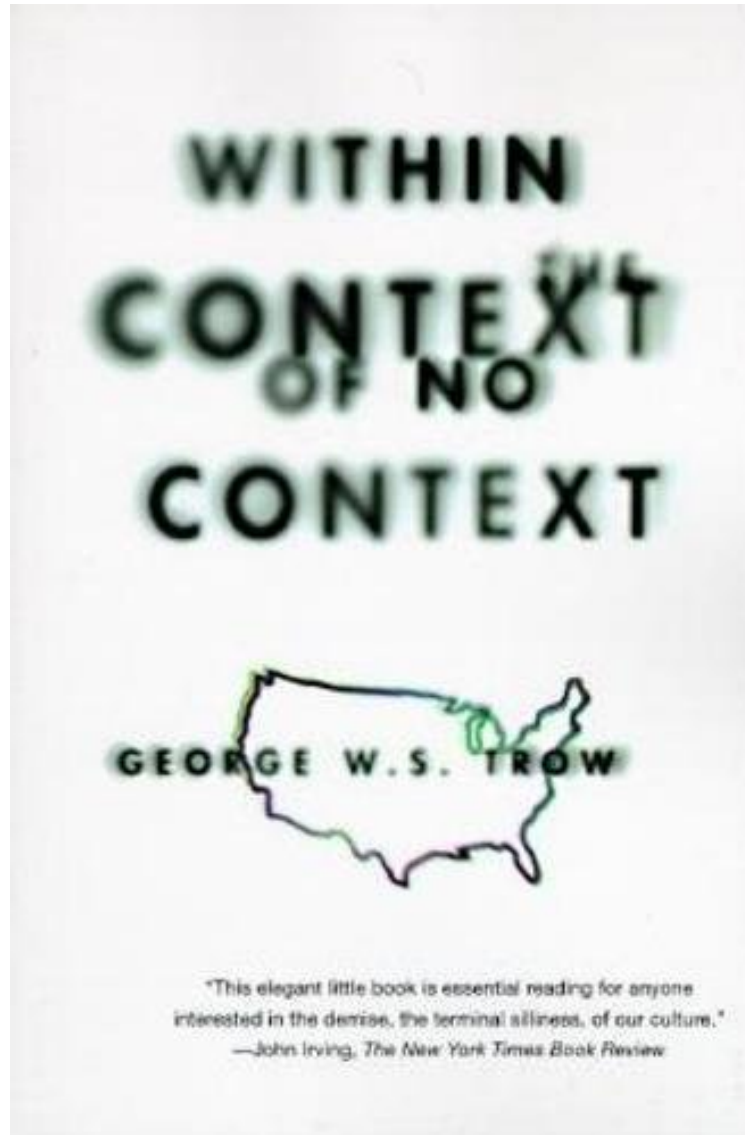


(Download) Within the Context of No Context

Within the Context of No Context

George W.S. Trow

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George W.S. Trow : Within the Context of No Context before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Within the Context of No Context:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What Did I Read? By MoonDreamer I gave this five stars for being so darned intellectually heavy that I could barely understand it. But I did go to the New York World's Fair when I was a kid, and it was fun to read about some of the behind-the-scene happenings. 11 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Required reading if you are majoring in David Foster Wallace studies By Either C, or D. I had this book pushed

