

david foster wallace broom of the system

David Foster Wallace and *Broom of the System*: Exploring the Roots of a Literary Visionary

david foster wallace broom of the system stands as an essential point of entry into the mind of one of contemporary literature's most innovative and challenging writers. This debut novel, published in 1987, offers readers a glimpse into the early development of Wallace's signature style—marked by intricate language play, deep philosophical undercurrents, and a uniquely postmodern sensibility. For those interested in understanding how David Foster Wallace evolved into the masterful author behind *Infinite Jest* and his celebrated essays, *Broom of the System* remains a fascinating and often underappreciated work.

The Genesis of a Literary Career: Understanding *Broom of the System*

When David Foster Wallace released *Broom of the System* at the young age of 25, it was immediately clear that he was not an ordinary debut novelist. The book introduces readers to a quirky, linguistically adventurous world that blends absurdity with existential inquiry. At its core, the novel follows the story of Lenore Beadsman, a young woman navigating the dizzying complexities of identity, language, and communication in a surrealized version of Cleveland.

This early work is more than just a narrative; it's a literary experiment in exploring how language shapes reality. The novel's title itself is a nod to the philosophical concept of the "system" and the mechanisms by which individuals attempt to understand or escape it. The "broom," in this metaphor, becomes a tool for sweeping away the clutter of meaning and miscommunication that pervades modern life.

Plot Overview and Key Themes

At first glance, *Broom of the System* might seem like a quirky, playful story filled with eccentric characters and odd situations. However, beneath the surface lies a meditation on the fluidity of identity and the limitations of language. Lenore, the protagonist, finds herself caught between the expectations of her grandmother, the demands of her job at a retirement home, and the enigmatic disappearance of her pet bird, which symbolizes a deeper crisis in communication.

Among the prominent themes explored are:

- The instability of personal identity in a media-saturated culture.
- The philosophical problem of how language constructs and constrains reality.
- The search for meaning in a world that often feels fragmented and nonsensical.

Wallace's use of humor, wordplay, and metafictional devices invites readers to question not only the story's events but the very act of storytelling itself.

David Foster Wallace's Style in **Broom of the System**

One of the defining features of **Broom of the System** is Wallace's linguistic inventiveness. His prose dances between the highly intellectual and the colloquially casual, reflecting a mind fascinated by both the mechanics of language and the messiness of everyday conversation. This duality is a hallmark of Wallace's writing style that would be further refined in his later works.

The Role of Language and Philosophy

Wallace's background in philosophy is evident throughout the novel. The book frequently engages with ideas from Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and other thinkers concerned with language and meaning. For readers interested in philosophical fiction or the intersection of linguistics and narrative, **Broom of the System** serves as a rich text to dissect.

His playful yet precise use of language also highlights how words can both reveal and obscure truth. This tension between clarity and confusion is central to the novel's narrative thrust, making the reading experience both intellectually stimulating and emotionally resonant.

Characters as Vehicles for Ideas

Rather than focusing solely on plot-driven storytelling, Wallace uses characters in **Broom of the System** to embody various philosophical and social ideas. Lenore's interactions with her grandmother, coworkers, and the mysterious "system" around her reveal different facets of human experience and perception.

The characters often feel like archetypes or thought experiments, which may challenge readers looking for traditional character development but reward those interested in thematic depth and conceptual complexity.

Why **Broom of the System** Matters in David Foster Wallace's Oeuvre

For anyone seeking to grasp the evolution of Wallace's literary voice, **Broom of the System** is an indispensable starting point. It showcases many of the elements that would become trademarks of his later work: the intricate layering of narrative, the blend of humor and melancholy, and the relentless questioning of how we understand ourselves and our world.

Foreshadowing Later Masterpieces

Readers familiar with **Infinite Jest** or Wallace's essays will recognize the seeds planted in **Broom of the System**. The novel's concern with addiction, communication breakdowns, and the search for

authentic experience echoes throughout his subsequent writings. In many ways, this debut functions as a laboratory where ideas and techniques were first tested before being expanded on a grander scale.

Critical Reception and Legacy

While some critics initially viewed **Broom of the System** as a promising but uneven debut, its reputation has grown alongside Wallace's increasing stature. Scholars and fans often return to the novel to trace the development of his voice and to appreciate the originality that set him apart from his literary contemporaries.

Moreover, **Broom of the System** remains relevant for its insightful exploration of the challenges posed by modern communication—issues that resonate even more deeply in today's digital age.

