

# David Foster Wallace:

## A Preliminary Inventory of the Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Wallace, David Foster, 1962-2008
<b>Title:</b>	David Foster Wallace Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	1988-2010
<b>Extent:</b>	3 document boxes, 1 oversize folder (osf) (1.26 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	This collection consists of David Foster Wallace related acquisitions that illuminate both personal and professional activities of the author and academic.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Manuscript Collection MS-05177
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Gifts and purchases, 2010-2016 (10-04-009-P, 10-04-010-G, 10-07-002-G, 10-10-011-G, 11-01-011-P, 11-11-006-P, 11-12-004-G, 13-07-009-G, 14-08-007-G, 14-08-008-P, 16-01-020-P, 16-03-012-P, 16-04-003-P, 16-09-002-P, 17-06-016-P, 18-12-008-G, 19-07-011-P)
<b>Processed by:</b>	Stephen Cooper, 2011; Rebecca Law, 2016
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of David Foster Wallace related acquisitions that illuminate both personal and professional activities of the author and academic. The materials are arranged in alphabetical order and date from 1993 to 2010.

Photocopies of Wallace's completed "usage ballots" for the *American Heritage Dictionary*. Wallace was a member of the company's board that governs decisions on usage, spelling, pronunciation, etc. Donated by Steve Kleinedler (10-04-010-G).

One cassette tape containing a recording of David Foster Wallace reading from *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again*. Also contains readings by David Bowman and Jan Banbury. Acquired from Ken Lopez Bookseller (14-08-008-P).

Primarily Wallace correspondence (1997-2005), including a Christmas card from Wallace to "D. M." [David Markson?], a note from Wallace to unidentified recipient, a letter from Nicholas Raftopoluous to Wallace with Wallace's reply written on the letter, two photocopied postcards from Wallace to Peyton Watson, and one photocopied letter from Watson to Wallace. Also includes two items of ephemera signed by Wallace. Donated by Bernard Peyton Watson (11-12-004-G).

Correspondence with Larry Dark, editor of the O. Henry Awards Series, beginning with a 1996 postcard from Wallace thanking Dark for kind words on an article and ending with a 2004 postcard in which Wallace recommends David Means' latest work for The Story Prize consideration. Also present is paperwork related to Wallace serving as a judge for, and later being nominated for, an O. Henry Award. Acquired from James Cummins Bookseller (17-06-016-P).

Materials written by Wallace for English 347.02 Advanced Creative Writing: Prose including a syllabus and "Adventures in Revision, English 347" as well as a newspaper clipping written by Amy Ahrens about a reading by Wallace in 1996 at Babbitt's Books during his time as a professor at Illinois State University. Acquired from Monster Pawn Normal, Inc. (16-3-12-P).

Items related to "Democracy and Commerce at the U.S. Open," an article Wallace wrote for *Tennis* magazine in 1995, including correspondence with Jay Jennings, senior editor at *Tennis*. Acquired from Jay Jennings (10-04-009-P).

Nine annotated copies of the essay "Host" for the *Atlantic Monthly*, from a heavily marked early draft to a "final final" draft. With a photocopied letter from Wallace to Martha Spaulding of the *Atlantic*, a brief note from Spaulding explaining the editorial process, and a "Semi mini style sheet for DFW." Donated by Martha Spaulding (10-10-011-G).

A graded copy of a student's story "I Can Disappear" with notes and comments by David Foster Wallace including "Buy a dictionary or die slowly." Acquired from Monster Pawn Normal, Inc. (16-09-002-P).

A faxed typescript draft of *Infinite Jest*. Acquired from Royal Books (11-01-011-P).

A photocopy of a typed letter from Wallace to Brandon Hobson in which he gives writing advice to the 22-year-old Hobson, comparing and contrasting his own experiences at that age. Donated by Brandon Hobson (10-07-002-G).

A thank-you note to Richard Elman, a former teacher of Wallace's, and a description of the context of the note by Alice Elman, as well as a typed letter to Elman on Hotel Algonquin letterhead [1988]. Acquired from James Cummins, Bookseller. (16-4-03-P, 19-07-11-P).

A photocopy typescript of a draft of Wallace's short story "Lyndon." Acquired from Glenn Horowitz Booksellers, Inc. (16-01-020-P).

An unpublished typescript essay titled *Pearls & Swine* by Wallace, written at the request of James Harmon, who wrote to well-known individuals requesting that they respond to the prompt, "If you could offer the young people of today one piece of advice, what would it be?" Harmon published the responses in 2002, although Wallace's essay was not included. Includes Harmon's original request letter to Wallace, two letters from Wallace to Harmon, and the related Ballantine contract with a handwritten change by Wallace. Acquired from Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, Inc. (11-11-006-P).

A postcard (2006) from David Foster Wallace to Nicholas Martin in which he encourages Martin to find a penpal in an institution. "I'm not kidding," writes Wallace. Donated by Nicholas Martin (14-08-007-G).

A limited-printing poster (2010) created by Sam Potts of a diagram of characters in *Infinite Jest*. Donated by Sam Potts (13-07-009-G).

A letter with envelope from Wallace to Colin Harrison (18-12-08-G)

Further acquisitions of Wallace related materials are expected.

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## Related Material

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

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<i>American Heritage Dictionary</i> usage ballots, 1999-2006	<b>Container 1.1</b>
Cassette tape with David Foster Wallace reading from <i>A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again</i> (*removed to Ransom Center Sound Recordings)	<b>Container *</b>
Correspondence with D. M. [David Markson?], Nicholas Raftopoluouos, and Peyton Wallace. With two ephemera items signed by Wallace	<b>Container 3.3</b>
Correspondence with Larry Dark, with related papers, 1996-2004, undated	<b>Container 3.9</b>
English 347.02 syllabus, 1995-1996	<b>Container 3.6</b>
"Democracy and Commerce at the U.S. Open," <i>Tennis</i> magazine, typed drafts with corrections and correspondence, 1995-1996, undated	<b>Container 1.2</b>
"Host," <i>Atlantic Monthly</i> , drafts with corrections and correspondence, 2004-2005	<b>Container 1.3-4</b>
"I Can Disappear," graded paper, undated	<b>Container 3.5</b>
<i>Infinite Jest</i> , typed photocopy draft, 1995	<b>Container 1.5-6</b>
<i>Infinite Jest</i> , typed photocopy draft, 1995 [continued]	<b>Container 2.1-6</b>
Letter to Colin Harrison, 11 February 2003	<b>Container 3.10</b>
Letter to Brandon Hobson, 1993	<b>Container 3.1</b>
Letters to Richard Elman, undated	<b>Container 3.8</b>
"Lyndon," typescript, undated	<b>Container 3.7</b>
Pearls & Swine, unpublished essay, with correspondence and contract	<b>Container 3.2</b>
Postcard from David Foster Wallace to Nicholas Martin, 2006	<b>Container 3.4</b>
Poster by Sam Potts of a diagram of characters in <i>Infinite Jest</i> , 2010	<b>Container osf</b>