

significantly improve chapter 7. My thanks also to Gail Sansbury for her useful essays and comments.

And then, there is Barbara Hooper. An older student and experienced writer who returned to the university after almost two decades of "other" work, Barbara almost instantaneously began by teaching me far more than I was able to teach her. Barbara is the only person who has read and creatively critiqued a complete draft of *Thirdspace*, after responding to earlier drafts as well. She has softened what she calls my rottweiler growls, steadfastly insisted on keeping *Thirdspace* open to constant (and unruly) reinterpretation, fed me informative quotes and ideas, and helped more than any other to make this book better than I could have made it alone.

Finally, there are those that deserve thanks for helping me complete what was beginning to feel like a neverending project. A grant from the Getty Foundation for collaborative research with Janet Abu-Lughod on "The Arts of Citybuilding: New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles" contributed significantly in pushing me to finish *Thirdspace* so that I could move on to new adventures. John Davey at Blackwell was always there, from beginning to end, with his gentle support. And also always there but far from gentle in her pressures to get me out of my smoky garden office-cell, finish the damned book, and do something for a change, was Maureen. She always gets the last word.

by Edward W. Soja
Cambridge, Mass. : Blackwell, 1996.
Thirdspace : journeys to Los Angeles
and other real-and-imagined places

Introduction/Itinerary/Overture

My objective in *Thirdspace* can be simply stated. It is to encourage you to think differently about the meanings and significance of space and those related concepts that compose and comprise the inherent *spatiality of human life*: place, location, locality, landscape, environment, home, city, region, territory, and geography. In encouraging you to think differently, I am not suggesting that you discard your old and familiar ways of thinking about space and spatiality, but rather that you question them in new ways that are aimed at opening up and expanding the scope and critical sensibility of your already established spatial or geographical imaginations.

Mobilizing this objective is a belief that the spatial dimension of our lives has never been of greater practical and political relevance than it is today. Whether we are attempting to deal with the increasing intervention of electronic media in our daily routines; seeking ways to act politically to deal with the growing problems of poverty, racism, sexual discrimination, and environmental degradation; or trying to understand the multiplying geopolitical conflicts around the globe, we are becoming increasingly aware that we are, and always have been, intrinsically spatial beings, active participants in the social construction of our embracing spatialities. Perhaps more than ever before, a strategic awareness of this collectively created spatiality and its social consequences has become a vital part of making both theoretical and practical sense of our contemporary lifeworlds at all scales, from the most intimate to the most global.

At the same time as this relevance is rising, however, there is reason to be concerned that the practical and theoretical understanding

of space and spatiality is being muddled and misconstrued either by the baggage of tradition, by older definitions that no longer fit the changing contexts of the contemporary moment, or by faddish buzzwords that substitute apparently current relevance for deeper understanding. It thus becomes more urgent than ever to keep our contemporary consciousness of spatiality – our critical geographical imagination – creatively open to redefinition and expansion in new directions; and to resist any attempt to narrow or confine its scope.

In keeping with these objectives and premises, I use the concept of Thirdspace most broadly to highlight what I consider to be the most interesting new ways of thinking about space and social spatiality, and go about in great detail, but also with some attendant caution, to explain why I have chosen to do so. In its broadest sense, Thirdspace is a purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings. If you would like to invent a different term to capture what I am trying to convey, go ahead and do so. I only ask that the radical challenge to think differently, to expand your geographical imagination beyond its current limits, is retained and not recast to pour old wine into new barrels, no matter how tasty the vintage has been in the past.

To help ensure that the magnitude of the challenge being presented is understood, I add a much bolder assertion. In what I am convinced will eventually be considered one of the most important intellectual and political developments of the late 20th century, a growing community of scholars and citizens has, for perhaps the first time, begun to think about the *spatiality* of human life in much the same way that we have persistently approached life's intrinsic and richly revealing historical and social qualities: its *historicality* and *sociality*. For much too long, spatiality has been relatively peripheral to what are now called the human sciences, especially among those who approach knowledge formation from a more critical, politically committed perspective. Whether in writing the biography of a particular individual or interpreting a momentous event or simply dealing with our everyday lives, the closely associated historical (or temporal) and social (or sociological) imaginations have always been at the forefront of making practical and informative sense of the subject at hand. Every life, every event, every activity we engage in is usually unquestionably assumed to have a pertinent and revealing historical and social dimension. Although there are significant exceptions, few would deny that understanding the world is, in the most general sense, a simultaneously historical and social project.

Without reducing the significance of these historical and social qualities or dimming the creative and critical imaginations that have developed around their practical and theoretical understanding, a

third existential dimension is now provocatively infusing the traditional coupling of historicity–sociality with new modes of thinking and interpretation. As we approach the *fin de siècle*, there is a growing awareness of the simultaneity and interwoven complexity of the social, the historical, and the spatial, their inseparability and interdependence. And this three-sided sensibility of spatiality–historicity–sociality is not only bringing about a profound change in the ways we think about space, it is also beginning to lead to major revisions in how we study history and society. The challenge being raised in *Thirdspace* is therefore transdisciplinary in scope. It cuts across all perspectives and modes of thought, and is not confined solely to geographers, architects, urbanists and others for whom spatial thinking is a primary professional preoccupation.

There is still another attachment I wish to make before beginning to explore the real and imagined worlds of Thirdspace. As I shall argue repeatedly, the most interesting and insightful new ways of thinking about space and spatiality, and hence the most significant expansions of the spatial or geographical imagination, have been coming from what can be described as a radical postmodernist perspective. Given the swirling confusion that fills the current literature both for and against postmodernism, it may help to explain briefly what I mean by radical or critical postmodernism and why, contrary to so many current writings, it does not represent a complete contradiction in terms, a fanciful oxymoron.