Tips for Reading **Broom of the System** and Appreciating Its Layers

Engaging with **Broom of the System** can be both rewarding and challenging. Here are some tips to enhance your reading experience:

- **Take your time with the language:** Wallace's prose is dense with wordplay and philosophical references. Pause occasionally to unpack the sentences and savor the nuance.
- **Familiarize yourself with key philosophical ideas:** Knowing the basics of Wittgenstein's language theories or Heidegger's existentialism can deepen your understanding of the novel's themes.
- **Embrace ambiguity:** The novel doesn't offer easy answers or a straightforward plot. Let yourself experience the confusion and uncertainty as part of the narrative's purpose.
- **Look for recurring motifs:** Pay attention to symbols like the pet bird or the concept of the "system" to uncover layers of meaning.

For readers interested in exploring the intersections of philosophy, language, and literature, **Broom of the System** provides a uniquely immersive experience that rewards careful reading.

Exploring the Broader Context: David Foster Wallace's Impact on American Literature

Understanding **Broom of the System** also involves situating it within the broader sweep of American literature in the late 20th century. Wallace emerged during a time when postmodernism was both

celebrated and critiqued, and his work often responded to the limitations of that movement.

Postmodernism and Beyond

While **Broom of the System** exhibits many postmodern traits—such as metafictional techniques, irony, and self-referentiality—Wallace also infused his narrative with an earnestness and desire for genuine connection that set him apart. This tension between skepticism and sincerity became a defining feature of his contributions to literature.

Influence on Contemporary Writers

Wallace's innovative approach in **Broom of the System** and later works inspired a generation of writers who seek to blend intellectual rigor with emotional depth. His ability to tackle complex subjects while maintaining accessibility continues to influence novelists, essayists, and critics alike.

Whether you are a student of literature or simply a curious reader, exploring **Broom of the System** offers insight into the early stages of a writer whose work has left an indelible mark on American letters.

In the end, **Broom of the System** is more than just David Foster Wallace's first novel; it's a vibrant exploration of language, identity, and the human condition. For anyone fascinated by the mechanics of storytelling or the philosophical puzzles embedded in everyday life, this novel invites a thoughtful and rewarding journey into the mind of one of the most original voices in contemporary literature.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'The Broom of the System' by David Foster Wallace about?

'The Broom of the System' is a novel that follows the life of Lenore Beadsman, a young woman navigating the complexities of language, identity, and reality in a chaotic modern world. It explores themes of communication, consciousness, and existentialism.

When was 'The Broom of the System' published?

'The Broom of the System' was published in 1987 and is David Foster Wallace's first novel.

How does 'The Broom of the System' reflect David Foster Wallace's writing style?

The novel showcases Wallace's signature style with its dense prose, intricate narrative structure, and

philosophical inquiries, blending postmodern techniques with a deep emotional core.

What are some major themes in 'The Broom of the System'?

Major themes include the limitations of language, the nature of reality and identity, the search for meaning, and the impact of media and communication on human experience.

Who is the protagonist of 'The Broom of the System'?

The protagonist is Lenore Beadsman, a young woman working in a call center in Cleveland, who becomes entangled in a series of surreal events challenging her sense of self.

How does 'The Broom of the System' compare to David Foster Wallace's later works?

'The Broom of the System' is often seen as a precursor to Wallace's later, more complex works like 'Infinite Jest,' with similar thematic concerns but a lighter and more experimental tone.

Is 'The Broom of the System' considered a postmodern novel?

Yes, it is widely regarded as a postmodern novel due to its metafictional elements, fragmented narrative, and exploration of language and reality.

What inspired David Foster Wallace to write 'The Broom of the System'?

Wallace was inspired by his interest in philosophy, language, and the works of authors like Thomas Pynchon and Ludwig Wittgenstein, aiming to explore how language shapes human perception and identity.

Additional Resources

David Foster Wallace Broom of the System: An Analytical Review of His Early Work

david foster wallace broom of the system stands as a significant marker in the literary trajectory of one of America's most influential writers. Though better known for his magnum opus **Infinite Jest** and his incisive essays, Wallace's debut novel **The Broom of the System** offers a compelling glimpse into the themes and stylistic tendencies that would define his career. This article delves into the novel's core elements, situating it within both Wallace's oeuvre and the broader landscape of late 20th-century American literature.

