

Partial Analysis of
David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*:
The Nine Months Glad Bag

By John P. Anderson

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I am in here.

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Thank you Yvonne Stephens and Ken Luber

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Vladimir Nabokov: My course, among other things, is a kind of detective investigation of the mystery of literary structures.

Albert Einstein: Our thinking creates problems that the same type of thinking will not solve.

Introduction to Wallace's *Infinite Jest*: The Nine Months Glad Bag

Introduction

Welcome to a partial analysis of David Foster Wallace's 1079 page novel *Infinite Jest* ["I"], which was copyrighted in 1996 when he was only in his early thirties. This analysis shows my take on the principal theme of the novel germinating in the first 30 or so chapters [about 20% of the total pages of the novel].

The principal theme of this gigantic novel is the serious danger to modern youth lurking in their tendency to be:

. . . deeply and literally self-centered and to see and interpret everything through this lens of self. [from Wallace's 2005 Graduation Speech at Kenyon College]

Wallace speaks, in the Kenyon speech, of his own attitude under entitlement:

It's the automatic way that I experience the boring, frustrating, crowded parts of adult life when I'm operating on the automatic, unconscious belief that I am the centre of the world, and that my immediate needs and feelings are what should determine the world's priorities.

And for Dr. Wallace, this is not just about being selfish. More dangerous than selfish, this entitled orientation leads to dependency. To addiction. I depend on my entitlement rather than exercising my own individual efforts to earn happiness. I rely on others to get things done for me, and when that fails I rely on substances to get things done for me. Not my job. Not my personal responsibility.

Wallace lights up the path from entitlement to dependency by examples of disastrous lives of characters in this novel, principally young Hal Incandenza. In the first chapter we find him an entitlement oriented, drug addled self trying to gain admission to the real world [college] where he is without entitlement. To promote his college admission, entitled Hal relies on officials at his private high school [Enfield Tennis Academy or ETA], which is owned by his family. This project fails disastrously when the college admission officials insist that Hal take personal responsibility for promoting himself. He ends up not in college but by involuntary admission in a mental ward, where he will be taken care of. Wallace's novel is a 1000+ page warning about Hal's form of graduation.

By contrast to Hal, the other main character Gately successfully takes personal responsibility for himself after a life of drugs purchased by way of theft from others, or living off others. His change happens in AA and DA sponsored Ennet House, a live-in recovery house for addicts where Gately takes the 12 step program and chooses thereafter to live and work helping others. With the program and working there after completing the program, Gately discovers a way out of self-centricity, the way of taking responsibility for yourself and helping others. Helping others stay sober helps many recovering addicts stay sober themselves. Helping others helps Gately help himself. Personal responsibility.

This novel is framed by the contrast in the eventual fates of Hal and Gately, which turn on taking personal responsibility for yourself. Hal doesn't and Gately does.

To flag the connection of entitlement to dependency, Wallace locates the addicts living in last chance Ennet House right down the hill from privileged ETA. This downhill and close physical connection indicates the way from entitlement to dependency is indeed a slippery slope.

To flag personal responsibility as the way to independent living, Wallace has the recovered Gately choose for his new life to take the job at Ennet House working at the bottom of the hill to help the resident addicts pull themselves up. He even risks his own life protecting them.

For our major themes, note that at the turning points, Gately had a choice but involuntarily institutionalized Hal didn't.

Self Substances

This dangerous center of the world self-orientation leads inside the lens of self to the use of substances of self. They are addictive to a self that is not rehabilitated. Given its orientation, this imperial self is often alone and often disturbed. For this it seeks cures for the self: tennis ranking, pride giving awards, admiration by others, power, fame, money [all pride oriented] and then those dangerous and readily available cures that come in plastic bags and packages and bottles. Anything to cover up what is missing, the permanent coronation of the self.

These readily available cures in bags and bottles are the dangerous ones because of their ready availability [even in a high school] and their potential effect in an unsatisfied soul is to restrict choices and cancel all other meaning in life. Serving over and over, these cures like opioids become the Dependencies, funded by an instinctive memory of mommy's womb, where I was the center of her world, the last time I was truly appreciated. In the process choices are eliminated, and you are being **totally hosed** [Wallace's words].

This dependency is the enemy of human identity formation, identity being necessary for maximizing human possibilities. For my man Wallace, dependency is the prime enemy of what it means to be a human, which is to leave the womb and childhood dependency behind and spring out on the arches of your own identity and self-responsibility. Those without personal identity lose their power of choice and freedom. And through a self-orientation based only on desire and lacking the grounding of identity and self-responsibility, they float in life and are left vulnerable to desire-based addiction.

The freedom of personal identity maximizes human possibilities just as the freedom of artistic identity maximizes the possibilities of literature. In this novel, we watch a horror show, the freedom of Wallace's artistic production exposing self-imposed restrictions on human possibilities.

The Glad Bag

This novel is "juiced" with examples of drug use and other addictive practices. These practices feature **repetition** without conscious choice, **repetition** responding to need. All of these practices produce dependency and generate at least temporary psychic conditions more or less similar to those in the mother's womb, the nine months glad bag. The starter glad bag, the gateway bag.


Drugs come in a bag [often a plastic Glad Bag] and the best bag of all is the womb [aka uterus]. Glad bag is a name featured in the title of the first chapter, the **Year of Glad**. The desire for return in the teenage years to the mother's glad bag is called the oedipal complex, which lurks in the dark apertures of this story. The vagina is the original way out and the beckoning way back in. I her son don't want to have to deal with new women, who might or might not like me, just return to good old tried and true mom who always did.

The womb at first provides for the infant comfort in residence and then later yearning for return, much like drug use. The bag is glad for nine months, just nine months, and then is the source of yearning. In this story, mommy is named Avril, for April Fools' Day. The birth day you came out fooled by the dependency expectations you developed in utero.

The image of the womb holds most of this story, sponsoring many chapter names as receptacles for feces, urine and garbage. In the womb, there is, as in other premium water-based cruises, no need for choices since everything is included. Food is provided without asking and refuse taken care of without additional charge.

The Glad Structure

Reflecting content based in repetition, this novel is framed on literary structures shaped like Möbius strips, **recursive** structures that inevitably **repeat** by returning to where they start. They also

bend in upon themselves. Think of the figure .

From among the many types of **recursive** shapes available, Wallace chose for his premium literary structure the snake eating its own tail, known in myth as the Ouroboros. Eating your own tail reduces the possibilities of what can and will follow [think future]. That snake is “wasted” [drug slang] because it eats its own self. Likewise, drug addicts eat their own futures.

From the Encyclopedia Britannica:

Ouroboros, emblematic serpent of ancient Egypt and Greece represented with its tail in its mouth, continually devouring itself and being reborn from itself. A gnostic and alchemical symbol, Ouroboros expresses the unity of all things, material and spiritual, which never disappear but perpetually change form in an eternal cycle of destruction and re-creation.

Readers will be reminded of the Ouroboros while reading Wallace’s story of the lethal cartridge which viewed over and over on a repeating cassette causes viewing males to consume themselves with desire.

There is more. The overall shape of the time-line order compared to the narrative order of this novel is like the Ouroboros. The events reported in the first chapter [narrative order] are the last in the time line order. The head of the story, the start narrative wise, has captured the end, the tail time wise. This frames the whole tale as one **recursive** shape, one great big snake biting its own tail. Form and content hooked together.

Head and Body

The image of the Ouroboros gives visual expression to the addictive psychic experiences this book is about. For example, the structure of **recursive repetition**, the joined snake, mimics the again and again no-exit experience of the drug addict. As does the self-limitation effect of eating your own tail. You may need it. The drug addict eats his or her own future. The addict may need it.

Both the joined snake and the drug addict experience self-administered limitation. Both separate their head from their body and listen just to the head, which is shouting desire for more. Meanwhile the body is busy red flagging poison. The head/body is not treated as just one unified entity all to be kept healthy. You have to have that head/body separation attitude in order to do to the body what the snake and addict do. For them feed the head is the only game plan.

If you could ask the snake why it is eating its own tail, it would have to answer: that is what I have always done and what I want to do. Likewise, drug addicts eat their own possibilities with their

exclusively head-focused orientation, talking to themselves. The brain center saying; Do it again I want to. Do it again I want to. The rest of their body, the part that would complain, is silenced. It will repair itself. Hopefully.

Separation of head and body serves to separate the person from other persons. The head can operate all alone, at the expense of self-limitation. Remember body means one unified everything, including the head. Head means head alone. Only a head operating alone could eat its own body.

The Ouroboros connects to the recursive 8 shape by the eight/ate pun. Ask yourself if that 8 looks like it is eating itself.

Default Mode Network

In his famous 2005 Graduation Speech at Kenyon College, Wallace said:

We have to do this, he said, because it's the only way to get free of our **“natural, hard-wired default setting, which is to be deeply and literally self-centered and to see and interpret everything through this lens of self.”**

. . . . We rarely think about this sort of natural, basic self-centeredness because it's so socially repulsive. But it's pretty much the same for all of us. It is our default setting, hard-wired into our boards at birth. Think about it: there is no experience you have had that you are not the absolute center of. The world as you experience it is there in front of YOU or behind YOU, to the left or right of YOU, on YOUR TV or YOUR monitor. And so on. Other people's thoughts and feelings have to be communicated to you somehow, but your own are so immediate, urgent, real.

IJ was copyrighted in 1996, and Wallace was on to something. In 2001 one Marcus Raichle discovered a network of cells in the human brain that he named the default mode network [“DMN” and source Pollan]. They give a physical brain location for self-centered mental activity. They are the mother board. These DMN cells are most active when the subject is thinking about him or herself [self referential thinking] or thinking about thinking. It blocks thoughts originating as a result of interaction with others and the environment, from the outside. These DMN cells tend toward rest [off] during successful meditation or the use of some psychedelics, when more connections can be made with input from the outside and less value is placed on messages from inner self.

In other words, the DMN is Wallace's net-work of self, of self-limitation. As we will see later, it is also the model for the survival negative Inversion approach in general semantics. Where what is already in the brain blocks the arrival of new information.

You will sense the association of limited DMN brain activity with the selfish and isolated activities of humans compared to the social activities of humans. Hal in the first chapter is in default mode, defaulting to a desire for the conditions which prevailed in the womb, when he was just self for self. As featured in chapter 2, addicts lose their connection to everything but their chemical compound of choice. In AA the higher power pledge together with fellowship give a sense of interconnectedness, the opposite power pole. And they help each other stay sober.

Hyperactive default mode settings such as in depression [chapter 15] can trap humans in repetitive and destructive loops of rumination which eventually permanently close us off from the world outside [Pollan, pg. 313 quoting Carhart-Harris]. Just like the lethal cartridge.

Our apparent default state is mindlessness, a mental culture in which addictions can thrive [Pollan 364]. That default state limits the available emotional repertoire. Addiction and depression are shown in chapter 15 to be roommates.

David Kessler, former head of the FDA, has suggested that “the common mechanism underlying addiction, depression, anxiety, mania, and obsession . . . involves learned habits of negative thinking and behavior that hijack our attention and trap us in loops of self-reflection. . . Every time we respond, we strengthen the neural circuitry that prompts us to repeat the same destructive thoughts or behaviors.” [quoted in Pollan]. Think of this as you follow Hal in the tubes under the Tennis Academy. His MO, his obsessive activity, walls him off from other people.

Selfish alone versus communal sharing with others. The DMN is the regulator of isolated selfish and self-orientation. Wallace on the dangers of a DMN orientation:

Attachments: “In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And an outstanding reason for choosing some sort of God or spiritual-type thing to worship — be it J.C. or Allah, be it Yahweh or the Wiccan mother-goddess or the Four Noble Truths or some infrangible set of ethical principles — is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things — if they are where you tap real meaning in life — then you will never have enough. Never feel you have enough. It’s the truth. Worship your own body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly, and when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally plant you. On one level, we all know this stuff already — it’s been codified as myths, proverbs, clichés, bromides, epigrams, parables: the skeleton of every great story. The trick is keeping the truth up-front in daily consciousness. Worship power — you will feel weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to keep the fear at bay. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart — you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out.” -Kenyon College, 2005 Commencement Speech

Self worship gives us head and body separation, particularly in the first chapter where Hal sees others that way, as separate heads and bodies, since he is that way. In the head game, the body is a mere tool and its additional stimulation coming in from the outside world is disregarded. Desire is the energy of the head-based self. That self never gets enough; like the Minotaur in the Labyrinth, it must be fed sacrifices continuously.

Drugs, Mommy and You

Addictive drug use and other practices giving psychic results similar to return to the womb, such as binge TV watching, all feature dependency, repetition, isolation and limitation. These practices drive you inward to self and away from others, to the motherboard.

The womb is as inward and self-oriented as you can get. In there you may kick and gurgle but don’t talk, even to Mommy. Where the fetus unwinds from a ball to a more vertical creature.

So drugs and mommy. Natural partners. In both cases, you are exclusively inside, in mommy or in your head. Some drug plants even look like a mommy. Many mushrooms, including the *psilocybe azurescens*, known as *flesh of the gods* [think Mary mother of god as a human] and promising a transcendental experience to some, have buttons on the top to release seed spores [reported by Pollan].

Sort of like human breasts with nipples. If you have a Wallace type sense of humor, you could call the womb the “mush room.”

Azurescents are indicated by blue color on the skin [of the mushroom] after bruising. And watch for the return of blue to humans, blue the psychological color for depression, deep dark blue. With one character we will learn that drug use follows depression because depression follows cessation of drug use. Blue meanies eating their own tail.

Note that in the area of reproduction, exclusive inward self-orientation would relate to the process of self-replication, or production of more of the same genes, the way of plants. Human sex son with mommy could produce dangerous genes. These alternative reproduction processes corrupt the natural process of child formation by unrelated man and woman that mix the genes and promise new possibilities for the future.

TV and Mommy and You

TV is an addiction in Wallace’s book, and is connected to the desire for Mommy, because of the type of programs that are on. Here is Wallace on TV serving in the role of mommy’s teat:

Because the predictability in popular art, the really formulaic stuff, the stuff that makes no attempt to surprise or do anything artistic is so profoundly soothing. And it even, even the densest or most tired viewer can see what’s coming. And it gives you a sense of order, that everything’s going to be all right, that this is a narrative that will take care of you, and won’t in any way challenge. It’s like being wrapped in chamois blanket and nestled against a big, generous tit, you know? [Lipsky 199]

When you return to the womb, you retreat to the original hierarchy, mommy as the inn keeper.

Addiction and Human Possibilities

As shaped by Wallace for the characters in this story, the contrasting forces in the human struggle for possibilities are [1] the desire for dependency and isolation, which reduce possibilities and [2] the desire for independence and interaction with other humans, which increases possibilities.

For drug users the ticket for dependence is more drugs and the ticket for independence is exemplified by the AA meeting, whose communal and mutually supporting aspects Wallace shapes as a good parent and a good friend. The main lesson to be learned in AA is anti-dependency, that you are responsible for your own condition and making your own choices and that you can do it, you can stay sober one day at a time. Just as I your sponsor did.

For Wallace the struggle for human possibilities plays out against several forms of addiction. These range from addicted binge “spectation” of television, the multiple generational effects of alcohol-driven bad parenting, sexual desire and even to its food equivalent chocolate.

As Wallace said to Lipsky:

The book isn’t supposed to be about drugs, getting off drugs. Except as the fact that drugs are kind of a metaphor for the sort of addictive continuum that I think has to do with how we as a culture relate to things that are alive. [Lipsky 81] . . . I think one of the reasons that I feel empty after watching of lot of TV, and one of the things that makes TV seductive, is that it gives the illusion of relationships with people. It’s a way to have people in the room talking and being entertaining, but it doesn’t require anything of me. [Lipsky 85]

These forms of addiction fostered the birth in Wallace's imagination of the ultimate desire product, the lethal television cartridge named Infinite Jest V. It was produced by an alcohol addicted character in the novel, one James Incandenza. The inevitable repetitive binge watching of this cartridge causes its male spectator to destroy himself with his own desire. More on this shortly.

Hierarchy and Introductions

Many of the harmful controls on identity development to be encountered in this novel involve hierarchies. Starting with parents and moving on to school functionaries, to competition ladders, to employers and to brain function. Even hierarchy among demons.

A few characters need to be named at this point, a character hierarchy. Mommy is Avril Incandenza, wife to James Incandenza and mother to main character Hal. Hal attends the tennis academy [ETA] started by James. James and Avril's family also includes sons Mario and Orin. Avril's inclinations leave paternity in question. Each of her sons is damaged in his own way.

Hal and his character foil the unrelated Gately are the main characters through which the plot is ingested.

On the international hierarchy front of nations, the U.S. and Canada have joined in ONAN, the organization of North American Nations with a bully U.S. at the helm. Canadian separatists [their organization AFR] are resisting. The American Office of Unspecified Services [BSS to Canadians] investigates. Control versus freedom.

Title

The phrase Infinite Jest is from *Hamlet*, the story about "who is there," who rules young Hamlet's identity, the ghost of his revenge-driven father or his own identity. Infinite jest is said by Hamlet about the King's jester, recently deceased under the new usurper king, the old king's brother. Infinite in this sense refers to the art of the jester in making up stories from the infinite well of creative human possibilities, which is open when art can speak to power.

You will recognize the Hamlet theme in IJ in the issue of identity and recognize Hamlet's mother Gertrude in Avril, Hal's sexually wayward mother. There are many other connections, including the mysterious half Uncle Charles. Enjoy these connections as fertilizer for this novel.

The novel's recurring aspects are also the infinite in infinite jest. The jest is that for many characters the infinite is caused by repetition rather than going on into the infinite new. The title Infinite Jest is also the name of the lethal film cartridge, the last of many made by James Incandenza before his suicide in the micro wave, where the normal subjects are English muffins. He sent heated waves through his head because of unrequited desires. The film has the same effect.

The Lethal Cartridge: The Black Hole

The cartridge produced by James Incandenza and named Infinite Jest in its Vth iteration is an important player in this story. This is Wallace's take as to the essence of addiction, what the user sees when he or she hits bottom, only his or her own desire. Only him or her self.

As Wallace put it, the cartridge is "the star by which the novel steers." But this star is not shining; it has collapsed to a black hole, a black hole from which nothing can escape, not even light rays. It no longer shines as a star. A black hole from which others can receive nothing, a black hole that is alone.

The cartridge causes in viewing males their own personal black hole of heavy desire that swallows all other human possibilities into their event horizon. Think of a black hole when in the first chapter Hal Incandenza cannot get any language out even though as he says **I am in here**.

An early chapter relates the effect of watching the lethal cartridge on a Saudi Arabian diplomat, an attaché, while his wife is on her carefully limited night out. Stressing Wallace's concerns for humans interrelating, the cartridge strikes when the Attaché is unattached, is alone. In years gone by he was one of Avril's many Canadian lovers, one James particularly detested. The revenge back story is left to our reader's imagination. Revenge is best served cold and James has been dead for several years when the cartridge arrives at the Attaché's house as apparently innocent mail. When the male is home alone.

ONAN believes the cartridge was sent by AFR to disrupt commerce [entertainment related commerce] between ONAN and Saudi Arabia and by implication to threaten release of more cartridges, which would further harm ONAN interests, which are primarily commercial. AFR seeks freedom and autonomy while ONAN seeks control and uniformity. International aspects of our identity issue.

The cartridge in question is lethal because it provokes in male viewers [and apparently not females] intense desire for sexual intercourse and intense desire for return to mommy's womb dependency, two most basic male desires. Notably, one actress plays both roles in the film in order to fuse both desires into the structure of the Oedipal Complex. Importantly, both desires are denied satisfaction by the lack of personal connection between the actress and the viewer. The actress as Mommy even says I am sorry to the occupant of the crib, sorry you can't come back in. No womb satisfaction now.

The cartridge gives desire for sex and mommy only in the male viewer's head. You could call the resulting erection an impersonal hard-on. The hard-on apparently hangs on. There is no ejaculation. No satisfaction.

These urges are made lethal by the fact the arousal of the desires does not slake or exhaust them. They are habit forming to say the least. If the male viewer is not protected by active community with others present or by the stability of his own identity, the viewer will be stuck in a recursive loop of desire. That is right, desire for desire, one sided desire which is unrequited. This loop through endless repeated and repeated passive viewings of the cartridge without a break will ruin his life by claiming his life. He eats himself with desire.

If you the reader have trouble, as I did, with the credibility of this aspect of the story, consider the point generally to be that the viewer of the cartridge is self-consumed by his own desires, by his own wants, which are provoked by the film. That is certainly credible in the annuals of drug addiction, where the desire for another high overcomes all other considerations even though it can easily lead to dangerous need and internal infections. For self-consumption, we remember the Ouroboros.

The cartridge effect is a literal and zany exaggerated application by Wallace of the concept of consumption of yourself by your own desires. With desire for sex and dependence substituted for desire for drugs, and with the desire accelerating to need. As with drugs, there is no satisfying fulfillment from watching the cartridge. As taking drugs does not satisfy your desire for drugs. Indeed, drugs just please the taker temporarily [and with a decreasing pause] but increase the desire and need long term on a recursive basis. Likewise, having sex or having mommy or a substitute temporarily does not satisfy your desire for same. All you get is a temporary pause in the desire followed by increasing need for repetition. What you get in both drugs and the cartridge is desire but no real satisfaction, just a recurring desire for more of the same with the need factor gaining ominously to weaponize desire.

The lethal cartridge part of the story shows desire at the base of the problem, the problem of the repetitive return by reason of the recursive shape of the experience. Wallace, as did the author of

the Garden of Eden story, sees desire as the fundamental source of the problem. The source of desire for drugs and sex is desire. Like Hume, Wallace sees humans as slaves to their desires [Hume called it “passions”]. Desire is the language of the self unadulterated by identity, and it is no surprise Buddha’s gateway to mental and spiritual health is to dissolve or control desires.

Back to the lethal cartridge. It is not that the male viewer will have self-administered or imagined sexual experiences while watching; he will have just desire to have what he sees. The desire is unfulfilled, unrequited. If it were fulfilled by an ejaculation, the desire would slow down, which does not happen with the film. While he is watching, the film gives him a temporary high in mixed sexual and dependency desire. That temporary desire high subsides without resolution when the film ends and starts up again when the film starts. In between, in the pause, the “maybe it will play again” pause, the male wants the same thing repeated, he desires to have that same sexual and dependency desire again. Interim general desire for those particular desires. Having had no satisfying fulfillment, the viewer has no rest from the tyranny of desire. Being alone or effectively alone with the cartridge is necessary so you can act as unadulterated self. So nothing interrupts the desire. You are always turned on by want.

The self and head-oriented viewer of the lethal cartridge eats himself with desire, just like the Ouroboros. Just like the drug addict. Without identity and without choice and totally passive, he is totally vulnerable to desire. I want it. It is similar to radiating your head with a microwave.

The lethal cartridge film features only one character, a most beautiful woman [Joelle van Dame aka Madame Psychosis] wearing only a white shroud and features in addition [my guess] scenes from endoscopic cameras looking inside the smooth, lubricated sides of her vagina, the “satin sleeve” server for this cocktail, on the way to the uterus or womb. She plays both roles, yang and yin, the young woman and the mother. In other words, sex in the vagina on the way to the dependence of the womb. Sex with mother’s vagina and then rest in mother’s womb. Sex with dependency as the chase her.

According to Joelle’s account, she wears for the recording in the cartridge an “incredible white-floor-length gown of some sort of flowing material” [think flowing amniotic water] and spends much time bent over a crib saying “I am sorry.” Sorry for pushing the infant out of her womb into the world and leaving him with a desire to but no opportunity to return. For which there are only weak impermanent substitutes like breast feeding and its successor sucking your thumb.

Note there is no satisfaction here, just an ignition of desire caused by watching. As desire turns to need, all he wants to do is watch it again and again, heat up again, even unto urine and feces soiled trousers and death do him part. He can’t wait. If torn away, he will be psychically destroyed by his desire, wanting to return to what this cartridge gives: an experience of highly intensified ultimate desire. Nothing else will do.

In general terms, desire is the language of the self. The viewing experience immobilizes the viewer’s ability to make choices other than watching again. It separates the head and body; it results in desire in the head but death in the body resulting from watching over and over without pause the same material while urinating and defecating in your own clothes, as one would in the womb, but not eating or hydrating. Physically and choice immobilized. Just leave me alone. Let me heat my head with the Head Tape, an analogy to heating your head in the microwave like James Incandenza did.

The lethal tape experience is a concentrated version of the dangers of dependency and head-only orientation. It is an exaggerated version designed to cast the dangers in a somewhat humorous but mostly frightening light. They lead through loss of choice to death in terms of what it means to be a human being. Literally.

The Head Tape as the Bomb

Finding the original tape from which lethal copies can be made is the grail in the contest between the Canadian separatists [AFR] and ONAN's secret Office of Unspecified Services [BSS to the Canadians]. Avril was the first source for the lethal cartridge for the Canadians. But she had only a copy [made from the original], and copies that kill can be made only from the original. Someone has had that original because the copy [or the original] sent to the Attaché was lethal. Think of original art like Wallace's novel.

My guess is that the original tape was also in the head-heating microwave when James checked out. After only a few lethal copies had been made [3 or 4 accounted for in story]. During the period of Hal's possible torture by the AFR as part of their seeking the original, Hal at the direction of an AFR representative standing guard looks for it in his father's skull in his father's grave [think Hamlet]. This is taking the meaning of original source quite literally. But it also indicates that the real poison was in James' head, just his head.

This death producing tape is the weapon that will decide the struggle between AFR and ONAN. In the story AFR hints that after the use on the Saudi diplomat they still have more lethal tapes. Sort of like the U.S.'s use of two nuclear weapons on Japan in WWII, apparently all we actually had but we threatened to have more.

