

# Spatial Production Analysis of the Film Mr.Six from the Perspective of Spatial Ternary Theory

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## Abstract

Henri Lefebvre space theory that space production is in the “spatial representation”, “space practice” and “representation space”, this paper using Henri Lefebvre “space ternary dialectics” as a theoretical basis, this paper expounds the film *Old Gun* as the aesthetic experience of material space, as meaning construction of spiritual space, as an open choice of social space in the film narrative concrete presentation and meaning expression.

## Keywords

“Mr.Six”, Space Production, Space Three-Yuan Dialectics

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## 1. Introduction

In 2015 film *Mr.Six* in Venice Film Festival held the global first screening, then in domestic cinemas, with its content theme rich profound, delicate artistic performance in the film market, do well in the academic also analyzed a lot of research on the film, or focus on photography, music, etc, or focus on the characterization, theme expression such as narrative analysis, few scholars to the space narrative or production analysis. With the help of Henri Lefebvre’s ternary space theory and the specific content of the film *Mr.Six*, the author tries to analyze the spatial production of the film.

## 2. Space and Ternary Dialectics

Film is the integrated art of time and space, but in the practice of theoretical research, influenced by novel narratives that are good at expressing timeliness, people attach great importance to the time narrative in movies, with the help of various narrative theory tools, therefore, time is called “rich, productive, living, dialectical”, while the spatial narrative is less attention. For example, the famous American film historian David Podwell, in his book *Film Art: Form and Style*, he

simply regards the scene props under the perspective of the scene setting and the scene scheduling as space, treat the spatial narrative as an accessory to the temporal narrative, space is therefore regarded as a “dead, fixed, non-dialectical and static thing”.

As one of the spatial turns, one of the “three turns” of western social research theories in the late 20th century, space—an important medium for people to understand, accept and express the world, has attracted increasing attention from the academic community. The concept of space has gradually emerged from the concept of physics and geometry, and is closely linked with culture, society and history. Henry Lefebvre, a famous French cultural geography scholar, divided space into three categories: “material space” (Material Space), “the representation of space” (the Representation of Space) and “the space of expression” (Space of Representation) (Lefebvre, 2021). “Material space” is the space of individual feeling and the space of objective existence; “the expression of space” is the space created by the creator and the space designed like the architecture of the painter and the scenery of the photographer; “the space of expression” is the space that people experience and “the space of feeling, imagination, emotion and meaning in our life day after day, or the potential space accumulated in our psychological structure”. On this basis, Henry Lefebvre also put forward the “ternary dialectics of space”, that is, the natural, spiritual and social stratification of space production. Henry Lefebvre believes that spatial production is realized in “spatial representation”, “spatial practice” and “representational space”, in which spatial representation is the space in conception and is dominant in spatial practice and representation space (Lefebvre, 2021). Space practice is an important one-dimension of Henry Lefebvre, which mainly refers to the objectivity and materiality of space in people’s perception, including specific sites and spatial collections in different social forms, as well as their production and reproduction (Du, 2020). Therefore, spatial practice is a productive construction of material space. Representational space is the space influenced by spatial representation, and it is the social space that reflects social relations. In other words, Henry his spatial dialectics in the three space, namely material space, spiritual space and social space, among them, the social space is social space should be the material and mental space overall deconstruction and tentative reconstruction, resulting in a new open choice, the choice and material space and spiritual space is similar and different (Lefebvre, 2021). He summarized the three dimensions of “three space dialectics” into perception (perceived), conception (conceived) and life (live), namely, material space is the space perceived, and spiritual space is the conceived space. Generally speaking, he transcends the previous debate on the nature of space, believing that space is the process of social production, but also the process of the reorganization of social relations and the practical construction of social order.

### 3. As the Material Space of Aesthetic Experience

The first space in the theory of space described by Henry Lefebvre is material

space. As a medium, film presents material space through moving images and has unique advantages, thus creating visual art wonders that other artistic categories cannot match. In the film, the material space is not only “the space carrier of the occurrence of the narrative, but also the medium for the characters to have the relationship with the world in the story (Liu & Wang, 2020)”. The creator of the film “The Old Gun” presents the different spatial landscape in this unique region of Beijing. Represented by six ye “old gun” living in Beijing hutong and courtyard traditional architectural space, represented by small fly young “old gun” living in repair shop, villa and other modern building space, through the old Beijing and new Beijing material space “juxtaposition”, not only film narrative in this material space, more important is the material space provides the audience with a unique aesthetic experience. At the beginning of the film, the courtyard life in the Beijing hutong shows us the enthusiasm and simplicity between people in the traditional material space. But the repair factory when Xiao Fei leaves the factory is cold and complex, the sparks generated by the cutting machine constantly appearing in the depths of the lens scene are hot but a mechanical modern material space rather than the smell of fireworks in the courtyard. To posing different material spaces in the same region in the movie, this spatial form directly determines the aesthetic tone and visual style of Mr.Six, this mix of old and new, the material space of both tradition and modernity, as an intermediary of Beijing’s activities and behavior in the process of modernization. It is also the result of the collision between traditional culture and modern culture. As Henry Lefebvre said, “The manufacturing process as a material form of social space is manifested not only as a mediator of human activities and behavior, as well as as a result” (Lefebvre, 2021).

