

Cassiopeia book collection

Conceptual Writing and Humor

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Call for book chapters

Laughter is a physical manifestation or, as Jean-Luc Nancy wrote, it is "a body shaken by a thought that is not possible". In a performance of conceptual poetry you hear as much laughter as in a stand-up comedy performance. However, in the academic world, conceptual writing has been treated mainly as a rational endeavor or a cerebral and intellectual exercise. Enthusiasts and critics alike have often read conceptualist works very seriously.

With the exception of Flarf poetry, investigations into conceptual writing and related practices have focused on formal aspects and the way in which they interrogate notions related to writing and reading, authorship and text, medium and message, among others. However, studies dedicated to thinking about humor or other discursive and material strategies related to it are scarce.

In any case, it is undeniable that humor plays a central role in conceptual writing. Interestingly, when humor is at all taken into account, it is mainly to condemn the black humor of some works considered controversial. Critics say, in these cases, that the limits of what is acceptable humor have been exceeded. This is, however, something that often happens in comedy, condemned by society when it touches on taboo topics. In the case of conceptual literature, it sounds even stranger to delimit the reach of projects and performances that, from the outset and as mentioned above, had not even been considered humorous in the first place.

On the other hand, the playful component of conceptual poetry is often highlighted in the literature on the subject. Is humor, however, just another facet of play? For example, how can we think of

playfulness but not humor in a work that consists of appropriating and reorganizing another text in alphabetical order? How not to think of humor with regard to a work that is based on the act of transcribing *ipsis verbis* a given source (textual, sound, web) or reproducing it in the form of a book. And what about texts that mine Google searches or repurpose screenshots or user comments on social networks? How not to think of humor when the artist takes up the job of selling letters, words or blank books (whether they are composed entirely of blank pages or completely in black)?

With this book, we do not wish to take humor too seriously, nor to devalue it. We want to open a space for thinking about humor and its relationship with conceptual writing, in order to understand the implications that humor has on the production, circulation and reception of these works. What are the mechanisms of humor and how are they manifested in conceptual writing? How broad are these mechanisms for rethinking a theory/practice of humor in conceptual writing?

We encourage the submission of original and unpublished essays on these topics, which may focus on works written in different languages and from different parts of the world:

- A wide-ranging notion of "conceptual writing", including diachronic perspectives (post-conceptualism, experimental literature, OuLiPo, etc.)
- Conceptualism and humor in works/authors in which they are not usually detected
- Why do literary studies take conceptual writing so seriously?
- The reader no longer needs to read – is it enough if he/she laughs at the text?
- Do conceptual writers just want to have fun?
- Does humor, in conceptual writing, have a political dimension?
- The playful dimension of conceptual writing in relation to humor
- Reception and connection with society at large: can conceptual literature be received in a non-literary or extra-literary way? Does humor help make that happen?
- Connection with pop culture: stand-up comedy; remix; memes; trolling

This publication will be part of the Cassiopeia book collection and will be edited by the Institute for Comparative Literature through its platform [ILC Livros Digitais](#). The publication will be distributed in open access and will have an ISBN and DOI attribution.

Submissions

Full texts must be submitted by **September 30, 2022**.

Send document in Word or OpenOffice format to: brunoministro@letras.up.pt and jpguimaraes@letras.up.pt.

The submission must be accompanied by a **biographical note** (100 words), sent separately.

Proposals will be subjected to blind peer review. Manuscripts must not include the author's name or explicit references to previous works.

Length of texts: 5000-6000 words (including bibliography and notes)

Working languages: English, Portuguese, Spanish and French.

Guidelines

Submitted manuscripts must adhere to the following formatting and bibliographic requirements:

References

The Chicago Manual of Style, using author-date format, for citations and final bibliography

General formatting

Type font: Times New Roman

Title: 14 pt, bold, left-aligned

Text body: 12 pt, 1.5 line spacing, left-aligned

Citations: 10 pt, 1.5 line spacing, 2 cm left indentation

Please use footnotes if applicable (and not endnotes)