To clarify the meaning of radical postmodernism requires a much more substantial look at the flurry of scholarly debates that has come to surround the postmodern critiques of modernism. Later chapters will return to these debates in greater detail, but for the moment let us begin by focusing attention on what I consider to be the most important of these postmodern critiques. I am referring to what postmodern scholars have described as the deconstruction and strategic reconstitution of conventional modernist epistemologies – in other words, the radical restructuring of long-established modes of knowledge formation, of how we assure that the knowledge we obtain of the world can be confidently presumed to be accurate and useful. This epistemological critique has ranged from a formidable attack on the foundations of modern science; to a deep questioning of the established disciplinary canons of the separate social sciences, arts, and humanities; and further, to a reformulation of the basic knowledge structure of scientific socialism or Marxism as well as other fields of radical theory and practice, such as feminism and the struggles against racism and colonialism.

In every one of these targeted arenas, the postmodern epistemological critique of modernism and its tendencies to become locked into “master narratives” and “totalizing discourses” that limit the

scope of knowledge formation, has created deep divisions. For some, the power of the critique has been so profound that modernism is abandoned entirely and new, explicitly postmodern ways of thinking take its place in making sense of the contemporary world. For others, the postmodern challenge is either ignored or creatively reconstituted to reaffirm more traditional modes of still avowedly modernist thought and practice. As I shall argue throughout *Thirdspace*, these are not the only choices available. Unfortunately, such categorically postmodernist and modernist responses have dominated and polarized the current literature, leaving little room for alternative views.

The opposing camps are increasingly clearly drawn. On one side are those self-proclaimed postmodernists who interpret the epistemological critique as a license to destroy all vestiges of modernism. They become, as I once called them, the smiling morticians who celebrate the death or, more figuratively, the "end of" practically everything associated with the modern movements of the twentieth century: of the subject and the author, of communism and liberalism, of ideology and history, of the entire enlightenment project of progressive social change. In essence, postmodernism is reduced here to *anti-modernism*, to a strategy of annihilation that derives from modernism's demonstrated epistemological weaknesses and its presumed failures to deal with the pressing problems of the contemporary world. Intentionally or not, this focused form of inflexible and unselective anti-modernism has entered contemporary politics all over the world primarily to support and sustain both pre-modern fundamentalisms and reactionary and hyperconservative forms of postmodern political practice that today threaten to destroy the most progressive accomplishments of the 20th century.

At the other extreme is a growing cadre of adamant *anti-postmodernists*. Usually marching under the banner of preserving the progressive projects of liberal and radical modernism, these critics see in postmodernism and postmodern politics only a polar opposition to their progressive intentions. Just as reductionist as the anti-modernists, they deflect the power of the epistemological critique of modernism by associating it exclusively with nihilism, with neo-conservative empowerment, or with a vacuous anything-goes "new age" philosophy. In this simplistic caricaturing, there is no possibility for a radical postmodernism to exist unless it is self-deluding, really modernism in oxymoronic disguise.

Not only have the debates on modernism and postmodernism polarized around these reductionist stances, a kind of ritual purification has been practiced to rule out any alternative possibilities. If you are a postmodernist, it is proclaimed, then you cannot be a Marxist or be committed to a continuation of the progressive projects of the

European Enlightenment. And vice versa: to be committed to radical social change one must resist the enchantments of postmodern thinking. Simply practicing the methods of deconstruction or expressing sympathy with the writings of Derrida, Lyotard, Foucault, or Baudrillard brands you as either unremittingly neoconservative or deviously apolitical. One particularly misguided purification game, engaged in even by those who appear to reject such simplistic dichotomization, involves searching for traces of modernism in the writings of postmodernists, as if these discoveries were a signal of duplicity, unforgivable inconsistency, or some sort of false consciousness. No mixture or combination is permitted. There is only an either/or choice, especially for those on the political left.

I urge you to begin reading *Thirdspace* with an open mind on these debates. At least temporarily, set aside the demands to make an either/or choice and contemplate instead the possibility of a both/and also logic, one that not only permits but encourages a creative combination of postmodernist and modernist perspectives, even when a specific form of postmodernism is being highlighted. Singling out a radical postmodern perspective for particular attention is not meant to establish its exclusive privilege in exploring and understanding Thirdspace. It is instead an efficient invitation to enter a space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable. It is a space where issues of race, class, and gender can be addressed simultaneously without privileging one over the other; where one can be Marxist and post-Marxist, materialist and idealist, structuralist and humanist, disciplined and transdisciplinary at the same time.

Thirdspace itself, as you will soon discover, is rooted in just such a recombinatorial and radically open perspective. In what I will call a critical strategy of "thirthing-as-Othering," I try to open up our spatial imaginaries to ways of thinking and acting politically that respond to all binarisms, to any attempt to confine thought and political action to only two alternatives, by interjecting an-Other set of choices. In this critical thirthing, the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of *restructuring* that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives. Two of these critical thirthings have already been introduced. The first revolves around the interjection of a critical spatial imagination into the interpretive dualism that has for the past two centuries confined how we make practical and theoretical sense of the world primarily to the historical and sociological imaginations. The second has shaped the preceding discussion of modernism and postmodernism, creating the possibility

for a more open and combinatorial perspective. Still another is implied in this book's title and subtitle. *Thirdspace* too can be described as a creative recombination and extension, one that builds on a Firstspace perspective that is focused on the "real" material world and a Secondspace perspective that interprets this reality through "imagined" representations of spatiality. With this brief and, I hope, helpful and inviting introduction, we are ready to begin our journeys to a multiplicity of *real-and-imagined* places.

Discovering Thirdspace

The six chapters that comprise Part I, "Discovering Thirdspace" are aimed at showing how and why spatiality and the inquisitive spatial imagination have recently entered, as a vital third mode of practical and theoretical understanding, what has heretofore been seen as an essentially two-sided socio-historical project. These chapters collectively establish the points of departure and an itinerary for the journeys Inside and Outside Los Angeles that comprise Part II and will be continued in a companion volume to *Thirdspace* that will be published by Blackwell in early 1997 under the title *Postmetropolis*. As these chapters presume some prior knowledge of the debates and academic discourse that have arisen over the interpretation and theorization of spatiality in recent years, I give more space and time here to assist in comprehending the often complex and perhaps, for some, abstruse arguments they contain.

