

# Verso l'infinito e oltre

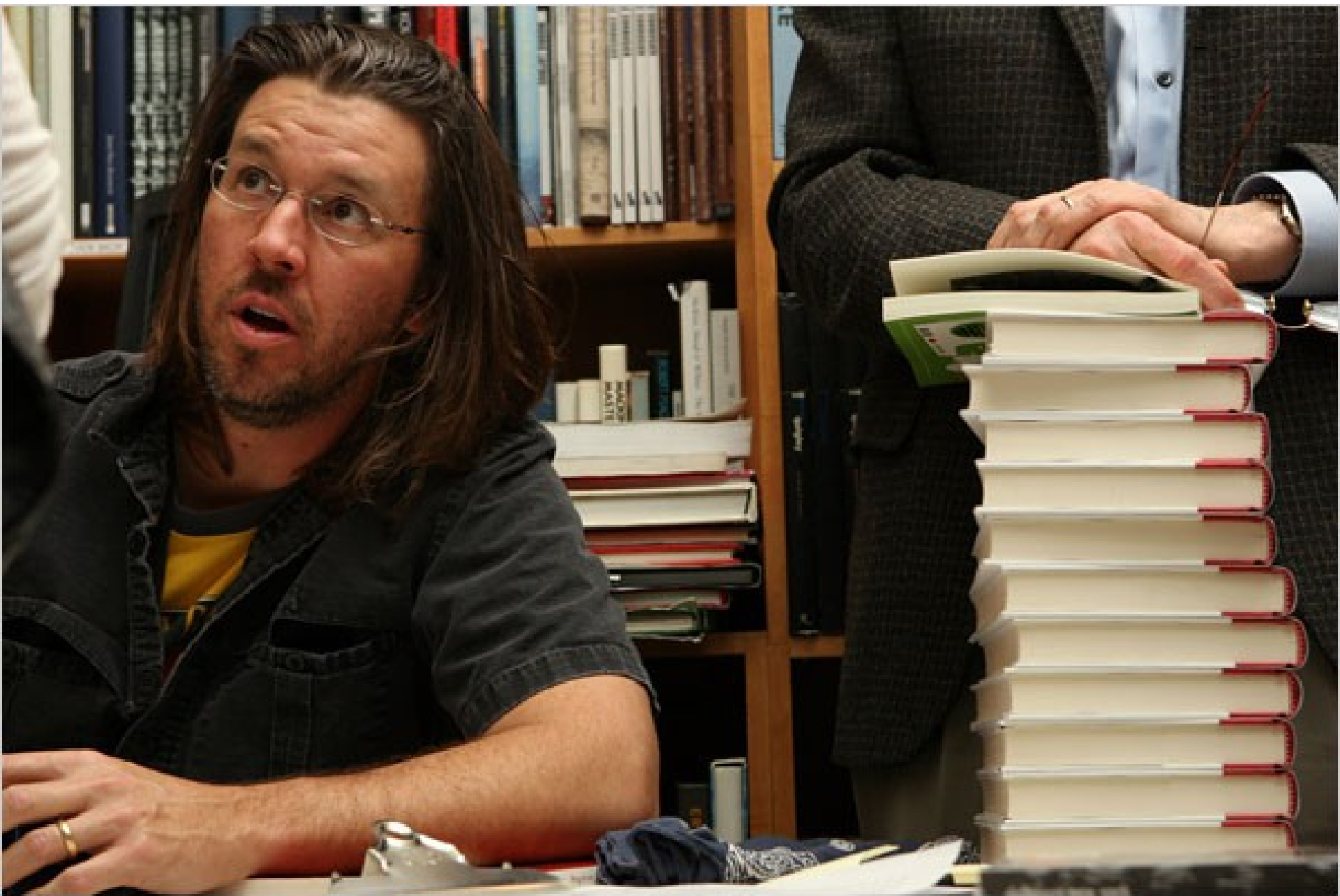
**David Foster  
Wallace  
e la Matematica**



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**David Foster Wallace**

CLOSE X

# Opere di David Foster Wallace

## **Romanzi**

*La scopa del sistema (The Broom of the System)*, (1987)