Understanding **The Broom of the System in Context**

Published in 1987, **The Broom of the System** emerged when Wallace was a freshly minted MFA graduate from the University of Arizona. At just 25 years old, he crafted a narrative that blends

postmodern experimentation with sharp philosophical inquiry. The novel's title itself—*Broom of the System*—evokes a metaphor for sweeping away outdated constructs, a thematic undercurrent that resonates throughout the book.

David Foster Wallace's novel occupies a unique space between absurdist fiction and metafiction. Explored through the perspective of Lenore Beardsman, a young woman navigating the complexities of identity, language, and reality, the story challenges conventional narrative structures. The novel's setting in Cleveland, Ohio, is no mere backdrop; it reflects a midwestern milieu that contrasts with the more cosmopolitan environments in Wallace's later works, emphasizing themes of confinement and the search for meaning.

Thematic Exploration: Language, Identity, and Reality

One of the most salient features of *The Broom of the System* is its preoccupation with language as a system that shapes—and sometimes distorts—individual identity. Wallace draws heavily on Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language games, underscoring the idea that words acquire meaning only within particular social contexts. Lenore's struggles with her grandmother and her own sense of self reveal how language can both enable and limit human experience.

This exploration aligns with broader postmodernist concerns about the instability of meaning. Wallace's treatment of identity is notably fluid; characters often slip between roles and personas, reflecting the fragmented self in a media-saturated age. The novel's playful tone juxtaposes with its serious philosophical inquiries, creating an unsettling yet engaging narrative rhythm.

Stylistic Features and Narrative Structure

Wallace's early writing in *The Broom of the System* already showcases his penchant for linguistic dexterity and narrative complexity. The prose is dense with neologisms, wordplay, and shifting perspectives. The novel defies traditional linear storytelling by incorporating elements such as embedded narratives, typographical experimentation, and metafictional commentary.

Notably, Wallace's humor in this work is both cerebral and absurd. It serves as a vehicle to probe existential issues without succumbing to despair or didacticism. The novel's episodic structure mirrors Lenore's psychological state, with abrupt tonal shifts that keep readers attentive to the instability beneath the surface.

Positioning *The Broom of the System* within David Foster Wallace's Literary Development

While *The Broom of the System* is often overshadowed by Wallace's later, more ambitious projects, it is essential to recognize its foundational role in his literary evolution. The novel introduces motifs and concerns that reappear in *Infinite Jest* and his essays, such as the tension between individual autonomy and systemic forces, the critique of mass media, and the quest for authenticity.

In comparison to **Infinite Jest**, **The Broom of the System** is more accessible in length and scope but equally rich in thematic substance. It offers a microcosm of Wallace's broader preoccupations, distilled into a more intimate narrative framework. For readers and scholars, this debut provides valuable insight into the development of Wallace's stylistic and philosophical voice.

Critical Reception and Legacy

Upon its release, **The Broom of the System** received mixed reviews. Some critics praised Wallace's originality and intellectual rigor, while others found the novel's complexity and eccentricity challenging. Over time, however, the book has been reassessed as a crucial early work that presaged the innovations of Wallace's later writing.

Academic discourse often highlights the novel's engagement with postmodernism, though Wallace himself expressed ambivalence toward the label. His nuanced approach blends irony with earnestness, distancing the work from the more nihilistic tendencies of contemporaneous literature. Consequently, **The Broom of the System** occupies a distinctive niche in American fiction of the late 20th century.

Key Features and Comparative Insights

- **Philosophical Underpinnings:** Rooted in Wittgensteinian linguistics and existential inquiry, the novel probes how language shapes reality.
- **Postmodern Techniques:** Use of metafiction, non-linear narrative, and genre blending situates the book within postmodern traditions.
- **Characterization:** Lenore Beadsman exemplifies the modern individual caught between personal desires and systemic pressures.
- **Stylistic Innovation:** Wallace's early experimentation with syntax, diction, and narrative voice foreshadows his later mastery.

Comparatively, while contemporaries such as Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo also explored similar themes, Wallace's approach in **The Broom of the System** is marked by a distinctive blend of humor and philosophical seriousness that sets him apart.

Pros and Cons of **The Broom of the System** for New Readers

1. Pros:

- Accessible entry point into Wallace's complex thematic world.

- Engaging, quirky prose style that showcases the author's unique voice.
- Philosophically stimulating, inviting readers to reflect on language and identity.