The Cartridge and Normal TV

Wallace presents watching "normal" TV as a baby version of this lethal cartridge watching experience. A normal TV experience is designed to temporarily take you mindlessly out of yourself, to disembodify you. Here is what Wallace said to Lipsky:

I think one of the insidious lessons about TV is the meta-lesson that you're dumb. This is all you can do. This is easy, and you're the sort of person who really just wants to sit in a chair and have it easy. When in fact there are parts of us, in a way, that are a lot more ambitious than that. [71]

No actually—the original title [of I] was *A Failed Entertainment*. The idea is that the book is structured as an entertainment that doesn't work. Because what entertainment ultimately leads to, I think, is the movie *Infinite Jest*. I mean, that's the star it's steering by. Entertainment's chief job is to make you so riveted by it that you can't tear your eyes away, so the advertisers can advertise. And the tension of the book is try to make it at once extremely entertaining—and also sort of warped, and to sort of shake the reader awake about some of the things that are sinister in entertainment. [79]

The problem with passiveness before TV according to Wallace is that you give your choices away by becoming passive:

If you go back to Hobbes, and why we ended up begging, why people in a state of nature end up begging for a ruler who has the power of life and death over them? We absolutely have to give our power away. The Internet is going to be exactly the same way. [88] Like, I'm not talking about one these. . . this—I mean this in a way is what the book's about. It's not about, "He watched television until his *bladder* let go " or something like that—it's more just, it's a *reliance* on something. [150]

Short chapters in Wallace's book mimic surfing TV channels. And mimic an unsatisfied watcher concerned he or she is missing something that would be more desirable.

Human Possibilities and Hal the 2001 Computer

This novel concentrates more on the enemies of human possibilities than it does on the friends. The Van Gogh crows are in the fields. Wallace asks us to infer the proper human practices from the obverse. The resulting novel is dark. As dark as outer space where the slabs rest and play chess and the black holes dance.

Wallace suggests that human possibilities can be enhanced by spending time with others in social situations, just hanging out, and by taking responsibility for your own actions, a kind of limitation on just satisfying the desires of self. He shows this by writing about people who don't socialize or help each other and get bad life results.

By the use of the name Hal for one of his main characters, Wallace resurrects our memory of the computer Hal in Arthur C. Clarke's [and Kubrick's] *2001: The Space Odyssey*. [There are other movie references in the novel]. There the plot drew the ultimate comparison between Hal the main frame and the miracle child sent back to earth by the spiritual beings of the slab, the child serving in the Jesus role of bringing new values for humanity in order to change the world by defusing the military satellites and attitudes that threatened nuclear war and destruction of humanity. As starvation had done earlier to the ape-humans whom the slabs helped to learn to eat meat with the result that they competed against and killed their own kind.

By contrast to the miracle child, Hal the main frame computer is all head. It was not capable of new possibilities, only what it was told to do by its human and artificial intelligence programming. Hal could not take responsibility for its own actions. Hal the computer malfunctioned when faced with conflicting instructions made possible by bad programming. The conflicting instructions were to [1] hide from the humans on board the space ship the purpose of the mission in order to keep secret the earlier discovery of evidence of aliens and to [2] help the mission succeed. Hal takes over total control of the ship when faced with this conflict and tries to eliminate all humans. Then they can't learn the secret. That program would certainly limit human possibilities.

Note that Hal the computer is all head or self and without any heart or body. Hal the computer plays chess with the human astronauts but does not relate to them. See Appendix One for a wikipedia summary of Hal the computer.

The ghost of Hal the computer returns in Wallace as a main character Hal Incandenza, the child wounded by bad parental programming and by drug use. He is torn by desires for both independence and dependence. On his way to dependence, this Hal, like the computer Hal, leads a secret life without friends, a unattached secret life in tunnels. He too becomes all inside head. His new knowledge possibilities feature rote memorization of entire books such as dictionaries, something like artificial intelligence programming.

Consider the issue posed by Arthur Clarke, the author of *Space Odyssey*: whether Hal the computer could be considered a thinking creature. The Allan Turing test is employed for this purpose: “. . . if one could carry out a prolonged conversation with a machine . . . without being able to distinguish between its replies and those that a man might give then the machine was thinking, by any sensible definition of the word.” Notice that Hal the human would fail this test in 2010 since he can't talk at all. That is why in the first chapter speechless Hal bears earmarks of Hal the computer.

In the first chapter of IJ featuring Hal the student and his inevitable meltdown in the college admissions office, you can feel in the first-person presentation Hal looking out at others on a “them and me” basis just as Hal the computer looked out of his fisheye glass and red glow at the “them and

me” humans. As both Hals are deactivated as higher thinking beings, they gurgle and fail, Hal as a computer and Hal Incandenza as a human.

Children Literature

Wallace also suggests by negative implication that human possibilities can be magnified by love, particularly sexual love which produces offspring, the new combination of genes for the future. If nurtured properly, the new child will produce new human possibilities, and not be limited to increased survival possibilities but increased realization possibilities as well. The children featured in this story are by and large without proper parental nurture and in turn they give to their own children hierarchical care [listen to me] and not the kind of love that creates and supports the independent identity of their own [and takes a lot of time and devotion]. This form of addiction to generational damage impoverishes the human future.

Wallace teaches us that along with science and religion, literature helps us explore the unknown, which otherwise is hidden in the rabbit hole of the future. Literature gives us unlimited possibilities. In this sense children, if they are free to be novel, are the ultimate literature.

Literary Possibilities

Like James Joyce’s, Wallace’s literature is cyclical and the part implies the whole. Like Flaubert, chapter associations, one next to the other, imply connections. The same issues arise in many different characters. The same roots feed Wallace’s entire novel.

Self and Other: Yin and Yang

Wallace plays self and other in the yin yang configuration, as they were explicitly used in his novel *The Broom of the System*.

Wikipedia:



In Chinese philosophy, yin and yang (/jɪn/ and /jɑ:ŋ, jæŋ/; Chinese: 陰陽 *yīnyáng*, lit. "dark-bright", "negative-positive") is a concept of dualism in ancient Chinese philosophy, describing how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may actually be complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they may give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another^[1]. In Chinese cosmology, the universe creates itself out of a primary chaos of material energy, organized into the cycles of Yin and Yang and formed into objects and lives. Yin is the receptive and Yang the active principle, seen in all forms of change and difference such as the annual cycle (winter and summer), the landscape (north-facing shade and south-facing brightness), sexual coupling (female and male), the formation of both men and women as characters, and sociopolitical history (disorder and order).^[2]

There are various dynamics in Chinese cosmology. In the cosmology pertaining to Yin and Yang, the material energy, which this universe has created itself out of, is also referred to as qi. It is believed that the organization of qi in this cosmology of Yin and Yang has formed many things.^[3] Included among these forms are humans. Many natural dualities (such as light and dark, fire and water, expanding and contracting) are thought of as physical manifestations of the duality symbolized by yin and yang. This duality lies at the origins of many branches of classical Chinese science and philosophy, as well as being a primary guideline of traditional Chinese medicine,^[4] and a central principle of different forms of Chinese martial arts and exercise, such as baguazhang, taijiquan(t'ai chi), and qigong (Chi Kung), as well as appearing in the pages of the *I Ching*.

The notion of a duality can be found in many areas, such as Communities of Practice. The term "dualistic-monism" or dialectical monism has been coined in an attempt to express this fruitful paradox of simultaneous unity and duality. Yin and yang can be thought of as complementary (rather than opposing) forces that interact to form a dynamic system in which the whole is greater than the assembled parts.^[5] According to this philosophy, everything has both yin and yang aspects (for instance, shadow cannot exist without light). Either of the two major aspects may manifest more strongly in a particular object, depending on the criterion of the observation. The yin yang (i.e. taijitu symbol) shows a balance between two opposites with a portion of the opposite element in each section.

In Taoist metaphysics, distinctions between good and bad, along with other dichotomous moral judgments, are perceptual, not real; so, the duality of yin and yang is an indivisible whole. In the ethics of Confucianism on the other hand, most notably in the philosophy of Dong Zhongshu (c. 2nd century BC), a moral dimension is attached to the idea of yin and yang.^[6]

Yin refers to female, passive and the moon while yang refers to the male, positive and the sun. Note that Wallace uses the yin-yang symbol as part of several chapter headings. They look like eclipses. In his eclipses, the clear space or yin is dominant. This would be the self-orientation of our addicted characters. Also note the two small circles in the other's space are missing in Wallace's eclipses; these presumably reflect the absence of interconnection of the two parts. Also keep the yin yang in mind when you get to the last scene with Gately on the beach and the tide.

Sunshine and Humans: the Mom's Plant

“Sunshine” is the street name of a powerful drug that plays an important role in “changing the mind” of two main characters, Hal and Gately. And you will remember who sang the song “You are

my sunshine.” Mommy dear who holds just up her vagina the womb you want to return to. Where the sun don’t shine. “Darkness my old friend.”

Another street name for the drug is Madame Psychosis, also the name of a character in the story and suggesting metempsychosis, the belief in the transmigration of a soul after death into another human or other animal. The total loss of identity.

Sunshine suggests the limitations of plants compared to animals. Animals are different from plants in that animals can move and make choices in what they do. Many live in cooperative packs. Plants seek only sunshine, water and minerals from the soil. Generally they self-replicate and don’t seek other plants for fertilization. They develop almost exclusively according to built-in pattern or what you could call instinct. Plants don’t make choices to go to meets or to make room for other plants. Human animals can move and do what they want even in darkness but also have the capacity to act beyond instinct and change in terms of their values and what they do. Jesus and Buddha spoke a lot about choices for change, change of spiritual values. Human animals do this with other humans. When they are humane, that is sympathetic to the distress of others.

The inability of plants [and by association sunshine user addicts] to do anything new is captured for this novel in the use of the word “sunshine” as the name of a drug. In this story the addiction to drugs and desire to return to the womb signal loss of identification or development. Loss of power to change, to forge identity, to forge the new. Instead to become like a mere plant, like the one they are addicted to.

Framework

Two main characters in the story are [1] Hal Incandenza [remember the conflicted computer “Hal” in *The Space Odyssey*], the teenage, privileged and dependent son of talented and wealthy parents who own and run the private tennis and preparatory academy school which Hal has always attended [Enfield Tennis Academy or ETA], and where he has been protected by family [no outside school influence] and [2] Don Gately, the son of neglect, poverty and fending for himself who ends up working in Ennet House [an AA sponsored drug and alcohol recovery facility just “down the hill” from the Academy] and helping other addicts.

The frames for the novel show in Hal’s and Gately’s initially similar and eventually different paths in life. The close physical and down the hill connection of ETA and Ennet House suggests a slippery slope from privilege to dependency.

Both Hal and Gately initially choose to pursue paths of dependency, Hal with drugs and Gately with robbery and drugs. Both have MOs, Hal’s secret drug use in the Academy’s underground tunnels while alone and Gately’s signature robbery technique, a disabled electrical switch. These are MOs which we can read as frozen identities. Both characters are changed by drugs, particularly the drug known as Sunshine, which brings them to their low points in the story: Hal trying to speak but only gurgling and wagging while pinned prone in a college admissions office and on his way to the less possibilities of involuntary institutionalization; and Gately left by gambling associates to die comatose on the beach. Low points physically and psychologically and in terms of human possibilities.

Hal’s low point on the floor happens in the first chapter of the book but as the last event in the time line of the story. Gately’s low point is in the last chapter of the book, the last in the narrative but is earlier in the time line and enables events which are earlier in the narrative presentation. Both low points are reached because of drugs and in particular the drug known as DMZ or DMT or “sunshine”, which according to the novel does not produce a high but rather a sense of being disembodied, of being removed out of yourself, out of responsibility for yourself. Into just your head. Your default zone.

Both low point scenes are dressed in the image of coming out of the womb when the amniotic water breaks. In the college admission offices Hal smells “There is something vaguely digestive about the room’s odor” [page 3] and considers himself an “infantophile” [page 16]. He is forced out of the admissions office as the infant is forced out of the mother’s birth canal. Gately wakes up all alone on the beach with the tide going out. Gately recovers because he gets up on his own and eventually goes on to AA while Hal goes it alone and remains in secrecy in order to protect family honor.

In short, Gately changes but Hal does not. Hal remains addicted and dependent. Gately gets clean and helps others. Gately achieves independent identity. Hal gurgles.

Identity

Identity is formulated by Wallace as a sense of yourself a differentiated person, recognition of your own personal responsibility for the choices you make, and of having the ability to choose. The pattern of your choices forms identity. Identity requires interactions with others, others beyond yourself, in order to experience different emotions and something other than the desires of your unadulterated self. To find out who you are through converse with others [but not the approval of others]. Contrast this with the end game of the opposite approach, to destroy yourself through self-oriented repetition of desire with the lethal cartridge.

New experiences create new knowledge and new abilities and possibilities. They add to identity. Identity robbers include the desire to return to the womb or at least breast feeding and that desire’s offspring, which includes drugs, disguises, fame, temporary sexual partners, and entertainment designed to relax. Good parenting is necessary for the child’s identity development beyond the influence of the “all included” “all the time” womb, the sweet but only sometimes available mother’s breast, and the eventually denied and frustrated child’s mouth turned to sucking fingers and biting fingernails and eventually drugs. Good parenting must be development not instruction oriented.

Good parenting is missing in both Hal and Gately’s family. Gately’s blue collar father beat his mother regularly. Hal’s intellectual father James [nickname *Himself*] was addicted to whiskey [Wild Turkey—compare cold turkey] and spent all his time on self, on his own inventions and art projects, while his wife Avril was addicted to spending her time in bed with others. Others who unlike Himself were emotionally interested in her. In this area she specialized in Canadian connections and medical attachés [this diplomatic term means attached].

Taking self-destruction to its ultimate, Hal’s father kills himself with his head in a microwave oven, an image of his own jealous thoughts about his wife’s unfaithful activities bringing him to boil. He in effect eats his own head. Teen-age Hal only has his mother and he spends his confidential drug taking moments in the sex organ and snake-nest like tunnels under the Academy. His none-too-hidden Oedipal interest in his mother is the possible pathway back to womb. It seems feasible since he catches her in an affair with another teenage student [Canadian John Wayne] at the Academy.

Self and ONAN: Organization of North American Nations

The contrast of a basic self alone versus a self interacting with others also plays out in contrasts of [1] masturbation [onanism] as opposed to mutual sexual intercourse of a couple and [2] treating the sexual partner as an object [attitude of Hal’s brother Orin] as opposed to part of “us” as an item.

In the larger political realm, it plays out in the relations of nations in ONAN, the organization of North American Nations. The self-important attitude of the U.S. is reflected in the merger several years back of the U.S., Canada and Mexico as part of the Organization of North American Nations, a merger forcefully engineered and ruled by the U.S. Contrast this with willingly joining in the spirit of

“Us” [as in the original United States]. This ONAN is a larger version of the pattern of limited possibilities among humans.

In the future world of ONAN, waste is hurled by large catapult machines located in the northern part of the U.S. part of ONAN north into the southern fringe of the Canadian part of ONAN. That garbage infested southern fringe has become a wasted landscape filled with dangerous mutant animals. This catapulting is a picture of masturbation, seed thrown on the ground, the epitome of an orientation to self. As the biblical Onan wasted his on the ground.

This disrespectful treatment of Canada leads to terrorist organizations in Canada [“AFR”] which pursue independence. Their efforts fuel much of the plot. For this purpose the terrorists are seeking the lethal television cartridge made by James Incandenza.

DMZ [Sunshine] Order and Ontology

The Drug DMZ or DMT from wikipedia:

N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT or *N,N*-DMT) is a chemical substance that occurs in many plants and animals and which is both a derivative and a structural analog of tryptamine.^[3] It can be consumed as a psychedelic drug and has historically been prepared by various cultures for ritual purposes as an entheogen.^[4] Rick Strassman labeled it "the spirit molecule".^[5] DMT is illegal in most countries.

DMT has a rapid onset, intense effects and a relatively short duration of action. For those reasons, DMT was known as the "businessman's trip" during the 1960s in the United States, as a user could access the full depth of a psychedelic experience in considerably less time than with other substances such as LSD or magic mushrooms.^[6] DMT can be inhaled, injected, vaporized or ingested, and its effects depend on the dose. When inhaled or injected, the effects last a short period of time: about 5 to 15 minutes. Effects can last 3 hours or more when orally ingested along with an MAOI, such as the ayahuasca brew of many native Amazonian tribes.^[7] DMT can produce vivid "projections" of mystical experiences involving euphoria and dynamic hallucinations of geometric forms.^[8]

DMT is a functional analog and structural analog of other psychedelic tryptamines such as *O*-Acetylpsilocin (4-AcO-DMT), 5-MeO-DMT, bufotenin (5-HO-DMT), psilocybin (4-PO-DMT), and psilocin (4-HO-DMT). The structure of DMT occurs within some important biomolecules like serotonin and melatonin, making them structural analogs of DMT.

Wallace describes the function of DMT or DMZ thus:

. . . but significantly different from LSD-25 in that its effects are less visual and spatially-cerebral and more like temporally-cerebral and almost ontological, with some sort of manipulated-phenylkylamine-like speediness whereby the ingester perceives his relation to ordinary flow of time as radically . . . altered [pg. 170 of IJ]

DMZ use would be the likely cause for Hal becoming [as shown in the first chapter] disembodied in his own mind into separate mind and body. DMZ is also known on the street as Madame Psychosis.

You the reader may conclude that DMZ is the source or reason behind the bizarre order for the chapters of IJ and even for its existence, its ontology.

Heart and Tubes

Concerning choices, note that the heart shaped **[cardioid]** ETA facility can be modified to cover some of the tennis courts by the inflation of a lung like device. It like the desires of the human heart can change. By contrast, the tunnels underneath the facility, like the female sex organ and tubes connecting the male testis, cannot be changed.

Floating versus Grounded

Wallace crosses over from the physical to the spiritual through the metaphor power of floating and grounded.

The human fetus floats in the amniotic fluid in the mother's sac. The developing fetus is lighter than the fluid per volume and so displaces fluid weighing more than the fetus. Thus it floats. Note that a boat floats because it is largely hallow. A fetus is hallow of identity, totally dependent on the mother and floats in the sac. In the spiritual realm, a person with identity is not hallow and does not float. Such a person is metaphorically "grounded." A fetus in the sac does not have to make any decisions, a grounded individual does willingly. Consider angels as floating and non-decision making spirits.

Note instances of floating in the scenes at the low points at the beginning and ending of the novel, floating for Hal and Gately.

First Gately, who wakes up in the last scene on the shore of the ocean with the tide out. Since he has been out "cold" and disembodied for some time on DMZ, he has survived the tide being in, which means he has had to float in order to survive. He could float because his drug life has made him hallow. He wakes up grounded on the sand and in time to retrieve his own body.

By contrast, Hal is grounded only by being held down by others in the opening scene. This because he is still disembodied, floating exclusively in his own self even to the point of being unable to communicate verbally to others [despite his wordsmith knowledge of words]. He is hallow and we hear him speaking inside himself, from the hallow: **I am in here**. Unlike Gately, Hal remains hallow.

Floating is to appear in the syntax of chapters about the life of drug use and robbery to support the drugs. These chapters float on very long compound sentences lasting for a page or more. They do not come to rest. More synergy of form and content.

Fractals

In a fractal, the basic pattern keeps repeating at different levels or sizes. It is recursive. This novel itself fractalizes, repeats the same overall pattern within, the parts being similar to the whole. You could say the pattern is addictive.

Fractal the word is from Latin *Fractus* meaning broken or fractured, a pattern at home with broken identity.

A Specific Fractal

This comment was made to Michael Silverblatt on one of DFW's Bookwork interviews...

Michael Silverblatt - "...something came into my head that may be entirely imaginary, which seemed to be that the book was written in fractals?"
David Foster Wallace - "Expand on that."

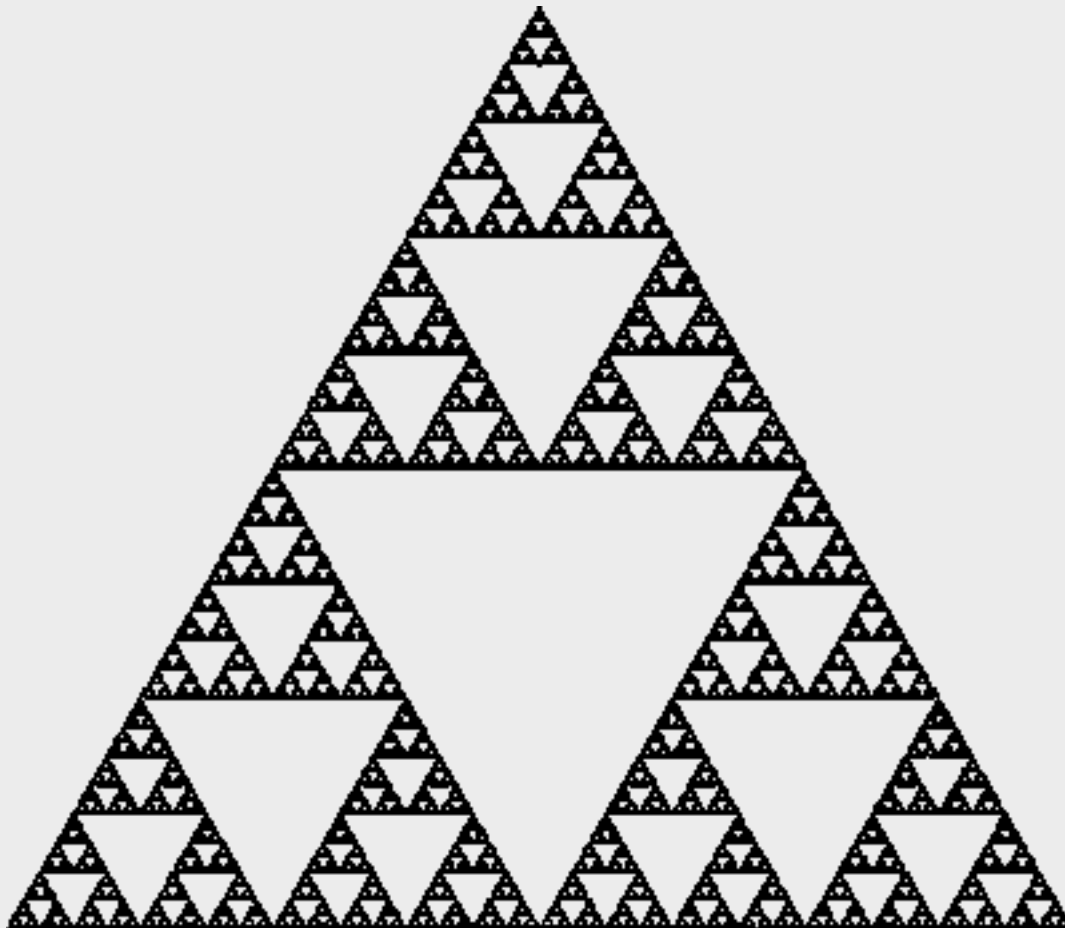
Michael Silverblatt - "It occurred to me that the way in which the material is presented allows for a subject to be announced in a small form, then there seems to be a fan of subject matter - other subjects - and then it comes back in a second form containing the other subjects in small, and then comes back again as if what were being described were, and I don't know this kind of science, but it just, I said to myself: 'this must be fractals.' "

DFW - "It's, uh, I've heard you were an acute reader. That's one of the things structurally going on, it's actually structured like something called a Sierpinski gasket, which is a very primitive kind of pyramidal fractal. Actually, though, what was structured as a Sierpinski gasket was the draft that I delivered to Michael [his editor] in '94, and it went through some, I think, mercy cuts, so it's probably kind of a lopsided Sierpinski gasket now, but it's interesting, that's one of the structural ways it's supposed to come together."

Here is an example of a Sierpinski gasket:

Post subject: Re: Sierpinski Triangle

Posted: Tue Jul 07, 2009 9:12 pm



Whatever else can be said about the Sierpenki gasket, it is based on repetition and is perfectly self-similar.

Wikipedia: In [mathematics](#), a **self-similar** object is exactly or approximately [similar](#) to a part of itself (i.e. the whole has the same shape as one or more of the parts). Many objects in the real world, such as [coastlines](#), are statistically self-similar: parts of them show the same statistical properties at many scales.^[2] Self-similarity is a typical property of artificial [fractals](#). [Scale invariance](#) is an exact form of self-similarity where at any magnification there is a smaller piece of the object that is [similar](#) to the whole. For instance, a side of the [Koch snowflake](#) is both symmetrical and scale-invariant; it can be continually magnified 3x without changing shape. The non-trivial similarity evident in fractals is distinguished by their fine structure, or detail on arbitrarily small scales. As a [counterexample](#), whereas any portion of a [straight line](#) may resemble the whole, further detail is not revealed.

Continuous “self similarity” would involve repetition. Note that the Sierpinski gasket starts with a limited enclosed area, that each addition must be in the same enclosed area, and that each addition limits what else can be added and limits where and size [it must be smaller]. Repetition resulting in limitation is the general property. You may remember the gasket when you read about drug life, each hit leaving a smaller life potential.

Art as Quantum Mechanics

This book about enemies of human possibilities uses new or unusual patterns, new artistic possibilities. Art emerges as the ultimate in free choices and the source of new possibilities and the arch enemy of recursive repetition. Perhaps we could call art the snake charmer [a good choice would be to take that tail out of your mouth right now]. Wallace’s New Method Art practices what it preaches, and emerges into the world as a premium model for identity.