*Infinite Jest*, (1996)

*The Pale King*, (2011) (Incompiuto)

## **Romanzi e Racconti**

*La ragazza con i capelli strani (Girl with Curious Hair)*, (1990)

*Verso Occidente l'impero dirige il suo corso (Westward the Course of the Empire)*, (1989)

*Brevi interviste con uomini schifosi (Brief Interviews with Hideous Men)*, (1999)

*Oblio (Oblivion: Stories)*, (2004)

*Questa è l'acqua (This Is Water)*, (2009)

## **Saggi**

*Il rap spiegato ai bianchi (Signifying Rappers: Rap and Race In the Urban Present)*, (1990) - scritto con Mark Costello

*Una cosa divertente che non farò mai più (A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again)*, (1997)

*Tennis, Tv, trigonometria, tornado (e altre cose divertenti che non farò mai più) (A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again)*, (1997)

*Tutto, e di più. Storia compatta dell'infinito (Everything and More: A Compact History of Infinity)*, (2003)

*Considera l'aragosta (Consider the Lobster)*, (2006)









When the writer David Foster Wallace committed suicide Sept. 12 at age 46, the literary world lost an inventive and verbally exuberant artist. And Boston lost something, too: one of the most imaginative chroniclers of the city. It's certain that far more people have read about Wallace's serio-comic magnum opus, the 1996

novel "Infinite Jest," than have actually read it. Maybe fewer yet know that the book takes place in Boston. Though he labeled the novel's central neighborhood "Enfield" (after one of the towns the Quabbin Reservoir swallowed), its highbrow athletes and low-down crooks hustle in easily recognizable Boston locales. The urban detail

contributes to the book's intense verisimilitude and its evocation of an America drugged on entertainment: Not only can you learn the exact technique one character used to freebase cocaine, you can identify the Charles Street Store 24 where she buys the paraphernalia. James Joyce fans pay tribute to their favorite author on

Bloomsday by following the action of "Ulysses" around Dublin. This tour, in abbreviated form, does the same for "Infinite Jest" — offering a meandering, digressive foray in the spirit of a book that needed nearly 100 pages of footnotes to contain all the back-, side-, and substories that Wallace devised.

### 1. ENFIELD TENNIS ACADEMY

A true ivory tower, located slightly east of the real-life Boston College, the academy is the high-pressure home base of the book's teenage protagonist, a promising athlete and brainiac named Hal Incandenza. His late father created a mysterious videotape, "Infinite Jest," so doloriously entertaining it turns everyone who watches it into a vegetable — the linchpin of Wallace's satire of a society addicted to pleasure even unto death. The hunt for the tape sends an array of incompetent but ruthless political groups chasing one another around the streets of Boston and Cambridge.

### 2. ATHSCME FANS

In Wallace's imagined new world order, the United States, Canada, and Mexico have fused into a single government, and have turned northern New England into a massive dump for toxic waste. The wastelands start just north of Boston, and giant fans ensure the noxious clouds stay put. The fans' steady hum is a constant reminder of the poisons that lie just beyond the borders of everyday life.

### 3. INMAN SQUARE, CAMBRIDGE

The action keeps returning to this neighborhood in the middle of Cambridge, called "Little Lisbon" in a nod to the Portuguese influence along Cambridge Street. The square also houses Antitoe Entertainment, a fictional gadgets and video store that's a front for Canadian political operatives.

