

Little, Brown and Company:

A Preliminary Inventory of Its David Foster Wallace Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Little, Brown and Company
Title:	Little, Brown and Company Collection of David Foster Wallace
Dates:	1987-2008
Extent:	5 document boxes (2.1 linear feet) and 40 electronic files (3.2 MB)
Abstract:	The Little, Brown and Company Collection of David Foster Wallace contains the files of Michael Pietsch, David Foster Wallace's Little, Brown editor from <i>Infinite Jest</i> (1996) to <i>The Pale King</i> (2011).
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-5274
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research. To request access to electronic files, please email Reference .
Restrictions on Use:	Certain restrictions apply to the use of electronic files. Researchers must agree to the Materials Use Policy for Electronic Files before accessing them. Original computer disks and forensic disk images are restricted. Copying electronic files, including screenshots and printouts, is not permitted.

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Gift, 2012 (2012-03-008-G)
Processed by:	Stephen Cooper, 2012 Born digital materials processed, arranged, and described by Chance Adams and Brenna Edwards, 2015-2022.
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Scope and Contents

The Little, Brown and Company Collection of David Foster Wallace contains the files of Michael Pietsch, David Foster Wallace's Little, Brown editor from *Infinite Jest* (1996) to *The Pale King* (2011). The collection contains only a single, unmarked excerpt from *The Pale King* however, with the majority of these materials residing in the David Foster Wallace Papers at the Ransom Center.

Materials in the collection include personal and professional correspondence between Wallace and Pietsch as well as between Pietsch and publishing staff; copy editing files containing manuscript transmittal and design checklists, design proofs, publicity photographs, style sheets, and other items related to book production and promotion; many unmarked and slightly-marked drafts of Wallace pieces sent for Pietsch's review; Pietsch's handwritten reading notes; a Little, Brown author's questionnaire related to *Infinite Jest*; and editing stickies from drafts of various works.

The collection is organized in a single series: Series I. Little, Brown Files. The materials remain grouped as they arrived at the Ransom Center, with the original file names intact and only minor organizational changes made such as perfecting the chronological arrangement of correspondence, for example.

A highlight of the collection is the correspondence of Wallace and Pietsch. Beginning in late 1987, their letters document a growing friendship, mainly through discussion of contemporary literature, and in 1992 the start of a strong professional relationship after Bonnie Nadell sent a partial manuscript of *Infinite Jest* to Pietsch. Their correspondence also reveals Wallace's attention to detail through letters containing, for example, five pages of "explanatory notes and helpful design suggestions," a sixteen page response in which he agrees to cut or change over 150 endnotes, and a six-point explanation and defense for those copious endnotes. Overall the correspondence shows Wallace's struggle both producing work and through the editing processes of cutting and revising his writing. A letter also reveals that Pietsch kept no drafts of edited manuscripts, explaining the reason for the mostly unmarked drafts in the collection and the disjointed editing stickies.

Related Material

Additional Wallace materials at the Ransom Center are located in the David Foster Wallace Papers, the David Foster Wallace Collection, the Bonnie Nadell Collection of David Foster Wallace, the Steven Moore Collection of David Foster Wallace, the Don DeLillo Papers, and the James Linville *Paris Review* Collection.

Separated Material

Five 3.5" floppy disks are cataloged separately and housed with the Ransom Center Electronic Records Collection.

Index Terms

Correspondents

Franzen, Jonathan
Howard, Gerald
Moore, Steven, 1951-
Morrow, Bradford
Nadell, Bonnie
Pietsch, Michael, 1957-
Powers, Richard
Richard, Mark
Wallace, David Foster

Subjects

American literature -- 20th century
Authors, American -- 20th century
Modernism (Literature) -- United States

Document Types

Correspondence
Electronic documents.
Manuscripts

Series I. Little, Brown Files 1987-2008, undated

Before Infinite Jest

David Foster Wallace-Michael Pietsch correspondence, one postcard note from Bonnie Nadell to Pietsch, with typescript copies of Fictional Futures and the Conspicuously Young and Signifying Rappers, 1987-1992, undated **Container**
1.1

Typescript photocopy of Little Expressionless Animals, undated **Container**
1.2

Brief Interviews I

Typescript drafts of The Depressed Person, Think, Suicide as a Kind of Piety, Death is Not the End, Yet Another Instance of the Porousness of Certain Borders (XXI), and Nothing Ever Happened, with minor corrections, undated **Container**
1.3

Pietsch letter to Wallace, with Pietsch reading notes, 1997, undated **Container**
1.4

Wallace letter to Pietsch, with photocopied "Brief Interview Snippets," 1997 **Container**
1.5

Wallace letters to Pietsch, with "Post-Pietsch version" typescript draft of Brief Interviews with Hideous Men, 1998-1999 **Container**
1.6

Adult World I & II typescripts, Esquire magazine containing Adult World story, with photocopy of published The Depressed Person, 1998, undated **Container**
1.7

Brief Interviews II, Untitled Story Collection

Wallace, Nadell, and production/design staff letters to Pietsch concerning design, foreign rights, and photographic rights, with design proofs, publicity photos, and sales/castoff/final page count estimate sheets, 1997-1999, undated **Container**
1.8

Wallace-Pietsch-Nadell correspondence, promotional copy drafts, Wallace interview in LA Weekly, proof cover for paperback edition, 1998-2000, undated **Container**
1.9

