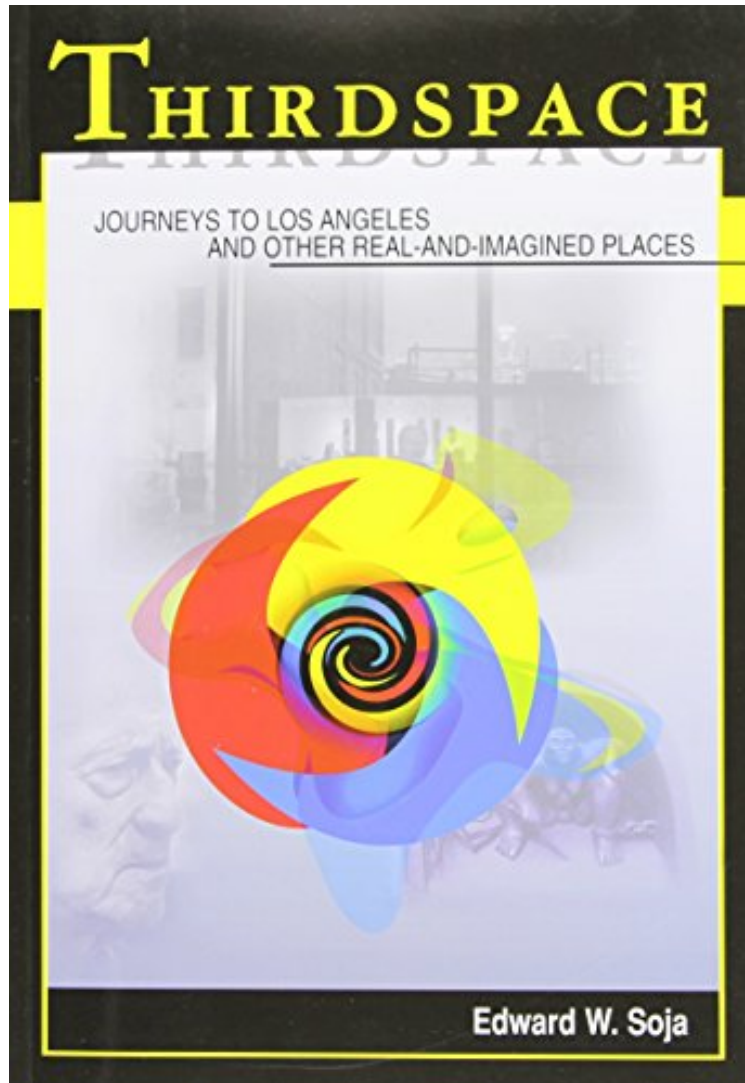


# Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places

*Edward W. Soja*

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**Edward W. Soja : Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Mayra del Carmen Bedolla Torres Good 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. great text By Mary J. Newbery Difficult but illuminating work. I bought to help me write a paper and in the end I am going to use it to explore new theoretical avenues. 38 of 41 people found the

following review helpful. Applied Lefebvre By Benjamin R. Bates This book is not a bad book. It is an overly unoriginal one. An understanding of Henri Lefebvre's work on space (particularly *The Production of Space*) is required to understand what Soja is saying. Yet, if you have read Lefebvre, you probably do not need to read this book. About 1/3 of *Thirdspace* consists of quotes from Lefebvre with a few conclusionary remarks made by Soja. Soja's pastiche of Lefebvre quotes claims to explain two trialectical relationships. The first is the trialectics of being (p. 71), consisting of historicity, sociality, and spatiality. The second is the trialectics of spatiality (p. 74): perceived, conceived, and lived. Thank goodness for the helpful diagrams on these pages. They are the only parts of the theory sections that aren't based on long quotes from Lefebvre, White, Foucault, hooks, and any other person that Soja has read in the last 20 years. If you need original arguments about how space is performed, constructed, and lived, read one Soja's sources (especially "Production"). The original arguments come when Soja leaves the realm of theory construction and turns to application. His reading of space and place in postmodern Los Angeles makes an important leap in spatial theory... it applies theory to something people can understand. If you have visited a large city, Soja's reading of L.A. will make sense, and make Lefebvre clearer. This is the most useful function of *Thirdspace*. Although this book is not theoretically new or interesting, it gets some extra stars for having practical relevance... something that most theoreticians could use more of.