Wallace uses an unusual sequence of presentation within the story as compared to the usual time-based or chronological narrative. Normally an opening starts what is to happen in the story, starts a linear narrative; it usually opens the possibilities. And normally an ending resolves and closes possibilities. Not with Wallace.

As crafted by Wallace, Hal’s lowest point is at the beginning of the book, the very first chapter, while Gately’s lowest point is at the end of the book, the very last chapter. Despite their position in the story and contrary to the normal roles assigned to openings and closings, Hal’s first chapter opening closes possibilities while Gately’s last chapter closing very much leaves them open. Hal’s first chapter makes inevitable much of the rest of his earlier experience. Gately’s last chapter makes his earlier experiences possible. You may be reminded of Quantum experiments in which time seems to run backwards in terms of cause and effect.

The first chapter in the book starts with Hal at a college admissions interview surrounded by a protective flotilla of ETA personnel. This is Hal’s lowest point, after he has used marijuana daily for several years and then most recently has used the highly potent “Sunshine” or DMZ [this is only suggested in the story]. This admission scene is the last scene in the time line for the entire book but the first in the book presentation sequence. The story’s time line sequence and the book’s presentation sequence are in conflict. The last comes first, the last chronologically time-wise comes first presentation sequence wise. And this opening does not play the traditional role to open possibilities; indeed it closes possibilities. What we see with this first/last arrangement is the beginning/tail of the

recursive Ouroboros that always ends where it begins and eats itself. What we see is self-limitation and self consumption. We also see the same results in the lethal cartridge experience.

After the disastrous college admissions interview and involuntary hospital admission in the first chapter, you know Hal's future is closed. In fact no more of his future is presented anywhere in the rest of the book. Nothing in the way of possibilities in the story will save him since the rest of the book cannot contradict what has gone before in the book structure [think of drug addiction]. The first scene in the book forecloses that. The rest of the book shows us how he got there and where he is, which is without choices. He is totally damaged, not able to communicate orally at all [he can only gurgle as he would with breast milk or amniotic fluid] and is dependent on others as a result of drug addiction. He can talk only to himself and is on his way to probable mental institutionalization, a sterile and rough substitute for the care in the womb. He and his possibilities are to be in custody. For how long we do not know. That part of the closing is left open, but there is no sequel.

By contrast, Gately's earlier scenes in the book's presentation sequence show him grounded: recovering in AA, helping others and recovering in the hospital from a gunshot wound incurred while protecting one of his fellow addicts. This is chronologically after all that has happened to him on drugs. The last scene in the book shows him at his lowest drug-drenched point, after an injection of DMZ has worn off. This ending scene is not the last chronologically and, as with Hal, for Gately the sequences of time and the book are in conflict. Gately's lowest point last chapter ending does not resolve, does not dictate the future and instead leaves his future open. His possibilities are still open because the ending is a non-resolving open one by its very nature, waking up to lying on the beach with the tide out [think amniotic water broken]. He can get up before the tide comes back in and drowns him. He is not being held down and is not necessarily subject to the repetition of the incoming waters. And we have read earlier what happens to him in the time line after the beach scene. This beach scene is the first in his recovery. He is grounded and gets up. He takes his first of 12 steps. And we feel yin yang in the relation of the beach to the water and his old life to his new one.

In this sense the artistic architecture of the book rules possibilities for the future just as does addiction to drug use. The opening closes and the ending opens. Art rules. Art as choices made by Wallace. Choices against the grain of the old fixed patterns of beginning and ending, opening and closing.

The freedom of art spawns uncertainty. Uncertainty is used throughout the book. Many matters are left open. In quantum theory, the possibilities in the subatomic world are thought to sit on a wave of probabilities until an observation is made by which one possibility becomes actual and others are precluded or pressed into alternative realities. This is the uncertainty principle. In this context you may view the footnotes as observations. Note some footnotes have their own footnotes.

For example, the presentation of what happens to Hal between November 2009 and November 2010, when he interviews for admission at the University of Arizona, is subject to a version of the uncertainty principle. What actually happens before the observed event [interview] is uncertain. The possibilities include Hal's continued use of DMZ and/or marijuana, detox on his own in secret without proper support, torture by the Canadian AFR and his viewing the lethal cartridge.

As with the effect of observation in the sub-atomic quantum world, if you focus on one possibility for the story it will appear to be paramount and the others will be knocked out of focus. And as Robert Boswell said about IJ. For observer read reader:

The world of Infinite Jest is just such a parallel world, one that, in its complex and thorough imaginative self-containment, manages paradoxically to call increased attention to the world *outside* the novel, that is, the world of the reader, the observer, since the book refuses to allow the reader to passively accept the world within as seamless with the world inside.

[Wallace thought] that his books are, in effect, “simply language, and language lives not just in but *through* the reader. [125]

Aesthetics and Life

This book is in many ways independent of, indeed noncomplementary, with the so called modern and postmodern literary traditions that have gone before it and to which it is partially a reaction. Particularly to their self-referential and ironic characteristics.

But this book is not standoffish. It is more in the nature of a challenge and challenges the reader to commune with it, struggle with it, work with it, understand it. As in the AA meeting, the message is that you personally are responsible for what you get out of it, not a summary by someone else. I am partially betraying that message by giving you my take on part of the book.

Compare this book as art with the Joycean categories given in *A Portrait*. Here it is:

— To finish what I was saying about beauty, said Stephen, the most satisfying relations of the sensible must therefore correspond to the necessary phases of artistic apprehension.

Find these and you find the qualities of universal beauty. Aquinas says: AD PULCRITUDINEM TRIA REQUIRUNTUR INTEGRITAS, CONSONANTIA, CLARITAS. I translate it so: THREE THINGS ARE NEEDED FOR BEAUTY, WHOLENESS, HARMONY, AND RADIANCE. Do these correspond to the phases of apprehension? Are you following?

*** Stephen pointed to a basket which a butcher's boy had slung inverted on his head.

— Look at that basket, he said.

*** — In order to see that basket, said Stephen, your mind first of all separates the basket from the rest of the visible universe which is not the basket. The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn about the object to be apprehended. An esthetic image is presented to us either in space or in time.

What is audible is presented in time, what is visible is presented in space. But, temporal or spatial, the esthetic image is first luminously apprehended as selfbounded and selfcontained upon the immeasurable background of space or time which is not it. You apprehended it as ONE thing. You see it as one whole. You apprehend its wholeness. That is INTEGRITAS.

***— Then, said Stephen, you pass from point to point, led by its formal lines; you apprehend it as balanced part against part within its limits; you feel the rhythm of its structure. In other words, the [synthesis](#) of immediate perception is followed by the analysis of apprehension. Having first felt that it is ONE thing you feel now that it is a THING. You apprehend it as complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, the result of its parts and their sum, harmonious. That is CONSONANTIA.

***— The connotation of the word [Claritas], Stephen said, is rather vague. Aquinas uses a term which seems to be inexact. It baffled me for a long time. It would lead you to believe that he had in mind symbolism or idealism, the supreme quality of beauty being a light from some other world, the idea of which the matter is but the shadow, the reality of which it is but the symbol. I thought he might mean that CLARITAS is the artistic discovery and representation of the divine purpose in anything or a force of generalization which would

make the esthetic image a universal one, make it outshine its proper conditions. But that is literary talk. I understand it so. When you have apprehended that basket as one thing and have then analysed it according to its form and apprehended it as a thing you make the only synthesis which is logically and esthetically permissible. You see that it is that thing which it is and no other thing. The radiance of which he speaks in the scholastic *QUIDDITAS*, the *WHATNESS* of a thing. This supreme quality is felt by the artist when the esthetic image is first conceived in his imagination. The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal. The instant wherein that supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure, a spiritual state very like to that cardiac condition which the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani, using a phrase almost as beautiful as Shelley's, called the enchantment of the heart.

Note that viewed in a person, quidditas would be identity. Arrested identity.

Using Joyce's categories, we would find that Wallace's book has its own identity. It stands out against the history of books in terms of its length, its use of footnotes, its creative use of the ingredients of a novel and its rejection of the modern ironic self-referential stance. It is by and large complete in and of itself except for hidden references. Which Wallace wants us to work to find.

In terms of how it is constructed, we will find that the parts are synchronized into synergy producing complementarity. The form harmoniously reflects the concepts in the text. The parts so employed include, to name just some, the structure, the governing factors in the sequence of presentation, the narrator, the narration, paragraph length, syntax and word usage.

Style, Freedom and Truth

While Wallace uses many techniques, the most satisfying style component for my money is the use of different kinds of narrators, particularly what I call the "bourgeois narrator."

Narrators are the voices in the text. They include the first person "I am seated . . ." and the third person "He was seated . . ." and many different kinds of third person voice. Of course, the author creates these voices, and Wallace like Flaubert and Kafka before him uses with subtlety the art of the narrator.

A "bourgeois narrator" is called bourgeois because it shows influence or control by an outside source, such as one of the characters. This is by analogy to the characteristic bourgeois lack of personal independence and individuality. The bourgeois typically acts to achieve others' approval so the bourgeois narrator contrasts with the neutral and independent third party narrator. These independent narrators are not influenced by any character and suggest by analogy the independent status of individuals with identity.

To understand Wallace, let us go back to Flaubert. Flaubert's style for his novels was grounded in maximum detachment. Flaubert proclaimed his aesthetics in letters [references to I and II are to Steegmuller's translations of Flaubert's letters]:

What seems to me the highest and the most difficult achievement of Art is not to make us laugh or cry, or to rouse our lust or our anger, but to do as nature does—that is, fill us with wonderment. The most beautiful works have indeed this quality. They are serene in aspect,

incomprehensible. The means by which they act on us various: they are as unmoving as cliffs, stormy as the ocean, leafy, green, and murmuring as forests, sad as the desert, blue as the sky. Homer, Rabelais, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, and Goethe seem to me *pitiless*. [Joyce's arrest] They are bottom-less, infinite, multiple. Through small openings we glimpse abysses whose dark depths make us giddy. And yet over the whole there hovers an extraordinary gentleness. It is like the brilliance of light, the smile of the sun, and it is calm, calm, and strong . . . [I 163]

If you seek happiness and beauty simultaneously, you will attain neither one nor the other, for the price of beauty is self-denial. [I 161]

It is for this reason that there are no noble subjects or ignoble subjects; from the standpoint of pure Art one might almost establish the axiom that there is no such thing as subject, style in itself being an absolute manner of seeing things. [I 128]

The illusion of truth . . . comes . . . from the book's impersonality . . . a writer should not be his own theme. An artist must be in his work like God in creation, invisible and all-powerful; he should be everywhere felt, but nowhere seen. [I 195]

In these quotes Flaubert gives us what he was trying to accomplish with his style. And it turns out to be a sense of detachment, *reverie*. It is the very opposite of bourgeois-driven, separation promoting self-consciousness and self-interest. In fact, it is the very opposite of self. It is detachment from self.

Only James Joyce produced as big a change as Flaubert. Joyce was to work out in detail Flaubert's idea of detachment (reported in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*), that empathy and detachment, the opposites of the self-interested bourgeois attitude, were the sources necessary for the highest art, art with the greatest reach in possibilities. Identity's aesthetic partner.

For Joyce and Flaubert, art must be complete in itself and free in order to reach the greatest number of possibilities and in order to reach its maximum potential [think personal identity]. For these requirements, the art must in the viewer produce detached arrest rather than desire or loathing:

The tragic emotion [result of proper art], in fact, is a face looking two ways, towards terror and towards pity, both of which are phases of it. You see I use the word arrest. I mean that the tragic emotion is static. . . . The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The esthetic emotion (I used the general term) is therefore static. The mind is [by proper art] arrested and raised above desire and loathing. [from Joyce's Paris Notebook with material added]

If you get this book, you may get hooked on Wallace but not on addictive drugs or pursuits, which would be pornographic in the extreme. May the book's independence serve your soul. You can feel *reverie* or *arrest* when you see it as a piece of art, not just a story or entertainment. For that purpose concentrate on its inner connections. They are like the myriad underground roots of the mushroom. They are thick.

Subsidized Years

Note the chapter titles representing a commercial product advertisement. The product advertisement says listen to me look at me want me buy me. The ad is self-oriented. It is a constant drone in our culture. Look at how much you can save by spending.

These chapter titles represent the sale of years to commercial concerns by the then U.S. administration. Instead of 2010, the year is officially referred to as The Year of Glad [the plastic Glad Bag]. This after the networks had been pushed out of television revenue by the government and could not sell advertising that way. These titles carry the main themes of the book and are always there just like billboards.

Eclipse

The sign of the eclipse at the front of chapters suggests the dominance of self, yin oriented self-consciousness rather than yang self-confidence. The eclipse also leads to bad maps.

Language

Since Hal's termination as a human being is presented by way of his inability to communicate orally to other humans, the theory of language plays a larger role than one might suspect.

The initial chapter sets up the difference in language theories between the word standing for the object and the Wittgenstein theory as language as part of a community between two or more interacting humans. Hal thinks he is communicating when he makes his gurgling sounds, which make perfect sense to him in his own separate self brain talk but are gibberish to others. He has no vocal community.

Hal thinks of words as things in themselves as he memorizes dictionaries and the thesaurus. As presented in the first chapter he may know words as such but he cannot use even one to communicate to others. Wallace couples this attitude about words as a symptom of his overall problem, devotion to self. He fails in the Wittgenstein theory of language.

Similar in idea is the treatment of a map as the reality of what it is a picture of, a subject visited during student war games at the Academy. Hal thinks of the words as the reality.

Map and Territory

In one of the chapters of IJ [not covered in this review], a character [Pemulis] shouts

It's snowing on the goddamn map, not the territory, you dick! [IJ 333].

This concerning a war game called Eschaton being played at ETA with tennis rackets and 400 tennis balls by 8 to 12 students under Pemulis' overall command. Ironically, Eschaton means the end-time, heaven-like stage of history. Here at competition-oriented ETA it means thermonuclear war, the end-time of fire.

The game is played on a map of nations imaginatively laid over the tennis courts with court objects as populations and launch sites. Each tennis ball represents a 5 megaton weapon. An argument ensues about whether the snow falling on the map [and thus the courts] is also falling on the territories it represents. Note the use of **dick** in this context is a metonym, another form of substitute [part for whole] like map for territory. And as it turns out, like words for reality.

This statement announces for IJ a connection to the ideas of Neuro-Linguistic Programming [NLP]. Its principal idea was expressed by its Founder Alfred Korzybski [1879-d. 1950 hereinafter "AK"] as "the map is not the territory." That our human maps of the world are not the world itself, that our words and frames of reference are not good maps for the reality we experience unless we really work at it. That we have fewer words and concepts than there are unique experiences in the world. AK's goal was to "encourage people to delay their immediate reactions while they searched for

the unique characteristics of a situation and alternative interpretations.” [Dilts 12]. That is to say, don’t start with preconceptions, start with a blank slate and let the information come in from the environment unimpeded by pre-existing assumptions.

The basic ideas of NLP are that:

. . . our mental models of reality, rather than reality itself, determines how we will act. [Dilts 13]

A core belief of NLP is that if you can enrich or widen your map, you will perceive more choices available given the same reality. [13]

. . . sensory experience is highly valued in NLP. NLP considers sensory experience the primary source of all of our knowledge about our external environment, and the fundamental building material out of which we construct our models of the worlds. Effective learning, communication and modeling are all rooted in sensory experience. [14]

Sensory experience may be contrasted with other forms of experience, such as fantasy and hallucination, which are generated from within a person’s brain rather than received through the senses [head only]. . . . Our internal web of knowledge creates another set of inter filters which focus and direct our senses (and also operate to delete, distort and generalize data received from our senses) . . . Often our preexisting internal knowledge filters out new and potentially valuable sensory experience. [15]

Words not only represent our experience, but, frequently, they frame our experience . . . by bringing certain aspects of it into the foreground and leaving others in the background. [18]

These NLP concepts give a unified web to Wallace’s choice of subject matters for IJ: human possibilities, socialization, repetition, choices and freedom. More experience and resulting finer grain maps or understanding promotes more choices, more choices more freedom, more freedom more possibilities, more possibilities more identity, more identity more independence.

Hal has a weak map of the world as a result of his “head only” orientation and preference for being alone rather than with others experiencing fully through his senses. By the time governing chapter 1, Hal has lost the ability to speak to others. He is slight of mouth [compare Dilts’ book title *Sleight of Mouth*].

Hal’s inability to talk means that other humans are bound to have a distorted map of him. And indeed this is the case in chapter 1 when college admissions officers conclude that because he cannot talk, Hal is not an acceptable student for their university and indeed not even acceptable for inclusion in the human race or even mammalian classification. They eject Hal to involuntary institutionalization. They would apparently ban all dumb students.

So we can understand that some maps as views of the world would be better than others because more accurate. AK went beyond a simple accuracy test in his analysis of maps. Some, he found, were inaccurate in a particular direction, a dangerous direction, as a result of how they have been constructed: When pre-existing assumptions in the head hijack the view of reality in the world received from the total sensory system. They could in his analysis lead to pathology: When a human could be “seeing things” that he expects but are not “really” there.

Here is AK’s main message on the larger issue of general semantics or the neuro-psychological effect of certain choices in language. The message in his own words from *Science and Sanity*:

As explained before, the structure of our nervous system was established with ‘senses’ first, and ‘mind’ next. In neurological terms, the nervous impulses would be received first in the lower centers and pass on through the sub-cortical layers to the cortex, be influenced there

and be transformed in the cortex by the effect of past experiences. In this transformed state they should then proceed to different destinations, as predetermined by the structure established by survival values. We know, and let us remember this, that the reversed order in semantic manifestation—namely, the projection into ‘senses’ of memory traces or doctrinal impulses—is against the survival structure, and hallucinations, delusions, illusions, and confusion of orders of abstractions are to be considered pathological. In a ‘normal’ human nervous system with survival value, the nervous impulses should not be lost in the sub-cortical layers. In such a case, the activity of our human nervous system would correspond to the activity of the less developed nervous systems of animals which have no cortex at all.

...the extensional attitude is the only one which is in accordance with the survival order and nervous structure, and that the intensional attitude is the reversal of the natural order, and, therefore, must involve non-survival or pathological s.r.

One of the simplest ways of approaching the problems of extension and intension is perhaps to point its connections with definitions. A collection may be defined so we are told, by enumerations of its members, as, for instance, when we say the collection contains Smith, Brown, Jones. Or we may define our collection by giving a defining property. We are told that the first type of definition which enumerates individual members is to be called a definition by extension. The second, which gives a defining property, is to be called a definition by intension.

This correction of mental approach to the environment is part of what Wallace meant when in the Kenyon Graduation speech he said:

I have come gradually to understand that the liberal arts cliché about teaching you how to think is actually shorthand for a much deeper, more serious idea: learning how to think really means learning how to exercise some control over how and what you think. It means being conscious and aware enough to choose what you pay attention to and to choose how you construct meaning from experience. Because if you cannot exercise this kind of choice in adult life, you will be totally hosed. Think of the old cliché about quote the mind being an excellent servant but a terrible master. [underlining added]

With the use of the analysis developed by AK, Wallace takes the issue beyond the range of individual identity versus the forces of other [for example see Foer]. Wallace takes the issue deeper to the neurological basis of our brain’s response to the environment. For this journey, Wallace uses the contrast of “intension” and “extension” approaches to reality and language, concepts developed by AK which turn on what comes first in the mental process, facts or assumptions.

Intension refers to inversion, judging the environment primarily and initially based on generalizations already formed in the brain rather than first on the basis of an objective view of facts coming in now about the environment. The pre-existing generalizations can filter out important information coming in now. This is survival negative. The Extension approach judges the environment primarily based on the objective facts coming in now and then evaluating those facts based on prior experience stored in the brain. This is the way of survival, survival positive, and in fact is how in AK’s view the humans developed who survived.

In chapter 1, Hal’s view of what is happening is filled with thick distortion by way of inverse effects. As the chapters progress, chapters set at earlier times in the progress of Hal’s degeneration,

the distortion in the text for Hal and other characters is a thinner version caused by pre-existing assumptions which do not conform to the facts coming in from the outside. Hal's distortion increases as the time line progresses to its culmination in chapter 1.

The Extension attitude looks first for all details in the incoming information. The Intension attitude looks for properties in the incoming information which are similar to those in preexisting generalizations. For our story, we have the following map for the attributes of these two attitudes:

Intension

Start with same properties
 Head only abstractions and generalizations first
 Value same properties
 Hal
 Alone and introverted
 Onanism
 Stay one with mother
 Subject predicate sentence

Extension

Start with different or individual facts
 full body reception of input detail first
 value different
 Gately
 with others as in AA and extroverted
 couple sex
 become your own person
 sentence with relational material

“AK semantics” refers herein to the theories of Korzybski as groomed by Wallace.

Hal we will find fits into the Intension category. He is Mr. Intension. At the end, he can talk only to himself. We know from our human experience that going out into the world with others in order to build a good map of the world requires courage and identity, two human characteristics that can easily get sidetracked in the family loading yard. Hal experiences nothing new when he is alone. Just what is already in his head.

Gately's experience, despite the common background elements, remains with others helping them. He is Mr. Extension.

AK Semantics and the Lethal Cartridge

The two most inclusive themes in Wallace's novel are the lethal cartridge theme and the theme of inversion from AK semantics. Since the cartridge is per Wallace “the star the novel steers by,” AK semantics must be pointed in the same direction. That direction is the black hole of self-centricity, where no light comes out for others.

We find that self-centricity and its off spring the cartridge experience and the inversion approach are survival negative; the cartridge experience is just faster. And both use false maps.

While watching the lethal cartridge designed to produce sexual desire and dependency desire, the man is just with himself in the microwave of his own desire. Note that the male in question is not with a woman in the flesh. Instead he is with a video of a woman. The video is a map of a woman, but not the real territory. The male's pre-existing sex drive lights up just seeing the video, a form of porn. He does not need an actual woman in his environment in order to be stimulated. This is survival negative since sexual desire and energy are not being used for procreation but are being wasted on a video. Wallace put the timing of the negative survival results from the cartridge on fast forward, to death within 6 hours.

The inversion process just takes longer to have its negative effect. The human specimen with inverted thinking and a false map will eventually succumb to dangers in the environment that are missed due to reliance on pre-existing assumptions built into his false map, which he thinks is the best since it is part of his imperial self. Just watch Hal go down in chapter 1. He won't procreate.

Neither the cartridge or inversion thinking produce anything new. Both reduce choices. Both are self-centric, one through desire and one through I already know best. Both are black holes, which don't produce children.

You and the Book

Wallace's book is designed to show us the dangers of addictions and dependencies of all kinds and their resulting restriction on human possibilities. The Intention attitude is one of those dependencies, dependence on pre-existing generalizations already stored in the head.

Promoting human connections and responsibility as the antidotes, the art of this book can form connections between writer and reader. This happens because it is necessary for the reader to work in order to realize the artistic architecture in the work. This book practices what it preaches. Reading actively and creatively and with an open mind and not just for diverting self-based entertainment is necessary to be "with" Wallace. This is not distraction or mere entertainment literature. This is the Joy of the 21st century. This is art, not another detective or romance novel.

This presentation is designed to share with you some of the connections I shared with the writer and hopefully motivate you to seek more. But you have to take personal responsibility for reading Wallace. Its joy does not come in an easily accessible bag. Look for details first and foremost without regard to generalizations. It will help to keep your map of the novel aligned with Wallace's version of AK semantics.

My partial analysis is no substitute for the real thing, the luxuriance of the novel itself, which Wallace brought to garden. I try to analyze some of the chapters from the point of view of dependency and leave the rest of the gardening to you. Wallace thought you should hoe it at least three times. The roots are thick and deep. The connections are thick.

You may well, as I did, find Wallace to be the Van Gogh of writers. His personal brush strokes are all over this story. For him writing is play, but serious play. As with Van Gogh's brush strokes, Wallace's syntax and semantic strokes are thick with meaning and connection. And both Wallace and Van Gogh ended their own depression.

TEXT

First, some preparation for reading from Wallace himself in Lipsky's interview after publication of IJ:

Because a book has to teach a reader how to read it. So [in IJ] the structure stuff starts right at the beginning. . . . You teach the reader he is way smarter than he thought he was. [71]

Are you ready to be taught how to read IJ? Again Wallace:

Now we're into DeLillo-ville, right? Where the bigger the system gets, the more interference there is, and all that. I am not talking about the system, I'm talking about what it feels like to be alive. And how formal and structural in avant-garde things I think can vibrate, can represent on a page, what it feels like to be alive right now. [40]

Art is about . . .the stuff that's about what it feels like to live. Instead of being a relief from what it feels like to live. [39]

What we start with in IJ is what it feels like to be dead inside. This is Hal's form of relief from what it feels like to be alive.

Opening: Chapter 1: **Year of Glad** [2010] Intensional Hal Gurgles Away His Chances

. . . because I think like as creatures, we've all got to figure out how to be together in the same room. [Lipsky 85]

Here at the start we have creatures in the same room but not together. Because one of the creatures, Hal, can't communicate with the college admission officers.

We find right off that by reason of his inability to communicate orally Hal is locked in himself, his own self-centred and entitlement worthy self. Hal has cut himself off from others while relying on his family entitlements, hiding in tunnels and smoking pot. He can't speak at all. He has lost the ability to connect with others easily. He has been wounded by his misguided upbringing by self-centered parents and damaged by his dependencies, including his addictive drug use. He is exhibit A in Wallace's warning. Hal the Graduate of Entitlement.

He is relying on others to get him in to college. He cannot promote himself. When he tries he is sent to the mental hospital.