Reviews and interviews, 1999 **Container** 1.10

Consider the Lobster, Untitled Essay Collection

Atlantic magazine containing Host, 2005 **Container** 1.11

Host, final text. 4 electronic files: Microsoft Word 1997-2003, February 2005 **Disk-ID-No.**
1203008G_003

Chapter drafts. 21 electronic files: Microsoft Word 1997-2003, December 2004	Disk-ID-No. 1203008G_001, 1203008G_002
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Wallace letters to Pietsch, book illustration inserts, 2002-2005	Container 1.12
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Marion Ettlinger's Wallace image proof printouts, undated	Container 2.1
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Wallace-Pietsch-Nadell correspondence with early reading copy drafts for Pietsch, some with Pietsch notes; photocopied published essays; Wallace corrections and changes, 2004-2006, undated	Container 2.2-2.4
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Copyediting Files

Wallace letters to Pietsch and Wallace-copyeditor correspondence primarily related to Infinite Jest but also to A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again, Brief Interviews with Hideous Men, Consider the Lobster, and Oblivion, with style sheets and design checklists, 1995-2008, undated	Container 2.5-2.6
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Infinite Jest

Wallace-Pietsch correspondence, with other letters to Pietsch; a Little, Brown author questionnaire; and Wallace-suggested possible book cover images [see also correspondence in 3.3], 1992-1997, undated	Container 2.7
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Little, Brown foreign publication rights correspondence, with photocopied reviews, 1994-1996, undated	Container 2.8
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Blurb and review correspondence, with one Pietsch letter to Wallace; paperback publishing business including correspondence, cover proofs, and promotional materials, 1992-2007, undated	Container 3.1
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Infinite Jest Editorial

Wallace-Pietsch correspondence, with Pietsch reading notes and suggested cuts/changes; Nadell letters to Pietsch and Wallace with notes of suggested cuts/changes, 1992-1998	Container 3.2-3.3
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Pietsch reading notes and suggested cuts/changes, with Wallace's handwritten responses, 1994-1995, undated	Container 3.4
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Oblivion

Wallace-Pietsch correspondence, with Pietsch reading notes; Another Pioneer typescript draft; The Suffering Channel 2nd pass pages; and publishing materials, 2001-2004, undated	Container 3.5
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Wallace letter to Pietsch, Marion Ettliger publicity photo with use agreement notes, review galley to-be-sent list with draft of Pietsch letter to Dave Eggers, and Oblivion review misquote article and related Pietsch letter, 2003-2004, undated **Container** 3.6

Chapter drafts. 15 electronic files: Microsoft Word 1997-2003, June 2003 **Disk-ID-No.** 1203008G_004, 1203008G_005

A Supposedly Fun Thing

Wallace-Pietsch correspondence, Nadell letter to Pietsch, photocopy typescript drafts of How Tracy Austin Broke My Heart ("Book Review That Became Too Good For A Book Review and Is Being Palmed Off As A Critical Essay"), 1991-1997, undated **Container** 3.7

Unfolded and Loose Material

Wallace letters to Pietsch with one note to Pietsch from "B," 2001-2008, undated **Container** 4.1

Pale King typescript excerpt, undated **Container** 4.2

Typescript drafts, some edited, 1998-2003, undated: Call Me A Snoot; Democracy and Commerce at the U.S. Open; E Unibus Pluram; Fictional Futures and the Conspicuously Young; Getting Away From Being Away From It All (Ticket to the Fair); Hail the Dragon, That Returneth Clothed in New Fire; Hideous "Showcase" Thing; Tri-Stan: I Sold Sisse Nar to Ecko **Container** 4.3

Printed works, with Wallace interview, 1991-2003, undated **Container** 4.4

Unused Gustav Klimt card, 2000 **Container** 4.5

Editing stickies from drafts of various works, undated **Container** 5.1

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- Franzen, Jonathan--3.1
- Howard, Gerald--3.1
- Moore, Steven, 1951- --2.7, 3.1
- Morrow, Bradford--3.1
- Nadell, Bonnie--1.1, 1.8-9, 2.2, 3.1-3, 3.7
- Pietsch, Michael, 1957- --1.1, 1.4, 1.9, 2.2-4, 2.7-8, 3.1-7
- Powers, Richard--3.1
- Richard, Mark--3.1
- Wallace, David Foster--1.1, 1.5-6, 1.8-9, 1.12, 2.2-7, 3.2-3, 3.5-7, 4.1

Index of Works

- Brief Interviews with Hideous Men--1.5-10, 2.5
- Call Me a Snoot--4.3
- Consider the Lobster--1.11-2.4, 2.6, 5.1
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- Democracy and Commerce at the U.S. Open--4.3
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- E Unibus Pluram--4.3
- Fictional Futures and the Conspicuously Young--1.1, 4.3
- Getting Away From Being Away From It All--4.3
- Hail the Dragon, That Returneth Clothed in New Fire--4.3
- Hideous "Showcase" Thing--4.3
- How Tracy Austin Broke My Heart--2.5, 3.7
- Infinite Jest--2.5, 2.7-3.4
- Little Expressionless Animals--1.2
- Nothing Ever Happened--1.3
- Oblivion--2.6, 3.5-6, 5.1
- The Pale King--4.2
- Signifying Rappers--1.1
- The Suffering Channel--3.5
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- Think--1.3
- Tri-Stan: I Sold Sisse Nar to Ecko--4.3
- Yet Another Instance of the Porousness of Certain Borders--1.3