2. Cons:

- The narrative's complexity and tonal shifts may challenge some readers.
- Less polished than later works, reflecting the author's developmental stage.
- Some plot elements remain deliberately ambiguous, which can be disorienting.

Exploring the Novel's Place in Contemporary Literary Studies

David Foster Wallace's *Broom of the System* continues to be a subject of literary scholarship, particularly in studies examining the transition from late postmodernism to what some critics term "new sincerity." The novel's earnest grappling with meaning and selfhood contrasts with the cynicism prevalent in much postmodern literature, positioning Wallace as a pivotal figure in this literary shift.

Moreover, the novel's interrogation of systems—be they linguistic, social, or psychological—resonates with ongoing debates in philosophy and cultural theory. Its enduring relevance is underscored by continued academic interest and the increasing popularity of Wallace's broader body of work.

In tracing the intricate layers of *The Broom of the System*, readers encounter not only the early contours of David Foster Wallace's literary genius but also a work that challenges fundamental assumptions about communication and existence. As an entry point into Wallace's complex universe, the novel remains a compelling study in language, identity, and the systems that both constrain and define human experience.

David Foster Wallace Broom Of The System

david foster wallace broom of the system: The Broom Of The System David Foster Wallace, 2023-12-07 A visionary, a craftsman, a comedian and as serious as it is possible to be without accidentally writing a religious text. He can do anything with a piece of prose, and it is a humbling experience to see him go to work on what has passed up till now as modern fiction. He's so modern he's in a different time-space continuum from the rest of us. Goddamn him' Zadie Smith The mysterious disappearance of her great- grandmother and twenty-five other elderly inmates from a

Shaker Heights nursing home has left Lenore Stonecipher Beadsman emotionally stranded on the edge of the Great Ohio Desert. But that is simply one problem of many for the hapless switchboard operator, seriously compounded by her ongoing affair with boss Rick Vigorous; the TV stardom of her talking cockatiel, Vlad the Impaler; and other minor catastrophes that threaten to elevate Lenore's search for love and self-determination to new heights of spasmodic weirdness.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *Corporeal Narrative in David Foster Wallace's Fiction* Xiaomeng Wan, 2025-07-13 This book serves as a critical examination of contemporary American literature by examining David Foster Wallace's incorporation of corporeal narrative techniques in his novels, with a particular focus on *The Broom of the System*, *Infinite Jest*, and *The Pale King*. By employing corporeal narratology as a conceptual framework, it sheds light on Wallace's profound exploration of the human body and its societal implications. Through detailed analysis, the book reveals how Wallace's narratives serve as a critique of contemporary issues such as self-alienation, consumerism, and the dehumanizing effects of modern society. Designed for scholars and students of literature, cultural studies, and narrative theory, this book provides a comprehensive understanding of Wallace's literary legacy and his keen observations on the complexities of human existence in the modern world.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *David Foster Wallace's Balancing Books* Jeffrey Severs, 2017-01-03 What do we value? Why do we value it? And in a neoliberal age, can morality ever displace money as the primary means of defining value? These are the questions that drove David Foster Wallace, a writer widely credited with changing the face of contemporary fiction and moving it beyond an emotionless postmodern irony. Jeffrey Severs argues in *David Foster Wallace's Balancing Books* that Wallace was also deeply engaged with the social, political, and economic issues of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A rebellious economic thinker, Wallace satirized the deforming effects of money, questioned the logic of the monetary system, and saw the world through the lens of value's many hidden and untapped meanings. In original readings of all of Wallace's fiction, from *The Broom of the System* and *Infinite Jest* to his story collections and *The Pale King*, Severs reveals Wallace to be a thoroughly political writer whose works provide an often surreal history of financial crises and economic policies. As Severs demonstrates, the concept of value occupied the intersection of Wallace's major interests: economics, work, metaphysics, mathematics, and morality. Severs ranges from the Great Depression and the New Deal to the realms of finance, insurance, and taxation to detail Wallace's quest for balance and grace in a world of excess and entropy. Wallace showed characters struggling to place two feet on the ground and restlessly sought to balance the books of a chaotic culture. Explaining why Wallace's work has galvanized a new phase in contemporary global literature, Severs draws connections to key Wallace forerunners Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, and William Gaddis, as well as his successors—including Dave Eggers, Teddy Wayne, Jonathan Lethem, and Zadie Smith—interpreting Wallace's legacy in terms of finance, the gift, and office life.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *Systemtheoretische Literaturwissenschaft* Niels Werber, 2011-03-29 Begriffe und Probleme der systemtheoretischen Soziologie sind längst in den Literatur-, Kultur- und Medienwissenschaften heimisch geworden. Unterscheidungen wie System und Umwelt oder Medium und Form sowie Begriffe wie Autopoiesis oder Ausdifferenzierung haben Forschungen beflügelt und Diskussionen orientiert, ohne dass immer das gesamte Arsenal der Systemtheorie in Anschlag gebracht werden musste. Gleichwohl bilden die systemtheoretischen Problemstellungen ein Netzwerk, dessen Komplexität oft nur um den Preis der Simplifizierung zu reduzieren oder mit großer Mühe in Analysen aufrechtzuerhalten ist. Das Handbuch verfolgt drei Ziele: Es gibt einen Überblick über die Theorie, indem es den Verknüpfungen der Begriffe folgt. Es führt als Nachschlagewerk in die zentralen Begriffe und Probleme so ein, dass ihr heuristischer Mehrwert deutlich wird, ohne dass zu diesem Zweck die gesamte Theoriearchitektur Luhmanns überblickt werden müsste. Es erprobt diese Begriffe und Probleme in exemplarischen Anwendungen und macht deutlich, wie sich literarische Texte aus einer systemtheoretischen Perspektive beobachten lassen – auf diese Weise kann es Literatur-, Kultur- und Medienwissenschaftlern als