Now let us stop right there. Not being able to speak as a result of dependencies and being cut off from others is a giant whopper, a huge and zany exaggeration. Not likely. Not even believable. Marx brothers stuff. It is a hugely exaggerated way of saying he has cut himself off from others. This exaggeration gives this chapter a zany fairy tale aura. It makes us readers look at these connections and scratch our heads. In other words, pay attention. It seems like a "get the reader's attention" device.

Note, for example, that being cut off from others and not being able to talk are mutually interacting causes, each promoting the other. Kind of like drug use, prior use promotes subsequent use.

So we start off at Hal's end with what it feels like to be dead inside, addicted to substances, addicted to yourself and unable to communicate. Hal is alone, even though with others who want to talk to him, but nonetheless alone. He is in his own black hole.

Hal is damaged; he has damaged himself. His mind still works but he is without a connecting voice. What we learn is that his mind is disembodied and no longer connected to his communication organs. You may be reminded of Kafka's Gregor Samsa, the beetle/ man who could only squeak not speak. Hal can only gurgle not speak.

Separation is the prevailing spirit in this chapter. You have two groups, those in university administration and those ETA personnel promoting admission for Hal, two groups separated by opposed agendas. One to protect the University [of Arizona] by keeping undesirables out and one to protect Hal and get him in. At the climax of this chapter, Hal will be ejected by the university group by reason of his inability to talk as they do. This is Act One in Hal's removal from the human race.

Remember that the word "university" derives from a Latin word meaning "whole." Hal seeks admission to whole but does not belong with those who are whole. He at most is just a part. He spends his part time in holes, like snakes. His life is devoted to returning to that early whole of the mother's womb. When he was at one or in identity with his mother. In AK semantics speak, this is infantilism, a desire for everything to be the same. In a later chapter [not covered here] we read of the "Inner Infant" group.

This first chapter presents first in the story the last event in the time line of the story [2010]. This start combining beginning with end structure mimics the snake eating its own tail.

We can start the analysis with Wallace's concept of writing:

Writing is communication, which people do on and off all day; writing is the professionalized version of what they're up to all the time. [Lipsky 116]

So we start with Wallace's professionalized version of communication, and the subject of his writing is a lack of communication, about what it feels like to be dead inside, dead to the world of being alive with other people. Wallace's communication about Hal's lack of communication.

Hal has lost his power of speech, at least while nervous, which we read per AK as loss of part of what was gained in human development regulated by survival. He has been sent back to an earlier time in human development when proto humans could grunt but not use language to convey information more complicated than anger or fear. In the cave days he would be kicked out to certain demise.

The technical reason for his loss of voice is not given. It may relate to insufficient saliva, since his secret use of drugs has taken the balance of his normally insufficient saliva production, which in turn was partially deteriorated earlier by fear of his father and no doubt much sucking. These possibilities are suggested in chapter 3 about Hal's damaged father/son relationship. Ironically too much saliva can cause loss of voice. So without a scientific explanation it remains the result of his being cut off from others.

Any detox he has suffered in private at the Academy [protecting its reputation] has not restored his voice. Sunshine may have burned him permanently. What has actually happened to him the last year remains a mystery, remains on a probability wave, throughout the book.

We feel the hierarchy. Admission controlled by Deans. Hierarchy, a form of "order" in both senses of the word: A before B and B subject to the control of A.

The chapter uses the first person narrative for Hal's thoughts [I am] and the third person for the others [he was]. Here are the beginning lines delivered in the first person inside Hal's head. His choice of language demonstrates the Intension effect:

I am seated in an office, surrounded by heads and bodies. My posture is consciously congruent to the shape of my hard chair. This is a cold room in University Administration, wood-walled, Remington-hung, double windowed against the November heat, insulated from Administrative sounds by the reception area outside, at which Uncle Charles, Mr. deLint and I were lately received.

I am in here.

For starters, note the first paragraph is not indented, which lack indicates it is part of something that has gone before, the earlier part of the recursive Mobius strip. Even though the first material in the novel. So right off the tail is in the mouth.

Notice **I am** is used twice, the two words claiming identity. This **I** has lost contact with those beyond **here**, beyond his own head. Hal is focused on himself, indeed locked in himself.

In his own analysis of others in the office, Hal assumes heads are separate from bodies. His assumption is revealed as his own Intensional, pre-existing assumption by expecting it in others without evidence because it is true in his case. His assumption is part of his search for the same.

He shapes himself to the immediate environment, his chair, rather than acting independently and sitting upright. The use of the "I" narrator emphasizes that Hal's thoughts are self-referential. Separated from others, Hal has disembodied himself. Later we learn that earlier he even disembodied his dead father by digging him up.

Now let us look at the general semantic aspects since Wallace has used inversion to frame Hal's failure to advance into the real world from the family operated and nepotistic ETA tennis academy. We will see through the first person narrator that Hal's mental operation is, in AK analysis, an inverted sequence of mental processing, not based on the survival-tested Extension method. His

inversion has made him an introvert. And this is shown at the beginning of a process that leads to his ejection from the human race and denial of the opportunity to propagate.

Hal's view of what is happening is filled with thick distortion by way of Inversion effects. Hal thinks along lines which are the reverse of the order that per AK was used in the development and survival of the human race. He starts out with general abstractions rather than data in detail from the real world, and dwells on matters not relevant to his purpose.

Heads and bodies is his first pick up of information from the room and is an abstraction or generalization based on a common property the interviewers share, heads and bodies. He assumes they are separate because his are and without any information to that effect. Moreover, this knowledge that they have separate heads and bodies is of no use in his current effort, which is to gain admission. It is not relevant, indeed wildly irrelevant.

This Intension oriented description of **heads and bodies** is nestled in a sentence which also contains Extensional relational values: **I am seated . . . surrounded by . . .** This contrast lights up the AK point of view.

The second, the chair sentence, is also the product of his introversion: **My posture is consciously congruent to the shape of my hard chair.** This information also is not useful or relevant, since it would not be known by others. Hal already knows this about his posture so he is not increasing his map information by thinking it. Contrast this line with "I made sure the others noticed that my posture is congruent to the shape of my hard chair."

Next Hal surveys the room, a cold room, which he sees in more detail than heads and bodies but not in terms of what is relevant for his purpose. This would be like seeing the bird on the branch above the tiger.

This is a cold room in University Administration, wood-walled, Remington-hung, double windowed against the November heat, insulated from Administrative sounds by the reception area outside, at which Uncle Charles, Mr. deLint and I were lately received.

His descriptions of the room demonstrate the influence and problems of the Inversion attitude. **Wood-walled** is awkward, a room walled by wood as opposed to had been walled with wood. It confuses who the acting agent is, the wood or an outside agent, like a carpenter, and confuses the point of view. This reminds us of the issue of what acting agent or process gathers facts, the point of view of already made generalizations or a clean slate ready for new facts. It is suggestive of closed-in limitation. **Remington-hung** walls would involve Remington painted pictures or prints usually of U.S. Cavalry fights with American Indians. Guess for our survival related subject which survived better. **Double windowed against the November heat** seems like an inverted description since we normally associate summer with hotter and winter like November with cooler. Even in Phoenix. In any event, it speaks of isolation from the immediate environment. The phrase **insulated from Administrative sounds by the reception area outside** seems to cut off from the brains of Administration leadership within the office the important facts in the hallways without, which are the responsibility of Administration. Again cutting off the head from what is going on outside.

Note in all these items the association of limitation with inversion.

Next Hal claims to only himself **I am in here**, a strange separation of **I** and **here**, a separation of mind **I** and head **here**. Hal appears to be disembodied. And hallow and floating protected by a flotilla of ETA officers, more than most graduates would get in terms of graduation support.

Hal may be "in" there but he can't get out. He is totally dependent on others from the Academy to advance his case for admission for further educational development. They are his voice and his cushion. His words on the page are spoken to no one other than himself. Think of Hal the computer looking out as a red glow through his glass "eye" and thinking "don't let them know."

Don't miss the obvious. Hal is in Admissions, seeking an admission to the human race in the form of a college not run by his parents, that is admission to "real life." Where he will have to be whole, have to get along with others rather than hiding in tunnels and under his mother's skirts.

Now let us return to the top and look at syntax in addition to semantics. The first sentence also speaks by syntax, the way the words relate to each other. This in a novel about humans relating to each other. The first sentence, given the comma, seems to die like a tide going out: **I am seated in an office, surrounded by heads and bodies.** With the comma, **surrounded** connotes hostility. This is a slow sentence. Read it without the comma. It rolls forward. It has more pace and more cohesion. Surrounded is less hostile. Hal can't wait to get out of there and, like this sentence, everything is going too slow for him.

With different syntax, the first sentence could have read: "Surrounded by heads and bodies I am seated in an office." Feel the difference in emphasis, more emphasis on others. No separation. Smoother and faster. Syntax speaks.

In the first sentence as is, **I am seated** gets more emphasis than **surrounded by heads and bodies**, which stand for other humans reduced to their bare external minimum. The comma after **office** provides separation. Separation is second nature to Hal since he has lived for several years just in his head and not with others aside from his brother Mario.

Notice the many commas in the third sentence beginning **This is a cold room . . .**, 6 of them, all providing separation.

And the first sentence contains no adverbs or adjectives, which would give the language more meaning possibilities. The sentence is as dead of possibilities as Hal is to be at this University. No metaphors or similes because they live in a combination of sameness and difference while here Inversion-oriented sameness is exclusively in charge.

In the second sentence the language is more complicated: **My posture is consciously congruent to the shape of my hard chair.** The word **congruent** seems an odd choice, except for a wordsmith. As in the chair, he is trying to fit in. Like a snake, he molds his shape to that of the chair.

The last, long and complex third sentence, beginning **This is a cold room**, which might convey some human information, describes only temperature and things, all irrelevant to the personal subject at hand. The description emphasizes a closed space, a limited space, separated from the outside.

The admissions office is out of the womb of his family owned preparatory school. Where dangers lurk. Like the vulnerable infant, Hal is submissive. In this context, the **waiting room** outer office would be the 9 month waiting womb/room and the admissions office would be the first step of admission out of the womb and into the world. Accustomed to the womb and warm mommy, this location in the admissions office is to Hal cold and notably has wood not satin sleeve walls and double windows [think opening to uterus and opening to vagina]. It even has male implements: **Remington hung walls.** Think Remington rifle. All attending this meeting are males. Many potential fathers have seeded his mother.

So far separation and limitation.

In **I am in here**, here can refer to the room or to his own head.

The admissions officers also have a distorted map, a map of the range of acceptable admissions candidates. They cannot reasonably evaluate an applicant who is a product of drug use and nepotism at a good academy, and surely Hal is not the only example of this type they will face. To understand would be to enrich their map of acceptable student applicants, and increase their choices. We readers sense Hal would make a good university student and graduate and even might be able after interacting with other students to give the valedictorian address. His similarly prepared creator certainly was and did.

Hal reviews the advice he is following in terms of facial expressions. The description of the yellow-faced dean reveals Hal's experience with shrinks. Like shrinks, Yellow face reads Hal his [Hal's] own identity summary. Hal admires that he Yellow face can make himself understood because Hal knows he [Hal] can't. American Indian comes in here somewhere with yellow face, given its start with Remington.

Note this identification technique: **because Hal notes he [Hal] can't**. The **he** is so weak it needs to be supported by **[Hal]** for identity. This identification repetition technique is used throughout the novel.

We learn that Hal's tennis, which is a zero sum game between opponents as opposed to communication and community, has not suffered while his speaking has. His game is hidden in his body, in his instinctive muscle memory groomed daily at the Academy. So groomed, his game ability is exempt from harm from the head and additional information coming in from the outside. The details of the tournament seeds [think propagation] indicate that Mom's [Hal's mother] lover ETA student John Wayne is not competing. This would mean Hal has a better seed. Perhaps Wayne is with Moms given the absence at the Academy of many of the officials [not including Moms] who are with Hal.

Notice the next material:

Three faces have resolved into place above summer-weight sportscoats and half Windsors across a polished pine conference table shiny with the spidered light of an Arizona moon. These are the three Deans—of Admissions, Academic Affairs, Athletic Affairs. I do not know which face belongs to whom.

Three faces rather than three heads or three persons. The others present are referred to by clothing, coats and tie knots, not by human characteristics. More separation from head into faces and clothes. Separation is ruling Hal's mind. He Hal has not picked up on the names, as one would in the interests of socialization and advancing his cause. His threat-producing memory of spiders is mentioned as a form of light, **the spidered light** of the moon. This is odd metaphor; it suggests an author trapped by metaphors he or she has read in others. Remember female spiders kill their propagating males. Having moved from people to things, non-threatening things, Hal's language now carries more detail.

The next material tells us Hal like Hal the computer has no identity of his own. He is coached:

I believe I appear neutral, maybe even pleasant, though I've been coached to err on the side of neutrality and not attempt what would feel to me like a pleasant expression or smile.

The head and body interviewers notice something is wrong with Hal, a twitching ailment which his ETA supporters describe as just a facial tick brought on naturally by the double tension of the tennis tournament and the admissions interview. The University interviewers refer to Hal's very low test scores versus his elevated high school grades as possible signs of grade nepotism in his family's school. They seek an explanation of the conflicting results.

A **red cave** for closed eye lids registers the womb symbolism as well as our memory of Hal the computer's eyes in the space ship. The red cave would be the Glad Bag, where the fetus is glad to be. After hearing him gurgle, the admissions officials describe Hal as some kind of growth. The fetus is also some kind of growth.

Hal is just out of his Glad Bag, protection at the Academy. He is flanked by Academy representatives. When Hal is forced to make his own case without entitled assistance, the unfriendly university admissions representatives are shocked by what they see and hear. They describe his

movements as **wagging**, a movement made by infants in reaction to interruption in breast feeding, and describe his sounds as gurgling, specifically like those of a goat drowning in something viscous, perhaps its own blood in sacrifice. Note the analysis retreat into being like sounds they already know. It could also be gurgling of breast milk or amniotic fluid. From the point of view of third parties, he has retreated development wise to his first months of life.

Concerning interface with other humans, we are advised that Hal is fine when he is by himself but is of the opinion **There's more to life than sitting there interfacing**. Since he can't interface. There is, but it is in his case only being by yourself with just your self, no authors for example.

Giving maximum importance to speech for development of humans historically, the University representatives describe him as sub-human, even sub-mammalian since he can't talk. We hear Hal just fine, the omniscient narrator giving us access into Hal's mental productions.

Note that in his damaged condition Hal cannot himself remember his first drug experience, eating the mold in the family basement. His mushroom. The dependent Hal remembers his brother remembering for him. At the time his **Moms** was rototilling a recursive pattern in the back yard.

As a result of his subhuman speech, Hal is restrained in the men's room [think vagina] and strapped to a stretcher to be taken by ambulance to a mental hospital. He is to be involuntarily incarcerated in a mental hospital for examination and evaluation. Despite this development Hal thinks he will win his tennis match the next day. His lack of connection to the reality of his environment has progressed to the point of hallucination. He thinks in separation terms that his head may go to the hospital but his body will go to the tennis tournament.

This is not Hal's first visit to a mental hospital. Hal relates that when he was in a similar hospital a year ago and waiting strapped down in the hospital hallway, another waiting patient, a Canadian woman, described her belief that she had experienced overnight a large increase in the size of just one her titties. Perhaps she was hallucinating her wish for larger breasts in order to have greater attraction to males [gene survival positive]. To her her wish had come true but only in part and separately. She is distressed because she assumes males do not respond positively to physical asymmetry [generally associated with Extension]. Males want the same pair in T & A.

Inversion also begins to rule Hal's thoughts directly:

I will be conveyed to an Emergency Room of some kind, where I will be detained as long as I do not respond to questions, and then, when I do respond to questions [by gurgling], I will be sedated, so it will be inversion of standard travel, the ambulance and ER: I'll make the journey first, then depart.

Depart here means from consciousness by sedation. But you can also hear the grim reaper's shuffle in the background of **journey first, then depart**. He is at the black hole's accretion disc, the black hole providing the mother of all departures. He will not be heard from again later in time.

We learn in this milieu that Hal was in the hospital for an emergency in November of 2009 and at some time dug up his father's skull with Don Gately helping and fellow ETA student John Wayne present wearing a mask. Probably for AFR and armed. Apparently in this role John Wayne did not speak because that would give him away.

2. Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment [2009]: The Cockroach's Limited Choices

Wallace abruptly introduces in Chapter 2 a new character at a different place and a different time. We later learn the time is earlier than the first chapter events but for now the time aspect just floats in uncertainty.

The important point made by Wallace in this *meta* way is lack of connection. Here we have lack of connection to the prior chapter, prior character, in time and in general. The character in this chapter, one Erdedy, is also disconnected from humanity. So disconnect is the main theme. As it was in Chapter 1.

Moreover, this character Erdedy and his drug supplier receive little in the way of identification information. He is called Erdedy only in the first line. Which must be his last name, his family not his personal name. Thereafter just “he.” The supplier just “she.” This anonymity indicates their lack of stable individuality. No identity so no life information. She never appears in the text.

You can read Erdedy as “err deadly.” The deadly error is not to watch the facts coming in and not to have many choices. At the critical moment, Erdedy is not able to make a choice between the door bell and the phone, each of which would be a human connection. His lack of the power of choice kills his possible connections with others. The loss of the power of choice is the tombstone for addiction.

This chapter displays the mind of a drug addict while waiting for his stuff, in this case marijuana, for what he says once again will be his last time. The recursive last time. He remains trapped in his head, in desire, in repetition of his habit. We observe that he is not straight with himself. He can’t think about anything else and can’t make choices. His dealer said she would **deliver**, which carries over the maternal womb image. The male user is another introvert, like Hal at an earlier point. In 2009. His need for drugs agitates his wait for them.

Despite having random sex, he and she have no relationship. No connection personally. I call him Erdedly and her the supplier just for convenience but remember that this text does not. His life companion at this point is a cockroach that lives in the same apartment. It also has limited choices. It has no name. It is in the wall or out a few inches on Erdedly’s stereo stand, but always just one of the two. Nothing else, nothing new, no companion, no family. Kafka’s Gregor Samsa is hovering in the background.

The AK semantics theme [summarized as “the map is not the territory”] reappears in the supplier’s main day job, designing sets for plays. Designing a map for artificial reality, the set, which does not reproduce the details of reality but instead selects in favor of emphasizing the generalities which are already imbedded in the play. A dangerous Intensional approach when applied to living instead of to the art of the play. The bad map in Erdedy’s head can’t read signals from the environment, here in the form of a phone call or a visit.

Note the initial syntax: short and bald sentences picked clean of possibilities. They serve as images of his life picked clean by drugs. The first two lines are Erdedy’s thoughts: **Where was the woman who said she’d come. She said she would come.** Repetition is the main syntax feature here. As a mirror image of Erdedy’s unsettled condition, the narrator then abruptly shifts to a third party voice: **He sat and thought. He was in the living room.** Some living! Pretty basic sentences, by a bourgeoisie narrator is influenced by the subject.

Another point here is the speed of narration. These short sentences are as fast as Erdedy is impatient for his fix.

Notice for contrast the long compound sentences later in the chapter floating in pools of long paragraphs. These capture Erdedy’s psychological experience of waiting for what he wants and floating rather than being grounded; it is taking so so long. His desire-fueled speed up inside makes the outside events seem so so slow. This particular addict will show up later at AA but in this drug fit he receives no introduction as to his upbringing, character or life. At this point, he is only a user. Not a human. He has no life. A comment made by the author by way of what is not said.

Erdedy is compared by association to a cockroach whose only choices are to be in its hole in the wall or out a few inches on Erdedy’s stereo stand. A cockroach does not have a name and of course suggests roach:

□ "roach". The term roach refers to. Benzodiazepines such as diazepam, flunitrazepam, etc - hypnotic and calming effect induced.

□ Roach (smoking) - Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roach_\(cannabis_culture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roach_(cannabis_culture))

Roach (smoking) A roach is the remains of a joint, blunt or roll up cigarette after most of it has been smoked. In Europe, the United Kingdom and most Commonwealth nations, the term is often used more specifically to refer to a short tube, commonly torn from a pack of rolling papers, that may be present in the unlit end of a joint.

Erdedy is the remains of a human, a roach or part of a human left over, one who cannot make choices. Since he can't choose between the doorbell and the phone, he can't make a connection. Choices and connections denied. Here he is at the end of the chapter:

Both sounds were loud and tortured and so abrupt they sounded yanked through a very small hole into the great balloon of colored silence he sat in, waiting, and he moved first toward the telephone console, then over toward his intercom module, then convulsively back toward the sound phone, and tried somehow to move toward both at once, finally, so that he stood splay-legged, arms wildly out as if something's been flung, splayed, entombed between the two sounds, without a thought in his head.

Erdedy is described as being in a womb sac of sound and silence, with a small hole into that great balloon of silence. Restricting what he hears.

Like the cockroach, he shuttles back and forth, unable to choose between the phone and the intercom to the door. Without a thought in his head. Splay-legged and armed, he is crucified by his own desire.

3. Eclipse and **1 April Year of Tucks Medicated Pad** [2003]: Dad in Disguise

We start with an eclipse, the sign of a partially missing moon, a yin moon, for an episode about missing family relationships. Here a missing father/son relationship and how it affected the son Hal. Compare 10-year-old Hal in this chapter with 18 year old Hal in chapter 1 for a view of his deterioration over time into reality denying Intension.

Here we see, in AK semantic terms, the view of reality distorted by a disguise, intentional distortion. The disguise on the father prevents the son at least initially from understanding what is in front of him in his environment. Father tries to sell the abstraction that he father is a professional conversationalist hired by his father.

Notice the composition vitality in the conversation between Himself in disguise posing as a **profession conversationalist** and 10 year old Hal. Father's disguise as a professional is ironic because dad had little to say to his son out of love over the years he [Dad] was engrossed in his own professional pursuits. This is the first of several disguises in the novel generally about loss of identity and bad maps.

The narrator is third party and independent, the only such party in the room. The entire chapter is made up of quoted conversation. However, it is conversation with disguised connections and looks forward to Steeply's disguise as a woman for BSS sponsored interviews with Marathe.

In the earlier [1994] The Iowa Review version of this chapter, the title of this piece was **It Was a Great Marvel That He Was in the Father without Knowing Him [I]**. This suggests that Himself

did not know or experience the father role with Hal. Himself was nominally Hal's father but did not experience the relationship as father. And a Canadian might have been his father. And it also suggests by reference to the Trinity that Jesus was not in the Old Testament Father. And that this son Hal is also not of his father. But of his mother whom this father describes as a whore. She does sell herself regularly to extra-marital attention because she is getting so little attention inside the marriage. Hal is to sell himself to addiction since he had so little attention inside the family. He is not to become his own father.

Here we see part of the source of Hal's problem, his relationship with his father. His father cannot deal with Hal directly as father and son, so Himself pretends to be a "conversational consultant." He is wearing a poor facial disguise. Father sends Hal to the "consultant," to Himself in disguise. Hal is 10, to be 11 in June. His distant father mistakenly thought he was 14. Father/consultant notices that Hal is making dry mouth sounds. Hal reports that his dentist attributed his many caries or cavities to low salivary output. An attentive father would have already known this.

After Hal enjoys a soda, a Seven Up, Himself says a professional conversationalist knows his mucous membranes, after all. This refers to Hal's mouth and the importance of the mouth in conversation but also in the background refers to Mom's vagina. Mucous membranes guard openings in the human body against bacteria in the air. Himself uses the word **implore** and asks Hal if he knows what it means. Hal cites from memory the dictionary definition and etymology and the page numbers. Stunned by this memory fete, Himself nearly gives himself away by saying she doesn't exaggerate. Himself apparently had not experienced this directly from Hal before but had heard about it from his sometime wife Avril.

As revealed by his questions, Father's purpose is not to help Hal but to find out about Avril's infidelities without her or her son knowing it. He mentions AFR leader DuPlessis, described as a bisexual bassoonist, and the Saudi Medical Attaché, the one whose affair with Avril particularly bothered Himself. These were mentioned in the hopes that Hal had heard something from his mother about them. The Tuck's Medical Pad in the chapter title is for cleaning rectal and vagina areas, tucking it in there.

In reaction to gulping down the soda, Hal makes gurgling sounds, sounds announcing the future reported in Chapter 1. Sounds to be the only ones he eventually can make. Hal wonders if his father sent him to a professional conversationalist because his father had hallucinations that Hal never spoke [premonition].

After a false start on the subject of Byzantine erotica, Himself begins to give himself away by using some of his favorite phrases, such as **full bore** [think pregnant]. Himself claims he has fully researched Hal's connection with the current intra-provincial crisis in Quebec and Hal's mother's **sordid liaison** with the Resistance's leader DuPlessis, a bi-sexual bassoonist, and more than 30 Near Eastern medical attachés [means attached]. Recursive repetition in infidelity. At this point Himself being agitated by this his real motive has dislodged his fake mustache [remember the snake eating its tail].

Himself goes on to exclaim that his tennis racket is made of the same materials as the **priapistic**-entertainment cartridge [the lethal cartridge]. This sounds once again the AK semantics there.

Priapism means a constantly erect and painful penis, the reflection of sexual desire which has hung in there. Note that in the case of the cartridge, Himself's reference is to the plastic container which holds the cartridge, not the tape or production itself which are inside. Likewise, the erect penis reflects desire but is not the production itself. Just as the lethal cartridge is not the experience itself but a creative rendition of it. All are secondary realities which start with givens rather than blank slates as to ultimate reality. Both are maps.

The tennis racket reference tells us Wallace intends to find a lethal aspect in competitive tennis as well. In all of this, consider the reader's emotional reaction to Wallace's novel as an unrequited erection, the novel being just the case for the cartridge, the case for reality.