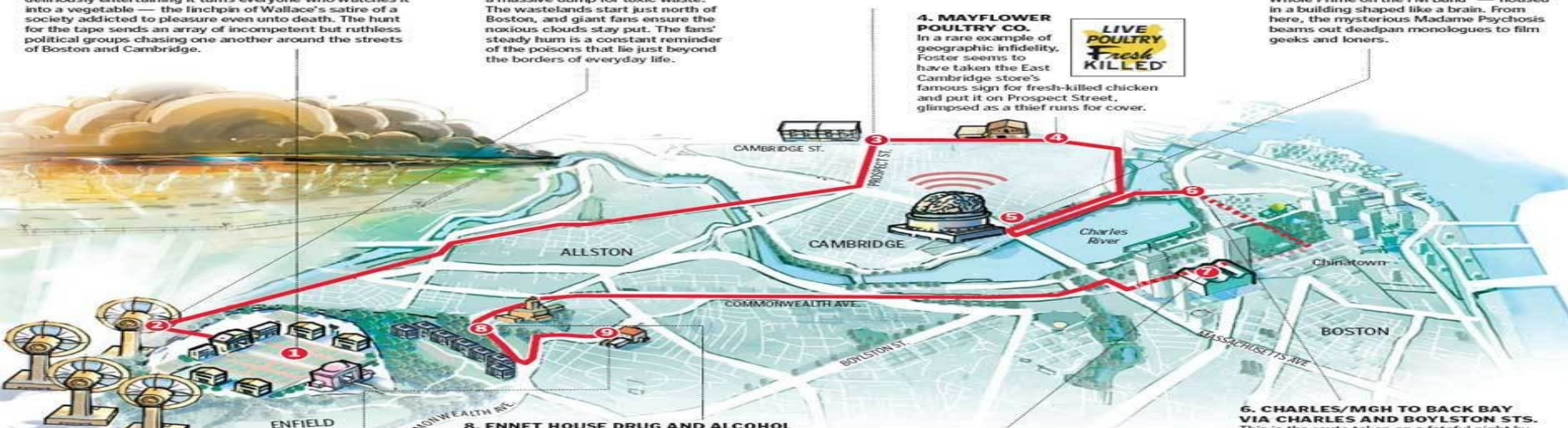
### 4. MAYFLOWER POULTRY CO.

In a rare example of geographic infidelity, Foster seems to have taken the East Cambridge store's famous sign for fresh-killed chicken and put it on Prospect Street, glimpsed as a thief runs for cover.



### 5. WYYY, MASS AVE., CAMBRIDGE

Sorry, WMBR. Just when you thought no one could parody MIT better than it parodies itself, Wallace invented college radio station WYYY-109 — "Largest Whole Prime on the FM Band" — housed in a building shaped like a brain. From here, the mysterious Madame Psychosis beams out deadpan monologues to film geeks and leopards.



### 9. 412 WEST BRAINER ROAD, ALLSTON

Standing outside a party house, a sadistic Ennet House resident on his way back from a Brookline AA meeting kills a dog. The resulting fight ends up putting Gately in St. Elizabeth's hospital, refusing Demerol and hallucinating. His suffering underlines Wallace's vision of the nasty tendency of pleasure to turn back on itself and become pain. Or as Wallace put it, a world where "the Fun has long since dropped off the Too Much."

