



## Dark Humor (Bloom's Literary Themes)

By Harold Bloom

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This 20th-century technique seeks to create humor through the use of satirical wit and grotesque situations. Use of this theme can be found in "Catch-22", "A Good Man is Hard to Find", "A Modest Proposal", "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?", and many other literary works, as examined by this new volume. Featuring original essays and excerpts from previously published critical analyses, each book in the new Bloom's "Literary Themes" series gives students valuable insight into the title's subject theme.

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## **Dark Humor (Bloom's Literary Themes) By Harold Bloom Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 10 Up—Following a brief introduction, each book presents 18 essays, all critical analyses on specific authors and their works. Half of the essays are reprints from journals or books and date as far back as 1675, and as recently as 2007; the other articles were written for the series. The theme of dark, or black, humor is discussed in the plays of Aristophanes, Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*, T. S. Elliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*, and a number of other works. Each essay is directed to an academic audience, and, at times, the ideas are expressed in literary jargon. For example, "Metahumour teases disorder into parodic order in its own borderland, in the play of re-creative fictivity" (Patrick O'Neill, in *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*). Likewise, in *The Trickster*, the motives of this ubiquitous character are sometimes difficult to understand. The essays on this topic suggest that some authors such as William Shakespeare and Mark Twain are themselves tricksters. The choice of works discussed includes Homer's "Odyssey," Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby*, and Joel Chandler Harris's "Uncle Remus" stories. The essays presume some background knowledge and an interest in serious literary criticism. These fascinating themes offer material for research papers, but due to the scholarly nature of the writing, they would best serve honors and AP students.—Peggy Fleming, Churchville-Chili High School, Churchville, NY

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