

# Response Essay 1

---

SID 12011124

Name 冯柏钧

Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space: From From Absolute Space to Abstract Space

Generally, Sections 1-9 discuss absolute space, where sections 3-7 analyze the space of ancient Rome and Greece, and sections 8-9 analyze the space of the Middle Ages. Section 10-11, Spatial Analysis of the Transformation of Western Societies in the sixteenth Century: The Role of CITIES. Section 12-14, Formation, Development and Characteristics of abstract Space: The State and Capital.

As far as he was concerned, examining space can help us address the methodological and theoretical questions presented in "What changed during this critical period".

In the eye of the author, Ancient and medieval space is absolute space, while capitalist space is abstract space. From the Middle Ages to the pre-century it was a process of capital accumulation and it was also a process of profit from war, and he thinks the space that emerged in Western in the 12th-century was a space for accumulation.

When he reviews the development of human civilization or production "from absolute space to abstract space", he repeatedly used the ternary concept of space to explain some typical nodes in history — spatial practice, the representation of space, and representational space. He takes the same view of history as Marx that people make history even though they don't always realize it.

His main argument:

The transformation has three links. The first link, things in space (objects). Production still respects nature, choosing certain parts of natural space, such as water and earth, and using their contents. Agriculture dominates. Form (thought and action) is not yet separated from content. At this time the space is an absolute space. The second link is the accumulation of wealth, knowledge and technology, and therefore production. First for exchange, then for money and capital itself. The artificial emerges and triumphs over nature, form and content separate. As a result, philosophical and scientific thought began to conceive of space without things and objects, which, when separated from things, was resolved as a form or as an essence (Descartes) or, on the contrary, as a "pure transcendental" (Kant). The result of the separation of time and space also includes that space makes time under the control of the practice of accumulation. This is the transformation from historical space to abstract space. The third link: Relative to the present, space and things are reunited. At this stage, the "in-itself" space is no longer comprehensible, no longer ponderable, no longer known, and neither is the "in-itself" time, that is, absolute time. Time is recognized and realized in space and becomes a social reality through social practice. But with the development of capitalism and its practice, a difficulty in the connection between time and space appeared. Finally, the capitalist mode of production reproduces nature and dominates space through production space, which is the political space of capitalism. Time was also simplified to prevent the production of new social relationships. Capitalism has reached its limit, beyond which reproduction will not be able to stop production. This production does not refer to the production of things, but to the production of social relations.

As a student of computer science, it is really hard to read and try to understand the points of social science and even philosophy. However, his point of view also further confirms that the natural evolution of things is often from the surface to the inside, just like the development of computer science, the improvement of technical details happens all the time, but the innovation of algorithm ideas needs a long accumulation. Of course, while algorithms continue to evolve, the essence of old algorithms does not disappear. Instead, different ideas collide and recombine in new algorithms.

I agree with the author. Deeply influenced by Marxist thought, I agree that the economic basis determines the superstructure, and the productive forces determine the relations of production, which also have a negative effect on the productive forces. We can analyze the level of productive forces and relations of production in a certain period by discussing the composition of space, so as to deeply understand the historical events in this period. Feudal system and the serf system in ancient times had to promote grain production, the system of capitalism in modern times also greatly enhanced the productivity, but as more people intelligence (rising of living standards, the education level also rises), more people will have stronger political demands, it also reflects in the modern city space allocation.