### 8. ENNET HOUSE DRUG AND ALCOHOL RECOVERY HOUSE

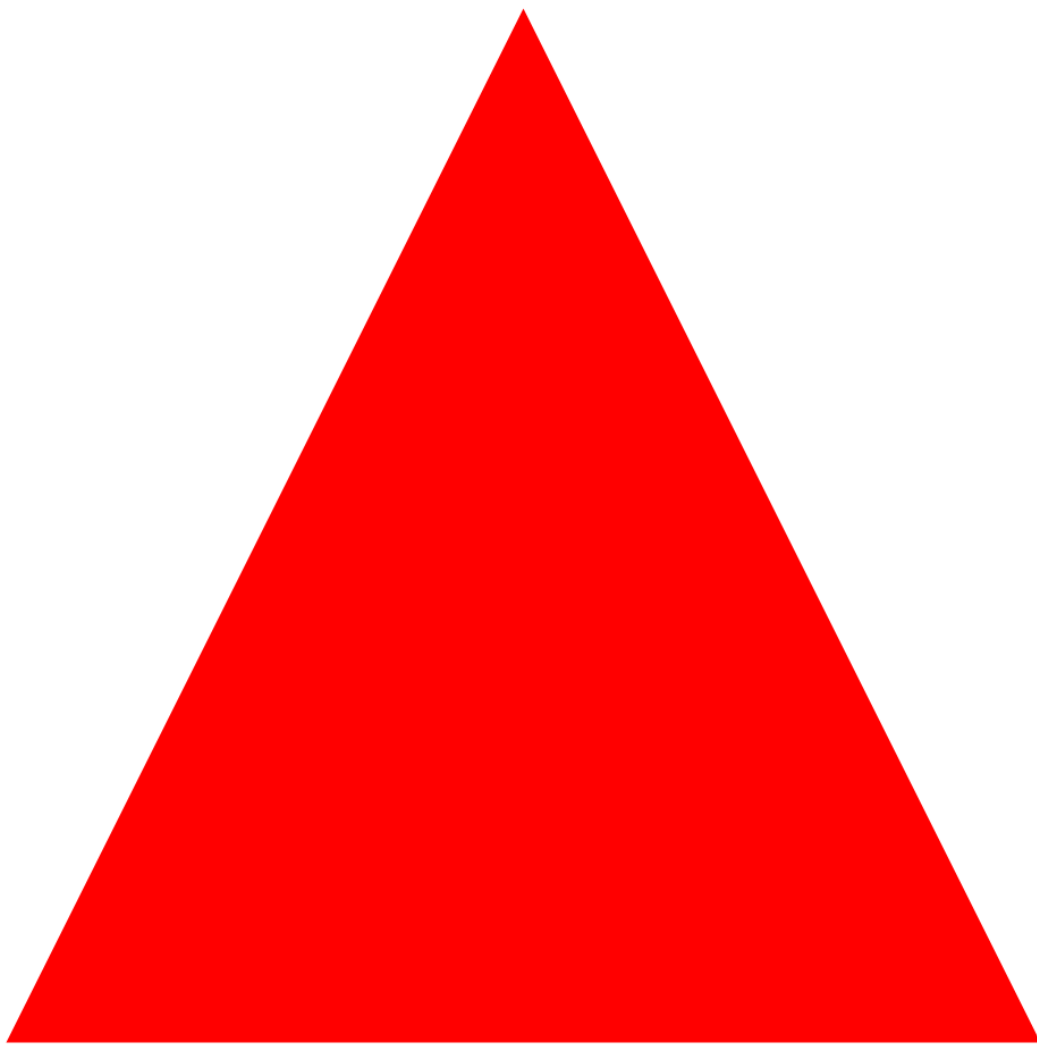
Halfway down the Enfield hill — which runs down to Comm. Ave. just west, it seems, of Washington Street — is a ramshackle dormitory that houses a wide range of recently sober characters. Wallace, who admitted to drug problems in his youth, researched AA by attending open groups in Boston. Though Wallace was often considered a postmodern ironist, the figure who occupies the moral center of "Infinite Jest" is Ennet House manager Don Gately, who insists quite unironically that while AA's principles sound impossibly trite, accepting them can save your life.