1 The Extraordinary Voyages of Henri Lefebvre

The intellectual journeys of discovery begin with an appropriately allegorical tour of the life of Henri Lefebvre, a French "metaphilosopher" who has been more influential than any other scholar in opening up and exploring the limitless dimensions of our social spatiality; and also in arguing forcefully for linking historicity, sociality, and spatiality in a strategically balanced and transdisciplinary "triple dialectic." I use his term "transdisciplinary" to mean not being the privileged turf of such specialized fields as History, Sociology, and Geography, but spanning all interpretive perspectives. As Lefebvre insistently argued, historicity, sociality, and spatiality are too important to be left only to such narrowed specializations.

There are many such transdisciplinary perspectives, or as Lefebvre described them, "ways to thread through the complexities of the modern world." One might think of literary criticism, psychoanalysis, linguistics, discourse analysis, cultural studies, and critical

philosophy, as well as comprehensive and critical interpretations of the historical development and social composition of this modern world. What distinguishes Lefebvre from so many others is that he "chose space" as his primary interpretive thread and, beginning in the 1960s, insistently wove space into all his major writings. How the meaning of what I have described as a "triple dialectic" – Lefebvre called it *une dialectique de triplicité* – relates to his expanding geographical imagination will become clearer as we move on.

I approach Lefebvre's biography in the first chapter as an introductory voyage of discovery, selectively excavating from his adventurous life its most revealing moments of spatial insight. The chapter can thus be seen in part as an attempt to spatialize what we normally think of as biography, to make life-stories as intrinsically and revealingly spatial as they are temporal and social. It is also a more specific historical geography of Lefebvre's triple consciousness of the complex linkages between space, time, and social being, or, as I suspect he would prefer them to be called, the production of space, the making of history, and the composition of social relations or society. En route through his 90 years, this triple consciousness took many different twists and turns, from his early fascination with surrealism and the various mystifications of working-class consciousness; through his Marxist explorations of the spatiality and sociology of everyday life and the equally mystifying "urban condition;" to his later work on the social production of space and what he called "rhythmanalysis." At all times he remained a restless intellectual nomad, a person from the periphery who was able to survive and thrive in the center as well, as a refined barbarian, a Parisian peasant from the Occitanian forelands of the Pyrenees.

In his personal (re)conceptualization of the relation between centers and peripheries comes one of his most important ideas, a deep critique not just of this oppositional dichotomy of power but of all forms of categorical or binary logic. As he always insisted, two terms (and the oppositions and antinomies built around them) are never enough. *Il y a toujours l'Autre*, there is always an-Other term, with *Autre/Other* capitalized to emphasize its critical importance. When faced with a choice confined to the either/or, Lefebvre creatively resisted by choosing instead an-Other alternative, marked by the openness of the both/and also ..., with the "also" reverberating back to disrupt the categorical closures implicit in the either/or logic.

Emanating from his insistent disordering or, to use a more contemporary term, deconstruction of binary logic in thinking about space and other complexities of the modern world are his various recombinations of the center-periphery relation in such concepts as the critique of everyday life, the reproduction of the social relations

of production, the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption (the forerunner of what we today call consumer society), the struggle over the right to the city and the right to be different, the urbanization of consciousness and the necessity for an urban revolution, and a more general emphasis on the dynamics of geographically uneven development from the local to the global scales. These conceptualizations and others springing from Lefebvre's creative spatial consciousness infiltrate every chapter of *Thirdspace*.

2 The Trialectics of Spatiality

In chapter 2, I re-engage with Lefebvre's journeys through an alternative reading of *The Production of Space*, arguably the most important book ever written about the social and historical significance of human spatiality and the particular powers of the spatial imagination. *The Production of Space* is a bewildering book, filled with unruly textual practices, bold assertions that seem to get tossed aside as the arguments develop, and perplexing inconsistencies and apparent self-contradictions. Yet its meandering, idiosyncratic, and wholesomely anarchic style and structure are in themselves a creative expression of Lefebvre's expansive spatial imagination. Years ago, when I first read the original French version (*La Production de l'espace*, 1974), I found myself having great difficulty navigating through the chapters that followed the extraordinarily exciting and relatively clearly written introduction, translated in English as "Plan of the Present Work." Lefebvre seemed not to be following his own plan, flying off in lateral directions and posing very different arguments from those presented earlier. There was so much there in the first chapter, however, that I set aside my frustrations with the rest of the text as a product of my own linguistic deficiencies and Lefebvre's complicated writing style.

But I had the same reaction when I read the 1991 English translation. Nearly all that seemed solid and convincing in the "Plan" frustratingly melted into air in the dense and eclectic prose of the subsequent chapters. I dutifully recommended this apparently badly-planned book to my planning students, but told them, quite uncomfortably, to read seriously only the introductory chapter and to browse the rest with a sense of *caveat lector*. It was only when I began writing chapter 2 of *Thirdspace*, after going over dozens of Lefebvre's other writings to prepare chapter 1, that I realized he may not have intended *The Production of Space* to be read as a conventional academic text, with arguments developed in a neat linear sequence from beginning to middle to end. Taking a clue from Jorge Luis Borges, who in his short story, "The Aleph," expressed his despair in writing about the simultaneities of space in such a linear

fashion, and from Lefebvre's frequently mentioned love of music, I began to think that perhaps Lefebvre was presenting *The Production of Space* as a musical composition, with a multiplicity of instruments and voices playing together at the same time. More specifically, I found that the text could be read as a polyphonic fugue that assertively introduced its keynote themes early on and then changed them intentionally in contrapuntal variations that took radically different forms and harmonies.

Composing the text as a fugue served multiple purposes. First of all, it was a way of spatializing the text, of breaking out of the conventional temporal flow of introduction–development–conclusion to explore new "rhythms" of argument and (con)textual representation. Similarly, it spatialized the equally temporal, sequential logic of dialectical thinking, always a vital part of Lefebvre's work. Thesis, antithesis, and synthesis are thus made to appear simultaneously, together in every chapter in both contrapuntal harmonies as well as disruptive dissonances. Just as importantly, the fugue formed some protection for Lefebvre against the canonization of his ideas into rigidly authoritative protocols. Although he was frequently vicious and dogmatic in his attacks on the "schools" that developed around the work of other leading scholars, especially his fellow Marxists, Lefebvre always saw his own intellectual project as a series of heuristic "approximations," never as permanent dogma to be defended against all non-believers.

