

The Vonnegut Chronicles: Interviews and Essays (Contributions to the Study of World Literature)

Marc Leeds, Peter Reed



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Since 1950, when his short stories first appeared, Kurt Vonnegut has published almost 50 short stories, 13 novels, two plays, and a teleplay. He has remained one of the shrewdest commentators?and often harshest critics?of American society, challenging the complacency of the Eisenhower years, watching the Kennedy's with admiration, and disliking Nixon. He has remained one of the most important chroniclers of American life, his message often foreboding though rarely gloomy. Yet he occupies an ambiguous place in American letters. The 14 essays in this collection seek to chronicle Vonnegut's career as it moves through changing times.

The volume opens with a chronology of Vonnegut's life and three interviews with him. The essays consider his career, combining interest and readability for the general reader with critical commentary for the more serious scholar. The essays consider Vonnegut's later work or are retrospectives reevaluating aspects of his career. Some discuss individual works, particularly later novels, but most consider the ways Vonnegut pursues a theme or technique, the ways his mind works both in the construction of the novels and in the ideas embodied in them. There is also an Appendix discussing Vonnegut's most recent creative enterprise, graphic art, with 12 illustrations of his most recent art work.

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