„Gebrauchsanleitung“ für konkrete Gegenstandsanalysen dienen.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *Fictions of Proximity* Tim Personn, 2023-11-02
Fictions of Proximity: Skepticism, Romanticism, and the Wallace Nexus tells the story of a nexus of contemporary novelists around David Foster Wallace who took up the legacy of logical positivism and reworked it between the 1980s and the 2000s in a way that has affinities with romanticism. The book shows how the writers of this ‘Wallace nexus’ use fiction’s complexities to challenge the idea that in human interactions, only complete fusion and transparency may count as instances of knowing. In place of this positivistic ideal of absorption, the book offers the freshly defined concept of ‘proximity,’ a closeness with separateness. It reads key novels of contemporary Anglo-American literature as ‘fictions of proximity,’ i.e., as texts that dramatize, problematize, and enact the movement into this position of proximity. To tell this story, the book draws on unpublished archival materials and understudied connections, advancing new interpretations of four novelists: David Foster Wallace, David Markson, Bret Easton Ellis, and Zadie Smith. *Fictions of Proximity* provides new readings of these writers, both of their canonical texts and of lesser-known works, and situates them with respect to prominent figures in contemporary post-positivist philosophy.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *The Matter of High Words* Robert Chodat, 2017-08-18
In a world of matter, how can we express what matters? When the explanations of the natural sciences become powerfully precise and authoritative, what is the status of our highest words, the languages that articulate our norms and orient our lives? *The Matter of High Words* examines a constellation of American writers who in the decades since World War II have posed these questions in distinctive ways. Walker Percy, Marilynne Robinson, Ralph Ellison, Stanley Cavell, and David Foster Wallace are all self-consciously post-WWII authors, attuned to the fragmentation and skepticism that have defined so much of the literary and critical culture of the last century and more. Yet they also attempt to reach back to older forms of thought and writing that are often thought to have dried up—the traditions of prophecy, of wisdom literature, of the sage. Working within this dual inheritance, these authors are drawn equally to both art and argument, showing and telling, shifting continually between narrative and discursive genres. In their essays they act as moralists, promoting the broad, abstract concepts that might inspire action in the face of naturalistic reduction: community, family, courage, fraternity, marriage, friendship, temperance, judgment. In their narratives, they offer particular lives in particular settings, thick descriptions that give flesh to such high words. Rarely do these movements between genres generate a tidy equilibrium; where their essays speak of cooperation and redemption, their narratives display alienation, loss, and failure. But in pursuing such risky, unorthodox strategies, these postwar sages are not only able to challenge some of the dominant naturalistic theories of the last several decades: cognitive science, neo-Darwinian theory, social science, the fact-value divide in analytic philosophy. Through five chapters of detailed analysis and close reading, Chodat explores the question of whether vocabularies of ought and ought-not can still emerge today, and how these concepts might be embodied, and whether such ideas might be found in things.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *Wolfgang Koeppen* Walter Erhart, 2018-02-12
Das ungeschriebene Hauptwerk des Wolfgang Koeppen - eine exemplarische Studie über das literarische Scheitern. Er wurde zu einem berühmten ›Fall‹ der Literaturgeschichte: ein mutmaßlich nicht mehr schreibender Autor, der die literarische Moderne in Deutschland nach 1945 mit begründete, einen weiteren Roman über Jahrzehnte jedoch verweigerte. Immer noch ungeklärt ist, was sich hinter dem Fall Koeppen verbirgt. Walter Erhart sucht die Gründe weder im Privaten noch beteiligt er sich an der Heroisierung eines notwendig nur noch Fragmente produzierenden modernen Dichters. Er liest die Werkgeschichte dieses Autors vielmehr exemplarisch: als Teil einer noch ungeschriebenen Literaturgeschichte des Scheiterns, als Schreibversuch und Erzählexperiment, mit dem Koeppen zugleich an die Grenzen der ästhetisch-literarischen Moderne geriet und deren unfreiwilliges Ende er beschreibt. Erstmals wird Koeppens Werk aus dem Nachlass und dem Archiv rekonstruiert: die Genese eines Schriftstellers aus dem Geist des Fin de Siècle und der Weimarer Republik, das lebenslange und doch vergebliche Bemühen um die Fertigstellung des großen Romans, der Konflikt

