own all the oil and why people cannot own any of oil” (Potrebenko 64).

From the conversation, Shannon's focus is on the benefits to the workers who work for him rather than the profits he makes. Not admiring the shiek like her passenger, Shannon rationally analyzes oil is not the private property of the oil shiek because oil is discovered and extracted by the workers. So, the oil shouldn't be owned by the shiek alone. Accordingly, in the aspect of ownership, the principle of distribution in capitalist society is private for the rich and bourgeoisie while the principle of distribution in socialist society is from each according to his ability and to each according to his work. Everyone has the right to get what they need and everyone is equal. It is clear that Shannon has the socialist consciousness.

Chapter Five

TEXTUAL SPACE

In the 20th century, the traditional way of literature creation has been unable to meet the needs of social development. The new social background calls for a new way of creation. As Cheng claims that “The narrative skills of the novel should be innovated in order to achieve the art of space” (32).

In *Towards a Theory of Space in Narrative* in 1984, Gabriel Zoran put forward textual space for the first time. In his opinion, textual space refers to the spatial structure of symbolic text, which is influenced by three aspects: narrative perspective, linear time sequence of text (the sequence of language in the process of conveying information) and language selection. Zoran in *Towards a Theory of Space in Narrative* in 1984 pointed out:

Although time and space are experienced as complementary aspects of the same situation, the spatial aspects of novel in the narrative cannot be treated in isolation. The textual space is not the structure of the text itself as a medium carrier, nor the material structure in the sense of linguistics, but the organizational composition of the re-building of the world. (58)

Therefore, different and multi-dimensional narrations will produce different spatial effects, and the linear timing of text will be reflected to a large extent in the structure design of text, and selection of characteristic image will make an unique mark on the novel. Based on Gabriel Zoran’s view and perspective of textual space, the paper will analyze recollection and image to reveal the loss of two working-class women in capitalist society and show authors’ sympathy for the heroines in *Taxi!* and *Sister Carrie*.

5.1 Reminiscences and Images of Losses

Reminiscence is an indispensable link in the switching of space that can evoke the sense of space in a text. Moreover, the flash of reminiscence takes readers from one time and space to another new time and space (Gomel 79). Besides that, David Mickelsen in *Types of Spatial Structure in Narrative* points out that repeated images are employed to break the time sequence to construct spatial structure of text (Mickelsen 69). Image is an indispensable factor in literary works. An image is made up of one or more words that refer to a visible or invisible object, such as colors, buildings, plants, smells and so on (Zuo 53). What's more, an image is composed of literal image and figurative image. A literal image refers to an image without extended meaning. A figurative meaning refers to an image with literal meaning and implicated meaning.

Both Carrie's memories of capitalists' luxurious life and Shannon's memories of the war in Vietnam and drinkers from working-class and lower-class are employed to break the time sequence to achieve the effect of space. Moreover, the losses of life of Carrie and Shannon in capitalist society are revealed by depicting Carrie's reminiscence to luxurious life and Shannon's reminiscence to low-class life. In addition, images are also used to interrupt the time sequence to develop novel's plots and express novel's theme and space effect in a text. The window and the rocking-chair, as images, frequently appear in *Sister Carrie* and develop into symbols that represent Carrie's strong desire for luxurious life of capitalism and incarnate Carrie's loss of life. In *Taxi!*, there are cage image and hippie image to represent Shannon's struggle to low-class life and incarnate Shannon's loss of career choice and identify.

5.1.1 Carrie's reminiscences to luxurious life styles

Carrie's memories about extravagant life of bourgeoisie mainly appear when Hurstwood is out of work and Carrie is not famous in New York in *Sister Carrie*, which highlights the embarrassment of Carrie's life and implicates Carrie's loss under the appearance of capitalist luxury.

