



New Critical Essays on Kurt Vonnegut (American Literature Readings in the 21st Century)

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Kurt Vonnegut's darkly comic work became a symbol for the counterculture of a generation. From his debut novel, *Player Piano* (1951) through seminal 1960's novels such as *Cat's Cradle* (1963) and *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) up to the recent success of *A Man Without A Country* (2005), Vonnegut's writing has remained commercially popular, offering a satirical yet optimistic outlook on modern life. Though many fellow writers admired Vonnegut - Gore Vidal famously suggesting that "Kurt was never dull" - the academic establishment has tended to retain a degree of scepticism concerning the validity of his work. This dynamic collection aims to re-evaluate Vonnegut's position as an integral part of the American post-war canon of literature.

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Editorial Review

Review

'Together the essays stand as an introduction to rereading Vonnegut, demonstrating that his canon may be worth re-examining. Secret lovers of Vonnegut (and sci-fi) will use this book to defend their affections for an artist whose pop fame and pop forms dismay some critics. And one can almost imagine Vonnegut's crooked smile at essays that seek to reserve a place in high-toned literary debates for his works.' - Choice

'This collection offers a timely re-engagement with one of the most enigmatic, deceptive, and misunderstood of American authors . . . Through a comprehensive interrogation of Vonnegut's early and late novels, his short stories, and his relationship to predecessors such as Hemingway and his 'post-9/11 heirs' such as Cormac McCarthy, Don DeLillo, and Ian McEwan, the contributing scholars establish beyond question the continuing relevance and necessity of reading Vonnegut.' - Will Kaufman, Professor of American Literature and Culture, University of Central Lancashire and author of *The Comedian as Confidence Man*

'Whether describing the uniquely warm personal relationship many literary critics shared with Vonnegut (Todd Davis), exploring the evolution of a feminist vision in his work (Susan E. Farrell), bringing fresh insights into the function of science fiction elements in his novels (Lorna Jowett), or detailing Vonnegut's ambiguous but important relationship to other writers such as Hemingway (Lawrence Broer), these one dozen essays offer convincing arguments that Vonnegut should, and will, remain a canonical American writer - at least until we humans manage to destroy the world.' - William Rodney Allen, author of *Understanding Kurt Vonnegut*

'With considerations of Vonnegut's exploded narrative structures, revelatory views on the importance of his feminine characters, explorations of both religious and apocalyptic themes, and measuring his novelty and subtexts against literary giants and his influence on new novelists, these essays speak to the essential questions Vonnegut establishes for a world rent asunder by man's inclinations to do evil in the name of goodness.' - Mark Leeds, editor of *The Vonnegut Encyclopedia*

About the Author

David Simmons is Senior Lecturer in English and Screen Studies at the University of Northampton, UK.

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