on me by a friend bemoaning the death of "taste and refinement" in the USA. Well, I've read it and the other reviews here and I don't understand the hype. This is not a great essay, nor even a particularly original thesis for an essay. (Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," this is not, despite the enthusiasm of some of the reviewers.) It stakes out a middlebrow-putting-on-some-highbrow-airs place in the great 20th century question-complex that modernity has chewed over now since at least 1918 although somehow all of it was presaged well before by the likes of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Conrad, Dostoyevsky etc., Why are we so damned bored? Why is there nothing real to do? What the hell is wrong with us? Why is it the more prosperous we become the more miserable and empty life seems? What broke Western Man's joie de vivre... Then mix some historicity into these questions -- the millions of dead in the trenches of WWI, then WWII and Auschwitz, Hiroshima, etc. ... And then, ever since around 1950, it has become increasingly obvious that the *weltschmerz* the modernists felt so acutely was being complicated -- exacerbated and obscured (but by no means cured) -- by the loud sugar-saturated hyper-active consumerist triviality of contemporary culture -- The Entertainment Mass Media! TV! Yeegads. Quisp. Quake. TV. This is where Trow jumps on... our culture is all mass media'd, all rotten with People magazine and celebrity worship, our long-developed culture (context) is gone, and what's left occurs within no-context: the set of the Mike Douglas show -- Nowhere, but with chairs and a studio audience. I'll give Trow this much: he absolutely nails 'reality TV'... he sees it coming, sees that ultimately there must be TV about being on TV... pure context of no context. But that's about it. Trow does not really add all that much to the conversation -- Pretty much every other thinker/cultural product in the past 50 years, from Philip K. Dick to Roland Barthes to E.M. Cioran to Don DeLillo to Network, has spoken to these issues in some way. The thinker Trow is most like is David Foster Wallace. Trow's book is more like notes for DFW's essays than an independent work. The strongest pages in Trow, the last pages of "Within the Context of No Context" which concern Trow's summer job as a Protocol Guide at the '64 World's Fair are so David Foster Wallace, you can't quite believe DFW didn't write them -- even DFW's smiling-yet-wounded it's-all-so-funny-but-it's-not-really-all-that-funny-actually tone is found in those pages... the only things missing are the modulating shenanigans of DFW's style... Trow isn't the stylist Foster Wallace was. Trow's little book belongs in a bibliography of The Great Malaise but it is neither the first, last, nor best word on it. This isn't the place for an extended discussion of Trow vis a vis DFW, but I derived the most enjoyment in the essay from thinking about how Trow's writing and thought compares to DFW's. **a little edit/comment on my own review** my review reads (to me) sour and three years later my recollection of the book is not nearly as negative as this review implies. I also might leave someone with the mistaken impression Trow's writing somehow derives from DFW, which of course is not possible just by simple chronology. My point was DFW and Trow work similar themes but for me at least DFW is more incisive. (Hardly a damning criticism of Trow). I think my review was motivated by a desire to act as a corrective to the many 5 star reviews that proclaim this "book is amazing, oracular, etc." Ok, imo it isn't all that. But it is well worth reading. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Cheap printing, but that is as it should be. By Read these books This classic needs to be read by anyone who wants to write media commentary. It's as much a part of the lexicon as "The Elements of Style." Get the (other) "Little Book!"

Written originally for a special issue of *The New Yorker* and reissued here with a new forward by the author, *Within the Context of No Context* is George W. S. Trow's brilliant exposition on the state of American culture and twentieth-century life. Published to widespread acclaim, *Within the Context of No Context* became an immediate classic and is, to this day, a favorite work of writers and critics alike. Both a chilling commentary on the times in which it was written and an eerie premonition of the future, Trow's work locates and traces, describes and analyzes the components of change in contemporary America -- a culture increasingly determined by the shallow worlds of consumer products, daytime television, and celebrity heroes. "This elegant little book is essential reading for anyone interested in the demise, the terminal silliness, of our culture." -- John Irving, *The New York Times Book Review*; "In this elegant, poignant essay, written with the grace of a master stylist, George Trow articulates the accelerated impermanence of American culture with a precision that is both flaunting and devastating." -- Rudy Wurlitzer; "Within the Context of No Context is a masterpiece of the century that belongs on a shelf next to Theodore Adorno's *Minima Moralia* and Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*." -- Michael Tolkin; "Within the Context of No Context may appear to be a book of the mind, for it is suffused with such a keen intelligence, but it is actually a book of the heart -- passionate, brave, and stirring." -- Sue Halpern.

.com Long-time *New Yorker* writer George W. S. Trow first published the long title essay of this book in 1981, and it now appears with a companion piece, "Collapsing Dominant." Taken together, the two essays are a trenchant and often scathing examination of American culture. As Trow surveys the landscape, he observes that television has created a land of "no context," which it then gleefully chronicles. The many examples he cites of things he has witnessed in the mass media are alarming not for what he has seen--for we have all seen this stuff--but for the intense, and at times lacerating, insight with which he views the passing parade of frivolity. *Within the Context of No Context* is a slim book that does much to explain modern American society, and the thoughts in its pages will resonate for a long time. From *Library Journal* First appearing in *The New Yorker* in 1978 (Trow wrote the "Talk of the Town" pieces) and

published by Little, Brown in 1981, this volume dissects 20th-century American culture and how it had spiraled downward in ever-tightening circles into decay. This edition contains a new introduction by Trow. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.