

Bad Thing, It, System, Substance.
Alcuni modi per dire il dolore
in David Foster Wallace

CHIARA SCARLATO

Università degli Studi G. d'Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara

Abstract

Bad Thing, It, System, Substance. How to say Pain in David Foster Wallace

The present paper aims to provide a framework to contextualize the concept of pain, as discussed by David Foster Wallace in his fiction. In order to do so, I analyze four Wallacian expressions (Bad Thing, It, Substance, and System) and contend the writer does in fact fictionalize "pain". Recognizing pain as a relevant theme explored by Wallace in fiction and non-fiction writings, may prove useful in evaluating how this specific concept has changed over the years. Seen from this perspective Wallace's oeuvre looks like a deep system in which each character appears connected to the other in a complex set of interrelationships. As a consequence the role of the reader is not only focussed on the reception of the text, but also on the construction of that peculiar literary network reaching far beyond the limits of a single work.

Keywords: David Foster Wallace; literary criticism; pain.