In the first of our all too brief meetings, I almost convinced him to agree that *The Production of Space* was his most pathbreaking work. But he was clearly uneasy. It was to him just another approximation, incomplete, merely a re-elaboration of his earlier approximations as well as those of Marx, Hegel, Nietzsche and others, another temporary stop en route to new discoveries, such as the "rhythmanalysis" he was working on up to his death in 1991. To the end, Lefebvre was a restless, nomadic, unruly thinker, settling down for a while to explore a new terrain, building on his earlier adventures, and then picking up what was most worth keeping and moving on. For him there are no "conclusions" that are not also "openings," as he expressed in the title of the last chapter of *The Production of Space*. Following Lefebvre, I have tried to compose every one of the chapters of *Thirdspace* as a new approximation, a different way of looking at the same subject, a sequence of neverending variations on recurrent spatial themes. Whether or not I have been successful in this effort, I hope the reader will at least keep this intention in mind while plowing through the text.

Given these intentions, what I have done with *The Production of Space* in chapter 2 would probably have discomforted Lefebvre. I have extracted from the introductory "Plan" a central argument and

attached to it a specific critical methodology. The central argument I refer to has already been mentioned: the ontological, epistemological, and theoretical rebalancing of spatiality, historicity, and sociality as all-embracing dimensions of human life. This "meta-philosophy," to use Lefebvre's preferred description of his work, builds upon a method that I present as a critical "thirding-as-Othering," with Other capitalized to retain the meaning of Lefebvre's insistent, anti-reductionist phrase *il y a toujours l'Autre*. And for the result of this critical thirding, I have used another term, "trialectics," to describe not just a triple dialectic but also a mode of dialectical reasoning that is more inherently spatial than the conventional temporally-defined dialectics of Hegel or Marx. I then use this method to re-describe and help clarify what I think Lefebvre was writing about in the thematic "Plan" of *The Production of Space* fugue: a trialectics of spatiality, of spatial thinking, of the spatial imagination that echoes from Lefebvre's interweaving incantation of three different kinds of spaces: the *perceived* space of materialized Spatial Practice; the *conceived* space he defined as Representations of Space; and the *lived* Spaces of Representation (translated into English as "Representational Spaces").

It is upon these formulations that I define Thirdspace as an-Other way of understanding and acting to change the spatiality of human life, a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the rebalanced trialectics of spatiality-historicity-sociality. This begins a longer story, or journey, that weaves its way through all the chapters. Briefly told, the spatial story opens with the recognition that the mainstream spatial or geographical imagination has, for at least the past century, revolved primarily around a dual mode of thinking about space; one, which I have described as a Firstspace perspective and epistemology, fixed mainly on the concrete materiality of spatial forms, on things that can be empirically mapped; and the second, as Secondspace, conceived in ideas about space, in thoughtful representations of human spatiality in mental or cognitive forms. These coincide more or less with Lefebvre's perceived and conceived spaces, with the first often thought of as "real" and the second as "imagined." What Lefebvre described specifically as lived space was typically seen as a simple combination or mixture of the "real" and the "imagined" in varying doses, although many in the so-called spatial disciplines (Geography, Architecture, Urban and Regional Studies, and City Planning, with capital letters used to signify the formally constituted discipline) as well as scholars in other disciplined fields tended to concentrate almost entirely on only one of these modes of thinking, that is on either Firstspace or Secondspace perspectives.

In the late 1960s, in the midst of an urban or, looking back, a more generally spatial crisis spreading all over the world, an-Other form of spatial awareness began to emerge. I have chosen to call this new awareness Thirdspace and to initiate its evolving definition by describing it as a product of a "thirding" of the spatial imagination, the creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism but extends well beyond them in scope, substance, and meaning. Simultaneously real and imagined and more (both and also . . .), the exploration of Thirdspace can be described and inscribed in journeys to "real-and-imagined" (or perhaps "realandimagined"?) places. Hence the subtitle of this book.

For reasons which I will not attempt to explain here, this new way of thinking about space became most clearly formulated in Paris, in particular in the writings of Lefebvre and his colleagues, but also, much less visibly, in the work of Michel Foucault. For almost 20 years, however, these "Other spaces" (*des espaces autres*, Foucault called them) remained unexplored and often substantially misunderstood by even the greatest admirers of Lefebvre and Foucault. Outside the spatial disciplines, the new importance being given to space and spatiality, when it was noticed at all, was seen primarily as another data set, interpretive language, or collection of modish tropes to be added to the serious business-as-usual of historical and social analysis. Within the spatial disciplines, when noticed, the work of Lefebvre and Foucault was taken as a reconfirming benediction on the long-established scope of conventional spatial or geographical imaginations. What was almost entirely missed by nearly all was the radical critique and disruptive challenge detonated by Lefebvre and Foucault to restructure the most familiar ways of thinking about space across all disciplines and disciplinaries. Rather than accepting the critique and responding to the challenges to think differently about space, the work of Lefebvre and Foucault was obviously sucked back into unchanged disciplinary cocoons.

In Geography, the field I know best, there continues to be a wholly disciplined absorption or, alternatively, complete rejection of what I describe as the Thirdspace perspectives of Lefebvre and what Foucault called "heterotopology." Given my disciplinary background, I refer relatively infrequently to the work of geographers on the pages of *Thirdspace*. When asked to speak to audiences of geographers about my recent work I tend to emphasize its "bad news" for Geography, especially regarding the formidable rigidity of the Firstspace-Secondspace dualism into which geographers have been so tightly socialized. I do so to compensate for the tendency to use the rising importance being given to the spatial imagination either to reaffirm proudly (and uncritically) the traditional disciplinary

project, with Geography crowned as the master discipline of space; or to reject the new approaches completely as not Geography at all, thereby preserving the canonical traditions of the past. Similar reactions occur in Architecture, Urban Planning, and Urban Sociology, alternatively co-opting or rejecting the new modes of thinking I am associating with a Thirdspace perspective. The most significant exceptions seem to arise only among those in the spatial disciplines who have been engaging seriously with the recent literature in the broad new field of critical cultural studies. This moves the spatial story or journey I am recounting to the next chapters.