widerstreitender Schreib- und Erzählweisen, die Versuche, den Schauplatz der erzählenden Literatur zu verlagern - mit Reiseliteratur, Drehbüchern und Filmen. Wolfgang Koeppen. Das Scheitern moderner Literatur enthüllt ein bislang verborgen gebliebenes Kapitel der deutschen Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert. Es ist auch die Geschichte einer an ihrem eigenen ästhetischen Programm scheiternden Moderne, im Gegenzug aber eröffnet dieses Scheitern den Blick auf die Zukunft des Erzählens in einer nachmodernen Welt.

david foster wallace broom of the system: Magie und Metapher bei Clemens J. Setz Gesa Steinbrink, 2022-04-19 Das Werk des österreichischen Schriftstellers Clemens J. Setz stellt einen vor Herausforderungen: In der literarischen Öffentlichkeit gelten seine Texte trotz zahlreicher Belobigungen als rätselhaft, irritierend oder sperrig. Einfache oder zumindest eindeutige Erklärungen für die darin geschilderten, oft unwirklich oder sogar magisch erscheinenden Ereignisse gibt es größtenteils nicht, was im eigentümlichen Kontrast zu den ebenso großräumig wie detailreich geschilderten, nicht selten idiosynkratischen Wahrnehmungen und Reflexionen der Figuren steht. Eingebunden in eine reichhaltige Verweisstruktur auf verschiedenen Ebenen, die sich insbesondere in einer Vielzahl von Metaphern niederschlägt, müssen sich Leser:innen im Bemühen um eine kohärente Erzählung immer wieder mit Erkenntnislücken und komplexen Assoziationen, Verunsicherungen von Realitätskonventionen und semantischen Ambivalenzen befassen. Damit ist, so die These des Bandes, ein poetologisch auszuwertendes Verfahren indiziert: Magische Vorstellungen werden im Verbund mit metaphorischen Konzeptionen in Setz' Romanen literarisch verarbeitet und nehmen in ihrem gemeinsamen Auftreten eine bedeutsame ästhetische und epistemische Funktion ein. Die ihnen zugrundeliegenden kognitiven Prozesse stehen dabei in elementarer Verwandtschaft, denn ihr gemeinsamer Wahrnehmungs- und Darstellungsmodus beruht auf analogischer Beziehungshaftigkeit, die sinnstiftend und in ihrer Wirkung besonders nachhaltig ist. Nach einem einführenden Teil in das noch kaum erforschte Werk von Clemens J. Setz entwickelt der Band zunächst eine eigenständige kognitionsästhetische Theorie zu Magie und Metapher unter Rückgriff auf verschiedene interdisziplinäre Ansätze, die dann im Rahmen einer detaillierten Analyse des Textkorpus geprüft und schließlich in kritischer Diskussion der Ergebnisse begründet wird.