In New York, Carrie recalls the fabulous dress of an actress on the stage when Carrie returns from the spacious theatre to her narrow apartment. In the terrible little

apartment, she cannot forget the glamour of an actress on the stage and the chase from audiences. “She remembered a beautiful actress had been wooed and won. The grace of this woman had won Carrie’s heart” (Dreiser 327). Obviously, it is not hard to find Carrie has always longed to be a famous actress, not just because of her interest and love for the stage, more importantly, because of her yearning for money and fame on the basis of Carrie’s careful recollection of the actress’s ornate dress and Carrie’s admiration for the actress being flattered by audience. In other words, the stage is a place where the working-class Carrie can feed her own vanity of becoming a wealthy person and play a bourgeoisie rich woman on the stage.

Besides, Mrs. Vance also leads Carrie to the upper-class restaurant in New York, which reminds Carrie of an occasion “She sat with Drouet in a good restaurant in Chicago for the first time” (Dreiser 335). However, the upper-class restaurant is higher in price than the fancy one in Chicago. Specifically, half broiled spring chicken was seventy-five in Chicago’s old Windsor dining-room and the price was so high for Carrie who then was paid four and a half dollars a week. While at Sherry’s, “The large bill of fare held an array of dishes sufficient to feed an army” (Dreiser 335). It completely proves that the price of dishes in Sherry’s is much higher than Chicago’s old Windsor restaurant and its real value, which further demonstrates the luxury of the moneyed or pleasure-loving class. At the same time, the past Carrie image suddenly appears in Carrie’s mind with her reminiscence of fancy Chicago’s old Windsor restaurant-poor, hungry, drifting at her wits’ ends. Obviously, Carrie who is further exposed to the extravagant and luxurious capitalist entertainment is afraid to go back to poverty and she still has sunk in that luxury life of capitalism all the time.

The Carrie’s memories of extravagant life of bourgeoisie in New York obviously disclose that, most of people in America chased after money and powers at all hazards under the capitalist system and the showy and wasteful life that prevailed in those days. In other words, almost everyone was lost in the capitalist society in that period. So was working-class Carrie.

5.1.2 Shannon's reminiscences to lower-class life conditions

Shannon's memories about low-class life are the war in Vietnam and drinkers of low-class. The war in Vietnam narrated by Shannon was from 1968 when the bad times really started. The war is mentioned at the beginning of Shannon's memory from 1968, which serves as the blasting fuse of the next events, such as economic recession and inflation and unemployment. However, it is noted that those problems bother the ruling class not a bit and they still are rich.

In Shannon's memory, there was a massive anti-war demonstration in Washington after the war in Vietnam lasted a more few years. However, the disasters and pains are resulted from the war going on as before with the resisting struggle of people. Although the war in Vietnam is not happened in Vancouver which is far from the battlefield, there are still bad influences brought by the war from the perspective of the spatial theory.

In *Taxi!*, bad influences are mainly manifested in spiritual paralysis of the low-class in Canada. With the baby's laughing and the intense love in Shannon's friend Evelyn's voice to the baby, Shannon recalls the bad time when it really started in 1968. According to Shannon's memory, the war in Vietnam had been going on for many years by then, and the protests all over the world had no visible effects so that they diminished in the next few years. Although the protests are suppressed, their and people's resistance and disagreement are showed in a different form-spiritual paralysis from the low-class. "The U.S. defeated in Vietnam, continued bombing people in a manner indicating rational behaviour could no longer be expected" (Potrebenko 10).

The non-rational behaviors or the spiritual paralyses manifestations from the low-class contain that despair and demoralization increased the crime rate and this was blamed on police laxness and drunkenness and dope addiction increased by phenomenal numbers. (Potrebenko 10)

What's more, drunkenness is the most common manifestation of spiritual paralyses from the low-class. Especially, drinkers who are mainly from low-class are also recalled frequently in the text. At the beginning of the text, it occurs to Shannon that she drives car with drinking out of her mind and Bradley is firstly absorbed in alcohol in an

evening, when she sees a female drinker who has suffered from domestic violence losing her mind in the street. The working-class drinkers and female drinkers appear frequently in the text and evolve into a symbol which represents the depressed and the evasive.