3 Exploring the Spaces that Difference Makes: Notes on the Margin

Chapter 3 re-opens the voyages of discovery through an excavation of the more contemporary writings of bell hooks, an African-American cultural critic who has been advancing – and reconceptualizing – the frontiers of Thirdspace through creative inquiries into the connected spatialities of race, class, and gender. Although influenced by Lefebvre and Foucault, hooks has not been a spatial theoretician but has instead put into personal and political practice a vivid Thirdspatial imagination, especially in her American Book Award winning *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (1990). In essays on “Postmodern Blackness,” “Homeplace: A Site of Resistance,” and most powerfully “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness,” hooks recomposes our lived spaces of representation as potentially nurturing places of resistance, real-and-imagined, material-and-metaphorical meeting grounds for struggles over all forms of oppression, wherever they are found. I use hooks (more on this “use” in a moment) to exemplify the contemporary leadership of cultural studies scholars, especially radical women of color, in the creative exploration of Thirdspace and to implant their spatial awareness in the strategic margins of an explicitly but critically postmodern cultural politics, filled with an expanding roster of struggles based not just on race, gender, and class but also on sexuality, age, nation, region, nature, empire, and colony.

In the particular ways she chooses marginality as a space of radical openness, hooks builds upon but also reconstitutes and recontextualizes the Thirdspace insights of Lefebvre and Foucault. Chapter 3 thus serves to initiate another journey of exploration, filling in many of the voids and silences contained in the first two chapters, and I might also add in *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989), my earlier attempt to reconceptualize the geographical imagination. I have chosen to foreground bell hooks in beginning this new exploration for several reasons. First of all, I have

found no one better to illustrate the radical openness of Thirdspace, its strategic flexibility in dealing with multiple forms of oppression and inequality, and its direct relevance to contemporary politics, particularly with respect to the journeys that will be taken to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places. My own real-and-imagined homeplace for my first 20 years in the Bronx and my academic specialization in African studies for the next 20 years of my life have added other compelling attractions and connections to her work. And just as important, I find hooks’s radical openness and chosen marginality a powerful antidote to the narrowed and aggressive centrisms and essentialisms that have deflected most modernist movements based on gender, race, and class into hostile and competitive binary battlegrounds of woman versus man, black versus white, labor versus capital. In a discussion of “the difference postmodernity makes,” I elaborate on my own definitions of postmodernity and postmodernism and the comparison between modernist and postmodernist cultural politics.

But there are still a few problems worth mentioning in my “choosing” bell hooks and in her “choosing marginality.” Almost impossible to set aside entirely are reactions that here is another example of a powerful, presumably established and affluent, White Western Man liberally attaching himself, in the margins no less, to a radical woman of color, who in her turn is a well-established and presumably affluent scholar. For those who feel compelled to respond in this way, I can only say please continue to read. Perhaps you will find more in my explorations of Thirdspace and hooks’s marginality as a space of radical openness than immediately meets your skeptical eye.

4 Increasing the Openness of Thirdspace

After exploring the spaces that difference makes with bell hooks in chapter 3 and as a means of preventing the formulations of the first three chapters from solidifying into rigid dogma, chapter 4 charts out additional pathways for increasing the openness of Thirdspace and redefining its meanings. With the uncanny assistance of Barbara Hooper, who has tried with some success to control my impulses to tweak a few of the feminist geographers who seemed to dismiss my admittedly gender-biased *Postmodern Geographies* as masculinist posing *tout court*, I explore and try to learn from the rich spatial feminist literature. While appreciating the pioneering efforts of earlier modernist spatial feminists in developing a rigorous critique of urbanism and the gendering of cityspace (work that I should have recognized more centrally in my 1989 book), and learning a great deal from the most recent work of feminist geographers such as Gillian Rose, I

focus my primary attention on the extraordinary discourse that has been developing among those spatially attuned feminists who feel most comfortable, like bell hooks, with being described as radical or critical postmodernists.

What distinguishes this literature for me and what makes it an unusually enlightening terrain for developing new ways to think about Thirdspace has been the active engagement of postmodern spatial feminist writers, poets, artists, film critics, photographers, philosophers, and others in creatively rethinking and retheorizing spatiality not just in conjunction with gender and patriarchy but also in a more polycentric mix of other forms of oppression, exploitation, and subjection. For much too long, radical and progressive politics has been tightly channeled in social movements that have not only remained relatively unaware of the politics of space but have also found it difficult to forge significant and lasting alliances across channels and between movements. The work of postmodern spatial feminists has taken the lead in reconceptualizing the new cultural politics and in making a radical consciousness of the spatiality of human life a foundation and homeground for creating cross-cutting alliances and communities of resistance to contend with those "complexities" of the (post)modern world. I rush through this work much too quickly in the first half of chapter 4, leaving too much unexplored in what may indeed be the richest vein of innovative contemporary writing on what I have conceptualized as Thirdspace.

Moving on, however, I re-emphasize the significance of the postmodern spatial feminist critiques by elaborating further on the "border work" being done by postcolonial feminists such as Gloria Anzaldúa, María Lugones, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Here, in the overlapping borderlands of feminist and postcolonial cultural criticism is a particularly fertile meeting ground for initiating new pathways for exploring Thirdspace and also for the later journeys to a real-and-imagined Los Angeles. In all too brief sketches, I present first a cluster of imaginative spatial insights emanating from Chicana and Chicano artists and scholars, highlighting Anzaldúa, Lugones, and Guillermo Gómez-Peña. This is followed by the spatial "reworldings" of Spivak and Edward Said, using both to introduce a critical awareness of the space-blinkering effects of historicism that will be built upon in later chapters. Finally, a more lengthy excursion is taken through the writings of Homi Bhabha, who develops his own version of what he called "the Third Space," also a space of radical openness and "hybridity," his term for the spaces of resistance being opened at the margins of the new cultural politics.

