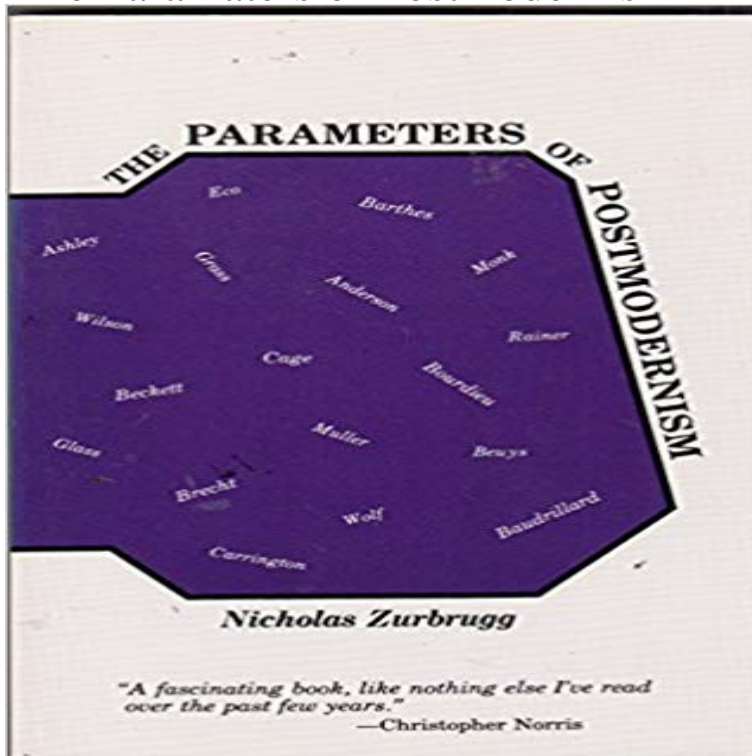


The Parameters of Postmodernism



In *The Parameters of Postmodernism*, Nicholas Zurbrugg demonstrates how contemporary artistic creativity discredits popular apocalyptic theories. *The Parameters of Postmodernism* offers a highly polemical discussion of the conflict between what Zurbrugg presents as the misleading assumptions of many of the more negative theoretical accounts of postmodern culture and the positive creativity of most leading postmodern artists, writers, and performers. Zurbrugg challenges what he considers the fictions of popular crisis theories by demonstrating that the so-called crises are only theoretical constructs at odds with current artistic practice. Based on Zurbrugg's extensive interviews with a number of the leading postmodern artists, writers, and performers (Anderson, Baudrillard, Beckett, Cage, Glass, Rainer, and Wilson, among them), this book presents a challenging, positive view of postmodern culture. Zurbrugg names the condition caused by the prevailing negative theories about postmodern culture the B-effect, a term derived from the work of a number of influential European writers and theorists (Brecht, Beckett, Barthes, Baudrillard, Bourdieu, and others) who have insisted on the lack of valid avant-garde innovation, the death of artistic creativity, and the lack of a permanent reality. In the first section of *The Parameters of Postmodernism*, Zurbrugg considers the contradictions in the arguments of the B-effect writers and points to later writings in which they qualify their earlier, most infamous assertions. In the second section of the book, Zurbrugg introduces the offsetting C-effect of postmodern culture, an effect based on those more positive creative practices and theories best exemplified, he feels, by the work of the late American composer John Cage. Zurbrugg identifies additional aspects of the C-effect in the multimedia experiments of other

Americans, such as Anderson, Ashley, Glass, Monk, Rainer, and Wilson, who interweave various postmodern media with confidence and invention and those European artists and writers like Beuys, Carrington, Eco, Grass, Muller, and Wolf who revive, modify, and reanimate mythological, medieval, neoclassical, and folk traditions. Zurbrugg argues that in each case high-tech or revivalist postmodern creativity culminates in highly positive syntheses of past, present, and futuristic materials. The Parameters of Postmodernism will interest scholars and students of postmodern culture, especially those working in English, comparative literature, French, performance studies, art history, and interdisciplinary humanities.

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