On one hand, the return rate on capital of fixed assets is higher than that of living labor under the influence of the development of science and technology in the third industrial revolution. In this case, capitalists use machines to replace human labors. At the same time, there is an increasingly polarization for job market. In particular, creative and high-paying jobs will increase while repetitive lower jobs will fall sharply. As a result, ordinary workers in low-skilled jobs, whose living conditions are getting worse and worse, become the discriminated under the impact of technology. In the text, Bradley, as a representative working-class male drinker in the third industrial revolution, is replaced by a machine in the bottling factory so that he loses his job with scientific and technological progress and capitalist degeneration, which makes him so depressed that Bradley drinks more and more after that.

On the other hand, a typical female drinker often suffers from the domestic violence so that she feels depressed and even paralyzed for life. At the beginning of *Taxi!*, a female drinker is described that “Her face was puffy and one eye was swollen and blue and there was a partially healed cut across one side of her forehead” (Potrebenko 2). And when Shannon asks the female drinker’s reason for the situation, the woman replies “Somebody beat me up” (Potrebenko 2). In that case, Shannon persuades her to go to hospital but the woman says in the same flat voice “No, I am okay” (Potrebenko 2).

The Shannon’s memories of the war in Vietnam and drinkers of the low-class obviously disclose that most of people in Vancouver felt depressed and even paralyzed because of the disasters and pains brought by the war in Vietnam. In other words, people from the low-class were lost in the capitalist society in that period. So was working-class Shannon.

5.1.3 Carrie's enthrallment to upper-class living environment

Image is usually regarded as an indirect space art to express the author's opinion. What's more, the recurring images implicate the theme of a novel. According to Frank, a reader needs to link the repeated images as a whole before the novel conforms to any meaningful pattern (16). The use of images in a novel breaks the traditional linear narrative structure and increases the interest of reading process, which delays the reading time and expands the length of the novel. At the same time, the reader has to read repeatedly in order to gain a full understanding to the true meaning of images in the novel. In this case, the readers will entirely give priority to the spatial environment of the novel rather than the chronological sequence of the novel.

There are some recurring images in *Sister Carrie*, especially the window and the rocking-chair. Dreiser employs those repeated images that transcend their own natural natures and symbols' abstract meanings to incarnate Carrie's growing desire for luxurious capitalist life and Carrie's deepening disorientation in the appearance of a prosperous capitalist world.

As an image, the window appears continually in the text, which is a way to portray city space. City is a complex contradiction that unfolds the progress of human beings and the disorientation of human beings. In a city, people not only enjoy the convenience of infrastructure and the pleasant psychological feeling of material consumption, but also suffer from the misery of being lost in material pleasures. The loss is mainly reflected on the emotional characteristics of human beings, such as loneliness, emptiness and so on. Thus, Carrie's growing and everlasting desire for luxurious capitalist life and Carrie's enthrallment in the life are shown by the description of urban space in *Sister Carrie*.

The appearance of the repeated image of window symbolizes Carrie's growing desire. The image of the window firstly appears when Carrie firstly arrives in Chicago in the text. At the front window of her sister Minnie's apartment, Carrie enjoys that "The lights of grocery stores were shining" (Dreiser 11). The bright and bustling scenes of Chicago outside the window make the country girl Carrie appreciate the charm of this metropolis. Especially, the urban space outside the window is so attractive while

the space inside the apartment is so unpleasant. Carrie who lives in the suffocating apartment is eager to flee immediately from the poor apartment and throw herself into the urban space outside the window. She was pleased to leave the house because she felt the drag of a lean and narrow life.

The image of window secondly appears when Drouet persuades Carrie to leave her sister's house and offers Carrie a nice one to live in. At that time, Carrie's desire for luxurious life is stronger than before. She wants to have a beautiful and independent house after she has seen the cottage behind the window. Carrie looked out through the window into the busy street. "There it was, the admirable, great city, so fine when you are not poor" (Dreiser 74). The image of window is once again mentioned when Carrie compares mansions on the rich area with the apartment that Drouet rents for Carrie. Carrie realized that "There were but three small rooms" (Dreiser 122). In contrast, the glow of the palatial doors was still in her eye. "At her window, she gazed out across the lamp-lit park to the lamp-lit houses on Warren and Ashland avenues" (Dreiser 123). Carrie, who has seen fascinating mansions through the window of her apartment, is no longer content with living in a small comfortable apartment. What she longs for is a mansion of the rich.