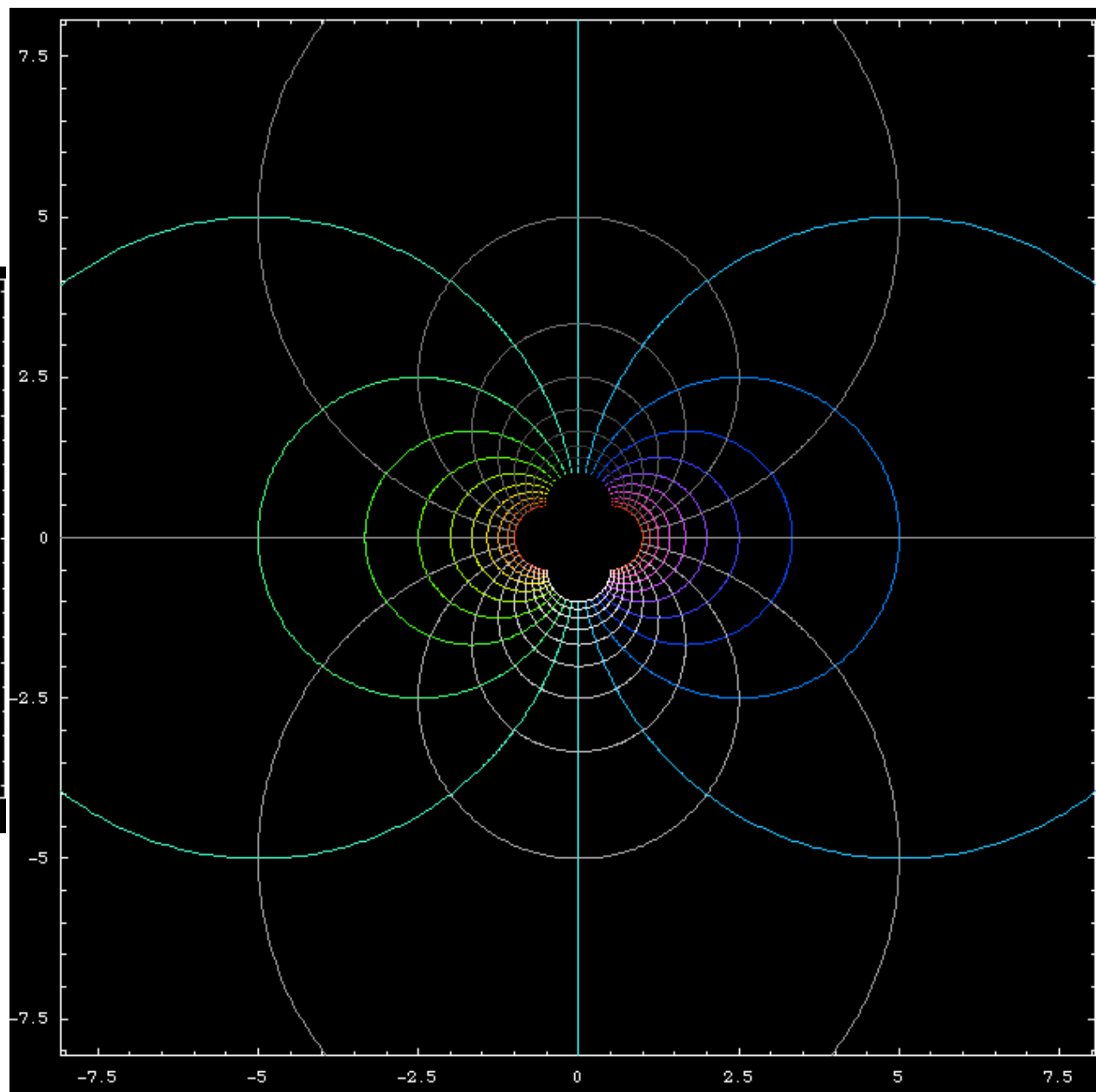
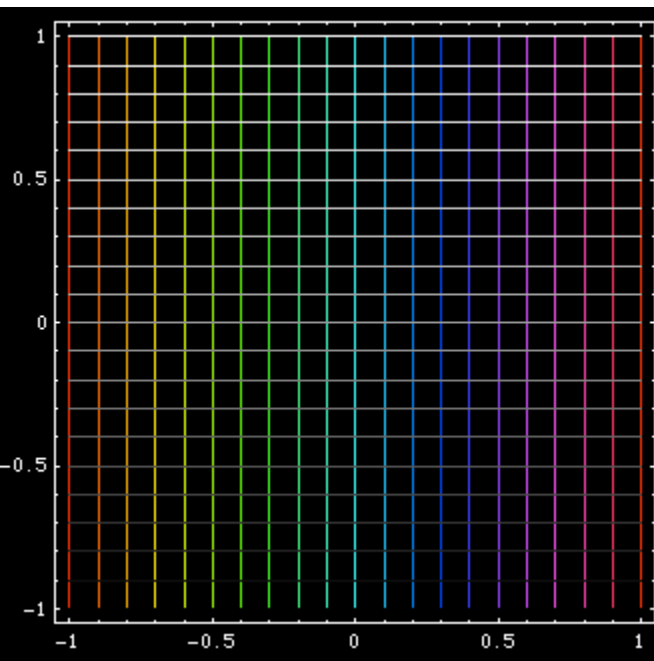
### 7. BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, COPLEY SQUARE