#### **4. Spiritual Space Constructed as a Meaning**

Henry Lefebvre elaborated the representation of space, the spiritual space in the ternary theory, arguing that “the purest form of spiritual space is entirely conceptual, acquiring ideas from conceived or imagined geography, and projects them into the empirical world (Zhao & He, 2012)”. Henry Lefebvre does not mean that there is no material reality, but that he emphasizes the comprehensive understanding of matter through thinking to construct meaning. In the film Mr.Six, the creator presents us with a spiritual space that is very popular with contemporary audiences. Guan Hu said, “Mr.Six is a culture, is the spirit, is a kind of human nature forced back and eroded by the rapidly developing social environment.” The sixth master is the bearing individual of the ideal spiritual space integrating benevolence, righteousness, morality and righteousness. Six ye takes benevolence and righteousness as the concept of action, and inherits the traditional moral view of dealing with people. Whether it is “sending the ID card back” or mediating the street disputes between chengguan and lampshade, he consciously unifies all kinds of big and small feelings into the concept of benevolence and righteousness in the spiritual space. The son has to lose money, the former old friends secretly stuffed money, donate money to the begging girl

Zheng Hong and so on, this is the concentrated embodiment of the traditional folk moral view. The mental space of the whole film is not only on Mr.Pao's side, On the new side of the gun, In the aspect of characterization, we also pay attention to the excavation of its spiritual space, Xiao Fei's appearance is a close-up of the martial arts novel Xiao Li Fei Knife. An individual who also wandered in society like Mr.Six, but they have the spiritual pursuit of reading wuxia novels. The arrangement of this characterization is not only a mutual expression of the director' his own. It is also an implicit arrangement to guide the audience to Xiao Fei's spiritual identity. The audience can identify with the connotation of the spiritual space in the view-acting relationship constructed by the director, thus achieving an aesthetic state of empathy. Finally, the character image of Xiao Fei leads the audience to finally recognize the spiritual space of the old gun. The brilliance of humanity still shines. The creator constructs the theme meaning of the film through the shaping of the spiritual space.

### 5. Social Space as an Open Choice

Henri Lefebvre of social space is a so-called "other", "space production" that "social space should be the material and mental space overall deconstruction and tentative reconstruction, resulting in a new open choice, the choice and material space and spiritual space is similar and different" (Lefebvre, 2021). The creator of Mr.Six presents a third space—in the screen sense for the audience. The word "river's lake" in the Chinese culture and the mainstream culture opposite category, "in the temple is the king, in the river's lake, is the" temple opposite material place, is also the ancient literati class to seclusion, born, enjoy the spirit of the pursuit of life space, these two points are based on the elegant culture of "river lake", represented by the popular culture, "jianghu" is a symbol of nomadic culture, is also away from the mainstream culture, is the individual nomadic living state. Because the temple does not have to struggle for life is relatively stable; and the lack of security to get to so life is full of changes. This "river's lake" shows a turbulent situation. In the movie, in the river's lake space and material space is similar to old gun military coat, saber, these space symbols, with the mainstream space culture, is s sense, nostalgia, rejected by the non-mainstream culture, and the spirit space is similar to the road, loyalty of the rules, they are individual nomadic state, not too much of the organization form, thus generated the spirit of nomadic culture space. Both material space and spiritual space prove the truth and credibility of jianghu space. However, the difference between river and lake space and material space and spiritual space is that it tries to construct a new social relationship. In the Production of Space, Henry Lefebvre proposed that "space is filled with social relations: it is not only supported by social relations, but also produced by social relations". The river and lake space is filled with social relations, which contains all kinds of contradictions of social relations as well as the construction of reorganization. In "Mr.Six", the new gun represented by Tan Xiaofei and the old Six represented by Six Ye experienced a road of construct social relations from confusion, under-

standing and identification, and the biggest help on this road is the river and lake space. Director in setting small fly way with other “new gun”, small fly hand alone sofa, holding martial arts novels, is a indulge in the literary world, depending on the river space link, small fly in six ye issued “I think such people are written in the book, meet with you, I believe”. Therefore, the social space of jianghu has become an important space for the resolution of conflicts in the film. The feud between the two generations moves from confrontation to reconciliation, and then the new social relations and social order are reconstructed. Six ye, of course, did not get new life in the river’s lake space, he died in the form of jianghu people, for his spirit space for river’s lake rules, traditional faith, and represented by son of new gun new social space construction, at the same time the film also completed the Henry fefivre space “open choice” proposition.

## 6. Epilogue

Henry Liphivre’s spatial ternary dialectics is not only the expression of each independent meaning, but also a dialectical unity. It emphasizes the dialectical unity among society, history and space, so it is connected in each dimension, and “keeps awake and comfortable” between various Spaces. Starting from this meaning, the analysis of the film, also is just the first step, between the three space also has the connection and the construction of the material space and aesthetic experience as the spiritual space as each meaning, as an open choice of social space to the above two deconstruction, and construct the open choice at the same time.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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