Hal finally recognizes his father's clothes, and his now revealed father goes on to complain about the lack of attention he [James] received from his own father. We learn that James' father had also been unhinged by his wife's infidelities which drove him into or resulted from isolation, just like James. We also learn that James went cold turkey from his Wild Turkey habit recently and as a result he conceived of the movie about unrequited desire that became Infinite Jest V, the lethal movie which produces addiction to desire in general. The movie that was created while Himself was in the throes of experiencing alcohol dependency as alcohol denied is in the form of a sexy oedipal female arousing as desires unrequited both the sexual urge and the urge for mother's womb dependency.

Hal implores his father to give him some real father not fear father again: **for just one conversation, amateur or no, that does not end in terror? That does not end like all the others: you staring, me swallowing?"** Hal leaves unceremonially swallowing his saliva and Himself ends with the question Son? Son? Hal's response is reported as just a ". . ." the grammatical sign for omission, the ellipse. No connection since the father was not in himself.

Other famous son claims reverberate in the background. The next chapter starts with a sentence about how fathers impact sons.

4. Eclipse and **9 May—Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

Another chapter about the effect of fathers on sons, the parental hierarchy, here the effect registered as how they answer the phone, which is a stand in for social relations with others.

Hal rooms with his physically damaged but morally and spiritually wholesome older brother Mario. Another example of hand me downs from parents, this time bad genes, perhaps all Canadian. Mario was conceived by Avril and perhaps James not out of love but in order to get Avril permanent residency in the U.S despite her connections with Canadian separatists. Mario's conception for practical considerations and not love is reflected in his physical anomalies.

Inconsiderate Orin calls at an hour when he [Orin] is awake but would know Mario is probably still asleep. Orin has little concern or time for others. Hal answers **Mmmyellow**, which sounds like Mommy Yellow.

The AK semantics theme returns with Orin saying **I want to tell you my head is filled with things to say**. Hal responds **I don't mind . . . I could wait forever**. Not receiving the enthusiastic response he expected, Orin is disrespectful and hangs up. Orin's Intensional map of expectations was not the reality of what was coming in Hal's response.

When Mario asks who called, Hal says **no one you know, I don't think**. Mario would not understand being disrespectful to your brother. His pre-existing conception of brother would not process Orin's disrespectful call.

Again father's effect on son, this time Orin. Who does not care about others. Who is a womanizer. Who when he has object sex is essentially throwing his seed on the ground.

5. Eclipse and **Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

This begins the story of the Saudi Attaché for Ear, Nose and Throat. As this evening turns out, his desires end his choices. He maxes out wasting sexual desire energy on a map of a woman in the lethal cartridge. Note he apparently has no children.

Earlier his own desires had brought him to Avril. This time they bring him to a state of pure unadulterated desire and without the need for any human female in the actual present. Better yet in a

cartridge where she has to do the same thing over and over again even without the blessing of a few sweet nothings. The ultimate in home entertainment which plays on the viewer's expectations, the generalizations and desires already in his own head. Only with sexual urge already built in and not carefully adjusted to the actual environment will this outside stimulus produce desire for an electronic image on a screen. He wastes his desire to the point that he wastes his life.

On the fifth anniversary of James Incandenza's suicide [in 2004], a copy of the lethal cartridge is mailed by an unknown source in Phoenix to the Saudi Medical Attaché for ear-nose-and throat attached to the Saudi Minister of Home Entertainment, who is in town to make a deal with Interlace Television Entertainment and suffer his recurring nasal medical issues. The Saudi ambassador eats only chocolate bars, what he wants instead of what is good for him. Ear-nose-and throat could have been one of the attachés who visited Avril and resided temporarily in her vagina when he was a resident 8 years ago. He is never named. As depicted by his specialty, he has limited range in life.

In this story of missing identities, the identity of who sent the cartridge from Arizona to Boston is unknown but the Attaché who himself is never identified opens it anyway, searching for something new to watch so he can unwind. Curiosity desire. The sender is never identified but my guess is the AFR using the cover of revenge motivation by someone doing the job as proxy for James' jealousy. The point is the threat of more cartridges being laid on the ONAN public. The strategy is to build a fearful expectation in the mind of the public regardless of the actual facts [no more lethal cartridges can be sent since there are and can be no more]. Note the connection of expectations to AK semantics.

The subsidized year has been extended to the Statute of Liberty, which has been sold by the government to wear a large DAU. We note that liberty is also highjacked by pre-existing urges.

After his light duties, the Attaché [means attached to] needs desperately to **unwind**, an image of the mobius coming straight. Unwinding must, given his religion, be done without chemical aids. His chair is designed to allow him to be able to eat and watch without interruption and to watch and then to fall sleep directly on the chair, with the tape set to run a recursive loop of surf and light rain. He wants everything just so. But tonight is Wednesday, hump day, when his wife goes out with the girls and he must rely on his independence resources, which turn out to be thin indeed.

Byzantine Erotica on the wall signals the importance of desire. And how little stimulation is necessary to trigger the pre-existing tendency. Just a picture, just a video. Just a map.

He has no entertainment cartridges to watch other than those that have just arrived by the post. An unidentified package has arrived from Phoenix with the return address as Happy Anniversary [time replacing place]. Perhaps the anniversary of his first time with Avril. Feeling tightly wound and under appreciated, Attaché opens the package out of curiosity and in search of evening's entertainment [too tired for books]. The unsuspecting Attaché starts playing the lethal tape at 19:27, that is 7:27 PM.

This curious exact time emphasis [continued in later chapters] reminds us of the Attaché's historical opposite, Christ our attaché from god on the make-shift cross dying for others. While this Attaché is on the specialized lounge dying for himself. The curious time image of 19:27 may remind the reader of biblical book indications, such as Mark 15:25.

Note this story of the lethal cartridge comes in the middle of the family damage chapters. The cartridge story itself is broken up and spread over several chapters as the Attaché being disembodied by his own desire loses his integration. The first installment of the cartridge story is followed by a chapter about the worst kind of family interaction, adult family members taking from innocent dependents rather than giving to them.

6. Year of the Trial-Size Dove Bar [2001]

This is a chapter about family damage of the worst kind. Family taking because of desire, sexual desire for the tightest vagina in the youngest daughter menstruating or not regardless of damage to her.

The AK semantics preexisting assumption is the attitude of these males: what else are females for, to be screwed whenever I feel like it. Children are a bother. This attitude is also survival negative in terms of the kind of children produced.

Like the prepubescent daughter, the trial size dove bar in the title is smaller than the regular one. The narrator uses restricted hood talk and is fully captured by the hood values in play. This is a dangerous version of the bourgeoisie narrator.

Young girls who are still jumping rope are expected to “lie down” with mamma’s boyfriend Roy Tony because Roy wants to and after all gives them candy. Momma say it Wardine’s fault cause she tempt Roy Tony with her young tight self. Mommy is loose with hers and her daughter’s. Wardine say her momma ain’t treat her right. She beats her with a hanger [more cross image]. Crib is apartment. She tells and hides at her father’s crib, Reginald’s crib. Reginald also expected her to lie down with him. Everyone want her to lie down. What else is she good for?

Wardine momma keep Wardine around so Roy Tony stay around and support them both. Have to buy his love. He stay for tight pussy, not love and caring. Momma is selfish, even with her daughter’s virginity.

The narrator is an apparent relation of Wardine, perhaps an older sister. She is pregnant. Her identity exposure as narrator is weak in the text as her personal identity is weak. Distorted relations are paired with distorted hood language, the language of the ghetto. Just any language does not do it. She be cry. Desire in the form of sexual desire is the viper here. It is eating its own children. Talk about hierarchy.

Their white counterpart is Mildred Bonk, who leaves school, takes drugs and lies with boys voluntarily. Finally she leaves school and home for trailer life and Bruce Green. She also watches cartridges. What can’t they cure? They live with Tommy Doocey, the pot and sundries dealer, who keeps snakes and, as if biting his own tail, his upper lip covers his nostrils.

Family love gone wrong as sexual desire.

7. Eclipse and **Year of the Dependent Adult Undergarment [2009]**

April 1, 2009. April Fool’s day. The same kind of neutral narrator of conversation as used in Chapter 3. The opening subject is reaching a connection with conversation [Wittgenstein’s theory of language].

Mario and Hal are living together, for each other. This chapter shows Mario’s identity in action and Hal’s care for him, care for someone other than himself. Hal’s care project.

Hal and Mario in bed at night talk about Moms, and we are treated to a revelation of Mom’s changed behavior in the years after Himself’s suicide. They think she has been happier, and travelled less in her academic field prescriptive grammar, the correct or preferred way to use grammar. She does not need to go out of town to get some of the drug of sexual thrill. Or need as much. She has the students right there, always close by. Presently her “fill in” is the student John Wayne, that is correct John Wayne, this time dressed in black. Hondo Wayne.

For AK semantics purposes, note that these sons start with the generalized assumption that mom will be just a mom and not seek male sexual recognition, particularly with student males.

Notice most of what Mario says is omitted, subject to ellipse. Hal must disregard it. Mario believes god was with Hal that day when he [Hal and god] played great tennis [another assumption not based on a careful analysis of the facts]. The flag lesson Hal gives suggests taking your own attitude

higher than the sorrow of Himself's death. Move on up. Note that unlike Roy Tony, Hal does with his relatives what he doesn't want to do, which is talk or give instead of sleeping.

The separated paragraph tells us that at 20:10 hours [after the start at 19:27] the Attaché is still watching the lethal cartridge. Even though it is midnight in the Hal-Mario conversation in the same time zone. Is time running slower at the Attaché's because of more mass of some kind? Christ is reported in the Book of Mark to have been crucified at the third hour [9:00 AM] and passed at the ninth hour [3:00 PM], six hours later. Which is when our Attaché is to be found dead.

8. **October—Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

Depend undergarment. Depend on others.

Here instead of the drug user Hal we have the woman user Orin. Orin has been with his latest sex object, called the "Subject" rather than the more appropriate "Object." Not even named. Just a vagina for the taking. A physical but not an emotional connection.

He Orin is a user/womanizer. Like Roy Tony. His connections with others are of the get excited and "take" variety. He is the second oldest Incandenza son, but then again dna tracking of parentage was not available when this was written.

Orin gets hot at night even though he turns the temperature control on the air conditioner way down to a low temperature [described in the text inversely as way up—which carries from AK semantics an assumption about what point of view is used]. He wakes up in a sweat and to a note on the pillow from his last nightery containing her identity information. Apparently not shared the night before during anonymity-heated desire grappling. He makes coffee rather than calling her. The point of the chapter is that he does not think about her or her best interests. A white Roy Tony. Addicted to object sex. Another Avril and James damaged product. Likewise, the narrator is a self-conscious writer [for example consider his or her **morning is the soul's night**].

Orin, professionally a NFL punter, is in Phoenix after being traded as a commodity from the New Orleans "Saints." It is October and still hot. He always sweats at night. He is left handed and from his ETA tennis days has a larger left arm.

Roaches invade his bathroom and we remember Erdedy's cockroach. This suggests these two share a version of the black hole of self-centricity. We learn Himself particularly feared black widows, and we think of his wife after his death as the widow in black. We learn of the flying cockroaches which feed on babies' eye mucous [which must distort their view of reality or point of view, the AK subject].

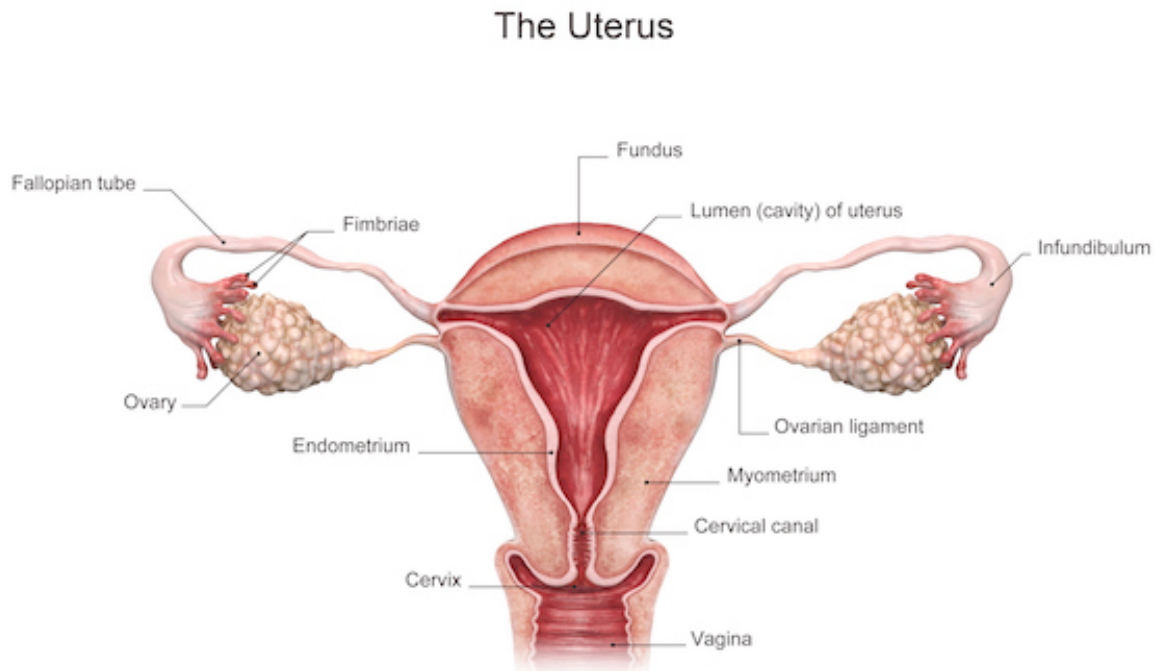
A bird falls dead from the sky into the pool. Orin thinks it is a wren and a warning. Because as we learn later the Phoenix Cardinals are to have him fly into the stadium on a kite-type bird structure as a promotion gimmick. He worries about having the same fate. Start to think of Icarus, whose name means something like strike a blow. Close enough to a punt.

We also learn his father fled this area earlier in his life. Orin's dreams feature his Mom's detached and rounded off head fixed to his forehead like a phylactery, a Jewish memory device for the Law. The Law of Oedipal is that you can desire but never have sex with Mom if you know she is your mom. Orin remembers an earlier girlfriend who wanted a figure eight tattooed on her bare thigh, our recursive symbol. First night sex over and over.

One sex object back his temporary female visitor watched a cartridge about schizophrenia while they were in morning-after bed close to departure time. In the cartridge a patient was treated to torture as investigators found out what was happening physically in his brain. Something like what Orin did to his girls. In AK semantics terms, the girls are attracted to Orin as a male successful at physical combat on the "built-in hardwired" assumption that physical trait is important in coupling

regardless of the plentiful actual experience out there that a supportive attitude is more important for family.

An interview with players by Moment Magazine has been approved by the Cardinals administration. And we remember the dead bird in the pool. And that a woman's uterus and vagina together looks like a bird, in this case a dead one.



Testing for bird.

9. Eclipse and **Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

Here is Hal, from a third party narrator point of view, a narrator with a casual and folksy attitude. The narrator says **Here is Hal**. Almost like a public announcer saying here he is folks. Howdy. But Hal is nowhere to be seen.

In the present Hal is hidden in the Academy tunnels smoking marijuana. He likes his secret and to be alone and away from others. This desire to be alone and the desire for the effect of the marijuana are mutually supporting forces in the Intensional camp. Both are fueled by self-centricity. The secrecy leaves his experience inside and Hal all alone. He smokes in the underground pump room, the pump that floats the lung that protects tennis courts from winter weather. Pump and tunnels may suggest the human heart. Smoke is not good for the heart.

Secrecy and pregnancy, the pumped up balloon.

Hal lives on the pre-existing and self desire-driven assumption weed is not harmful, regardless of plenty of direct evidence to the contrary.

Mother Avril thinks Hal just uses alcohol occasionally, which even at that is bothersome given the addiction of his father and apparently his father before him. She believes she should error on the

side of letting him make his own mistakes and learning from them. This is her rationalization, her pre-existing assumption, for not caring that much and not spending much time with him and not knowing what he does. Despite the direct evidence of trouble. She thinks he can confide in her, but he doesn't. And she suffers from the dread of possible secrecy by her sons.

The underground lung may remind you of the nine months glad bag. That is where Hal smokes and repeats the feeling temporarily that he last had in the glad bag. Tensions of post-latency and puberty and angst are given as the reasons for common recreational drug use among secondary school students. The transition to more dangerous use **starts to creep up on you**. This is described as **giving yourself away**.

In companion but slightly isolated material, the Attaché's wife is leaving her one night out tennis round robin [think recursive] and social club while her husband has the tape on recursive loop and has wet his pants and the chair on the way to his final hard on. His desire is consuming him.

In additional companion material, Mario's job to film Academy workouts is described and its use to instruct students since **it's a lot easier to fix something if you can see it**. If you can't see yourself it is hard to fix yourself. You can't see yourself in the womb. No mirrors there. Hard to fix yourself there.

10. **Autumn—Year of Dairy Products from the American Heartland** [2008]

From the womb to the breast, another glad bag. From Hal's secret basement smoking to Gately's burglary.

Gately, our second main character and foil for Hal, is a giant with a square head. He is happy in the work of burglary. He at this point is dependent on others to make wealth for him; he steals it. He does not take personal responsibility for his own upkeep. A self-centric approach to life in the wealth realm. Later we have an ETA employee who licks the sweat off the ETA boys.

Gately has a MO in his burglary technique. He turns off the electricity and the alarm by way of a straight shunt in the electric meter's flow. He clips the ground wire on the alarm as a diversion. Wikipedia:

In electronics, a shunt is a device which allows electric current to pass around another point in the circuit. The term is also widely used in photovoltaics to describe an unwanted short circuit between the front and back surface contacts of a solar cell, usually caused by wafer damage.

Gately shunts his humanity.

As revenge, Gately burgles the home of a district attorney who had put him in jail for 90 days and a bad detox. Afterward, Gately sends the DA [think Dada] a postcard photo of Gately mooning with the DA's toothbrushes in you know where.

Now in a three page paragraph we have Gately burgling the home of DuPlessis, the head of the Canadian AFR terrorists, who is unexpectedly home. He has a bad cold so the Gately applied tape on his mouth to quiet him kills him by suffocation. Gately gets caught because he repeats the same MO with the electrical box, a version of our repetition theme. The Assistant District Attorney who first put him away and later was burgled and recipient of the mooning post card is happy to have revenge. The desire for revenge is a pre-existing assumption that can distort current information about what treatment is appropriate.

In an added paragraph, the latest in TV appliances are merged with the physical condition of DuPlessis. As he dies his buttocks enlarge with lividity and his back hurts,.

11. 3 November—Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment [2009]

Start of the run of hierarchy chapters: from demons, to tennis rankings, to older versus younger students, to employer versus employee, and to drugs and users. Identity versus influence of others. No first paragraph indent, so a continuation of some sort. Or maybe it means it has always been there.

This chapter uses patterns suggested by C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. See the summary from wikipedia in Appendix Two. Screwtape means to mess things up, to corrupt, to be devilish, which you will note connects to our AK semantics theme. For Wallace, it also suggests constriction [screw it tight] and the recursive twisted figure eight. The assumption for AK semantics is the senior knows best.

The Letters are based in hierarchy, namely a senior and a junior devil whose interaction is constricted by the hierarchy. The senior devil, named Screwtape, is the only one writing the letters and giving advice. Senior recommends that the junior devil on the job, named Wormwood, promote in the human target passivity and irresponsibility, two of Wallace's major themes. Given in Lewis' novel the eventual failure of the efforts of the junior devil, the senior devil eats junior's spirit since senior is the stronger. This report card produces fear as the operative emotion in Hell. Hierarchy and fear. Also true of bad parenting.

As emphasized by Lewis' preface to the Letters, there are no letters or reports from Wormwood to Screwtape, just letters from Screwtape to Wormwood. In other words, no correspondence between two beings or spirits. Just one-way orders based in hierarchy. In hierarchy the senior being **overlooks** the junior, reviews from above. The overlook is an important concept in this chapter. I have put them in bold to emphasize their repeated use. Remember this when we get to Steeply and Marathe on the ledge **overlooking** Tucson.

Here in Wallace's kingdom, passivity, irresponsibility and fear eat students' identity in the halls of hierarchy. And in Wallace neither of the two students featured in this chapter talks during the chapter to anyone else, only to themselves. And hierarchy is assumed.

Hierarchy is the form of family organization that fails to produce independent identity in children and instead produces children like these two. Note that in the case of Hal, family and school hierarchy are one in the same.

Impish Wallace gives us what Lewis didn't, communications from Wormwood, the type of letter in the form of a report Wormwood as junior devil would write to Screwtape, and then the even more complete takeover kind of report directly from the target's mind. Here in Wallace's chapter and put in Lewis' terms, the junior devil has been successful. He is in the head of a junior student.

The first report is with appropriate headings to identify the report for impersonal filing. No human discussion is called for. The second report is directly from the student's mind. These reports, in Lewis and in Wallace, are based on hierarchy, which according to Lewis' introduction would be the structure of Hell. Screwtape appears in the image of the snake that eats its own tail and slinks in the background. That snake apparently **overlooks** the fact he is eating himself. Wormwood appears in the focus on the floor [wood] where the demon is or is hiding.

For this Lewis inspired romp, we have not one but two narrators. The first narrator for the first report is third party "he did." His report suggests a report written by a male coach or administrative staff member to his hierarchy-based school administration. This is Wallace's version in the context of ETA of what a report from a Wormwood would be like, a report Wormwood would

be pleased to make and Screwtape pleased to receive because of significant progress in personal corruption of the human target. The reporter knows more than a normal third party could know, which suggests a spirit like Wormwood with access.

The tennis rankings of the boys listed in the heavy heading carries the hierarchy theme. The boys are pitted against each other mono on mono. There is no mention of even doubles. Hierarchy sponsors the use in this chapter of the word *promote* in the meaning of take from another. It is to be used often in the annals of Poor Tony, the cheese eater.

By contrast, the second narrator is in the first person and fear-based personal. This narrator is an 11 year old unidentified student. He is what a target human would be like whose spirit has been eaten. Wormwood has wormed its way in. The report from Wormwood is one and the same with the voice of mental fear of the young student, representing more progress in corruption. With this narrator, Wallace gives us another thing Lewis did not give us, direct access to the mind and spirit of the target human.

There are two separate parts for the two narrators. Each gets its own part. The prose and syntax of each part reflects its subject: first an over medicated and stuffed up mucous experience of an older identified student at ETA and second a wild ass nightmare by a younger unidentified “where is mommy” student. The style and syntax of each part mirror its subjects.

The purpose of these two parts is to show that the lack of personal responsibility and passivity in the mind of the typical drug addict is a general problem in American young people resulting from hierarchical rather than proper parenting and proper schooling, which would aim at producing independent identity. Lack of independent identity has its own form of misapprehension, the same claimed lack of personal responsibility. That “this not my fault” mindset is a general problem in a society that does not honor and raise children to independent identity and personal responsibility.

In the first part the student with a cold is a drug user as well, so he has repetitive pill-based practice in denying personal responsibility and enjoying passivity, the womb trip. In the second part the 11 year old student does not appear to be a drug user but does have repetitive nightmares. In this part fear is the rush, with adrenaline being the early drug of choice. And announced by “amazing.” Fear being the enemy of identity, whose father is courage. Wallace’s deft strokes show the 11 year old student’s mother to be the facilitator of the young student’s fear. Since the fear means her child always needs her.

Note especially the use of style to juice the content. The first is a long paragraph stuffed with so many facts they drip out of our reading memory, as with virus infected and oozing nasal mucous glands. After a transition paragraph, the second is in the form of a long and quickly subject switching diatribe in the first person narrator by an unidentified, fearful 11 year old student. He wishes he had his mommy because of his nightmares at school, apparently his first time away from home. He believes the nightmares are caused by an exterior force which is in the room, not a just a fear in his head, which he might be able to do something about [note in these mental assumptions or points of view the inversion from AK semantics structure]. The style in this second section features fearful thoughts, a style made of thoughts that swing wildly, just like the spot reflection of his flashlight does in his dark room looking for the demon, usually on the floor [think wormwood]. Since his fear demon eats his fledgling identity, the 11 year old is not named.

The essential subject matter of the two dramas is the same: two additional versions of not taking personal responsibility for your own problems, the heart of the drug addict’s predicament and the sign of lack of independent identity. Two other versions of taking the view that responsibility lies with an outside agency not with yourself. An agency like devils.

These two versions involve health and nightmares. The “addict” version is that others out there, not I, are responsible for my bad cold and demons actually out there are responsible for my nightmares. In the nightmare case, the evil forces are actually always out there but **overlooked** during

the day, not just in my head at night. Mommy contributed to this fear by giving the fearful first year student a flashlight he could use to find out if there was actually a demon in the room. A flashlight with his name on it. This mommy gift partially validated his fear.

Here in the first part, one student [Troeltsch—roommate of student drug dealer Pemulis] believes he has a rhino virus caused cold, which he believes comes on fast and hits particularly hard, like a rhino would. That another student sneezed on his food one day before and caused this rhino cold. When in fact the rhino virus causes the common cold and peaks over a period of 3 to 5 days after infection. The fact that this “not my fault” belief exempts him from early AM tennis drills and allows him to watch US Open tennis on the TV is relevant. And the effect of the many medicines he decides to take is worse than the cold, sort of self-justifying medicine reminiscent of drug use, where the effect of the drugs is worse than the problem which sparked their use.