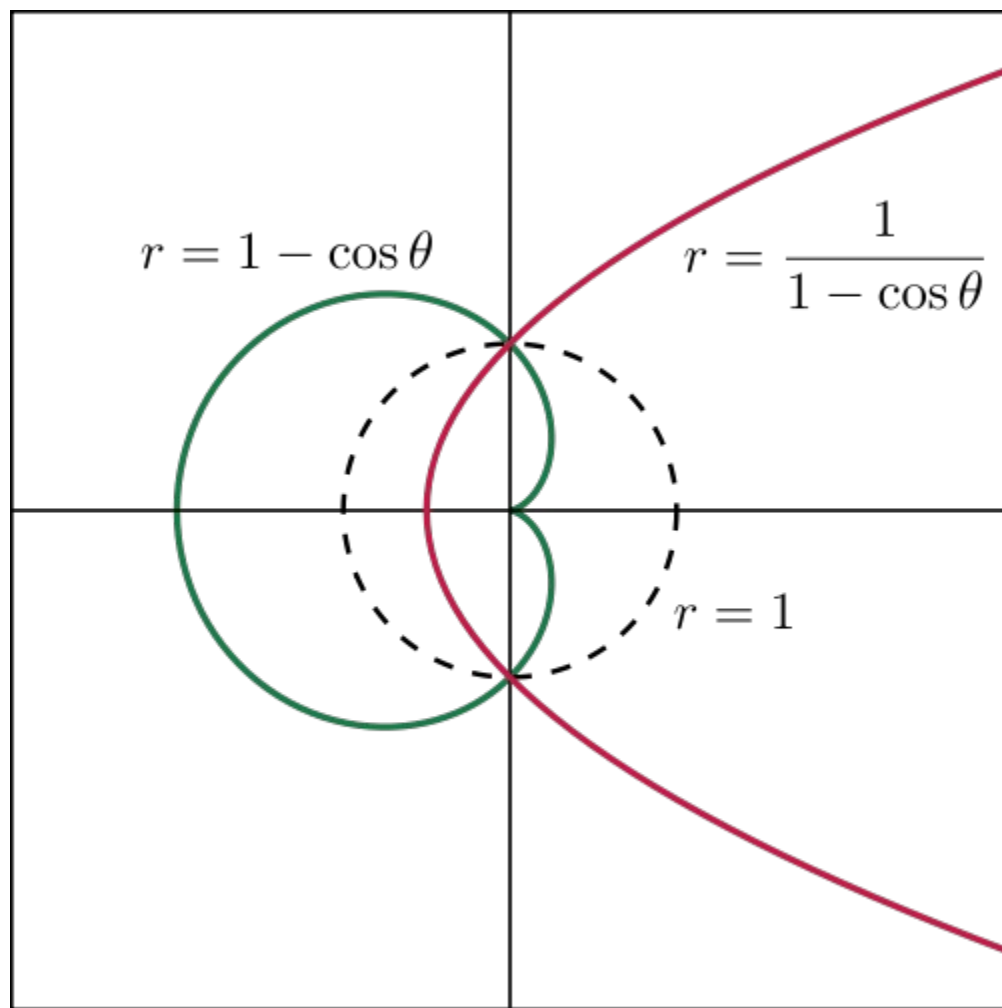
Wallace delighted in juxtaposing high culture and the down-and-out, and he found a perfect real-world contrast here. Early in the book, an unnamed narrator ricochets with buddies among Cambridge, Enfield, and Chinatown, mugging people and tracking down dope, finally shooting up on their favorite hot-air grate behind the library.

### 6. CHARLES/MGH TO BACK BAY VIA CHARLES AND BOYLSTON STS.

This is the route taken on a fateful night by Joelle van Dyne, the star of the video "Infinite Jest," as she prepares to kill herself. The book's many ruminations on self-destruction are especially poignant in the wake of Foster's death, including this description of van Dyne: "Among pernicious myths is the one where people always get very upbeat and generous and other-directed right before they eliminate their own map for keeps. The truth is that the hours before a suicide are usually an interval of enormous conceit and self-involvement."

