

Consider David Foster Wallace Critical Essays | 23b1d2d4902dc5aa536db861ad2ef3c2

David Foster Wallace
Consider the Lobster
A Companion to David Foster Wallace
Studies
Consider David Foster Wallace
Brief Interviews with Hideous Men
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Infinite Jest

David Foster Wallace

In this thought-provoking and playful short story collection, David Foster Wallace nudges at the boundaries of fiction with inimitable wit and seductive intelligence. Wallace's stories present a world where the bizarre and the banal are interwoven and where hideous men appear in many guises. Among the stories are 'The Depressed Person,' a dazzling and blackly humorous portrayal of a woman's mental state; 'Adult World,' which reveals a woman's agonized consideration of her confusing sexual relationship with her husband; and 'Brief Interviews with Hideous Men,' a dark, hilarious series of imagined interviews with men on the subject of their relations with women. Wallace delights in leftfield observation, mining the absurd, the surprising, and the illuminating from every situation. This collection will enthrall DFW fans, and provides a perfect introduction for new readers.

Consider the Lobster

The book *Fate, Time, and Language: An Essay on Free Will*, published in 2010 by Columbia University Press, presented David Foster Wallace's challenge to Richard Taylor's argument for fatalism. In this anthology, notable philosophers engage directly with that work and assess Wallace's reply to Taylor as well as other aspects of Wallace's thought. With an introduction by Steven M. Cahn and Maureen Eckert, this collection includes essays by William Hasker (Huntington University), Gila Sher (University of California, San Diego), Marcello Oreste Fiocco (University of California, Irvine), Daniel R. Kelly (Purdue University), Nathan Ballantyne (Fordham University), Justin Tosi (University of Arizona), and Maureen Eckert. These thinkers explore Wallace's philosophical and literary work, illustrating remarkable ways in which his philosophical views influenced and were influenced by themes developed in his other writings, both fictional and nonfictional. Together with *Fate, Time, and Language*, this critical set unlocks key components of Wallace's work and its traces in modern literature and thought.

A Companion to David Foster Wallace Studies

"A gripping guide to the modern taming of the infinite."—The New York Times. With a new introduction by Neal Stephenson. Is infinity a valid mathematical property or a meaningless abstraction? David Foster Wallace brings his intellectual ambition and characteristic bravura style to the story of how mathematicians have struggled to understand the infinite, from the ancient Greeks to the nineteenth-century mathematical genius Georg Cantor's counterintuitive discovery that there was more

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than one kind of infinity. Smart, challenging, and thoroughly rewarding, Wallace's tour de force brings immediate and high-profile recognition to the bizarre and fascinating world of higher mathematics.

Consider David Foster Wallace

Criticism of the work of David Foster Wallace has tended to be atomistic, focusing on a single aspect of individual works. A Companion to the Work of David Foster Wallace is designed as a professional study of all of Wallace's creative work. This volume includes both thematic essays and focused examinations of each of his major works of fiction.

Brief Interviews with Hideous Men

The agents at the IRS Regional Examination Center in Peoria, Illinois, appear ordinary enough to newly arrived trainee David Foster Wallace. But as he immerses himself in a routine so tedious and repetitive that new employees receive boredom-survival training, he learns of the extraordinary variety of personalities drawn to this strange calling. And he has arrived at a moment when forces within the IRS are plotting to eliminate even what little humanity and dignity the work still has. The Pale King remained unfinished at the time of David Foster Wallace's death, but it is a deeply compelling and satisfying novel, hilarious and fearless and as original as anything Wallace ever undertook. It grapples directly with ultimate questions--questions of life's meaning and of the value of work and society--through characters imagined with the interior force and generosity that were Wallace's unique gifts. Along the way it suggests a new idea of heroism and commands infinite respect for one of the most daring writers of our time.

David Foster Wallace: Fiction and Form

In the stories that make up Oblivion, David Foster Wallace joins the rawest, most naked humanity with the infinite involutions of self-consciousness -- a combination that is dazzlingly, uniquely his. These are worlds undreamt of by any other mind. Only David Foster Wallace could convey a father's desperate loneliness by way of his son's daydreaming through a teacher's homicidal breakdown (The Soul Is Not a Smithy). Or could explore the deepest and most hilarious aspects of creativity by delineating the office politics surrounding a magazine profile of an artist who produces miniature sculptures in an anatomically inconceivable way (The Suffering Channel). Or capture the ache of love's breakdown in the painfully polite apologies of a man who believes his wife is hallucinating the sound of his snoring (Oblivion). Each of these stories is a complete world, as fully imagined as most entire novels, at once preposterously surreal and painfully immediate.

