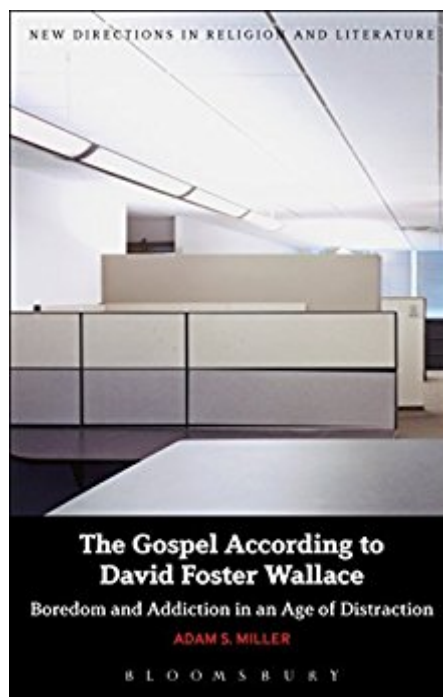


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# The Gospel According To David Foster Wallace: Boredom And Addiction In An Age Of Distraction (New Directions In Religion And Literature)



## Synopsis

The Gospel According to David Foster Wallace is the first book to explore key religious themes - from boredom to addiction, and distraction - in the work of one of America's most celebrated contemporary novelists. In a series of short, topic-focussed chapters, the book joins a selection of key scenes from Wallace's novels *Infinite Jest* and *The Pale King* with clear explanations of how they contribute to his overall account of what it means to be a human being in the 21st century. Adam Miller explores how Wallace's work masterfully investigates the nature of first-world boredom and shows, in the process, how easy it is to get addicted to distraction (chemical, electronic, or otherwise). Implicitly critiquing, excising, and repurposing elements of AA's Twelve Step program, Wallace suggests that the practice of prayer (regardless of belief in God), the patient application of attention to things that seem ordinary and boring, and the internalization of clichés may be the antidote to much of what ails us in the 21st century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Can being bored save your soul? David Foster Wallace thinks it might, and Adam Miller is his prophet. Drawing from passages and themes in Wallace's major fiction and essays, Miller's book

lays out how Wallace diagnoses the sickness of modern society: that drugs, entertainment, television--maybe even religion?--distract us from the loneliness we feel by empowering the running monologue in our head until it has drowned out our connection with our body and the bodily world we live in. The more we indulge that voice, the louder it becomes, and the more our head becomes detached from its surroundings. Wallace's solution, Miller suggests, is a sort of spiritual detox "starving the beast that resides in our heads by refusing to supply it with distractions. You stop listening to your head and start paying attention to the body. And as you patiently and persistently face the real [the audience in your head gets bored and leaves. Once this happens, the real action of the play can begin. Once life is no longer conducted as an entertaining diversion for the head, the body is free to feel, think, and act. • Wallace suggests that if we reconnect with the body by paying close attention to the most tedious thing you can find in waves, a boredom like you've never known will wash over you and just about kill you. • Ride these out," he continues, "and it's like stepping from black and white into color. Like water after days in the desert. Constant bliss in every atom. • Boredom forces us to admit that we're not the center of the universe, and it forces us to step outside of our head and get in touch with the world directly in front of us--what Miller sees as the essence of "religion.

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