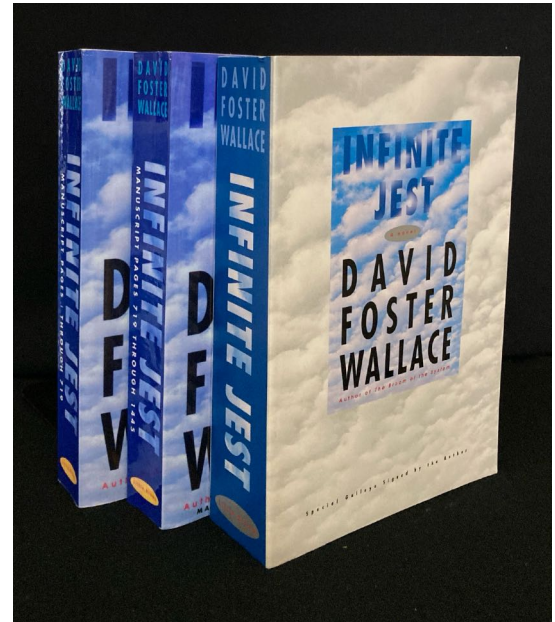
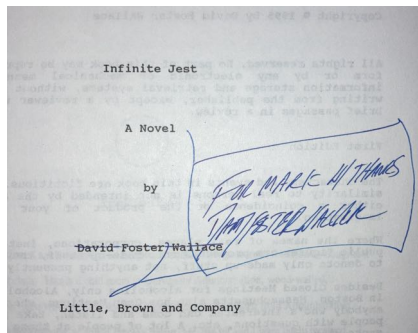


**INFINITE JEST: the exceedingly rare two-vol. *Uncorrected Bound Manuscript* with the ARC**

The earliest obtainable versions of David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*: 1) *Uncorrected Bound Manuscript* (2 vols.) and 2). *Special Galleys Signed by the Author*, both of which precede and differ from the final published version the novel, and both signed by the author, with distinguished provenance from a key member of the publisher's sales team.



David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* (1996), like James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), immediately captured the attention of contemporary critics, readers, and fellow writers. Both books are characterized by their author's use of idiosyncratic language, neologisms, and unconventional syntax, and especially in Wallace's case nonstandard grammar and syntax as characterization, usually through speech, as well as typographical signs, endnotes, and other visual cues. These elements led both books to go through a notoriously complex editing processes, before, during, and after their initial appearance in print.

Offered here are the two earliest obtainable versions of *Infinite Jest*, both of which differ from the final published version of the novel and serve as witness to Wallace's concerted efforts to assure that readers received the novel in its most coherent and polished form. Study of these volumes reveals the process that the author went through in order to preserve his unconventional and highly effective use of nonstandard language, typographical features, and endnotes to convey his story to his readers in its best possible version.

David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* has been called "the Great American Novel of our days" (Lawrence Buell, 2014) and has overwhelmed readers and critics since it appeared in 1996. A literary best-seller that has sold more than a million copies worldwide, the work continues to be read and admired by contemporary readers. A twentieth anniversary edition was glowingly reviewed in the *New York Times*, writing that Wallace "understood the paradox of attempting to write fiction that spoke to posterity and a contemporary audience simultaneously, with equal force" (NYT, Feb. 1, 2016). One could go on...

The 2-volume *Uncorrected Bound Manuscript* (1995) and the *Advanced Reader's Copy* (1996) also represent the marketing efforts made by the publisher prior to publication to generate interest in a work whose \$30 price tag and 1,079 pages, including 388 endnotes, would represent a challenge to many readers. These volumes, especially the two-volume unbound manuscript, were circulated among literary critics (Larry McCaffery and Michael Silverblatt) and leading authors (Don DeLillo) as well as to bookselling retailers in order to generate enthusiasm and support for *Infinite Jest*.

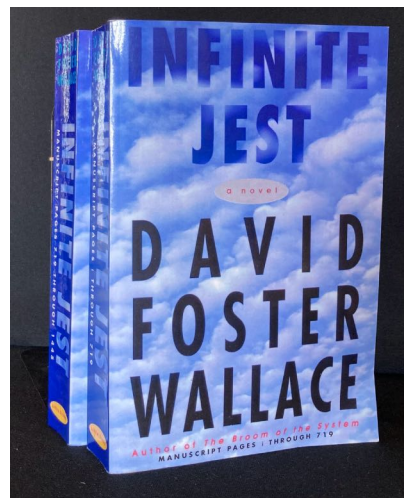
The follow description relies on close examination and comparison of the printed books with the original manuscripts, archives, and correspondence in the David Foster Wallace papers at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin, and conversation with Mark Borden, from whose collection these books come.