Character Strengths and Virtues

Considered by many to be the greatest writer of his generation, David Foster Wallace was at the height of his creative powers when he committed suicide in 2008. In a sweeping portrait of Wallace's writing and thought and as a measure of his importance in literary history, *The Legacy of David Foster Wallace* gathers cutting-edge, field-defining scholarship by critics alongside remembrances by many of his writer friends, who include some of the world's most influential authors. In this elegant volume, literary critics scrutinize the existing Wallace scholarship and at the same time pioneer new ways of understanding Wallace's fiction and journalism. In critical essays exploring a variety of topics—including Wallace's relationship to American literary history, his place in literary journalism, his complicated relationship to his postmodernist predecessors, the formal difficulties of his 1996 magnum opus *Infinite Jest*, his environmental imagination, and the "social life" of his fiction and nonfiction—contributors plumb sources as diverse as Amazon.com reader recommendations, professional book reviews, the 2009 *Infinite Summer* project,

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and the David Foster Wallace archive at the University of Texas's Harry Ransom Center. The creative writers—including Don DeLillo, Jonathan Franzen, George Saunders, Rick Moody, Dave Eggers, and David Lipsky, and Wallace's Little, Brown editor, Michael Pietsch—reflect on the person behind the volumes of fiction and nonfiction created during the author's too-short life. All of the essays, critical and creative alike, are written in an accessible style that does not presume any background in Wallace criticism. Whether the reader is an expert in all things David Foster Wallace, a casual fan of his fiction and nonfiction, or completely new to Wallace, *The Legacy of David Foster Wallace* will reveal the power and innovation that defined his contribution to literary life and to self-understanding. This illuminating volume is destined to shape our understanding of Wallace, his writing, and his place in history.

Oblivion

Two ambitious young musicians are drawn into the dark underworld of blues-record collecting while navigating the fallout of a scam involving one's claim that a viral video of an unknown singer is a long-lost recording of a famous blues musician.

Ordinary Unhappiness

David Foster Wallace's *Toxic Sexuality: Hideousness, Neoliberalism, Spermatids* is the first full-length study of perhaps the most controversial aspect of Wallace's work – male sexuality. Departing from biographical accounts of Wallace's troubled relationship to sex, the book offers new and engaging close readings of this vexed topic in both his fiction and non-fiction. Wallace consistently returns to images of sexual toxicity across his career to argue that, when it comes to sex, men are immutably hideous. He makes this argument by drawing on a variety of neoliberal logics and spermatid metaphors, which in their appeal to apparently neutral economic processes and natural bodily facts, forestall the possibility that men can change. The book therefore provides a revisionist account of Wallace's attitudes towards capitalism, as well as a critical dissection of his approach to masculinity and sexuality. In doing so, David Foster Wallace's *Toxic Sexuality* shows how Wallace can be considered a neoliberal writer, whose commitment to furthering male sexual toxicity is a disturbing but undeniable part of his literary project.

This Is Water

This timely volume explores the signal contribution George Saunders has made to the development of the short story form in books ranging from *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* (1996) to *Tenth of December* (2013). The book brings together a team of scholars from around the world to explore topics ranging from Saunders's treatment of work and religion to biopolitics and the limits of the short story form. It also includes an interview with Saunders specially conducted for the volume, and a preliminary bibliography of his published works and critical responses to an expanding and always exciting creative oeuvre. Coinciding with the release of the Saunders' first novel, *Lincoln in the Bardo* (2017), *George Saunders: Critical Essays* is the first book-length consideration of a major contemporary author's work. It is essential reading for anyone interested in twenty-first century fiction.

The Pale King

"The year is 1990 and the place is a slightly altered Cleveland, Ohio. Lenore's great-grandmother has disappeared with twenty-five other inmates of the Shaker Heights Nursing Home. Her beau, and boss, Rick Vigorous, is insanely jealous, and her cockatiel, Vlad the Impaler, has suddenly started spouting a mixture of psycho-babble, Auden, and the King James Bible"--

Everything and More: A Compact History of Infinity

"Character" has become a front-and-center topic in contemporary discourse, but this term does not have a fixed meaning. Character may be simply defined by what someone does not do, but a more active and thorough definition is necessary, one that addresses certain vital questions. Is character a singular characteristic of an individual, or is it composed of different aspects? Does character--however we define it--exist in degrees, or is it simply something one happens to have? How can character be developed? Can it be learned? Relatedly, can it be taught, and who might be the most effective teacher? What roles are played by family, schools, the media, religion, and the larger culture? This groundbreaking handbook of character strengths and virtues is the first progress report from a prestigious group of researchers who have undertaken the systematic classification and measurement of widely valued positive traits. They approach good character in terms of separate strengths--authenticity, persistence, kindness, gratitude, hope, humor, and so on--each of which exists in degrees. Character Strengths and Virtues classifies twenty-four specific strengths under six broad virtues that consistently emerge across history and culture: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. Each strength is thoroughly examined in its own chapter, with special attention to its meaning, explanation, measurement, causes, correlates, consequences, and development across the life span, as well as to strategies for its deliberate cultivation. This book demands the attention of anyone interested in psychology and what it can teach about the good life.

