

# Critical Insights: David Foster Wallace

“David Foster Wallace left behind a treasure trove of literature, both published and unpublished, upon his untimely death in 2008. A writer who employed unusual literary technique to explore themes of mindfulness, addiction and more, he has always been a critical favorite due to his aesthetic choices and diverse subject matter. Prolific with short fiction and essays, he is perhaps best remembered as the author of the lengthy novel *Infinite Jest*. While that novel alone has inspired numerous critical observations, ***Critical Insights: David Foster Wallace* divides its attentions among the broad scope of his work to promote an open, yet compact discussion.**

**The book begins with background on Wallace’s life and career;** painting a portrait of an intellectually and aesthetically restless creature whose talent in tennis, interest in philosophy, and trouble with women and addiction would all eventually make their way into his groundbreaking writing. We also learn of the cultural and critical landscape within which he wrote. Kiki Benzon’s “David Foster Wallace and Millennial America,” for example, aims to help readers place Wallace’s work in relation to the historical, political, and social contexts from which it was born. This section also notes the influences of various literary progenitors upon Wallace’s writing development.

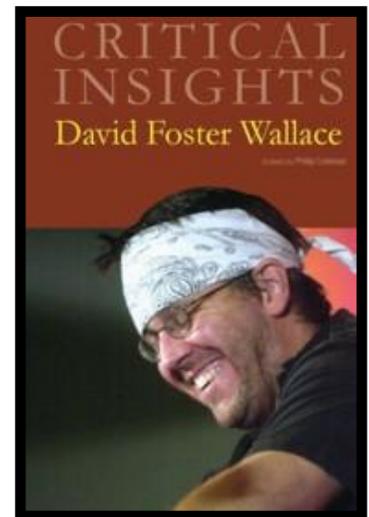
**Twelve essays then examine the breadth of his work and showcase a diverse array of critical analyses.** Arranged more or less chronologically, pieces like Steve Gronert Ellerhof’s “Proteus Bound: Pinning *Girl with Curious Hair* under Short Story Theory,” examine the importance of a reader’s acknowledgment of literary effort via Wallace’s early short fiction, while Aine Mahon’s “Difficulties of Reality in Cora Diamond and David Foster Wallace” points to the ultimate meeting of literature and moral philosophy as expressed throughout his writing.

Much, of course, is said of *Infinite Jest*, as it remains his definitive work. David Hering’s essay “Form as Strategy in *Infinite Jest*” examines the novel’s unique form in relation to its complex themes, while Alex Resar ponders the repeated re-imaginings held both within the novel and its analysis.

Including chronological and bibliographical resources, **this book gathers a well curated assortment of criticism that does well to capture the essence of a talented writer saturated in his own complex view of contemporary society. Recommended for academic libraries.”**

—ARBA

Text  
Reviews



Pub. Date: April 2015  
ISBN: 978-1-61925-513-5  
Price: \$105.00

SALEM PRESS

2 University Plaza, Suite 310, Hackensack, NJ 07601  
(800) 221-1592 FAX (201) 968-0511  
www.salempress.com csr@salempress.com