



# foreword

This issue of *Aletria: Revista de Estudos de Literatura* was organized for many different audiences, and each contribution sheds light on social, political, economic, and cultural struggles that are part of our everyday life. Recent works have emphasized how various cultural productions have created new ways to represent our cities, challenging old paradigms by exposing the urban space in its complexity and contradictions. Cultural productions have become an important tool for the construction of a gaze (or a multiplicity of gazes) and question a form of spatial knowledge that is intimately connected with social structures of inequality, racism, gender, and sexuality. Consequently, these works point to key questions regarding the uses and meanings of public space: How has our relationship with public space changed over time? In what ways has this change affected our sense of belonging? To what extent does the representation of the cities affect one's identity and spaces of circulation?

The issue is divided into nine essays and each of the contributions defines public space as a site of socialization, resistance, repression, or encountering difference. In this volume, public space is perceived as a physical, symbolic, and/or virtual space that constitutes and regulates identity through categories such as race, gender, class, and sexuality. Varied in approach, notions of exclusion or invisibility are at the forefront of the essays. As we shall see, the various contributions discuss how spaces are represented selectively and how their representation is bound into ideological structures. The studies discuss the ways in which discourses

promote certain cultural values and lifestyles at the expense of others on an everyday basis. Consequently, the studies challenge dominant modes of representation deeply ingrained in our imaginary in an attempt to expose the intricate relationship between the production of symbols, space, spheres of exclusion, social reproduction, and capital. Broadly speaking, the studies expose a more complex web of power relations that attempt to control and discipline life in our societies. Because the future of our cities and societies are still in question, studies as those developed in this issue merit continued attention and suggest exciting venues for future investigations that will undoubtedly enhance our understanding of the relationship between individuals, space, and culture.

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