It is clear that the recurring window image symbolizes the ballooning desire of Carrie. After driving away the fog of the desire for unlimited growth, Carrie's emotional disorientation in her life is revealed by the repeated rocking-chair image in the text. In New York city, Carrie, who has lost Hurstwood's financial support, has no idea how to satisfy her desire. Sitting in the rocking-chair, Carrie begins to feel pain and helplessness behind the endless desire. She sat in her chair and rocked and she was beginning to see through longing and conflicting desires. "Oh, ye legions of hope and pity-of sorrow and pain" (Dreiser 341). After Carrie becomes famous and successfully obtains most of desires, her emotional loss is more intense and obvious. She could look about on her gowns and yet she was lonely. "In her rocking-chair she sat, when not otherwise engaged-singing and dreaming..." (Dreiser 525). Carrie is just like a machine acquiring desires in the capitalist society. To satisfy her own desires, Carrie abandons her family affection and love, leaving her only endless desire and loneliness.

Appreciating the bustling urban landscape, Carrie is driven by desire and alienated as a servant of desire. Her goal in life is no longer to pursue the ideal and ultimate concern beyond reality, but to strive for money to enjoy the happiness of mortals. She eventually becomes a tool for capitalist economic aims, a completely passive consumer and one dimensional person. Herbert Marcuse in *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* points out that one dimensional person refers to the person who only enjoys material life and loses spiritual pursuit, negatively accepting the reality without any critical consciousness (93). As a result, her life loses its value, significance and the infinite beauty and goodness of human nature obscured and suppressed, leaving only loneliness and emptiness to accompany her all day.

5.1.4 Shannon's struggle in lower-class living environment

As a repeated image, cage image refers to the constraints and limitations of Shannon and all women in choosing a career in *Taxi!*. Such constraints like patriarchal consciousness and sex discrimination, however, disorient Shannon and all women in their career choices. In this case, most women have no alternative but to return their families.

A 55-year-old female passenger without a job talks to Shannon about how few career choices women are offered. Shannon agrees that there are so few choices for women. "They've got you in a cage" (Potrebenko 39). In a patriarchal society, women are confined to their families, so that they lose their voice in society, and people naturally ignore that women can work as well as men. Especially, it is more appropriate for women to take on some jobs. Besides that, women are regarded as "other" in the absence of financial support. When one male passenger is asked if women are human beings, the man says "Women are women and vive le difference" (Potrebenko 140). Shannon retorts that "Women are people you know, and you can't treat them as if they are monkeys in a cage" (Potrebenko 141). Therefore, those inherent ideas and practices from male-dominated society are the constraints and restrictions for women to seek job opportunity.

The women in the cage are lost in the predicament of no chance of employment,

and so is Shannon. After dropping out of college, Shannon begins to look for employment opportunities. However, none of interviews turn into a job, which makes Shannon cry in despair with no solution. “She filled out 19 applications and had five interviews and came home crying after each other” (Potrebenko 7).

After failing to hunt a job, Shannon goes back to driving full-time because she has driven cab part-time before. As one of the few female driver, Shannon is still regarded as “a monkey in a cage” by men. In other words, women are as undignified as animals from the perspective of sex discrimination. A male passenger says to Shannon “Oh, I wasn’t meaning you were a hooker and I wouldn’t pay for it” (Potrebenko 29). Even some passengers name Shannon as “little chick”. Therefore, Shannon dresses herself like a “hippie” and tells her passengers that she is a “hippie” in order to protect herself from malevolent flirting and sexual assaults by male passengers.