5 Heterotologies: Foucault and the Geohistory of Otherness

After this most contemporary re-opening, Thirdspace is reconceptualized again in chapter 5 through a glance backwards in time to review Foucault's original conception of "heterotology" and "heterotopia." Drawing almost entirely on a short lecture on space he prepared for a group of architects, but never published, I try to show some of the similarities and differences between Foucault and Lefebvre in their coinciding and parallel discoveries of Thirdspace before and after the upheavals of May 1968 in Paris. Like Lefebvre, Foucault begins his explorations with a thirding, a sympathetic critique of the bicameralized spatial imagination that leads us to Other spaces quite similar, yet teasingly different, when compared to Lefebvre's lived spaces of representation. Foucault called these spaces "heterotopias" and described them as "the space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs." Like Lefebvre, but with even greater tenacity and success, he also filled these heterogeneous sites with the dialectics of *space, knowledge, and power*, what Derek Gregory, whose *Geographical Imaginations* (1994) features prominently in this chapter and is returned to in many other places, called Foucault's distinctive "discursive triangle." I go over Foucault's uncharacteristically explicit and didactic discussion of the "principles of heterotology" and attempt through these formulations to stretch Thirdspace in new and different directions.

But what is most interesting to me about Foucault's pathway to thinking differently about the powers of space and spatiality – and perhaps his most important contribution to the conceptualization of Thirdspace – was the explicitness and insight of his treatment en route of the relations between space and time, between the spatial and the historical imaginations. Amplifying on what I had written earlier in *Postmodern Geographies*, I re-present Foucault's critique of historicism as a vital part of understanding why thinking differently about space and spatiality has been so difficult for at least the past 150 years. In words that have been epigraphically echoed repeatedly in contemporary discussions of space, Foucault asked why is it that time has tended to be treated as "richness, fecundity, life, dialectic" while in contrast space has been typically seen as "the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile"? He answers his question by referring to a persistent overprivileging of the powers of the historical imagination and the traditions of critical historiography, and the degree to which this privileging of historicity has silenced or subsumed the potentially equivalent powers of critical spatial thought. Breaking down the controlling effects of this particular form of

historicism becomes a key step in radically opening up the spatial imagination and in rebalancing the trialectics of historicity–sociality–spatiality; in other words, to exploring both theoretically and practically the lifeworlds, the heterotopias, of Thirdspace.

This critique of historicism is so crucial and so easily misunderstood that it is worthwhile clarifying immediately what it does and does not imply. It is not a rejection of the proven powers of the historical imagination, nor is it a substitution of a spatialism for historicism. It is instead a recognition that historicity and historiography are not enough, and a plea for opening up the historical and tightly interwoven sociological imaginations to a deeper appreciation for the spatiality of human life. This was perhaps not so problematic when the spatial imagination remained tightly encased in its bicameral compartments, either fixed on the forms and patternings of “real” material life or involved with mental and ideational worlds of abstract or “imagined” spaces. Such knowledges could easily be absorbed and subsumed by the free-flowing and infinitely expandable historical imagination, as “things” and “thoughts” that can be best understood by putting them into their historical context, into a narrative, a sequential story. But the times are changing. A new perspective is not only beginning to recompose the spatial or geographical imagination, it is entering disruptively, if still located on the margins, into the ways we think about historicity and sociality, demanding an equivalent empowering voice, no more but no less. We return then to the premises contained in the first paragraphs of this Introduction/Itinerary/Overture.

6 Re-Presenting the Spatial Critique of Historicism

The spatial critique of historicism underpins the middle chapters of *Thirdspace*. It begins in chapter 4 with Gayatri Spivak’s reworldings and Edward Said’s far-reaching critique of “Orientalism,” rooting historicism in Western, Eurocentric, masculinist, modernist, and imperialist intellectual traditions, even when promulgated with revolutionary intentions. It flows through chapter 5 and the efforts of Foucault to construct a different “geohistory of otherness” despite his Eurocentrism; and becomes the central focus in chapter 6. Here I foreground the writings of Hayden White, one of the contemporary world’s finest and most open-minded “metahistorians.”

White approaches historicity with much the same enthusiasm and critical drive I try to generate with respect to spatiality; and he attempts to open the borders of the historical imagination against a perceived external threat to subsume its power in ways that seem to echo, in reverse, the spatial critique of historicism. In demonstrating “why loving maps is not enough,” I take White’s history of

consciousness and his consciousness of history to task not for completely ignoring spatiality but for unconsciously subordinating and subsuming it under history’s *sui generis* “burden.” And in “Hayden White meets Henri Lefebvre,” based on White’s recent revealing review of *The Production of Space*, I show why the failure of this most thoughtful, open-minded, and imaginative theoretician of history to understand or even recognize the need to spatialize his story beyond mere Braudelian references may be the strongest reason for continuing to press the spatial critique of historicism throughout the contemporary human sciences.

Inside and Outside Los Angeles

Part II consists of a cluster of chapters that begin to apply contextually the ideas and theoretical arguments contained in Part I. Here our journeys take a more empirical and visual turn, first into the memorable inner sanctums of the Civic Center of the City of Los Angeles and then to the galactic outer spaces of Orange County, the virtually unbounded extremes of urban centeredness and decenteredness, Endopolis and Exopolis. In these antipodes of Greater Los Angeles core and periphery, city and suburb, seem to be imploding and exploding simultaneously, turning everyday urban life inside-out and outside-in at the same time and in the same places. This widening gyre confounds conventional narrative interpretations of urban spatiality, for we are too aware of what is cutting across the storyline laterally, of how the local and the particular are becoming simultaneously global and generalizable. Increasingly unconventional modes of exploring Los Angeles are needed to make practical and theoretical sense of contemporary urban realities – and hyper-realities.