**A fine copy of the two-volume *Uncorrected Bound Manuscript: DFW's magnus opus***

**1). WALLACE, DAVID FOSTER. *Infinite Jest*. [Uncorrected bound manuscript].**

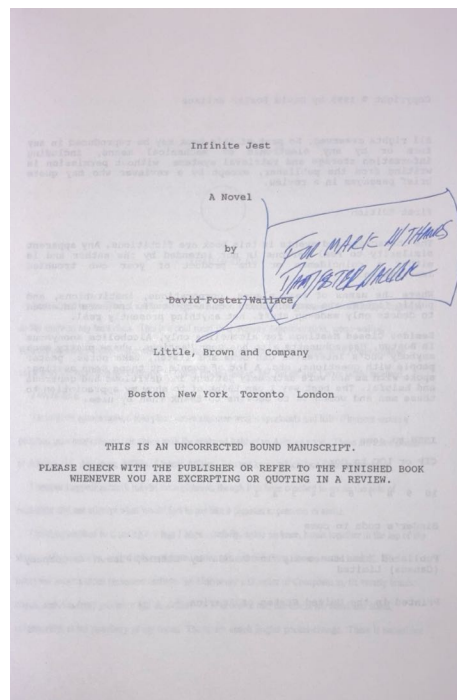
Boston: Little, Brown and Company, (1995).

(23.5 x 15.5 cm). 2 volumes; Vol.1: [4], [1] 2-719 pp. "Manuscript Pages i through 719"; vol.2: 719-1445 pp. "Manuscript Pages 719 through 1445." [n.b., page 719 is repeated, although the content is not]. Publisher's laminated wrappers. A small mild bow to the lower corner of the front wrapper, and the faintest minor shelf rub to the bottom edges, but otherwise a fine unread copy. The text was produced from a reduced facsimile of Wallace's original typescript [called here by the publisher the "uncorrected manuscript"]. **RARE: two holdings only in OCLC.**



**Presentation inscription on the title page of vol. 1 to Mark Borden, a member of the sales team at Little, Brown, who collaborated with Wallace's editor Michael Pietsch to promote the book pre-publication.**

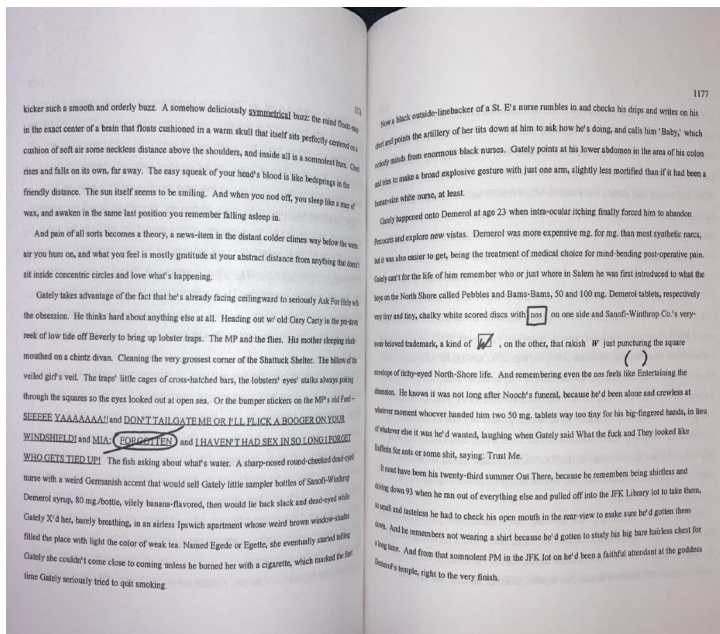
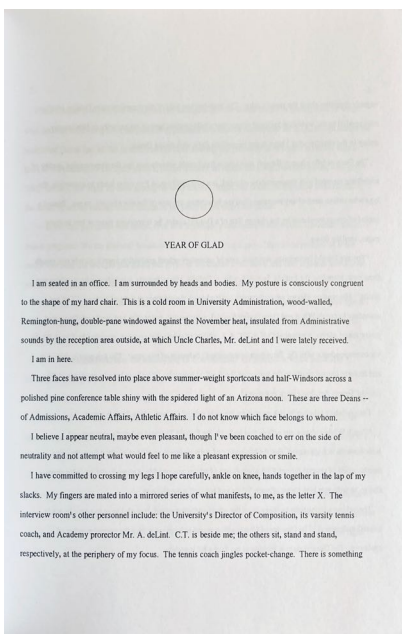
This is the exceedingly rare two-volume uncorrected bound manuscript which reproduces DFW's typescript (in a slightly reduced size) before the final copyediting and proofreading had been completed. This version of the novel, the earliest obtainable of the complete book, follows Wallace's original manuscript after the author and Pietsch edited down the book by several hundred pages. This version is a reduced facsimile of the author's typescript, a version far from the final mise-en-page that the author intended, and one rife with typographical inconsistencies and problematic formatting. There are also minor textual differences typically related to word choice or questions of clarity and consistency.