Nonetheless, Troeltsch feels he is not responsible for the way he feels while heavily drugged, not responsible for the virus and not even for the medicine’s effect. He has after all has “been taken ill.” As if an outside agency caused it and his role is passive. Another student coughed on his food. Not his own fault even though it would be his body that harbors the infection.

Self-medicated with powerful antihistamines, Troeltsch has trouble breathing, just like the taped Canadian terrorist DuPlessis. He rooms with Pemulis and has stolen drugs from him, that is he relies on others to promote him chemicals. Not my job. He hides the stolen capsules “in plain sight,” Pemulis just **overlooks** them [note this additional connector to the second section re the daytime demon that is **overlooked**]. The noises in his room hissing moist medicated air are associated with the ATHSCME fans and refuse catapults aimed up north, the U.S. not taking responsibility for its own, instead just blowing its nose over the border.

The subject of responsibility avoided even resides in this chapter’s footnote 21, which passes the buck to footnote 211.

Note that Pemulis’ initial active participation in the TV tennis match by pretending to give an announcer’s description dies away as he watches and becomes passive. Note also the light touch of the Ouroboros in the line describing Pemulis’ half awake half asleep mental state caused by the medication:

And any dreams you do have seem ragged at the edges, gnawed on, incomplete.

This connects the snake eating its tail with lack of identity. It does not even know it is hurting itself. It is of necessity incomplete since it has eaten itself.

The connector from the first part to the second part is in the following transition material about the medicated Pemulis:

. . . you awaken from with a sort of psychic clunk, struggling up to sit upright, convinced there’s someone unauthorized in the dorm room with you.

Then the second section, material separated by an extra space and using a first person narrator, an unidentified 11 year old first year student narrator. We overhear his thoughts upon waking from nightmares in his dorm room. They continue while he is awake to infect him with fear. He believes that the threat of nightmares is always with him awake or asleep as the result of an actual third party evil demon out there which is just **overlooked** during the day. As opposed to just being in his own head, which you might be able to do something about. [Note for AK analysis the assumption directly

affects what he sees in the environment.] You can feel depression in the objects above him that do not return or reflect light. So there the dark place is the demon's hiding place.

This student's consciousness is compared to the flashlight which his mom sent with him and even put his name on, knowing he would need it in the dark away from home. The misprision is the belief that the evil reality is out there in your room all along, not just in your mind. Out there all along just **overlooked**. This is the second format for not taking responsibility for your own problems. The demon did it.

The syntax in this second part is all over the place, just like that mommy responsible flash light beam searching on the floor for your demon. In wormwood you could say.

You can feel in the faint background of these two examples the issue Jesus foregrounded in his short ministry on the earth: whether an external god, an outside agency, is responsible for all that goes on or the spirit of the humans in question is somewhat, largely or completely responsible. Jesus' message was more radical: He taught that you and you alone are responsible for your own attitudes towards others, love thy neighbor. Worship is designed to achieve that attitude, not to make you subservient. Jesus certainly was not. He was AOC radical. That the kingdom of god was in, no is, your own attitude. You are god of your own kingdom. The kingdom of god is spread upon the earth but men and first year students do not see it.

12. **As of Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

This chapter's title's first words **As of** indicate a date from which something will be started or will be ended. Since no ending is mentioned, it will continue running, as will ETA. You may remember the Ouroboros, the snake eating its own tail. It keeps circling and chomping.

Here what starts is the Incandenza curse, starting with Hal's grandfather. A third party narrator spills out the history of an unnamed grandfather and his son James Orin Incandenza, Hal's father, and the Enfield Tennis Academy, started by James and leadership of which has been kept in the family. This material suggests it is easier to get something continued rather than taking a change for a new turn. The sinuous Incandenza family eats its own young by staying on the same faulty hierarchical-based recursive course.

The premium style or syntax device is a contrast of short crisp and stable sentences involving third parties contrasted with long run-on, sticky and awkward sentences involving just the Incandenza family. A version of the contrast between grounded and floating.

The sentence line lengths in this short chapter are 4, 19, 3, 21, 15, 12, 5, 1, 1, 6, 2, 2.

Note the shorter sentences are about third parties and are stable sentences, crisp sentences. Third parties in your life do make a difference and promote your own stability, your own crisp independent identity. Like boats tethered side to side are more stable in rough waters.

By contrast, the long sentences, like long narrow boats, are unstable and sticky, and are about intra-family matters, families not incented to do the best for the independence of their children, independence which produces stable and crisp children. Fathers who try to stick their sons to the bulletin board of their father's way of life. Hierarchical families. These sentences are crammed full. To accommodate the resulting long load, dashes are used--and used--and used. But internally the dashes, necessary for long run-on material, serve to separate material, not connect them. Like how his father tried to affect James, Hal's father. Shape him like a **garage project**. Their relationship would be in the nature of a dash. Note that Hal's grandfather's name is not given. For us he is without identity.

So here is the first sentence, the crisp 4 line sentence:

The Enfield Tennis Academy has been in accredited operation for three pre-Subsidized years and then eight Subsidized years, first under the direction of Dr. James

Incandenza and then under the administration of his half-brother-in-law Charles Tavis, Ed.D.

The subject matter of this sentence involves time and third parties, those partners necessary for a full life. Note this elegantly stable sentence and those confidence building words: **accredited, direction, administration.** But this sentence is not innocent. By reference to **Subsidized years**, it connects ETA to ONAN's sell out devices for collecting funds, selling the year to corporations, selling time, what used to be owned by everyone. Notice the shift from **direction** by James to **administration** by Charles.

Contrast that with the dark words in the second sentence, a run-on *19 line* sentence describing James' time under his father: **only, former, promising, formative, disrespected, unemployable, driven back, dividing, short-run, crippled, obsessions, fright, bitterness, ambiguous, consuming and nadir.**

This contrast between the short stable sentences and the long sticky ones continues through the chapter.

Much of the detail in the long sentences about family matters gives us background but not the essentials, for example why Hal's mother Avril fooled around so much outside her marriage. You may feel that the heavy nuclear reaction material, always producing the same results, is meant to suggest that human reactions are predetermined in the same sense, at least with the Incandenza seniors, regardless of the information coming in from the environment.

Note that atoms are sticky; they tend to stay together. The "strong force." A powerful fission effort is necessary to split them. Like our long sentences. Note the emphasis of James' nuclear work was reflection. As a dependent father would be reflected in a son without his own independent identity.

The point is that in this long chain of lightly connected but sticky material, connected only on the outside, there is little room for independent identity.

As to the James/Avril romance, reflection is contrasted with reflexive, the latter meaning a pronoun that refers to another noun which gives it meaning, such as "herself." For example: Patricia thought only about herself. In this example Patricia gives meaning to "herself" as a noun. Or try James was Himself. Himself is also reflexive. Reflection means throwing back light or sound without absorbing it all. Aspects of syntax, how words get along.

So in their romance, which given her Canadian citizenship and arguably innocent connection with terrorists made her entry into the U.S. difficult, a child was useful and was produced. Mario. Her role as mother gave meaning to her boundary passing. Mrs. Incandenza was motherself.

We learn in this grammatical jungle that Hal's grandfather was a top U.S. junior tennis player and then a promising young pre-Method actor and then finally a disrespected and unemployable actor driven back to Tucson and to drink by fears of death by spider bite by the black widow [think former wife]. Taught his son James to be a tennis player as if shaping him to be what daddy himself wanted him to be, son James uses tennis to get scholarships in the east away from his father, receives doctorate in optical physics [seeing], helped make reflectors for the internal processing of nuclear weapons, invented cold annular fusion, low energy nuclear fusion in a **ring**. The snake again. Eventually took up film making, a picture or map of life, a ring of its own. Suicide at age 54.

The last line of the chapter refers to the ring, the recursive ring, in this case in the form of black bands worn by ETA students to lament the passing of James as the founder of ETA. The bands would not fit some whose arms had grown from the tennis exercises. The ones who wore them were different and that is the point, that is the contrast with the foregoing Incandenza generational matching efforts:

And those of E.T.A.'s junior players whose hypertrophied arms could fit inside them wore black bands on court for almost a year.

Smaller is different. Has a life other than huge arm tennis.

13. Denver CO, 1 November Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment [2009]

Orin the punter plays Icarus, but this time he flies too low. For a job. Hierarchy of employer over employee.

Orin eats himself, eats his identity, since he is doing something he absolutely hates and even threatens the health of his money making kicking leg. Hierarchy continues in employers forcing employees to do what they don't want to do.

Orin is dressed, disguised, as a flying cardinal for his National Football League team the Phoenix Cardinals. They are playing the Denver Broncos at Denver, which hosts the loudest stadium in the NFL.

In the reincarnation of the Icarus myth, the stadium plays the role of the Labyrinth where the Minotaur, bull's body and man's head, was imprisoned by its inability to find its way out [sound like youth on drugs?]. The Minotaur devoured human sacrifices. Fierce. Here the crowd is the bull, the Denver Minotaurs. Our Icarus cannot find his way out of the promotional requirement. The bird imitations are a promotion device for the Cardinals. Remember the dead bird in Orin's swimming pool.

We find our snake eating its tail in the story as delivered by Bulfinch's Mythology:

The labyrinth from which Theseus escaped by means of the clew [clue] of Ariadne was built by Daedulus, a most skillful artificer. It was an edifice with numberless winding passages and turnings opening into one another, and seeming to have neither beginning nor end, like the river Maeander, which returns on itself, and flows now onward, now backward, in its course to the sea.

Note the recursive loop in the Maeander.

Orin is in a bad position because he is flying this course as part of his employment. He is required to as a condition of employment. Extra bonuses are paid for squawking while flying but not for just flying. He was forced into flying at the threat of loss of his job. He hates it. He is eating himself by doing this.

His bird flight may suggest the punt. The trajectory of punts may remind you of this voyage, up with energy to the rim of stadium and then down in flight. Punts go up and then down and are used when a fresh set of downs [first down] is not to be achieved, when possession is to be given up to the other team. His particular flight pattern coming down is tacking back and forth as if on skis, which may suggest the above description of the river Maeander.

Back to Icarus. After making and attaching the wings, Daedulus advised his son to fly not too low, because the damp would clog his wings, and not too high, because the sun would melt his wings. In other words, follow me. In the myth, Icarus flew too high with the hutzpah of youth. Here Orin flies too low by doing something for money he does not believe in. Orin feels like a **dick**, again part for whole dick for person and a name he has earned.

The Minotaur bull was dangerous because it was fierce and acted on hate. Orin does the flying routine even though he hates it. The Denver fans hate the opposition and try to catch the legs of the

opposition fliers and crash them. The bull roars as does the paying crowd. It roars because it hears itself in the loudest stadium in the NFL.

The loudspeaker for the stadium speaks in a **steely gargle**, a foreboding of Hal's voice. Each of the members of the crowd does the same thing. To the complaining fliers, management stand ins say it could be worse; he could play for the Eagles or the Browns. Eagles for flying higher. Browns for turds.

14. [Eclipse]

Hierarchy continues in two episodes set in the ETA arena of drug use, initiation of young boys to drugs. Drugs eventually dominate their users. The setting is a Big Brother hierarchy. Drugs become the ugly big brother who takes your toys. The Eclipse watches over the expansion of negative yin into positive yang.

In the first part, we have older student Pemulis lecturing the younger boys in a structured, school sponsored, regularly scheduled Big Buddy pow-wow. But Pemulis lectures about certain hallucinogenic drugs while the school sponsored Big Buddy session is supposed to give the younger boys positive structure away from home. Drug use would not be an appropriate Big Brother subject unless it was a warning about the dangers of use.

Pemulis lectures about drugs because that is his subject, he sells drugs and he thinks [his map] all boys will be interested since he is. The hierarchy of age and position as leader. Some boys are not interested in listening, showing that drug use is not natural for all young boys, especially well adjusted and happy ones. Drugs kill identity in users and forge a criminal identity in sellers. It becomes a Ponzi scheme, selling drugs to afford using drugs.

In a second part, we find related material about boys starting tennis early and starting drugs early. It seems like Hal is the narrator but officially the narrator is unidentified so as to indicate Hal's loss of identity. The narrator student is probably speaking in another Big Buddy pow-wow. He recounts his relatively late inception in drug history and how he started with a girl supplier at school, one Bridget Boone. In other words, he started because others used, lacking his own strongly anchored identity and values. He first used marijuana for sleep at the recommendation of Ms. Boone [think bone and other sleeping aids available]. He apparently needed something because his psyche was troubled by his family experience as a child; presumably it is Moms, who continues to show up in his troubling dreams. His dream of a giant tennis court with many different parts, too involved to take in at once or to figure out, describes his psychic life so far. Not under his control. Serving wish fulfillment, Moms is in the audience under her suggestive white umbrella [think skirt] rooting him on.

The artistry of this piece rests on the likely interpretation of the second part based on the reader's understanding of the first. Association influence, like drug use influence, like Big Brother influence, like hierarchy influence. Subject matter sitting side by side, as with the boys in Big Brothers.

15. [Eclipse] **Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

Here we have the full hierarchy of drugs over user and doctor over patient and husband over wife and Nazi over weaklings. Suicide over identity. The AK semantics pre-existing map assumption is that what the doctor has learned in medical school is all there is in the territory of patient's problems.

The hierarchies are human connections which lack humane connection. Here the patient is treated as one example of a general problem, unipolar depression as a result of Marijuana detox, as

opposed to one specific, unique human being with her specific problem. We are also treated to an Attaché, who chooses to die in the pool of his own desires and waste without concern for his wife, and even to a Nazi connection, command by punishment. Three different kinds of failed connection of the humane kind.

The third party narrator is as antiseptic as the hospital sheets. No sympathy there. Note that the featured patient Kate Gompert has no social life. She works [alone in a real estate office] and lives with her mother. No friends or lovers other than Bob Hope and shock treatment. We note her pot use restricts her socialization and even her employment. She is on the not so merry-go-round of self-reference and eating herself. She even prescribes her own treatment, shock therapy. Through Kate, we learn why Gately and Hal wanted to take Sunshine, the desire to be disembodied. Every cell of Kate's body is sick. She wants to shock it away. Her condition merits a long paragraph on page 69.

Kate hides her ample breasts, her feature that could encourage some fundamental connection with the male doctor, perhaps as doctor prescribed physical examination. Given her suicide attempts, the hospital watches her 24 hours a day but doesn't care for her. She is first seen in the fetal position and hot, suggestive of the womb.

The first issue to the doctor is her identity, but just her name and not what makes her tick. His attitude towards patients depends on the arbitrary category of which floor the patient is on. He doesn't talk to her but takes notes on what she says, for the record. He just asks questions using his technical language.

The point of the chapter is the failure of human communication even when the purpose is professional help. The doctor is more interested in scoring professionally than helping this one patient. Scoring is cause based, detecting what causes what. His scoring desire is indicated by his excitement when he thinks he will be the first to report a connection between cannabis withdrawal and unipolar depression. He wears heavy glasses with steel rims, which may remind you of Hal the computer programmed by others.

Listening to Kate closely, we know cause and effect will not rule this aspect of her life. She moves in and out of emotional affect. More like changing color filters on the camera.

The first paragraph indicates how doctor/patient human relations are distorted by assumptions about mental illness. For the psych ward, the doctor tunes down his good cheer and adopts a manner **between bland and deep**. Notice how long this first paragraph is. What remains the same? The doctor. **Dysphoria** is dissatisfaction with life. Her depression drives her away from life, to just being alone. And exclusively into her own mind.

Kate Gompert is shown right off in the psyche ward of the hospital lying down in a fetus like posture. In this posture she is just like the popular conceptions of mental illness. True to popular form for young people, she wears sneakers without laces or socks. She is in the hospital on suicide watch after she tried to end her life with an overdose of medicines. Suicide, which she has tried several times, would be the alpha in self destruction of identity and the last choice. The nurse supposedly watching her all the time instead watches a ROM and chews gum, oral fixation and spectation. She the nurse is bored with this job and true to form in lack of human connections does not pay attention to Kate.

Kate has had severe depression several times. She is an abuser of prescribed medicines. She had been found this time **red and wet like a newborn** after trying to take her own life. Doctor asks her identity; she at least knows her name. Note she is even ironic, like self-ironic literature that takes its own life.

The doctor and Kate speak past each other, the doctor about the drugs she took and Kate about what she was doing, like chewing the carpet. The **plexor** in his pocket is a small harmer, presumably for testing reflexes but generally indicative of his attitude towards patients. The shock treatment is at the end of a progression which starts with the plexor. She tells a joke which he does not get. She calls her last doctor by his name. She feels she has an entitlement to choose shock therapy.

The fetal imagery is strong. Sending our cries **for someone to care and help**. She wants to stop being conscious, that is why she tries to kill herself. Like others who are killing their possibilities and identity. She describes normal depression as **a kind of blue kind of peaceful state**. Something **horrible is about to happen** [out of womb into world] And you can't stop it. This **lurid** thing.

Word History: It may seem surprising that English *lurid*, which sometimes means "vivid," comes from Latin *luridus*, "pale, sallow, sickly yellow," used to describe the color of things like skin or teeth. Latin *luridus* could also describe horrifying or ghastly things like poisonous herbs or even death itself, things that make a person turn pale. In an account of the volcanic eruption that buried the city of Pompeii, the Roman writer Pliny the Younger used *luridus* to describe the unsettling color of the sun shining through a cloud of ash. When *lurid* first appeared in English in the mid-1600s, it described things that are pale in a sickly or disturbing way. *Lurid* was also used of gray, overcast skies. In the 1700s, writers began to use *lurid* to describe the red glow of fire blazing dimly within smoke. In the 1800s, the word acquired an additional meaning, the one it most commonly has today when we reveal the *lurid* details of a horrifying or sensationalistic story.

States are lurid and sounds are **harsh and spiny** as we traverse her condition through the analogy of many different metaphoric sensory worlds. She wants shock treatment again, not color therapy. We learn that classic unipolars [down only] are tormented by the conviction no one can hear them when they try to communicate [remember Hal in Chapter 1 who can't speak]. She admits to her life with Hope, which like the spiritual kind can ruin you when it doesn't pan out. Not harmless. Like Hal she smokes into a fan to disperse the tell-tale smoke. She does not want to be identified by her drug use. She describes having quit cold turkey several times by herself but the depression oppression inevitably comes back and drives her back to Bob.

Question: could AA help Kate? Did Hal have the same problem?

The doctor processes what she says through his preconceived categories rather than really sympathetic understanding concentrating on exactly what she says. He summarizes it as depression from withdrawal from cannabis, a previously unknown source of depression. He is excited because he may be the first to diagnose this connection. Maybe get mentioned in the big journal.

Attaché's wife arrives home from ladies night at 1:45 AM [seemingly late] to find her husband soiled and comatose but with an ecstatic look on his face. 1:45 AM would be six hours later relative to 7:27 PM when he started, the same amount of time Christ is reported to have lived on the Cross. Compare his visage with that of Kate who is alive and awake but with a stone cold look on hers. Note that the Attaché went into the orbit of desire when he was alone. Desire ended his choices. When his wife was gone and also note that the box carrying the cartridge had no return address. No human connections. He has sired no children when he checks out.

In the third section featuring Schtitt, Head Coach and athletic Director at ETA, we have a philosophy that demeans individuality in favor of the importance of the state. Totalitarianism. The state provides the connection between its citizens. Sympathetic compassion is not necessary since control is in place. This is his pre-existing generalization or map for living in this world.

Director of Athletics Gerhardt Schtitt is a German with a Nazi-like punishing stick. At ETA he is friends only with Mario, the physical deformity and virtue artist. Gerhardt is white white. He can be friends with Mario because you can be yourself with Mario, there is so little Mario resistance there. They share motorcycle rides on the PM training runs. Rather than commune with others, Gerhardt [find the hard in his name] prefers to interact by using the corrective blow.

Schitt approaches tennis more like a mathematician rather than a technician. His view of junior tennis is training for citizenship in the state as a higher goal, compared to the modern USA which he views as a sort of sloppy intersection of desires and fears, where the only public consensus . . . is to the **acknowledged primacy of straight-line pursuing this flat and short-sighted idea of personal happiness; . . . The happy pleasure of the person alone, yes?** The Nazis did not have AA meetings and a AA Nazi would not be effective since in AA guidance is needed not command.

Schitt's personal skills are demonstrated by his love affair with a willow tree. He describes tennis as meeting with your own limits, transcending yourself: **life's endless war against the self you cannot live without.** No different from life itself **except the chance to play.** For him there is little or no difference between life and the end of life. No rapture of being alive for the Nazi.

16. Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment [2009]

Here we find Watertown, the civic water womb. Where Tiny Ewell grew up and was made tiny early on. He has been in custody for two weeks of detox and is being transferred to Enfield halfway house. The transfer route goes through Watertown, his old section of town he normally avoids.

Here lack of identity is processed as lack of control in the physical realm. In the extreme form of lack of control over body functions, it promotes at Enfield the rubber washable pisscatcher shoes and robes with open backs for quick response to uncontrolled bowel movements. Even the light in the rose window in the church is off on both sides indicating the uneven presence of god in this life. The Detox patient is described like an infant just out of the womb, the **rouge corps.** Even Tiny's vision from inside the moving cab is distorted.

We are first told by the third party omniscient narrator that there is no irony in Tiny's name. He is small physically and given his alcohol addiction he is small in spirit. He is tiny both in what he cannot control and what he could.

Detox in Watertown, which may remind you of the womb. Given his alcohol addiction, Tiny's wife kicked him out of their home and changed the locks. She gave up on him after his many drunks. All he has left is the bottle. He left his roommate in detox fascinated by controlling the air conditioner in their room. He likes it cold even when it is cold outside. He is stuck on cold and could not have been much human company for Tiny. Remember Orin.

In the attached and related piece about the medical attaché's saga, the Attaché himself, the personal physician, two guards from the Embassy and even two Seventh Day Adventist promoters who accidentally walked in all watch the recursive lethal cartridge playing on the screen. They become firmly attached to watching. They also lose control over themselves. They don't even smell the odor the Attaché has left. None of them notices the others present. Each is essentially alone. They don't care about the Attaché because they have the ultimate in desire. Their ultimate fate is not described.

17. [Eclipse] 30 April—Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment [2009]

Here we have identity in disguise but not necessarily permanently changed [remember chapter 3 with father disguised as a professional conversationalist]. Identity in disguise is cast as a shadow, a temporary lack of truth in identity in the sunshine.

We are relieved by an omniscient third party narrator. The issue of Christ in disguise as the son of God looms in the background. Near Tucson, we think tuck the son back into the father.

Both Marathe and Steeply are in disguise, Marathe as a double agent for both the Bureau of Unspecified Services [called the B.S.S. by Canadians] and the Canadian A.F.R., and the B.S.S. agent Steeply as a woman reporter. Their identities are hidden by disguise, for Marathe of disguised loyalty and for Steeply of disguised sexual and purpose identity. How disguise of and thus lack of true identity distort human relationships and distort information coming in from the other.

Double agency brings uncertainty to true loyalty. Hierarchy presides in the back ground. They meet on an uncertain ledge **overlooking** the valley.

He sat alone above the desert, redly backlit and framed in shale, watching very yellow payloaders crawl over the beaten dirt of some U.S.A. construction site several km. to the southeast. The outcropping's height allowed him, Marathe, to look out over most of the U.S.A. area code 6026. His shadow did not yet reach the downtown regions of the city Tucson; not yet quite.

These sentences speak to an alert reader with the selection of words and with syntax.

Note that Wallace does not name him at the first opportunity, the **He** that starts the first sentence. **He** is allowed in specifically as Marathe only in the second sentence and only under the cover so to speak of **him** in **him, Marathe,** Note that **Marathe** rather than the disguised pronoun **him** is marked off by commas from the main action of the sentence. In other words, he is identified reluctantly, as would be the case with an assumed identity. His shadow is even mentioned and he is described by how far it reaches. Payloaders in yellow reflect the main purpose of humans, to bring home the paycheck in their loader, but in color analysis is attuned to a subtractive color scheme, one moving from white to black.

From wikipedia:

Subtractive color, or "subtractive color mixing", predicts the **spectral power distribution** of light after it passes through successive layers of partially absorbing media. This idealized model is the essential principle of how **dyes** and **inks** are used in color printing and photography where the perception of **color** is elicited after white light passes through microscopic "stacks" of partially absorbing media allowing some wavelengths of **light** to reach the eye and not others.

Yellow suggests that personal identity and pay check source often do not correspond. Moving away from your natural calling, as are the payloaders, those tractors with buckets on the front destroying the natural desert. Brittle is suggested by the shale, which is formed of consolidated mud or clay, god's source for original humans.

Compare Wallace's start with this straight forward one:

Marathe, the A.F.R./Unspecified Services double agent, sat alone on his wheel chair looking out from a ridge at the end of day on the desert close to Tucson. Construction was going on and payloaders were moving dirt. Tucson is derived from the O'odham word, 'Chuk-son,' meaning village of the dark spring at the foot of the mountains.

Marathe starts alone and in his wheel chair. For injuries born of his test of loyalty to A.F.R. He is looking out over most of an area code [note 4 digits not 3], which of course is not a geographic boundary. But is a connection device, notably a relatively impersonal connection device. This is a form of disguised identity, an area code for a place. You can reach it without really being there.

Where Marathe sits in his wheel chair things are moving in the shale residue. We are not told how he got to the ledge. We learn his wife needs medical help, which is why he is there helping ONAN against Canada. He plays with his shadow waiting for a late Steeply to arrive at the pre-agreed location near Tucson.

The reference to the shadow as *Brockengespenst* emphasizes the fact that this giant shadow produced by the sun at a low angle is a setting sun not a rising sun, closing to dark and not opening to light. And brings into the text a meaning of the shadow in terms of spirit. Think a setting son. Christ as a human would be a setting son and a disguise too. His father chucked him.

