

HOCUS POCUS

KILGORE TROUT IS BACK

by Garth Hagey

Hocus Pocus
Kurt Vonnegut
Putnam-Berkley

My name is Garth Alexander Hagey. Kurt Vonnegut published a new book called *Hocus Pocus* last year and I promised a copy in September. Cursing the arts editors, I thought it had been stolen by many of the K.V. fans in the office. Finally, after coming back from the December holidays, the copy was waiting for me. I have now read the book and able to report its merits. Good for me!

The master of science fiction's story appears within the book, found in the most prestigious of publications. Although his name is never mentioned, Vonnegut fans know who he is. Hi ho.

The rest of the story is traditionally Vonnegut, but entertaining enough to be admired by his true fans. For any of those who are new to Absurdity and Vonnegut I suggest you read *Slapstick* and *Cat's Cradle* first. By then you'll be hooked.

Kurt is 69 and been living in Manhattan since 1970.

Going down like ice cream like a Vonnegut novel should it can be read in one night. This anti-hero, who

'authors' the book, is awaiting his fate at the end of events he revues for us throughout the novel. The old man sticks in pieces here and there to entertain, almost like in a detective novel. More like a Defective (read El Bourba) Novel his anecdotal hits and verbal hiccups are old, but comfortable, hat.

Some would say *Hocus Pocus* is much more tasty than a lot of the epic poetry contained in the University's literary canon. Those in this institution deem what is to be preserved in the canon. While others want to burn *Slaughter House Five*, some have chosen to teach Kurt Vonnegut in their class. Good for them!

I was glad of the return of the sci-fi writer, although he was anonymous. I would like to see another *Venus and The Halfshell*, which is very obscure and impossible to find. The publication of the returning sci-fi writer is *Black Garter*. Some of Kurt's stories were published in *Playbill*, including an essay on censorship.

The unknown men's magazine published author, whose stories are summarized in Vonnegut's novels was one of the greatest things Kurt gave to the America Absurd. The author's name is Kilgore Trout.

I enjoyed the novel overall, though in the history of his metafiction. *Hocus Pocus* is just a novelty. So it goes.



Kilgore Trout's mild return: Like a defective (read El Bourba) story, Kurt uses techniques such as small anecdotes and verbal hiccups that are now part of the traditional Vonnegut repertoire. Read *Slapstick* first.



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