The hippie is another recurring image in *Taxi!*, which symbolizes the disorientation of Shannon’s female identity in the male-dominated society. In most people’s eyes, hippies are advocates of ecstasy and sexual liberation. They are synonymous with the fallen and gays, who respect and promote homosexuality. As Shannon describes that “They are neither boys nor girls and they come in entirely other groups” (Potrebenko 30). Therefore, Shannon dresses as a hippie to escape the sexual harassment of many male passengers under people’s recognition that hippies have natural gender and homosexual orientation.

However, Shannon’s female identity is also lost in such an environment. During driving a taxi, Shannon cannot expose her gender or any female characteristics. She has to disguise as a hippie boy in dressing for driving a taxi. Anchuk, a manager of Purple Door, says to Shannon “Your short hair that makes you look like a hippie boy” (Potrebenko 50). In addition to the dressing, Shannon’s ideas and conceptions are the same with hippies’. Real hippies are used to describe the young people in western countries who fought against established social values and politics with pure spirits in the 1960s and 1970s. So, as one of the real hippies, Shannon has a great passion for talking politics. In *Taxi!*, Frank, the manager of taxi company, has frequently warned Shannon not to always talk politics to passengers. He says “You’ve been talking politics

since the War Measures Act” (Potrebenko 43). Shannon retorts that “The War Measures Act didn’t say I couldn’t talk politics to passengers” (Potrebenko 43).

However, women hardly have the idea to talk about politics in that patriarchal society, because talking about politics wasn’t the women’s field in that period from the perspective of social gender. While both men and women have the right and freedom to talk politics nowadays. It is noted that Shannon’s practice is a revolt against the patriarchal society from the perspective of today’s society. On the contrary, Shannon, as a hippie, blurs her gender by talking politics from the perspective of the male-dominated society. In other words, Shannon shows certain characteristics and practices of men in that society.

Obviously, the image of hippie has no any typical features of female image that are required by the patriarchal society, such as neutral dress and political enthusiasm. So, the hippie symbolizes the disorientation of Shannon’s female identity in a male-dominated society.

5.2 Causes of Being Lost

According to the analysis of the above memories and images, there are two main reasons for Carrie’s disorientation of life and emotion and Shannon’s loss of spirit and female identity. One is the guidance of social values in the capitalist society. The other is the incomplete construction of spiritual civilization under the capitalist system.

5.2.1 Oriented-values of capitalist societies

The working-class Carrie is immersed in the sea of desires for capitalist life while the working-class Shannon is rapt in the world of alcohol. The main reason for their situations is that they are guided by different values of the capitalist societies.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Chicago which Carrie lived in advocated free consumption. According to the above analysis of urban structure, Chicago was a consumption-centered metropolis in that period. From the perspective of Zygmunt Bauman’s Post Marxism, consumer markets achieve social integration through seductive consumer culture rather than compulsory state power. Bauman points out that

consumption culture has become an important feature of contemporary society and the core of its operation (226). In the consumerism era when consumption dominates the operation of society, people have sufficient free space in the consumer market. The way of life and aesthetic judgment are centered on consumption. But this freedom of consumption cannot reach the full freedom of the individual.

Bauman tears off the coat of consumer freedom and reveals its inherent deceptiveness (143). The deceptiveness of consumption freedom is that the freedom, pleasure and happiness dominated by consumption desire are false and never be satisfied. Dependence on shopping and consumer goods is the requirement for every individual freedom and the degree to which freedom relies on consumer choice is determined by the quantity of goods used. Thus, it is common and tempting to regard life as a series of experiences of consumer choices. Consumption has no other purpose than its own maintenance and strengthening. Consumption is absolutely unreasonable. In *Sister Carrie*, Carrie's brief pleasure and growing desire are achieved through all sorts of consumption in her life, such as, watching plays in upper-class theaters, eating in luxurious restaurants and living in splendid hotels. In the end, however, Carrie becomes a slave for growing desire and a loser for emotion.