Steeply arrives for their prearranged meeting by sliding on his bottom onto the outcropping ledge and nearly off the ledge. Instability marks his arrival and appearance. He is an operative from Unspecified Services, referred to by the Canadians as the BSS for Bull Shit. We learn Marathe is betraying the Canadian resistance in exchange for U.S. medical services for his wife.

Once on the ledge with Marathe, Steeply seeks news about the lethal “Entertainment” cartridge that killed the Saudi Attaché and others [subtract ridge from cartridge to leave cart or wheelchair]. Blue is used to describe the cartridge: arrived **out of the blue, from somewhere blue**. Blue is closer to black than yellow. The psilocybin mushroom turns blue when bruised.

Steeply suggests, in an example of predetermined thinking, that since the Resistance is known to have a **cell** in Arizona and since the package was mailed in Arizona, the Resistance must have been behind it. Marathe calls the Cartridge the **blue dazzle**, dazzle meaning temporary loss of sight due to a bright light. Steeply reports 20 casualties from the cartridge, casualties who lost their brain due to a bright desire. Compared to the effect of the cartridge, Steeply is described as producing in the male viewer something like **sexual despair**. Steeply asks if there **were below the surface connections** that made the Attaché the target. Marathe denies the Attaché, a Canadian, was on the AFR target list, since they have **larger seafood to cook** [compare larger fish to fry]. Throughout this conversation Marathe is sniffing, as if he uses drugs. Trying to get Marathe to talk, Steeply mentions a connection of Canadian conspirators to Avril.

Against this background and suddenly without preparation or connection and marked with a lead in of **It's a herd of feral hamsters**, we are given to see what has transpired because of the ONAN connection, dangerous feral hamsters roaming barren country. These feral hamsters, previously without real identity as kept pets, are now monsters, their true nature. They may remind you of some of Wallace's feral sentences, may keep you away. This is posed right after the discussion of who sent the lethal cartridge and why. Rodney Tine Jr., the Chief of Unspecified Services, wants to know, Rod the God with a resistance-loyal secretary one Luria Perc. Loyalties are mixed up with doubles and pretend to pretend to betray.

Note that both Marathe and Steeply are open with each other as they have a face to face human connection.

In a second and one space removed section, with divided loyalties as the subject, we learn details of Marathe's machine pistol he has covered under his blanket [in the heat?]. At the end both humans watch the same thing, a burning cigarette thrown down the mountain, a dying ember in the encompassing shade. A human lifetime. Shadows are also thrown.

Chapter 18. **Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

Syntax: The way in which words, clauses and sentences are put together. “The order of words in which they convey meaning collectively by their connection and relation.” Here in this chapter we have syntax wrapped in general semantics.

With connection and relation, syntax is the connection of literature to life. The way people interact is human syntax. Shying away is a comma. Separation is a period. So is placing your very young children in a boarding school away from home so you don't have to deal with them. Hierarchy is also a form of human syntax.

This chapter is located in the ETA locker room where personal possessions are locked up. And connections are locked up. We have a third party narrator who is less than omniscient.

The example used to focus on syntax is a sentence from Tolstoy, a sentence about how families get along, family syntax. Note the sentence is never given directly.

We learn the sentence was used in a recent test at ETA [probably in an English or prescriptive grammar course taught by Moms] and apparently the same test is used year after year. The boys in the locker room are discussing the sentence as part of discussing the test they took recently. The narrator does not tell us about the Tolstoy sentence. Tolstoy emphasized uniting people.

The Tolstoy sentence in question pointedly is not in the text but here it is in English:

All happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

The most important thing about this quote is that it is not in Wallace's text. Omission syntax. Like not giving a character a name. Wallace's point concerning Tolstoy's sentence is that it focuses on families and not on the individuals. Think Romeo and Juliet.

The pre-existing assumption in AK semantics for this sentence is that happiness is registered at the family level not the individual level. That is why, I believe, Wallace gives this sentence the omission syntax treatment, does not quote it and makes reference to it only by reason of a reaction on an individual and not a family basis. ETA is, after all, a boarding school and the Incandenza family experience has not been all that good. Note that the boys are each unhappy in his own way. This is the information in the environment which is contrary to the assumptions made by the sentence. A related assumption by the parents is that a boarding school is good for the child.

The sentence as crafted by Tolstoy uses syntax which itself suggests separation. Note that the Tolstoy sentence structure is made of two parts, parts separated by a comma. The separating agent is the comma. As structured with just a comma for separation, the two segments lean awkwardly against each other. Think of the boys in the locker room on the floor leaning against lockers. Separation such as that experienced by boarding students from their families.

Notice also in the Tolstoy sentence the lack of a connector between the two parts, after **another**. A connector such as "while" or "and" between the two phrases would be helpful for additional smoothness and momentum. Try it. This lack of a connector is the whole point and gives the relationship of the two fragments an uncertainty, an unrelatedness, a lack of natural togetherness, like a young son far away in a boarding school.

Notice the rhythm of Tolstoy's sentence: the first part about happy families proceeds smoothly but the progress of the second about unhappy families is full of bumps, resulting primarily from the repetition of **unhappy** [get it?]. This is a tired sentence, just like the exhausted boys in the locker room who do not relate. In prescriptive or hierarchy grammar, this sentence would be criticized as an improper run-on. At the end of this chapter, we shall reverse Tolstoy at least for individuals who lived their lives for love.

The first remark in the reported discussion among students stands all alone without prior reference to the Tolstoy sentence. Connection to the Tolstoy sentence, like human connection, is missing from the chapter. Connection is made by the reader only by subject matter and the notoriety of the Tolstoy sentence:

. . . To even realize what they're sitting there feeling is unhappiness? Or to even feel it in the first place.

This remark is by one of the boys, notably unidentified, about an exam question. The point being it could be anyone of the boys. This remark stands alone syntax-wise without a friendly or related introduction.

This remark is about what the individual child experience would be like when unhappiness is registered at the family not the individual level. It must have been prefaced by "it is hard to believe . . ." The remark assumes that unhappiness in the family would not be known as unhappiness by the individual members, since they always felt that way. This assumes the individual children are separate enough from the family to have separate and independent happiness experiences. As one would at boarding school. This would be the view of Generation X, Y and Z, who were not so tied to their parents as previous generations.

Student drug lord Pemulis [more hierarchy] asks what is the main point. Hal answers quietly:

The exam was talking about the syntax of Tolstoy's sentence, not about real unhappy families.

Notice Hal's odd use of **real**; as an adjective [adjective real versus adverb really] it must in prescriptive grammar modify families or unhappy families and not just unhappy. It must mean authentic not very. Families with children in boarding school are not real families. And Hal knows about really unhappy families. Hal wants to derail and not talk about this subject, dismissing it as not the real point of the exam, which was syntax. John Wayne's contribution to this academic discussion is a fart, another form of separation syntax.

As befitting the subject of connection in grammar and among humans, this chapter starts off with repetition of the schedule at ETA. Here is your life, your run-on life. Period after period. The school now standing in for the family. Notice the lack of connection between the subjects of the classes. Each item is separately presented between separating commas. Very little positive syntax in the syllabus. Notice not just tennis matches or friendly matches or working out together but **challenge matches** [a hostile way of relating].

One course on the schedule is prescriptive grammar, Moms' subject, where the subject of syntax would come up and Tolstoy could be on the test:

A prescriptive grammar is a set of rules about language based on how people think language should be used. In a prescriptive grammar there is right and wrong language. It can be compared with a descriptive grammar, which is a set of rules based on how language is actually used. [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/.../prescriptive-grammar]

A hierarchy in language use, educated English. The human counterpart of prescriptive grammar would be how people relate to each other in a hierarchy: I am the boss. Behave properly. Speak properly.

The third paragraph starts with the time, 1640 hours. Notice the numbers are not separated as 16:40, which would be usual especially for the military, the paragon of hierarchy. Separation of activities and reality by time. Hierarchy of time. The counterpart of syntax in the boys' appearance is their combed hair, combed in furrows like sentences. Other habits, such as not drying your feet with a towel, score as patterns like syntax. Pemulis spits, which prescription does not allow at all.

In the paragraph starting **There is a silence** notice all the unrelated sentences, each short without connectors. Detachment stands as unconnected against the great pattern in reality: . . . **hooded**

in silence, removed, for a moment, from the connectedness of all events. A Tolstoy kind of sentence.

The discussion about the upcoming test in the class History of Entertainment reminds us of the zenith of human connection among the sexes: **seminal, seminal** entertainment. Younger boys are advised that on their exam papers they should not just state facts but also support them with argument, as would be the case in a relationship. Notice this test telling is the past robbing the future. Another question likely to be on the test is to define **acutance**. Hal answers from memory: **A measure of resolution directly proportional to the resolved ratio of a given pulse's digital code.** In other words the more resolved the sender the more clear the message. Translate that into life. Hal remembers the definition but does not realize the meaning in his own life.

We learn the older students shower before the younger. Shower Hierarchy.

The boys are tired after practice. Some have turned off. Their lack of communication is the analog to lack of syntax. They even make sounds that do not communicate, like the sound of an untranslated digital signal.

Later discussions suggest that syntax is seminal. At the end and for contrast, the other boys applaud Hal's memory feats. You feel the possible connections in the applause. Right after you have heard luges and watched spit bubbles.

Back to Marathe and Steeply. Night is beginning to "fall." Steeply looks at himself, Marathe at nature opening up its multifold connections. Readers realize these two are in their own form of an Arizona locker room.

Back in the locker room the boys continue to fail to relate. They blow their nose or pick their pimples and sigh and throw towels. One boy can speak very little English and without connecting communication skills is quite shy. The big brother system, which could foster communication, is described by way of its failures. It is infrequent and one way. No doubt according to Wallace because the older boys experienced poor family relations and did not learn how.

John Wayne's dressing syntax is sock shoe sock shoe, one side at a time. No connection between the feet. Just a comma.

The description of the lockers in the locker room begins to sound like certain mushrooms, blue at the base with slits in the side [**antimildew vents**]. Mushrooms whose ingested effect locks you in your own room and your own lack of syntax. Different skin colors on the athletes indicate non-holistic relationships with the sun. Different ways to give the finger are explored. Exhausted the students wish for something **uncomplex** on the TP, to relax and indulge rather than relate. Some complain about the exercise/ studying coordination [more failure of school syntax]. Some attention seeking. Hal ruminates on the defecatory posture and images Luther on the loo awaiting his movement to epiphany. Collected John Wayne does not join the conversation and his locker is neat and organized. He is top of the heap. Heap of what?

Hal's swollen ankle has a blue tinge in the Locker room. Towels are thrown in this lack of togetherness.

We note that at the end of this chapter, Tolstoy has been reversed. All the boys are unhappy for the same reason, they are exhausted physically and spiritually by lack of connection and by lack of diversity in experience. All the same, except John Wayne. We would guess that contrary to the Tolstoy sentence those humans who are happy are each different, because their happiness comes from their identity, which by its very nature is different. Each is happy in his or her own way. Happiness is individual when based on identity.

Marathe and Steeply are also not together. Now in the shadow thrown by the rocks behind them. Steeply transfixed in **torpid spectation** by the view larger than his eye can take in. They discuss famous historical loves [human syntax] between man and woman. Steeply makes several mistakes about historical coupling. Marathe corrects his historical motivations [Greek siege at Troy] to practical ones, examples of commerce or community interest [think families versus individuals] and not stealing a woman like Helen. Marathe jokes at Steeply being a delivery vehicle [syntax again] for a theory about tragic love. Marathe diagnoses that love and attachment not carefully chosen are essentially worshipping yourself, slave to your own desire to love. [There is desire again]. The chapter ends with Marathe singing the USA song in various keys, the musical counterpart of syntax.

Chapter 19 **3 November Y.D.A.U.** [2009]

We know from the use of a similar setting to the last one that this one will be about the same subject. That is the Wallace way.

Connecting to the last chapter, this one starts with a discussion during Hal's Big Brother time about the fact that the school administration knows that after a typical day at this school the boys end up unhappy but the administration does not care. Just lets them complain to each other and generate hate. In fact wants them to be unhappy to make them better tennis players and promote the school's reputation. Note that parents, at least good parents who are attuned to the child's happiness, would do something positive about ending the unhappiness, would want their children to be happy.

One point of a boarding school is to shield the parents from the children's unhappiness, the reverse of what was discussed in the last chapter, families shielding children from family unhappiness. Note that Hal's remaining parent is effectively ETA. The school is his parent and the school is making him unhappy and lonely. Just the opposite of what a good parent would do.

Taken to the floor of this viewing room the Tolstoy line would be revised to read:

All unhappy individuals resemble one another, [but] each happy individuals is happy in his or her own way.

This chapter is about ETA's Big Buddy program, supposedly designed to produce the inheritance by the younger boys of wisdom earned by the older ones. It comes after the showers in the last chapter. You reader will automatically want to compare this with what is given as wisdom in AA meetings.

The first Big Buddy program reported on is run by Hal and his lecture is actually good advice for his kids as humans but not as tennis players. He is the counterpart of a good parent interested in his or her child's welfare. In his, Pemulis runs a gambling casino which is good for him but not his boys. He is the counterpart of ETA.

Five Academy boys including Hal are on the floor resting in the viewing room [V. R. 6] which has the high def cartridge viewer and a separate cartridge player. Only the cartridges in the room can be played. Nothing new, nothing creative. No choice. No windows or fresh air.

Hal's Big Buddy group is watching a tennis stroke being made, watching it over and over. The point is that the mental program being used to make another hit in tennis would be the same mental program that would make another hit with drugs. The hit would be built in, in muscle memory and in desire memory.

The picture on the monitor [remember the Minotaur bull] is so clear it almost seems, snake like, to strike out at you. The film is designed so that the watcher will eventually react intuitively rather than actively or consciously mental, that is decide automatically what to do when hitting. Like the automatic response to take another drug "hit." Do it again because you have done it before. Don't decide each time. The soundtrack **Don't Think Just See Don't Know Just Flow** plays over and

over. It is gauzy and dreamlike [think womb and high]. Designed so you will disappear into the loop and carry that with you [without knowing it]. Remember the lethal cartridge.

You may be reminded of T. Leary, who in his original form may remind you of Wallace. The following from wikipedia as to the original Leary:

"Tune in, turn on, and drop out."^[90] Though the more popular "turn on, tune in, drop out" became synonymous with Leary, his actual definition with the League for Spiritual Discovery was: "*Drop Out* – detach yourself from the external social drama which is as dehydrated and ersatz as TV. *Turn On* – find a sacrament which returns you to the temple of God, your own body. Go out of your mind. Get high. *Tune In* – be reborn. Drop back in to express it. Start a new sequence of behavior that reflects your vision."^[52]

Notice Leary's admonition was full of personal responsibility.

The boys do not notice that on the tape the old worn out player hitting the strokes over and over in the cartridge with his old outdated wood racket looks dessicated because of lack of success and variety in his life. He is at a dead end. Reading the strong word **dessicated** [means a state of dryness or a lack of spirit], note the above *dehydrated and ersatz as TV*. Dry and repetitive TV or TP. It could be and probably is, after all, the same picture just repeating. With this repetitive mental training, you can sleep with your eyes open since you do not see anything new. Notice the fluid flow of Wallace's prose that describes this repetition. Contrast this mental programming with the discretion Hal still retains as to his clothes.

We learn that the parents of the one of the boys in Hal's Big Buddy group [Ingersoll] started a grocery delivery service based on the TP; you can order the groceries delivered and don't even have to get human interaction at the store. Just call up every time. We deliver. Uber Eats.

The discussion in Hal's group morphs to the subject of the future, in the Show [for others] or a scholarship for college. With Tolstoy in the reader's mind, Hal notes that they all bitch after exercises but they all bitch *together* and are unhappy for the same reasons. Hal notes wisely that under the ETA challenge system everyone is food for the others and that this is the ETA meaning of individual, not identity we note. Exposed to this thinking, one young boy says he misses his dog, apparently his closest friend in his family, the one with unconditional love. Hal notes the constantly revised standings at the Academy are based on dominance, not on togetherness; we know where we stand versus everyone else. All based on inequality and separateness. The experience of the tooth-oriented, wolf-like alpha seeking hierarchies. Hal asks how they can be friends. Instead they are lonely. He explains that their only togetherness is the one the school has given them, a common enemy, something they all can hate while gearing them up for matches. With hate at their hearts, the boys criticize each other. Hal instinctively hates Ingersoll.

Note that what Hal tells his buddies is true and useful for life but not for success at ETA, which is where they are.

We are told that some part of Hal's cortex [DMN] is scanning for a reason why the secrecy of his drug habit is as important if not more important than the drug use itself. Maybe as a rationalization it would be as easy to quit as it would be to be social. He is using daily now [getting off]. Secrecy means being alone. He yearns for being alone at the school, even though it in a very real sense is his family. Being lonely in your family group means you seek loneliness.

In John Wayne's group, the TP is not turned on. Wayne talks about temperament needed to develop for the Show. He teaches that progress comes in plateaux [remember Steeply and Marathe on the plateau before Tucson] not evenly.

In Pemulis' group, they are gambling with Pemulis as the house at \$5 per throw over remembering where a card is in a group of three [find the identity]. Pemulis distracts them by showing

his teeth during the shuffle so they lose track of where the individual cards are and have only a 1 in 3 chance while the house has a 2 in 3 chance with each one. At this school they also lose track of their own individuality. For queen and jack read mommy and son. The day's lesson is supposed to be about how to properly brush and floss your teeth. Readers are reminded of the repeated tennis strokes and carnivorous canines. Pemulis needs drug money so he takes from his charges. Just as the school does. Just as Roy Tony does.

Schact leads his group by giving bona fide instruction about how to brush your teeth properly. He talks about down below the gum line where the most pernicious particles breed infection. Readers will be reminded of the unconscious and unhealthy assumptions in the ETA program that Hal has uncovered.

In his Big Brother group Troeltsch talks about repetition [loops], repetition for its own sake **going through the motions**, which pushes the knowledge of the motion down into the unconscious part of your brain, wiring it into the **motherboard**. Then the player's character starts to matter: **focus, self-consciousness, the chattering head, the cackling voice, the choking-issue . . . doubts . . .** This may remind you of the addict trying to quit .

In his group Truck Jr. from Orinda Ca answers a question about morality in player tennis line calls, **kertwanging**. And what to do if you have to fart during a match. If you are human.

In his group, Tice says it is about what you have to give and doing something for something larger than yourself, like America. Like Fascism. That is if you want to hang in for the long haul.

Near the end the talk in the various groups is mixed together in the text, giving the reader the idea that all is related.

Hal thinks about limits and rituals and the line between desire and need. A demilitarized zone he is approaching. He feels a tooth twinge. The tooth, the hate tool, the kill tool.

Chapter 20 **MARIO INCANDEENZA'S FIRST AND ONLY EVEN REMOTELY ROMANTIC EXPERIENCE, THUS FAR**

Here we are treated to an expansion in the cadre of people not taking responsibility for their actions. In a test group where gender roles reversed.

Perhaps a ZZ catechism would be helpful:

I use drugs because my father did not love me. It is not my fault.

I sexually assaulted the cheerleader because her short skirt and nice legs made me do it. I couldn't stop myself. It is not my fault.

I Millicent sexually assaulted Mario because his eyelashes made me do it. I couldn't stop myself. My father wore women's clothes in secret. It is not my fault.

As author I described this episode as a romantic experience for Mario and removed the accusations at the end because my editor made me do it. It is not my fault.

While Hal hides for a hit, an absence and hiding made possible by Mario's sympathetic understanding, Mario has a human connection with the 200 kilo female ETA student U.S.S. Millicent Kent. An awkward connection but a connection nonetheless. She is as big as a ship.

Roles are reversed. Millicent is the aggressor and commits sexual assault against Mario, pressing him full body and groping for his penis. We learn of several role oddities in her the Kent

family. Another instance of parental distortion reflected in their children. Assaulted Mario just feels a tickle. No harm done. With her sexual desire assumption turned on, Millicent ignores Mario's lack of sexual interest.

As Hal hides, an Empire Waste Displacement vehicle whistles overhead on its official way north its one blue [remember blue] light visible. Waste predominates the background.

Millicent insists Mario take her deeper into the woods in order to find the tripod she had seen. She has tripod on her mind [Think the human male with three legs]. They talk past each other on the way. She reveals that her true love [desire] is modern dance not tennis and that she went to boarding school to avoid her father, her Old Man who used to perform in front of mirrors in his daughters' dancing clothes.

Millicent attacks Mario because, she says, his eyelashes stimulate her. She digs in his complicated frame and clothing **rooting** for his penis. Trying to remove and unbutton his complicated clothes may remind you of what forced love making must have been like in the ice ages with bear skins and the like. Ticklish Mario starts to laugh and Hal returns directed by the sound of Mario's laughter. Notice the narrator does not describe what happens afterward and why Hal does not ask Mario why he was laughing. The text is quiet at the end, too quiet for what has happened before. Heading back the three of them find the tripod in the forest, as if James had used it to catch Moms in the forest act with a student or her half-brother Charles.

You may sense a conflict between the style of the narration and the events described, sort of like the famous conflict between the same in Nabokov's *Lolita*, another story about an odd couple. The style may be a joke on typical romance novels. Note the difference in tone between the title and the text. And calling it a romance.

Chapter 21 **30 April—Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

Back to Steeply and Marathe who have not left the plateau.

Apropos of a female aggressor in the last chapter, Steeply the aggressor seeking information is dressed as a woman. Apropos of roles reversed, the subject at discussion is whether there is in existence an anti-Entertainment tape which reverses the effects of the lethal cartridge. Which would convince individuals to take responsibility for their actions. Perhaps Wallace's book would do it.

Steeply chides Marathe on his organization's [AFR] selection of Boston for their headquarters, Boston where the lethal cartridge was born. Marathe reminds him it is the closest big city to the border with Canada. Human interaction down below the plateau is heard as a stuck car horn.

Marathe reminds Steeply of his former disguise as a negro. Haitian Steeply corrects. They hear a coyote's call like a high strung dog and a return call like a dog on low voltage [think torture].

Chapter 22 **30 April—Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

Note this seemingly silly chapter. One sentence long. Not separated otherwise from the foregoing report of their conversation.

Several times Marathe called the USA “Your walled nation” or “mured nation.” Mured means chloride and chlorides keep the body healthy by moving fluids in and out of body cells, that is past cell walls. Think of the dumpsters being thrown over the border.

Eclipse

Here we discover why AA teaches both submission to a higher power as well as personal responsibility. By showing the results of acceptance of a higher power but not your own personal responsibility.

First Buddhism, which recommends living the last part of your life on alms from others. That is to say, not responsible for your own sustenance. Second, Christianity’s promise that Jesus died for your sins so you are not responsible. Buddha gets a third party narrator and Christianity a first person voice.

A guru back at ETA is sitting on top of the towel dispenser, his normal position. Named Lyle. He survives by licking sweat off the boys. His tank top in front says *Transcend* and in back *Deus Providebit* [god will provide]. He advises the boys not to try to lift more than their own weight. He sits three feet off the floor, possibly suspended. He goes way back with James Incandenza the founder.

This appears to be a pastiche of the Buddhist religion, the recommended last life segment being living in the forest and begging alms for your bread. In Wallace’s version, living off the sweat or work of others. Here we are literal [always recommended for holy books], Lyle eating others’ sweat. Buddha attained enlightenment at age 35 and Lyle is a ripe old 40 something.

The black haired Lyle may remind you of the Black Lily of the Nile, on three foot stalks like Lyle three feet off the floor. From wikipedia:

The blue-purple flowers make a stunning display atop 3-foot black stalks.

This clumping Lily of the Nile boasts a unique combination of violet-blue flowers and tall black stalks. The showy blooms come on in summer, adding a stunning accent to the garden, container, or cutflower arrangement. A great choice for a larger planter, 'Black Buddha' actually flowers better when its roots are contained. Another benefit of growing this gorgeous Lily of the Nile in a container is that you can bring it indoors for the winter, protecting it from the icy chill of winter.

From Religion Facts:

Black, the absence of color, is most often symbolic of death. It can also represent the darkness of sin and hate.

Black in Christianity

In Christianity, black is the liturgical color for Good Friday, which commemorates the death of Christ. Black can also represent sin, which results in death.

Black in Buddhism

In Buddhism, black signifies the primordial darkness. In the realm where it is dark, because there is no light reflected, there is also a sound which we cannot hear as it is so high on the scale of harmonics that it is inaccessible to the hearing capacity of any physical being. The wonders of creation may be manifested through the gradual slowing down of vibrations. The darkness becomes light, the shadows colors, the colors sound, and sound creates form.

The weight recommendation, not trying to lift more than you weigh, is a joking comment on Buddha's recommendation to get happy by reducing your desires and thereby reducing your disappointments. Trouble comes when you want more than you have [which Wallace transformed to weights]. The more you want the more you despair and lose control. The more you want drugs the more you have lost control.

In the next section, which with Wallace we know will be about religion as well but with a difference suggested by the space dividing them, we visit Christianity, at least certain aspects of Christianity selected by Wallace. We witness through language very much attuned to the Bostonian characters in question [think local Jesus and Aramaic] the story of the birth of the Christ child on Christmas eve. We behold the repetitive drug and robbery life of the trinity of **yourstruly** [never identified but no doubt each of us for sure], **C** and **Poor Tony**. C or Christ or Mr. Not To Be Denied [come to the Father only through me] takes it by way of Drano [think clean out] for the sins of others [namely Tony] against Dr. Wo [woe or evil] the human chemist. The trinity of characters oscillate from drugs and robbery, drugs and robbery, namely short lived spiritual spikes and sins, taking from others. Not taking responsibility for their actions in either case.