**This version of the novel was never intended for circulation beyond a select readership. The publisher decided not to produce galleys, and the book went from this version directly to page proofs (see the following item below). Wallace was extremely cautious about sharing the novel in this state and according to Mark Borden asked for extraneous copies to be destroyed.**

A comparison of the corrected version of this manuscript in Wallace's archive at the Harry Ransom Center, reveals that it contains thousands of typographical, editorial, and linguistic differences from the two subsequent impressions of the work: the Advanced Reader's Copy (see below) and the first published edition of the book. Nonetheless, this two-vol. version of the novel was sent by Little Brown to fellow novelists (Don DeLillo),

readers, critics (such as Larry McCaffery), and members of the publishing industry, in order to raise awareness about the book.



Above left: the first page of the novel, with the error in the first sentence (which reads in the corrected first edition, “I am seated in an office, surrounded by heads...”); at right: a page spread from volume two with Wallace’s corrections in facsimile.

### Provenance: from the collection of an early reader and industry promoter of the novel:

Mark Borden, whose copy is offered here, was an early reader and an essential participant in driving the book’s pre-publication buzz. He worked closely with Wallace’s editor Michael Pietsch and the sales team at Little, Brown to bring it to the attention of independent bookstores and chain retailers like Barnes & Noble and Walden Books. Borden’s account follows:

I worked in the sales department at Little, Brown & Company from 1993 until 1995, an aspiring writer who hoped to work one day in the editorial department. On occasion, I read manuscripts from the slush pile and wrote up recommendations for Michael Pietsch.

In 1995, Pietsch was editing *Infinite Jest* and asked if I would read it in manuscript (two reams, double-sided). Pietsch knew my primary role was to support the sales reps and provide them with the information and materials needed to sell new titles to bookstores across the country. He also knew I had some measure of influence with the sellers and hoped I could help gin up support for this wildly inventive, densely footnoted, tragicomic brick of a novel, which clocked in at a thousand pages and carried a then-unheard-of \$30 price tag.

His intuition was right. My enthusiasm for the book spread to the independent bookstore reps and to our national sales manager who sold into Barnes & Noble and Waldenbooks, an early sales coup that culminated in that rarest of achievements: the literary best-seller, with six printings in its first month.

A few months later, Pietsch introduced me to David Foster Wallace at Tower Books on Lafayette Street after a reading. He told Wallace about my role and how I was an early reader, influential advocate, and a contributor to the book’s success.

When I asked for a signature for the two-volume set I had brought with me, Wallace lost it: “What the fuck, Michael? I thought you said we destroyed all of these?!”

Pietsch pulled in close and whispered something to Wallace, who visibly softened, turned to thank me, and signed the first volume on the title page

Mark Borden

Wallace's comment is telling: the two-vol. manuscript is riddled with inconsistencies, due to the typographic complexities of the book (multiple typefaces of different sizes, hundreds of endnotes [and footnotes within the endnotes], errors left over from the recent cuts made to the previous version of the manuscript, and small changes that Wallace believed were essential to making the book more accessible to the reader. The author's correspondence with Michael Pietsch makes it explicitly clear that Wallace was intensely invested in the typographical features and the meaning they conveyed for readers of the novel, and he would not have wanted stray versions of the text floating around on the market.

Because the process of proofreading and editing the book was so complex and the manuscript itself so long, it took many passes through the text to get things consistent and right. The archives at the Harry Ransom Center show that in addition to Wallace and Pietsch, others like Bonnie Nadell (Wallace's agent) Mike Mattil (copy editor), and David Travers (proofreader) were all working to help polish and refine the typographical presentation and the word choices throughout the process. Thus, each of these steps represent stages of a work-in-progress, as reflected in this pre-published version of the novel.

**The two-vol. version of *Infinite Jest* is an essential artifact for understanding how this “densely footnoted, inspired tragic-comedic thousand-page brick of a novel” came to be published. Our copy has the impeccable provenance linked to a member of the publisher's sales team who was essential in broadening interest in the work prior to publication.**

Don DeLillo's copy at the HRC is one of only two known copies held by an institution, a copy which Wallace likely had sent to DeLillo directly as the two had corresponded about the novel.

