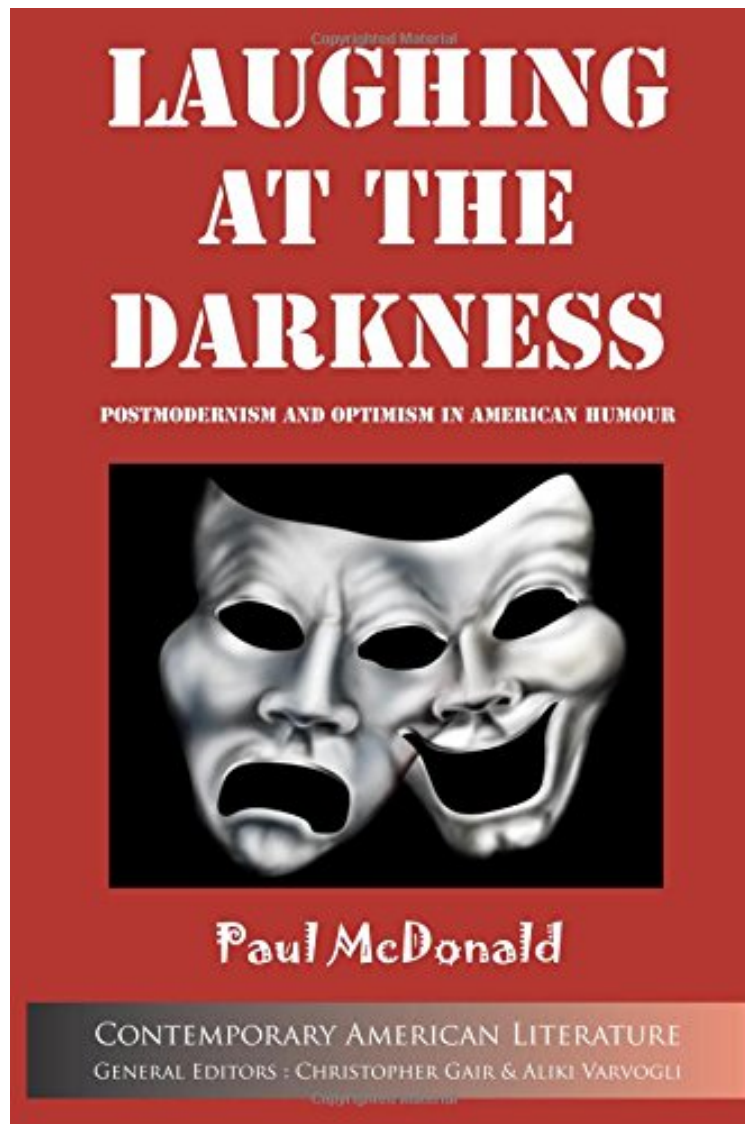


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Laughing at the Darkness: Postmodernism and Optimism in American Humour (Contemporary American Literature)

Paul Mcdonald

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Paul Mcdonald : Laughing at the Darkness: Postmodernism and Optimism in American Humour (Contemporary American Literature) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Laughing at the Darkness: Postmodernism and Optimism in American Humour (Contemporary American Literature):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. combines erudition with critical flair
By Reader of great fiction
I am midway through my doctorate in contemporary American literature and found this book of great value. McDonald offers original, sharp readings, not only of the likes of Woody Allen, Douglas Coupland, and Bill Hicks, but also of texts you wouldn't ordinarily associate with comedy: he convincingly argues that humour is a central theme in ostensibly humourless works such as David Mamet's *Oleanna* and, not least, the terminally glum songs of Nirvana! Surely there must of some kind of award for such critical ingenuity? What is particularly useful is his accessible style, particularly when it comes to the notoriously abstruse and elusive concept of postmodernism. The introduction to this book offers one of the most lucid overviews of the subject available. McDonald - a well-known author of comic fiction himself - clearly has a love and understanding of humour, and while this book is not the place to look for jokes (his style here is scholarly rather than jokey), he presents some startling insights in a narrative that combines erudition with critical flair.

Paul McDonald's book is the second in the Humanities Ebooks Contemporary American Literature Series, edited by Christopher Gair and Alike Varvogli. Given that postmodernism has been associated with doubt, chaos, relativism and the disappearance of reality, it may appear difficult to reconcile with American optimism. *Laughing at the Darkness* demonstrates that this is not always the case. In examining the work of, among others, Sherman Alexie, Woody Allen, Douglas Coupland, Jonathan Safran Foer, Bill Hicks, David Mamet, and Philip Roth, McDonald shows how American humourists bring their comedy to bear on some of the negative implications of philosophical postmodernism and, in so doing, explore ways of reclaiming value. Paul McDonald is the author of three other Heb titles, *The Philosophy of Humour*, *Reading Morrison's Beloved*, and *Reading Heller's Catch-22*, all available from Lulu.

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About the Author
Paul McDonald is Senior Lecturer in American literature at the University of Wolverhampton, where he is also Course Leader for Creative and Professional Writing.