david foster wallace broom of the system: The Self and its Shadows Stephen Mulhall, 2013-04-18 Stephen Mulhall presents a series of multiply interrelated essays which together make up an original study of selfhood (subjectivity or personal identity). He explores a variety of articulations (in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and the arts) of the idea that selfhood is best conceived as a matter of non-self-identity—for example, as becoming or self-overcoming, or as being what one is not and not being what one is, or as being doubled or divided. Philosophically, a sustained reading of the work of Nietzsche and Sartre is central to this project, although Wittgenstein is also fundamental to its concerns; Mulhall therefore draws extensively on texts usually associated with 'Continental' philosophical traditions, primarily in order to test the feasibility of a non-elitist form of moral perfectionism. Within the arts, several essays examine various films whose themes intersect with those of the philosophers under study (including Hollywood melodramas, recent spy movies such as the Bourne trilogy and the latest incarnation of James Bond, and David Fincher's 'Benjamin Button'); Wagner's Ring cycle is a recurrent concern; and the novels of Kingsley Amis, J. M. Coetzee and David Foster Wallace are also prominent.

david foster wallace broom of the system: David Foster Wallace's Infinite Jest Stephen J. Burn, 2012-04-19 Infinite Jest has been hailed as one the great modern American novels and its author, David Foster Wallace, who committed suicide in 2008, as one of the most influential and innovative authors of the past 20 years. Don DeLillo called Infinite Jest a three-stage rocket to the future, a work equal to the huge, babbling spin-out sweep of contemporary life, while Time Magazine included Infinite Jest on its list of 100 Greatest Novels published between 1923-2006. David Foster Wallace's Infinite Jest: A Reader's Guide was the first book to be published on the novel and is a key reference for those who wish to explore further. Infinite Jest has become an exemplar for difficulty in contemporary Fiction-its 1,079 pages full of verbal invention, oblique narration, and a scattered, nonlinear, chronology. In this comprehensively revised second edition, Burn maps

Wallace's influence on contemporary American fiction, outlines Wallace's poetics, and provides a full-length study of the novel, drawing out the most important themes and ideas, before surveying Wallace's post-Infinite Jest output, including *The Pale King*.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *Pop Goes the Decade* Kevin L. Ferguson, 2019-09-03 Popular culture in the 1990s often primarily reflected millennial catastrophic anxieties. The world was tightening, speeding up, and becoming more dangerous and dangerously connected. Surely it was only a matter of time before it all came crashing down. *Pop Goes the Decade: The Nineties* explains the American 1990s for all readers. The book strives to be widely representative of 1990s culture, including the more obvious nostalgic versions of the decade as well as focused discussions of representations of minority populations during the decade that are often overlooked. This book covers a wide variety of topics to show the decade in its richness: music, television, film, literature, sports, technology, and more. It includes an introductory timeline and background section, followed by a lengthy Exploring Popular Culture section, and concludes with a brief series of essays further contextualizing the controversial and influential aspects of the decade. This organization allows readers both a wide exposure to the variety of experiences from the decade as well as a more focused approach to aspects of the 1990s that are still resonant today.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Science* Bruce Clarke, Manuela Rossini, 2010-09-13 Pt. 1. Literatures and sciences -- pt. 2. Disciplinary and theoretical approaches -- pt. 3. Periods and cultures.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern American Fiction* Paula Geyh, 2017-04-24 Few previous periods in the history of American literature could rival the richness of the postmodern era - the diversity of its authors, the complexity of its ideas and visions, and the multiplicity of its subjects and forms. This volume offers an authoritative, comprehensive, and accessible guide to the American fiction of this remarkable period. It traces the development of postmodern American fiction over the past half-century and explores its key aesthetic, cultural, and political contexts. It examines its principal styles and genres, from the early experiments with metafiction to the most recent developments, such as the graphic novel and digital fiction, and offers concise, compelling readings of many of its major works. An indispensable resource for students, scholars, and the general reader, the Companion both highlights the extraordinary achievements of postmodern American fiction and provides illuminating critical frameworks for understanding it.

david foster wallace broom of the system: *Literature and the Encounter with Immanence* Brynnar Swenson, 2017-06-06 In *Literature and the Encounter with Immanence* Brynnar Swenson collects nine original essays that approach the relationship between literature and immanence through methodologies grounded in the philosophy of Spinoza. One of Spinoza's most provocative claims is a simple declaration of ignorance: "We do not know what a body can do." A literary theory based on immanence privileges the ontological status of the text and the material act of reading. Rather than ask what a text means, the essays here ask what a text can do. Each essay documents a distinct literary and philosophical encounter with immanence and, as a result, opens up a space to read literature as one would read philosophy and vice versa.

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