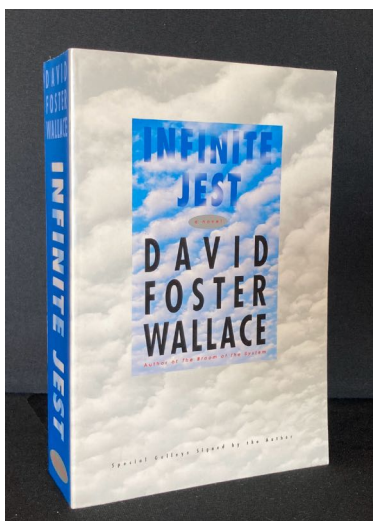
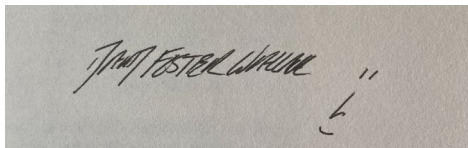
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**“The more I proof these page proofs, the more convinced I get that it would be a *mistake* to disseminate bound galleys before typos and solecisms are corrected... i.e. it looks incoherent and awful, and the book's already hard enough.” (DFW to Pietsch, Oct. 1995, HRC MS-5274, 3.3).**

## 2). WALLACE, DAVID FOSTER. *Infinite Jest*. [Special Galleys Signed by the Author] bound manuscript].

Boston: Little, Brown and Company, (1996).

(23.5 x 15.5 cm). [8], 1,079 pp. Publisher's stiff wrappers. A fine unread copy. Signed by the author on the front free endpaper with a pictograph of a smiley face.



A blockbuster epic comedy — about a nation amusing itself to death — from one of the most-watched young writers of our time.

David Foster Wallace's first two books unleashed a torrent of comparisons with Pynchon, DeLillo, Barth, and Coover. Now, with his second novel, he displays a gargantuan talent that is undeniably his own, addressing our most serious concerns — what happens to a nation of people whose highest goal is pleasing themselves — while expanding the very idea of what a novel can be.

Set in a drug-and-alcohol addicts' halfway house and a tennis academy, and featuring the most intelligent and screwed-up family to come our way since J. D. Salinger's *Glass*, *Infinite Jest* snowballs farce, drug abuse, heart-break, advertising, tennis, philosophy, math, slapstick humor, and profound drama in a story that is never less than edge-of-your-seat compelling.

*Infinite Jest* is a stay-up-all-night and tell-all-your-friends book, a novel that may well become the generation-defining book of the 1990s.

A dynamic writer of extraordinary talent . . . He lays his artistic self on the line with his invidious use of language, at times seeming to rip both the mundane and the unusual from their moorings, then setting them down anew, freshly described.

— New York Times Book Review on *Girl with Curious Hair*

David Foster Wallace is the award-winning author of *The Briefing of the System* and the sexy collection *Girl with Curious Hair*. His short stories and nonfiction have appeared in many magazines, and excerpts from *Infinite Jest* have been featured in the *New Yorker*, *Harper's*, and the *Pitt Review*. He lives in Bloomington, Indiana.

THESE ARE UNCORRECTED ADVANCE PROOFS BOUND FOR YOUR REVIEWING CONVENIENCE.

PLEASE CHECK WITH THE PUBLISHER OR REFER TO THE FINISHED BOOK WHENEVER YOU ARE EXCERPTING OR QUOTING IN A REVIEW.

It is not uncommon for an Advance Reader's Copy, such as this one, to contain typographical errors which are corrected before the published version of the text is put on the market. In the case of *Infinite Jest*, the publishers skipped the galley stage and went straight to page proofs, which were bound as this “Special Galleys Signed by the Author” as indicated on the cover, thus this version of the novel remains unpolished. The complexity of the proofreading meant that the book still required thousands of corrections and changes, and the

text of this version of the novel received blue-pencil marks and changes, an average of 3-5 changes per page, as witnessed by the hand-corrected version in the archives at the HRC.

**“This is a prophylactic note”:**

Wallace’s concern for making all the necessary corrections to his book is strongly evident in a letter he wrote to his editor Michael Pietsch, Sept. 18, 1995, when he was engaged in correcting these page proofs. “This is a prophylactic note,” Wallace wrote to clarify the copyediting process. Wallace had been asked by Mike Mattil (the copy editor) if he anticipated making any “major changes” in the galleys, and when Wallace said, “no, not like anything involving cutting or adding paragraphs or pages” it was decided to skip the galleys and go straight to page proofs. But the complexity of the process require Wallace to explain in the same letter: **“I am not making paragraph- or page-level changes. But I’m making lots of small ones -- maybe an average of three a page... It’s very slow going, and the idea that this is the Last Go-Around has scared me so that I’m going over each word and line with a loupe, almost... Anyway, I’m worried that I will get yelled at for making as many little changes as I’m making”** (DFW to MP, HRC).

Wallace’s proofreading process for making these corrections is brilliantly described by Emilio Englade in his 2019 article, “The Birth of the Reader: Inside the Final Edits to *Infinite Jest*.” Englade has articulated what becomes very clear when one has examined Wallace’s archival materials: the author and his editorial and proofreading collaborators worked extremely diligently to prepare the text of the novel, both linguistically and typographically, polishing the work in a manner that would guide the reader and offset the challenge of reading what is an epically complex work.

Both items are offered together:  
\$15,000