For extrinsic insight, a diverting third tour is taken to the Centrum and regional periphery of Amsterdam, spiraling us into another stimulating itinerary. It is at once a celebration of intimate locality and a re-routing of our journeys into worldwide contexts of urban development and global restructuring. This contemporary comparison of Amsterdam and Los Angeles – themselves the provocative antipodes of urbanism as a way of life – triggers an appreciation for the complex compositeness of difference and similarity, the intricate interweaving of the unique and the general, the local and the global. It also renews our understanding of the dynamics of uneven development over space and time, and especially of what Lefebvre was to describe as the simultaneous tendencies toward homogenization, differentiation, and hierarchical ordering that thread through the specific geographies of the modern world.

Each of these three chapters takes the form of a visual but also re-envisioning tour of lived spaces. They present very different perspectives, yet running through them there is much that is the same.

7 Remembrances: A Heterotopology of the Citadel-LA

The first chapter of Part II continues the spatial critique of historicism through a Foucauldian stroll through an exhibition I helped organize at UCLA commemorating the bicentennial of the French Revolution and evoking memories of the synchronic resonances between Paris and Los Angeles in the period 1789–1989. It both concludes the sequence of chapters dealing specifically with the relations between spatiality and historicity and opens new ways of looking at and understanding the geohistory of Thirdspace.

Two heterotopological spaces resonate together in this real-and-imagined journey. The first is a rectangular chunk of downtown Los Angeles that today contains one of the most formidable agglomerations of the sites of governmental power and surveillance anywhere in the US. The second space represents the first in a small gallery and connected places in the UCLA building that housed the exhibition. Everything is seen as a simultaneously historical-social-spatial palimpsest, Thirdspace sites in which inextricably intertwined temporal, social, and spatial relations are being constantly reinscribed, erased, and reinscribed again.

Here, in the Citadel-LA of Southern California, the “little city” of gigantic powers, I use specific sites and sights as memory aids, geographical *madeleines* for a remembrance of things past and passed: the historical presence of African-Americans in downtown Los Angeles from the original siting of the city in 1781 to the violence and unrest of 1992; the even more impressive presence of a Mexican city etched into the history of El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora La Reina de Los Angeles; a recollection of the lifeworlds of Bunker Hill, now a truncated acropolis of culture waiting to be crowned again in a new concert hall designed by Frank Gehry for the Walt Disney family; a look back to the debates that have raged nearby around that citadel of postmodern cultural studies, the Bonaventure Hotel, perhaps the first preservation-worthy historical monument of postmodernity; and finally, a glimpse at the “eye of power” to be seen in the prison-adjacent *The New World*, a sculptured forum visibly and invisibly celebrating anarchism and sexual freedom in the middle of an uptight building complex that serves the US federal government. All is present within walking distance: the past, the present, the future.

8 Inside Exopolis: Everyday Life in the Postmodern World

Ten scenes from the galaxy of sites that comprise the astral Exopolis, the starry-eyed “city-without-cityness” of Orange County define another tour. Jean Baudrillard rather than Foucault enables this tour to take off and to be defined as a journey to the “hyperreality” of everyday life. For Baudrillard and for many of the inhabitants of Orange County and other exopolises around the world, everyday living has become increasingly embroiled in the “precession of simulacra,” in exact copies or representations of everyday reality that somehow substitute for the real itself. We no longer have to pay to enter these worlds of the “real fake” for they are already with us in the normal course of our daily lives, in our homes and workplaces, in how we choose to be informed and entertained, in how we are clothed and erotically aroused, in who and what we vote for, and what pathways we take to survive.

The Exopolis itself is a simulacrum: an exact copy of a city that has never existed. And it is being copied over and over again all over the place. At its best, the Exopolis is infinitely enchanting; at its worst it transforms our cities and our lives into spin-doctored “scamscapes,” places where the real and the imagined, fact and fiction, become spectacularly confused, impossible to tell apart. In many ways, Orange County is the paradigmatic Exopolis, a simulated county-city-state of mind that is infused with and diffuses ever-encompassing ideological hyperrealities such as “small government is good government,” “the taxpayers’ revolt,” “the magic of the market,” “electronic democracy,” “the end of history,” “the triumph of capitalism.” The tour begins with a quote from *The Wizard of Oz*: “Toto, I’ve got a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore.” But then again, neither is Kansas.

This tour cannot be done on foot. It requires other forms of mobility to experience and comprehend. Despite many amusing diversions, however, the tour must be taken seriously for, whether we like it or not, Orange County offers glimpses into everyday life everywhere in the contemporary world. And brought up to date with the still fulminating financial bankruptcy of this arch-Republican bastion of real-and-imagined fiscal populism, we can begin to see the accumulating signs of an emerging global crisis of postmodernity. Beginning in 1989 with the staged disappearance of the Cold War, exploding most notably in Los Angeles with the so-called Rodney King riots of 1992, and now continuing indefinitely into our futures, a thirty-year cycle of restructuring and postmodernization, detonated by the crises of the 1960s, is beginning to generate its own

internal explosions. Much more will be said of this restructuring-generated crisis of postmodernity in *Postmetropolis*, the forthcoming companion volume to *Thirdspace*. For now, our tour inside the Exopolis of Orange County provides only a preview.

9 The Stimulus of a Little Confusion

Part II concludes with a contemporary comparison of Los Angeles and Amsterdam and with, following Henry James, the stimulus of a little confusion. In chapter 9, which in some ways combines the microspatial tour of the citadel of downtown Los Angeles and the macrospatial excursion into the Exopolis of Orange County, I report from my own experiences living for a short period in the Centrum of Amsterdam, the largest and most creatively preserved 17th-century "old town" in Europe. I use my impressions of life on and off Spuistraat, my home street in Amsterdam, to both wrap up our journeys to real-and-imagined places and to open them up again.

Several of my friends who do not live in either Los Angeles or Amsterdam have told me that the original essay upon which this chapter is based was the best interpretive writing I have ever done. Why then do I continue to be uneasy about this compliment? I loved living in Amsterdam and discovering that, in its own secretive way, it was keeping alive the utopian dreams of democratic and humanely scaled urbanism better than any other place I know. Perhaps the excitement of this discovery and my directly personal reflections on it were the explanation.