In addition, Bauman finds that consumption is not only an act of satisfying material desires, but also an act of manipulation to symbolic things for purposes (146). In the aspect of life, symbolic things refer to identity and the relationship between people. So, consumption is an act to build identity, self and personal relationships in life. In *Sister Carrie*, as soon as Carrie moves to petty-bourgeois living areas in Chicago and New York, she begins to make friends with petty bourgeoisie, such as, Mrs.Hale, the daughter of a railroad treasurer and Mrs. Vance. On the contrary, Carrie has no chance to meet the upper class as she lives with her sister's house located in the working-block. Obviously, consumption on renting house is a means for Carrie to achieve the goal of joining the bourgeoisie and becoming a bourgeoisie.

Carrie becomes a "free consumer" who is enslaved by growing desires and she constantly integrates into the upper class by the means of consumption in the consumption-dominated society.

Compared with Carrie living in the consumption-dominated society, Shannon lives in a war trauma ruled society. The psychological trauma is mainly caused by the Vietnam War that is the liberation war for fighting against American aggression and taking a stand for national independence. This war not only has a serious impact on the two main parties: the United States and Vietnam, but also has a psychological aspect of the Canadian people.

As a close neighbor of the United States, Canada has lagged far behind the United States in economically. As a result, the gap in power has forced Canada to obey the United States' s will in handling bilateral relations. Although Canada was unwilling to favor America in Vietnam War, it had to help America indirectly due to the pressure exerted by America. Besides that, the two countries not only share long borders, but also communicate with each other frequently. They share a high degree of similarity in culture and way of life. So, Canada has been one of the countries most directly and severely affected by Americanization.

In this case, there was a high inflation for Canada's domestic economy during the Vietnam War so that a series of strikes broke out in Canada. When a Vietnamese offensive began in April, events were leading towards a general strike in Quebec. "The Civic Workers strike in Vancouver began on April 27" (Potrebenko 121). The incessant strikes and the hippies movement incorporated the American philosophy push Canada into the anti-mainstream culture movement. So, Canadians have emerged to abandon existing social values and sought a kind of nihilistic, escapist way of life with the social unrest and their dissatisfaction with reality and confusion about the future. The main manifestations of the escapist lifestyle include: drunkenness, domestic violence, drug abuse and some other extreme crimes.

Carrie who is blinded by desires and Shannon who is addicted in alcohol are influenced by free consumption and psychic trauma from the Vietnam War in capitalist societies respectively.

5.2.2 Alienated spirits in realistic societies

Working-class Carrie abandons her love and family, leaving her with endless

desires and loneliness and working-class Shannon has so few job opportunities that she has drunk to get rid of the worries for a while under the influence of machine automation. The main reason for their situations is that both of them live in the capitalist societies with incomplete construction of spiritual civilization.

The emergence of capitalist spiritual civilization links with the establishment of capitalist mode of production. On one hand, the civilization develops and changes with development of capitalist material civilization and change of basic contradiction of capitalist society. On the other hand, it reflects situation of spiritual life in capitalist society. However, dominated by private ownership system, the civilization presents a trend of self-disintegration that is different from the self-improvement of socialist spiritual civilization.

Furthermore, an important manifestation of the self-disintegration of capitalist spiritual civilization is the alienation of human spirit in capitalist society. People's spiritual alienation can be regarded as that people are ruled by the instrumental rationality that refers to the result of evolution and development of Enlightenment Spirit and reason itself. However, material and money begin to replace the Enlightenment Spirit with the development of capitalism. So, reason degenerates from the tool of liberation into the tool of ruling nature and men.

In the capitalist society of the 20th century, the human spirit was dominated by materialized forms, such as machines and consumption. In *Sister Carrie*, Carrie who lives in a consumption prevailed society is keen on the pursuit of money and status. Similarly, Shannon who lives in the machine automation society longs for a job that can earn money to feed herself in *Taxi!*. However, Shannon isn't as lucky as Carrie to fulfill her desires that Shannon has to get drunk all day to escape the confusion of a shortage of money. It means that there has been no extremely antagonistic distinction, and there is hardly any difference between people in modern capitalist society. The only difference is the amount of material wealth people possess, which reflects the level of human status. In a word, the alienation in the spiritual world can be interpreted as that people are dominated by capital in a more insidious way today.