Contemporary critical studies have recently experienced a significant spatial turn. In what may eventually be seen as one of the most important intellectual and political developments in the late twentieth century, scholars have begun to interpret space and the embracing spatiality of human life with the same critical insight and emphasis that has traditionally been given to time and history on the one hand, and social relations and society on the other. *Thirdspace* is both an enquiry into the origins and impact of the spatial turn and an attempt to expand the scope and practical relevance of how we think about space and such related concepts as place, location, landscape, architecture, environment, home, city, region, territory, and geography. The book's central argument is that spatial thinking, or what has been called the geographical or spatial imagination, has tended to be bicameral, or confined to two approaches. Spatiality is either seen as concrete material forms to be mapped, analyzed, and explained; or as mental constructs, ideas about and representations of space and its social significance. Edward Soja critically re-evaluates this dualism to create an alternative approach, one that comprehends both the material and mental dimensions of spatiality but also extends beyond them to new and different modes of spatial thinking. *Thirdspace* is composed as a sequence of intellectual and empirical journeys, beginning with a spatial biography of Henri Lefebvre and his adventurous conceptualization of social space as simultaneously perceived, conceived, and lived. The author draws on Lefebvre to describe a trialectics of spatiality that threads through all subsequent journeys, reappearing in many new forms in bell hooks evocative exploration of the margins as a space of radical openness; in post-modern spatial feminist interpretations of the interplay of race, class, and gender; in the postcolonial critique and the new cultural politics of difference and identity; in Michel Foucault's heterotopologies and trialectics of space, knowledge, and power; and in interpretative tours of the Citadel of downtown Los Angeles, the Exopolis of Orange County, and the Centrum of Amsterdam.

"There is much that is innovative and thought provoking in the book ..." Rob Atkinson, *Capital and Class* "*Thirdspace* is Soja's most demanding theoretical work to date. It is a book which attempts to open up new ways of thinking about and responding to the binaries which continue to dominate the way we make practical and theoretical sense of the world. In concluding this short review of a very complex text I can only echo a comment Derek Gregory (1990:41) made when reviewing Soja's *Postmodern Geographies*: 'its intellectual sparkle is the product of a rare and generous critical intelligence'." Richard Bedford, University of Waikato "In all, a compilation of empirical and intellectual journeys." *The Geographical Journal* "Such as serious and important undertaking by such a prodigious intellect compels an in-depth and extended transdisciplinary and critical dialogue. Its destiny, I suspect, is to be the centre of a heated and fruitful debate. ed Soja has changed how we think about space." Robert Beauregard, Milano graduate School of Management "Soja offers a powerful new way of thinking that simultaneously takes apart and reorganizes the basic premise from which dualistic thinking derives power." *Geographical* From the Back Cover Contemporary critical studies have recently experienced a significant spatial turn. In what may eventually be seen as one of the most important intellectual and political developments in the late twentieth century, scholars have begun to interpret space and the embracing spatiality of human life with the same critical insight and emphasis that has traditionally been given to time and history on the one hand, and social relations and society on the other. *Thirdspace* is both an enquiry into the origins and impact of the spatial turn and an attempt to expand the scope and practical relevance of how we think about space and such related concepts as place, location, landscape, architecture, environment, home, city, region, territory, and geography. The book's central argument is that spatial thinking, or what has been called the geographical or spatial imagination, has tended to be bicameral, or confined to two approaches. Spatiality is either seen as concrete material forms to be mapped, analyzed, and explained; or as mental constructs, ideas about and representations of space and its social significance. Edward Soja critically re-evaluates this dualism to create an alternative approach, one

that comprehends both the material and mental dimensions of spatiality but also extends beyond them to new and different modes of spatial thinking. Thirdspace is composed as a sequence of intellectual and empirical journeys, beginning with a spatial biography of Henri Lefebvre and his adventurous conceptualization of social space as simultaneously perceived, conceived, and lived. The author draws on Lefebvre to describe a trialectics of spatiality that threads through all subsequent journeys, reappearing in many new forms in bell hooks evocative exploration of the margins as a space of radical openness; in post-modern spatial feminist interpretations of the interplay of race, class, and gender; in the postcolonial critique and the new cultural politics of difference and identity; in Michel Foucault's heterotopologies and trialectics of space, knowledge, and power; and in interpretative tours of the Citadel of downtown Los Angeles, the Exopolis of Orange County, and the Centrum of Amsterdam. About the Author Born in the Bronx and nurtured in its dense diversities, Edward Soja was a street geographer by the time he was ten and a doctoral student in Geography at Syracuse University just after turning twenty-one. For the next two decades, he specialized in the political geography of modernization and nation-building in Africa, holding visiting appointments at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. After seven years of teaching at Northwestern University, he joined the Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UCLA, in 1972. He has twice been department chair in Urban Planning and, for nine years, was the Associate Dean. For the past fifteen years, he has been writing about the postmodernization of Los Angeles, where he lives with his wife Maureen and children, Christopher and Erika.