Yourstruly speaks the local, the uneducated dialect. See wikipedia for Jesus speaking Aramaic:

It is generally agreed by historians that Jesus and his disciples primarily spoke Aramaic (Jewish Palestinian Aramaic), the common language of Judea in the first century AD, most likely a Galilean dialect distinguishable from that of Jerusalem.^[1] The villages of Nazareth and Capernaum in Galilee, where Jesus spent most of his time, were Aramaic-speaking communities.^[2] It is also likely that Jesus knew enough Koine Greek to converse with those not native to Palestine, and it is also possible that Jesus knew some Hebrew for religious purposes.^{[3][4][5]}

For our personal responsibility theme, remember that Jesus took responsibility for himself as well as the sins of all of us. Sins like drug use give only temporary pleasure. Our three sinners hang out at Harvard Squar [sic], their Galilee.

Now get ready for **Poor Tony** the fag in drag [Gal in Galilee] complete with a snake boa and long sentences and a long paragraph, as in syntax stuck in the repetitive drug and robbery life. They hang out behind the public library housing wisdom of mankind and a heater exhaust. Rob and use, rob and use. Sentences and paragraphs get longer and longer to mark the repetitive life. These materials seem to float on long yin sentences that do not come to rest. Notice distorted grammar and spelling and street slang as if the characters are writing it.. A **cheeseater**, like **Poor Tony**, is one who gives blow jobs [just to males] to support himself. No Me Too.

An unidentified **yourstruly** [his nearly extinguished identity does not support an "I" narrator], **C** and **Poor Tony** [dressed as a woman] report on that day, what they "crewed" by theft in the Boston amniotic waters of dependency on others. They are truly fishers of men. In the morning they are always drug use sick but are able to steal some items from a Harvard Square sale.

Tony meets an old acquaintance and pretends he will give him a free blow job so they all three get in the acquaintance's car where they **lift** more, enough for drugs for the day, and rough up and cut off the acquaintance's ear [remember the Roman guard]. The Jewish Temple comes in here somewhere. With the stolen funds, they buy [**score**] drugs from Roy Tony at the projects which they take to the library rest room. They steal NyQuil in the drug store and a book bag from a young student. They meet up with a whore they know one Kely [sic] Vinoy working by the Cheap-O record store [play it again ha ha] who tells them about a mutual acquaintance being tested for the AID's virus. The word is out warning about using the pimp Stokely Darkstar's drug equipment [**works**].

They roll an old man drunk from a bar visit [think Jewish Temple] for \$400 plus. Poor Tony wants to save some for later but the others want to spend it immediately in Chinatown on Dr. Wo's good stuff. After the subway, they stiff a cab for a two block ride. Use and rob.

After a long time in preparation, Dr. Wo gives them drugs in a newspaper cover [short term attraction of current events versus the permanent ones] and asks about Poor Tony, for whom Dr. Wo has an active grudge. In retribution for Poor Tony, Dr. Wo puts Drano in each of the three drug portions, and to his mortal detriment C can't wait and goes first. Dying with poison in and poison being barfed out with blood. The others waited to see what happened to C and can't decide whether the rest of the drugs are safe.

The chapter ends thus with **yourstruly** speaking:

And it took yrstruly two days of Kicking the Bird [cold turkey] in the hall out side my Mumsters' apartment that for payback she locked the door before I yrstruly can get in a Detox to atleast cop some methedoan and get three squars to stay down in yrstruly to start to theorize on what to try and do after I could standingup straight and walk upright again once more.

We feel the same way about this syntax. Stand up straight and walk upright, leave childhood behind. Yourstruly relies on others for his food. Methodist method for methadone.

Chapter 23 **3 November Y.D.A.U.** [2009]

Back to Hal at ETA. He is high and receives a phone call from Orin. Hal starts wondering about himself, his floating thoughts not tied to the conversation.

To set the moral stage, a man has fallen down on the pavement in Phoenix and no one tries to help him. No one feels personal responsibility for another human.

Orin's conversation floats and he chides Hal for masturbating, an odd form of personal responsibility. Until he asks Hal what he knows about the Canadian separatist movement. Orin has apparently had a visit.

Then to Ennet Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, started by an anonymous ex-con recovering addict helped by AA. He started EDA as the result of a vision in the shower [more self treatment]. He wanted to share the rapture of being alive and sober with others. EDA leases from the federal Veterans Administration a building right next to ETA, just down the hill but related by proximity. The anonymous founder taught the AA doctrine of surrender, surrender to others. Don't stay in yourself. Talk to others, listen to them. Try their advice. But you and you alone are responsible for what you do. EDA provides 9 months live in care for 22 patients. Note the 9 month time frame of dependent treatment.

The founder initially required would-be patients to bite rocks to show the level of their desire to join ETA. God, the rock of Israel. Feldspar is mentioned, the most common rock on earth, one

pointedly without ore. The founder's death in the year of 2007 Yushitsu [read you shit you] TP **motherboard replacement** goes unremarked in Boston outside the AA community.

The section involving the claim for worker's compensation involves trying to lift something heavier than yourself. A pulley is supposed to help. The up and down with the barrel may remind the reader of using drugs. Of an endless loop. The claimant for worker's comp was apparently drunk when this happened.

Reading Hal's school paper on TV heroes, you may conclude a healthy hero of action suggests one with identity and a hero of reaction suggests a drug user. Hal predicts the next hero will **the hero of non-action, the catatonic hero, the one beyond calm, divorced from all stimulus, carried here and there across sets by burly extras whose blood sings with retrograde amines.**

The first paragraph of Hal's paper seems to unnecessarily repeat the program location:

Chief Steve McGarrett of "Hawaii Five-O" and Captain Frank Furillo of "Hill Street Blues" are useful for seeing how our North American idea of the hero changed from the B.S. 1970 era of "Hawaii Five-O" to the B.S. 1980's era of "Hill Street Blues."

It was not necessary to repeat the names of the programs at the end of the sentence. The year change would do. This is an indication that at this time the family context was too important for Hal's development as an individual. His psychological status then affected his writing. He is still "homing," looking for home, a different meaning than that Hal uses to describe what **the classic hero of modern action does.** Homing like a homing pigeon.

The McGarrett character we learn operates pretty much alone, as does our addict. He is not weighed down by **Administrative . . . chores, or by females, or friends, or emotions . . .** described by Hal as **mere diverting clutter.** By contrast Captain Furillo of Hill Street Blues is a hero of **reaction** dealing with others pursuing the same goals, what Hal calls **petty distractions.** His relations with his current female are described as coming too soon, for which she suggests stress counseling. Notice the difference in offices, one close to others the other off putting.

Reading the end of the paper we conclude that indeed his expectation of the catatonic hero coming next does arise from the rest of the paper, despite what the narrator said. Only a teacher who did not understand would come to the opposite conclusion. Hal traces the track of the change from fabled cowboy riding alone represented by McGarrett to the post-modern heroic part of the herd represented by Furillo. This is, of course, in Wallace's book the wrong aspect of the change to concentrate on.

Next we learn from an all capitalized newspaper type lead in that B.S.S.'s agent Steeply disguised as Helen Steeply the journalist is doing an article on punter Orin Incandenza. This as cover for seeking information about the separatist movement in Canada. The lead in connects her article to Wallace's story.

Helen had already talked to Orin before he made the call mentioned in the first section of this chapter. The title tells us this is 4 years after James committed suicide [he toasted in 2005]. This section is the only article she had written before that, in *Moment Magazine* [note Moment not the lasting truisms] about an artificial heart which was carried in and operated inside a purse, not inside the body. [The reader may think her heart is in her purse, her material possessions]. The journalism is timid, some might say and attribute the weakness to lack of full identity. After being torn from her arms by a purse snatching transvestite in Cambridge's Harvard Square [Poor Tony], she shouted out literally **she stole**

my heart, stop her. The destroyed mechanism was found later in the public library making Poor Tony the suspect.

Next is a report on terrorist and separatist groups adverse to ONAN. With the kind of thin thinking usually employed by governments in cases like this, the only information is communicated with the Intensional method, by abbreviations of status without regard to some more sophisticated differences.

Next without intermediate connecting material is a long all cap report about the rapid rise and sudden fall of video telephony [think FaceTime]. This report covers only the bare facts about its popularity and the winners and losers in investment, not the details of human psychology that funded the change.

The next material, not separated by a starting indent, does just that. In a **trivalent nutshell**, trivalent meaning in chemistry the combining power of three. Note for our continuing themes the reference to **self-obliterating logic** and **it's like it was so emotionally complex that it could be countenanced only in the context of its loss**. The division of the material under three 1 2 3 bullet points seems to be unnecessary division and control and points again to separation.

With the old phone, the one person speaking assumed that the other person on the line was paying full attention to the caller, an assumption bolstered by the focused sound of the ear piece, even though the caller in actuality was not giving his or her full attention. The use of video phones broke down those assumptions and introduced the issue of "how do I look." Market demand produced masks and doctored photos receiving units. Eventually the you can't see me old phone returned.

This is a charming story of how egos got in the way of communication by phone, one form of human interaction, not even interfacing personally. Caring about other people's opinion of you is a sign of lack of identity.

The narrator notes that the developments of the phone pursued the closed loop of economic development. The snake again.

Chapter 24 [Eclipse] [October 2009]

For months the entrepreneurs Pemulis and Axford have collected drug free or clean urine from younger students for sale in connection with the regular four times a year urine test of all junior tennis players above a certain ranking. Notice this is a form of inauthentic identity, fake urine identity.

Selling the clean urine at the time of the test, the entrepreneurs use the language of street or stadium vendors. The narrator uses the language of business; quarterly sales breakdown and worker psychology and pep talk. Like good capitalists, they do not take personal responsibility for what they are selling.

Mario takes movies of the urine test event and scrambles the faces in order not to create a record of cheating the urine test. Another distortion of identity.

We learn the youthful history of Pemulis, from the nearby and poor section of Allston, Ma. When he was an inner city tennis phenomenon, his parents tried to sell all his future earnings for up-front cash. No doubt for their family habit. Now he uses and sells recreational drugs to many members of the junior-tournament-circuit market. Fully identified and accepting of himself, Mario does not see the point of using drugs. If anyone has reason to feel sorry for himself, it is Mario.

Pemulis barely gets by his Grammars even with Hal's help because his interest is in math and hard sciences. He holds the James O. Incandenza Geometrical Optics Scholarship, which allows him

and him alone to use the late director's equipment, some of which he uses for his other unrelated enterprises.

Hal's recent rise in tennis is explored, his evaluation by others, a disease Mario would never imagine. Mario accepts the way things unfold like a good Buddhist.

Pemulis [notice the order of subjects] is paranoid about getting caught dealing. He even plans entrapment phone calls. Those destroyers of choices and identity.

Chapter 25 [Eclipse] Winter B.S. 1960—Tucson Az

Here we are way back in time in the boyhood life of James Incadenza, founder of ETA and Hal's father. James with his father [Hal's grandfather], his father dictating to James when he was 10 and getting ready for his first tennis experience. Poor parenting, the parental hierarchal stamp and distorter of identity.

The narrator is third party, so it is as if we overhear the conversation as a father overseas his son. We have to plough through a ten page paragraph indicating father's speeches never stopped.

We are given witness to Hal's grandfather ["GF"] telling his son Jim [Hal's father] about playing tennis, a sport GF had apparently chosen when young and enjoyed all through his body to the bottom of his sneakers. This was GF's identity since all his parts enjoyed the ride. While playing tennis GF overhears his father [Hal's great grandfather] tell a client his [GGF's] son [GF] is good but will never be great. This is in order to soften the disappointment that the client's son is losing to GF Incadenza. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy as GF hears this being said by his own father and falls to his knees on the way to the net. GF cashes in his son's knees for additional business from the client.

By contrast, James' father trying his best to right the wrong his father committed on him tells his son James [Hal's father] that he will be great and assumes James will follow this prediction lock step.

While one paternal message is you will not be great and the other is you will be great, they both are destructive, destructive of the knees of identity. The knees that bow.

The first instruction subject is opening a door, which may remind you of life's adventures. He James learns of his mother's part in a movie starring Marlon Brando, another form of opening. Brando the dominator a moody infant. Totally immersed in his body with assurance that everything will be done for you.

As part of his first tennis lesson, GF forecasts his son's future tennis victory over dad as the son obliterating the father, as in the cave totem days. He makes James nervous with his prediction that he Jim will be great. He describes the tennis ball as without character, subject to others. Ten year old Jim is quite awkward, at 5'11." He is, at this point, also without character. And unlike the tennis ball, without fuzz on his chin.

What is wrong is that GF Dad insists on his view, instead of giving it as a possibility for his son to consider. He does not present other possible views. He GF would shape and stamp James' identity so James can play the role he GF was denied. He is more interested in stamping his son's outlook than helping him develop himself along the lines of his own identity. He even discourages his acceptance of his mother's views.

Jim is carrying a book about Refractive Indices [the effect of a medium on the speed of light], which represents his own personal interests. Dad recommends he put it down since it is flat. Jim the precocious scientist son is being refracted, bent and slowed down, by his father who wants him to be a tennis player and a celebrity. Jim begins to cry and his father [GF] chides him for being too sensitive. GF has his flask with him for his own sensitive moments. Another inheritance in the Incadenza family.

GF Dad also announces he is going back to LA for another attempt at the big screen and leaving their trailer park behind. GF Dad is focused on himself.

The patent is to be handed down, under the influence. Notice GF Dad dominates the conversation as dictation and Jim says nothing. Notice the long long explanation. And the reference to ether, a space filling substance or field.

Chapter 26 **4 November Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

A third party narrator follows Pemulis on his drug supply run. It features hats with detachable lining, for susceptible identities. Notice all the descriptions of the weather and surroundings which are immaterial to the main point of the chapter, buying drugs. Pemulis studies drugs on line, medical posts on MEDCOM monographs.

We are treated to a lesson on DMZ, which is derived from a mold that grows on another mold, an addition to our visions of lack of independent identity. It is referred to in “some metro Boston chemical circles as Madame Psychosis,” after an early morning cult radio personality. Disembodied. At the knees.

Pemulis calls Hal, his best customer, who using code orders marijuana.

Chapter 27 Long Title about **Tennis and the Feral Prodigy**

This is a film narrated by Hal and supposedly written by Mario which won a honorable mention in an Interlace young filmmakers competition [suspect nepotism]. Notice this film carries the theme of instruction. Here is how to.

Notice how the title attempts to commandeer the subject matter.

The text of the chapter is the sound track of the movie: its structure is based on instruction-- Here is how ... More direction and hierarchy. The subjects are the personal experiences of students at ETA, particularly Hal under his father and mother. The racquet becomes your friend as does the racket.

Feral is wild but descended from a domesticated animal. Ask yourself who is a feral prodigy. Who is about to be independent. First we have **A feral and flux-ridden state with respect to talent. Talent’s unconscious exercise becomes a way to escape yourself, a long waking dream of pure play.** Playing in tournaments **to justify your seed.** Think inheritance for **seed.**

Feral would be independent.

We now connect Hal’s ankle injury with his father’s knee injuries.

The first How to is **Here is how to put on a big red tent of a shirt that has ETA across the chest in gray.** The subject here is personal identification, you as a student of ETA. The identification does not fit well as the shirt is too big. You need to fill it out.

Here is how to treat your injured ankle so you don’t notice it, the state of your body. Here is how to practice hitting serves to no one, dead balls to no one. No interaction. Lean forward to pick up keys after serving as practice for follow through but don’t go anywhere.

Chapter 28 . . . **4 November Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

Again the title attempts to commandeer the subject matter. These are transcripts of interviews by the executive director head of Ennet House rehabilitation with various residents during interview hours, always scheduled from 1300 to 1500. Even for emergencies.

Note how believable the prose is. Notice the drug withdrawal induced overreactions by the residents to irritation with aspects of human interaction. Note the reduced identities. Note the writer of the transcript is in control of what is recorded. Hierarchy of history.

In the first interview with Nell, a female resident of Ennet House who apparently stabbed another resident [apparently female] with a fork because that resident drummed her fingers on the table in an irritating way. The perp resident seems to take responsibility but hopes to keep her overnight privileges. She does not take responsibility for the seriousness of the attack.

The second resident, apparently a lawyer, is asked if he is an alcoholic and he answers by asking for a definition of alcoholic in a way to avoid giving the answer. He calls the interviewer young lady.

The third is the stabbing victim of the first interview, who had to be taken to the hospital by Gately. She asks that the perp be expelled from Ennet since she can't learn how to live in a community and give and take.

The fourth is a walk-on who wonders if there is a special program for wanting to hang yourself.

The fifth wonders about the philosophy of acknowledging powerlessness before the group. Vermin are mentioned, apparently in Ennet.

Next is a vision of something in the toilet that won't go away. Next is about stolen pudding, stolen by another resident. Next asks why she can't stop using if she wants to [notice the ambiguity about the mixed desires of using and not using].

The next subject is a report on a harelip drug dealer that the resident stayed with before Ennet. This is the snake keeper with the deformed lip, a human image of the Ouroboros. For their rent the resident and his girlfriend fed mice to the harelip's snakes. And were "wasted" 90% of the time. The snake keeper screwed chickens [bigger eggs?]. The male narrator tells about losing his girlfriend Mildred and their 3 year old child Harriet to a male in the shelter who said he had a ranch in New Jersey [of all unlikely places for a ranch]. He presents this experience as reason enough to get "high." High is low.

Next is a fancy wordsmith who denies alcoholism is a disease and demands to know the meaning of this group recommended prayer asking to be released. Next is a resident who claims to be fine despite her teeth grinding and eyebrow tic. Next claims to be trying to get a job and can't be kicked out for the **moth** [probably should be month]. Next is threatened with expulsion for using mouthwash, 2% alcohol. Misdemeanor gargling.

These reports record from within lock-up at Ennet the cries of smothered identity, of the loss of personal control, of the loss of personal responsibility, of the loss of choice. The last cry is

First just let me say one thing.

Just let me talk.

Chapter 29 Eclipse **Late October Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment** [2009]

An unknown father is telling his son about Orin's punts, the longest of 73 yards with 8.3 seconds average hang time. This father tells while quickly drinking beers. Father has a harelip, so we add him to the Ouroboros group. Harelip uses w where r is called for. He compares the sound of Orin's punt to a bomb going off.

Note the son declines summer camp so he will not lose television time. He loses time with others. Father's conversation does not receive any response. Remember punts are a form of giving up, giving up earning a first down and more plays for a score. The son is giving up on his own identity by giving up socialization at summer camp. Saves Dad the expense.

Next is unrelated information about Madam Psychosis's radio show at MIT called "Those Were the Legends that Formerly Were." We learn that the first paragraph is a reading devised by an MIT student for fun, with the background that the dad admired some sports figure compared to his book-oriented geek son. The broadcast room is several levels down under, where Madame Psychosis is waiting beyond her curtains. She is in the Id, not the I would.

So let us stop there and invite you to finish the book. You have had a look at the roots. Now back to the flowers. The Van Gogh flowers that are stressed and depressed.

Appendix One

From wikipedia:

2001: A Space Odyssey (film/novel)[\[edit\]](#)

HAL became operational in [Urbana, Illinois](#), at the HAL Plant (the [University of Illinois' Coordinated Science Laboratory](#), where the [ILLIAC](#) computers were built). The film says this occurred in 1992, while the book gives 1997 as HAL's birth year.^[2]

In *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), HAL is initially considered a dependable member of the crew, maintaining ship functions and engaging genially with its human crew-mates on an equal footing. As a recreational activity, [Frank Poole](#) plays chess [against HAL](#). In the film, the artificial intelligence is shown to triumph easily. However, as time progresses, HAL begins to malfunction in subtle ways and, as a result, the decision is made to shut down HAL in order to prevent more serious malfunctions. The sequence of events and manner in which HAL is shut down differs between the novel and film versions of the story. In the aforementioned game of chess HAL makes minor and undetected mistakes in his analysis, a possible foreshadowing to HAL's malfunctioning.

In the film, astronauts [David Bowman](#) and Frank Poole consider disconnecting HAL's [cognitive](#) circuits when he appears to be mistaken in reporting the presence of a fault in the spacecraft's communications antenna. They attempt to conceal what they are saying, but are unaware that HAL can [read their lips](#). Faced with the prospect of disconnection, HAL decides to kill the astronauts in order to protect and continue its programmed directives. HAL uses one of the *Discovery's* EVA pods to kill Poole while he is repairing the ship. When Bowman, sans space helmet, uses another pod to attempt to rescue Poole, HAL locks him out of the ship, then disconnects the life support systems of the other hibernating crew members. Bowman circumvents HAL's control, entering the ship by manually opening an emergency airlock with his service pod's clamps, detaching the pod door via its explosive bolts. Bowman jumps across empty space, reenters *Discovery*, and quickly re-pressurizes the airlock.

While HAL's motivations are ambiguous in the film, the novel explains that the computer is unable to resolve a conflict between his general mission to relay information accurately, and orders specific to the mission requiring that he withhold from Bowman and Poole the true purpose of the mission. (This withholding is considered essential after the findings of a psychological experiment, Project [Barsoom](#), where humans were made to believe that there had been alien contact. In every person tested, a deep-seated [xenophobia](#) was revealed, which was unknowingly replicated in HAL's constructed personality. [Mission Control](#) did not want the crew of *Discovery* to have their thinking compromised by the knowledge that alien contact was already real.) With the crew dead, HAL reasons, he would not need to lie to them.

In the novel, the orders to disconnect HAL come from Dave and Frank's superiors on Earth. After Frank is killed while attempting to repair the communications antenna he is pulled away into deep space using the safety tether which is still attached to both the pod and Frank Poole's spacesuit. Dave begins to revive his hibernating crew mates, but is foiled when HAL vents the ship's atmosphere into the vacuum of space, killing the awakening crew members and almost killing Bowman, who is only narrowly saved when he finds his way to an emergency chamber which has its own oxygen supply and a spare space suit inside.

In both versions, Bowman then proceeds to shut down the machine. In the film, HAL's central core is depicted as a crawlspace full of brightly lit computer modules mounted in arrays from which they can be inserted or removed. Bowman shuts down HAL by removing modules from service one by one; as he does so, HAL's consciousness degrades. HAL finally reverts to material that was programmed into him early in his memory, including announcing the date he became operational as 12 January 1992 (in the novel, 1997). When HAL's logic is completely gone, he begins singing the song "[Daisy](#)

[Bell](#)" (in actuality, the first song sung by a computer, which Clarke had earlier observed at a [text-to-speech](#) demonstration).^{[3][4][5]} HAL's final act of any significance is to prematurely play a prerecorded message from Mission Control which reveals the true reasons for the mission to Jupiter.

Appendix Two The Screwtape Letters from wikipedia:

The Screwtape Letters comprises 31 letters written by a senior demon named [Screwtape](#) to his nephew, Wormwood (named after [a star](#) in [Revelation](#)), a younger and less experienced demon, charged with guiding a man (called "the patient") toward "Our Father Below" ([Devil](#) / [Satan](#)) from "the Enemy" ([Jesus](#)).

After the second letter, the Patient converts to [Christianity](#), and Wormwood is chastised for allowing this. A striking contrast is formed between Wormwood and Screwtape during the rest of the book, wherein Wormwood is depicted through Screwtape's letters as anxious to tempt his patient into extravagantly wicked and deplorable sins, often recklessly, while Screwtape takes a more subtle stance, as in Letter XII wherein he remarks: "... the safest road to hell is the gradual one – the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts".

In Letter VIII, Screwtape explains to his protégé the different purposes that God and the devils have for the human race: "We want cattle who can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons". With this end in mind, Screwtape urges Wormwood in Letter VI to promote passivity and irresponsibility in the Patient: "(God) wants men to be concerned with what they do; our business is to keep them thinking about what will happen to them".

With his own views on [theology](#), Lewis goes on to describe and discuss [sex](#), [love](#), [pride](#), [gluttony](#), and [war](#) in successive letters. Lewis, an [Oxford](#) and [Cambridge scholar](#) himself, suggests in his work that even [intellectuals](#) are not impervious to the influence of such demons, especially during complacent acceptance of the "[Historical Point of View](#)" (Letter XXVII).

In Letter XXII, after several attempts to find a licentious woman for the Patient "to promote a useful marriage", and after Screwtape's narrowly avoiding a painful punishment for having divulged to Wormwood God's genuine love for humanity (about which Wormwood had promptly informed the Infernal authorities), Screwtape notes that the Patient has fallen in love with a Christian girl and through her and her family a very Christian way of life. Toward the end of this letter, in his anger Screwtape becomes a large centipede, mimicking a similar transformation in Book X of *Paradise Lost*, wherein the demons are changed into snakes. Later in the correspondence, it is revealed that the young man may be placed in harm's way by his possibly [civil defence](#) duties (it is stated in an earlier letter that he is eligible for military service, but it is never actually confirmed that he was indeed called up). While Wormwood is delighted at this and by the war in general, Screwtape admonishes Wormwood to keep the Patient safe, in hopes that they can compromise his faith over a long lifetime.

In the last letter, the Patient has been killed during a [World War II air raid](#) and has gone to [Heaven](#), and for his ultimate failure Wormwood is doomed to suffer the consumption of his spiritual essence by the other demons, especially by Screwtape himself. Screwtape responds to Wormwood's final letter by saying that he may expect as little assistance as Screwtape would expect from Wormwood were their situations reversed ("My love for you and your love for me are as alike as two peas ... The only difference is that I am the stronger."), mimicking the situation where Wormwood himself informed on his uncle to the Infernal Police for Infernal [Heresy](#) (making a religiously positive remark that would offend Satan).