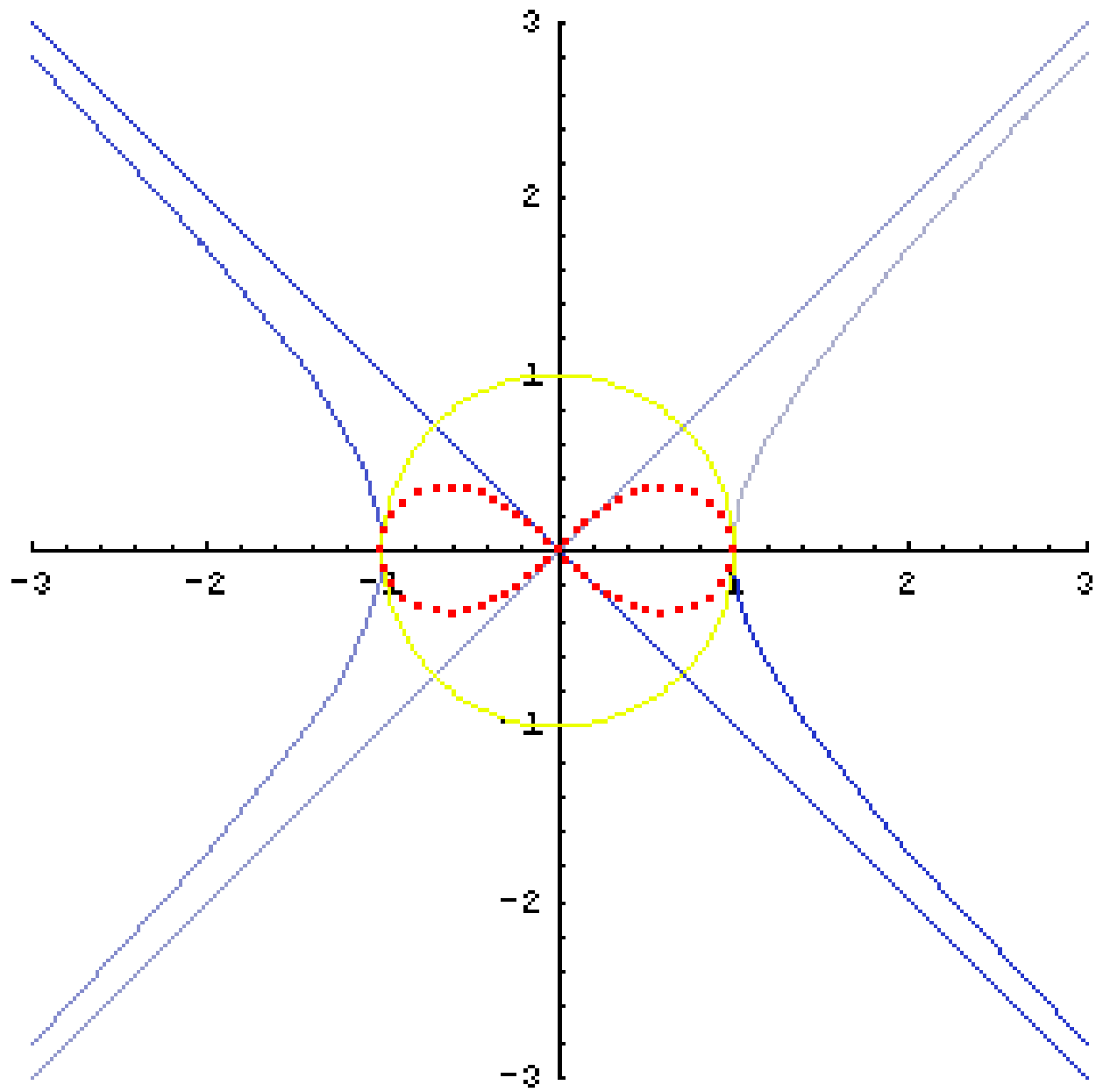








E.T.A. Grounds  
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**David Foster Wallace**

1962 - 2008