5.2.3 Victims in capitalist systems

Both Carrie and Shannon are working-class members. The former is immersed in the memory of the luxury life of capitalism and the latter falls into the memory of unemployment and poverty brought by capitalist society. They are victims under the capitalist system from perspectives of basic contradiction of capitalism and cultural spirit.

According to the basic contradiction of capitalism, the main manifestation is the contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat within the country. Marx points out that capitalists' main means of increasing their wealth is to extract absolute surplus value of workers as much as possible, which inevitably results in absolute poverty among workers and sharp class antagonism. Engels says "The contradiction between social production and capitalist possession is manifested in the opposition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie" (745).

Carrie is squeezed by capitalists in factories and theaters. The income she earns is far below the real value of her work, making it hard to cover her daily expenses. However, Shannon is squeezed harder by capitalism than Carrie. Because of machine automation, the factory needs so less labors that she has no opportunity to find a job in factory, forcing her to become a taxi driver. As a taxi driver, Shannon is squeezed not only by taxi owner, but also by passengers in terms of paying fees. In a word, Carrie and Shannon are the victims under the capitalist system.

From the perspective of cultural spirit, capitalism is actually a system based on individualism, which aims at pursuing the unlimited increase of personal wealth so as to satisfy individual desire to the maximum extent. Under such a system, Carrie is a machine governed by desire, whose spiritual world is empty. However, Shannon doesn't have the opportunity to fulfill her own desires. At the same time, Shannon of socialism has realized the essence of capitalism but Shannon is unable to change the system of capitalism and has to struggle under the system, whose spirit world is suffering and helpless.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

This thesis is devoted to comparing the similar survival dilemmas and different social consciousness of the two working-class women in the industrial revolution periods and the two writers who depict the two working-class women. By comparing the working-class women images in *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*, we can reach a more thorough understanding to different characteristics of the two industrial revolution periods and different social ideologies as well as the survival status of the working class. Furthermore, the thesis applies urban space, social space and textual space in spatial theory to analyze the living conditions of the two working-class females, their working conditions, love choices and memories related to their lives. On the basis of spatial theory, the portrayals of working-class women image in literature reveal class incompatibility, gender inequality and all sorts of malpractices in capitalist society.

From perspective of urban space, Carrie lives in Chicago which is a concentrated city with only one common center and obvious division of class residence area. While Shannon lives in Vancouver which is a relatively loose city with multiple centers and insurmountable division of residence area for the rich and the poor. Such a urban space results in poor and terrible life conditions for Carrie and Shannon. However, those two working-class women have completely opposite attitudes towards luxury life of the bourgeoisie. From the perspective of social space, bases of class division, incompatibility of social class and gender inequality cause working-class women Carrie and Shannon to be regarded as “other” by the bourgeois men in their work and loves. However, Carrie and Shannon build different social consciousnesses in hard social environments. Finally, the thesis thoroughly explains different living attitudes and social consciousnesses of the two working-class women Carrie and Shannon by probing into relevant memories and images on life in textual space. Furthermore, oriented value

and incomplete construction of spiritual civilization of capitalist society promote working-class women Carrie and Shannon to have a completely opposite understandings to capitalist society. And the social backgrounds of *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!* including two Industrial Revolutions and two authors' social ideologies also play an important role in different attitudes and social consciousnesses of Carrie and Shannon.

In terms of the functions of spatial theory in literature, the disparities between Carrie's living condition and Shannon's living condition in their urban space provide a basic setting for the layout of *Sister Carrie* and *Taxi!*. The marginalized statuses in working places and loves for Carrie and Shannon develop the plot of the two novels effectively in social space. What's more, the special techniques including reminiscence and image in textual space break chronological order and give priority to the spatial environment of the two novels.

From the perspective of comparative study, the two novels and two females illustrate various disadvantages of capitalist society, including serious gap in wealth, obvious class division, gender inequality from the development process of the social backgrounds of the United States and Canada respectively, which significantly provides reflections, introspections and enlightenments for modern society.

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