

[PDF] Everything And More: A Compact History Of Infinity (Great Discoveries)

David Foster Wallace - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Everything and More: A Compac
Author: David Foster Wallace
Released: 2003-10-17
Language:
Pages: 336
ISBN: 0393003388
ISBN13: 978-0393003383
ASIN: 0393003388



[CLICK HERE FOR DOWNLOAD](#)

pdf, mobi, epub, azw, kindle

Description:

Before discussing the merits of David Foster Wallace's *Everything and More: A Compact History of Infinity*, it is essential to define what the book is *not*. This volume in the "Great Discoveries" series is not a history of the personalities and social conditions that led to the "discovery" of infinity. Nor is it a narrative fixated on the cultish fear of--and obsession with--the infinite that has seemingly driven mathematicians insane over the centuries. Rather, *Everything and More* is a surprisingly rigorous march through the 2000 plus years of mathematical research that began with Aristotle; continued through Galileo, Isaac Newton, G.W. Leibniz, Karl Weierstrass, and J.W.R. Dedekind; and culminated in Georg Cantor and his Set Theory. The task Wallace (author of the bestseller *Infinite Jest* and other fiction) has set himself is enormously challenging: without radically compromising the complexity of the philosophy, metaphysics, or mathematics that underlies the evolving concept of infinity, present

the material to a lay audience in a manner that is entertaining. To propel his narrative, Wallace even develops a style that mirrors the mathematical language he probes. One difficulty in his focus on concepts and not a strict human chronology, though, is that his structure is dependent on frequent digressions (especially early on). Patience is required. Wallace demands that his reader walk through the equations, study the graphs and charts, and relearn college-level concepts to follow along on the exploration. Indeed, after one wrenching dip into Zeno's paradoxes, Wallace spouts at his imagined complaining audience: "Deal." But the book should be deemed a success. If one grants him the attention he requires, Wallace has made the trip richly rewarding. --Patrick O'Kelley

From Publishers Weekly The subject of infinity would probably strike most readers familiar with Wallace as perfectly suited to his recursive style, and this book is as weird and wonderful as you'd expect. There are footnotes galore, frequently prefaced by the acronym IYI ("If You're Interested"), which can signal either pure digression or the first hint of an idea more fully developed in later chapters. Among other textual idiosyncrasies is the constant use of the lemniscate instead of the word "infinity," emphasizing that this is "not just an incredibly, unbelievably enormous number" but an abstraction beyond what we normally conceive of when we contemplate numbers. Abstraction is one of Wallace's main themes, particularly how the mathematics of infinity goes squarely against our instinct to avoid abstract thought. The ancient Greeks couldn't handle infinity, he points out, because they loathed abstraction. Later mathematicians fared better, and though the emphasis is on Georg Cantor, all the milestones are treated in turn. Wallace appreciates that infinity can be a "skullclutcher," and though the book isn't exactly easy going, he guides readers through the math gently, including emergency glossaries when necessary. He has an obvious enthusiasm for the subject, inspired by a high school teacher whose presence is felt at irregular intervals. Had he not pursued a career in literary fiction, it's not difficult to imagine Wallace as a historian of science, producing quirky and challenging volumes such as this every few years.

Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

- Title: Everything and More: A Compact History of Infinity (Great Discoveries)
 - Author: David Foster Wallace
 - Released: 2003-10-17
 - Language:
 - Pages: 336
 - ISBN: 0393003388
 - ISBN13: 978-0393003383
 - ASIN: 0393003388
-