Yet, I continue to wonder. Was the praise being generated because I was writing about a place other than Los Angeles (but Los Angeles was certainly there too)? Was it because I was speaking personally, without leaning too hard on one or another French philosopher (although Lefebvre was very much with me in this essay)? Or was it because, after working primarily at a macro-geographical scale for so many years, I was becoming more of a micro-geographer, a bit of the *flâneur*, that romantic poet-of-the-streets whose intimate urban insights had become so privileged in much of the current literature, especially over (or is it under) the view from on high that Michel de Certeau, among others, showed to be so limited and misleading? If this last point of view is the source of the essay's perceived quality, then I must add something more to its re-introduction here.

As noted in a postscript to chapter 9, my "contemporary comparison" of Amsterdam and Los Angeles was (and is) intended, in part, to add some stimulating confusion to a growing tendency in post-modern critical urban studies to overprivilege the local – the body, the streetscape, psychogeographies, erotic subjectivities, the micro-worlds of everyday life and intimate community – at the expense of

understanding the city-as-a-whole, or what Lefebvre described as the "urban reality." Macrospace perspectives are too often labeled taboo by those more attuned to *flânerie*, by critics who see in the view from on high only a dominating masculinist voyeurism, and by what might be called vulgar voluntarists romancing the unconstrainable powers and intentions of human agency against any form of structural analysis or determination. In chapter 9 I try to "third" this debate by exploring an-Other way to approach the micro-macro, local-global, agency-structure oppositions, drawing selectively from both spheres as best I can while pointing toward new directions that transcend any simple additive combination or strict either/or choice. Again, I may not be entirely successful in doing this, but it is useful to make my intentions clear.

Also clarifying my intentions is a second postscript that serves both to conclude this volume and to preview its forthcoming extensions in *Postmetropolis*. *Postmetropolis* is a composite term I use to describe (a) the new urbanization processes that have reshaped the metropolitan cityscape and everyday urban life over the past thirty years; and (b) the new modes of urban analysis that have been developing in the wake of this profound metropolitan restructuring and postmodernization. The original manuscript for *Thirdspace* contained a lengthy Part III that explored at much greater depth and detail this restructuring and postmodernization of the perceived, conceived, and lived spaces of the exemplary postmetropolis of Los Angeles. Here is a brief outline of its contents.

The first of the three chapters that comprised Part III, "Exploring the Postmetropolis," placed the "conurbation" of Los Angeles – using this almost forgotten term as both a noun and a verb – within a larger geohistorical context that relates the evolution of urban form to two other spatialized timelines: the crisis-filled periodization of capitalist development and the associated "succession of modernities" that have together helped to shape and reshape the perceived (First)spatialities and spatial practices of urbanism over the past three centuries. A panoramic satellite photograph of sprawling "Los Angeles – From Space" initiates the discussion of how this particular conurbation developed over space and time.

The second chapter shifted the interpretive focus to Secondspace, to the conceptual representations of urban spatiality, and more specifically to the "situated" urban imaginary that has consolidated over the past ten years into what some have called a Los Angeles "school" of urban analysis. At the core of this discussion are six discourses on the postmetropolis that represent Los Angeles as: (1) *Flexcity*, a productively postfordist industrial metropolis; (2) *Cosmopolis*, a globalized and "glocalized" world city; (3) *Exopolis*, a cityscape turned inside-out and outside-in through the radical

restructuring of urban form; (4) *Polaricity*, a social mosaic of increasing inequalities and polarization; (5) *Carceral City*, a fortified archipelago where police substitutes for *polis*; and (6) *Simcity*, a hyperreal scapescape of simulations and simulacra. Taking heed of Lefebvre's warning that these Secondspatial representations tend to become hegemonically powerful, I disrupt each of the above discourses with contrapuntal critiques and the "stimulus of a little confusion" to keep them open to continued rethinking and re-evaluation.

The third and erstwhile concluding chapter was infused primarily with a Thirdspace perspective, selectively encompassing the other two spheres of the spatial imagination to open up a distinctive new interpretive realm. Focused on a critical re-envisioning of a singular yet global event, the Los Angeles uprising of April–May 1992, it ends with the same words used to conclude the second postscript to *Thirdspace*: TO BE CONTINUED ...

Before moving on, a few last introductory words are in order. As the reader will soon no doubt realize, the radical openness and limitless scope of what is presented here as a Thirdspace perspective can provide daunting challenges to practical understanding and application. Exploring Thirdspace therefore requires a strategic and flexible way of thinking that is guided by a particular motivating project, a set of clear practical objectives and preferred pathways that will help to keep each individual journey on track while still allowing for lateral excursions to other spaces, times, and social situations. If Firstspace is explored primarily through its readable texts and contexts, and Secondspace through its prevailing representational discourses, then the exploration of Thirdspace must be additionally guided by some form of potentially emancipatory *praxis*, the translation of knowledge into action in a conscious – and consciously spatial – effort to improve the world in some significant way.

The praxis that guides our journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places is organized around the search for practical solutions to the problems of race, class, gender, and other, often closely associated, forms of human inequality and oppression, especially those that are arising from, or being aggravated by, the dramatic changes that have become associated with global economic and political restructuring and the related postmodernization of urban life and society. Hovering in the background of all the chapters that will follow is an awareness of the possibility that the contemporary world has entered a new round of turbulent crises that

stem not from the many different events that marked the end of the long postwar economic boom and initiated in the late 1960s a still continuing period of restructuring; but from what has seemed to so many to be the most successful examples of economic, political, and urban restructuring and postmodernization in recent times. In other words, our cities and all our lived spaces have been shifting from a period of crisis-generated restructuring to the onset of a new era of restructuring-generated crisis, a crisis deeply imbricated in the postmodernization of the contemporary world. As with all times of crisis, there are both new dangers and new opportunities unleashed by the multiplicity of confusing and often brutal events that have been shaking the world since 1989, from the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, to the repercussions of what happened in Tiananmen Square and in the Los Angeles uprising of 1992, to current developments in Bosnia and in the Republican Revolution in the United States. The ultimate goal of *Thirdspace* and the continued journeys to the *Postmetropolis* is to contribute to the progressive resolution of at least some of the problems associated with this contemporary restructuring-generated crisis.