The Cambridge Companion to David Foster Wallace

From Tristram Shandy to Fredric Jameson, Consider David Foster Wallace blazes a trail into the new territory of David Foster Wallace studies. Greg Carlisle, author of the landmark Wallace study *Elegant Complexity*, provides an introduction that sets the scene and speculates on the future of Wallace studies. Editor David Hering provides a provocative look at the triangular symbols in *Infinite Jest*. Adam Kelly explores the intriguing question of why Wallace is considered to be at the forefront of a new sincerity in American fiction. Thomas Tracey discusses trauma in *Oblivion*. Gregory Phipps examines *Infinite Jest*'s John "No Relation" Wayne and the concept of the ideal athlete. Daniel Turnbull compares Wallace's Kenyon College commencement address to the ethics of Iris Murdoch. These 17 essays stem from the first ever academic conference devoted to the work of David Foster Wallace. Held in Liverpool, England, in 2009, the conference sparked a worldwide discussion of the place of Wallace's work in academia and popular culture. Essential for all Wallace scholars, fans of Wallace's fiction and nonfiction will also find the collection full of insights that span Wallace's career. Yes, there are footnotes.

George Saunders

In unrelenting flow of choices confronts us at nearly every moment of our lives, and yet our culture offers us no clear way to choose. This predicament seems inevitable, but in fact it's quite new. In medieval Europe, God's calling was a grounding force. In ancient Greece, a whole pantheon of shining gods stood ready to draw an appropriate action out of you. Like an athlete in "the zone," you were called to a harmonious attunement with the world, so absorbed in it that you couldn't make a "wrong" choice. If our culture no longer takes for granted a belief in God, can we nevertheless get in touch with the Homeric moods of wonder and gratitude, and be guided by the meanings they reveal? *All Things Shining* says we can. Hubert Dreyfus and Sean Dorrance Kelly illuminate some of the greatest works of the West to reveal how we have lost our passionate engagement with and responsiveness to the world. Their journey takes us from the wonder and openness of Homer's polytheism to the monotheism of Dante; from the autonomy of Kant to the multiple worlds of Melville; and, finally, to the spiritual difficulties evoked by modern authors such as David Foster Wallace and Elizabeth Gilbert. Dreyfus, a philosopher at the University of California, Berkeley, for forty years, is an original thinker who finds in the classic texts of our culture a new relevance for people's everyday lives. His

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lively, thought-provoking lectures have earned him a podcast audience that often reaches the iTunesU Top 40. Kelly, chair of the philosophy department at Harvard University, is an eloquent new voice whose sensitivity to the sadness of the culture—and to what remains of the wonder and gratitude that could chase it away—captures a generation adrift. Re-envisioning modern spiritual life through their examination of literature, philosophy, and religious testimony, Dreyfus and Kelly unearth ancient sources of meaning, and teach us how to rediscover the sacred, shining things that surround us every day. This book will change the way we understand our culture, our history, our sacred practices, and ourselves. It offers a new—and very old—way to celebrate and be grateful for our existence in the modern world.

The Legacy of David Foster Wallace

In intimate and eloquent interviews, including the last he gave before his suicide, the writer hailed by A.O. Scott of *The New York Times* as “the best mind of his generation” considers the state of modern America, entertainment and discipline, adulthood, literature, and his own inimitable writing style. In addition to Wallace’s last interview, the volume features a conversation with Dave Eggers, a revealing Q&A with the magazine of his alma mater Amherst, his famous Salon interview with Laura Miller following the publication of *Infinite Jest*, and more. These conversations showcase and illuminate the traits for which Wallace remains so beloved: his incomparable humility and enormous erudition, his wit, sensitivity, and humanity. As he eloquently describes his writing process and motivations, displays his curiosity by time and again turning the tables on his interviewers, and delivers thoughtful, idiosyncratic views on literature, politics, entertainment and discipline, and the state of modern America, a fuller picture of this remarkable mind is revealed.

All Things Shining

A gargantuan, mind-altering comedy about the Pursuit of Happiness in America Set in an addicts' halfway house and a tennis academy, and featuring the most endearingly screwed-up family to come along in recent fiction, *Infinite Jest* explores essential questions about what entertainment is and why it has come to so dominate our lives; about how our desire for entertainment affects our need to connect with other people; and about what the pleasures we choose say about who we are. Equal parts philosophical quest and screwball comedy, *Infinite Jest* bends every rule of fiction without sacrificing for a moment its own entertainment value. It is an exuberant, uniquely American exploration of the passions that make us human – and one of those rare books that renew the idea of what a novel can do. "The next step in fiction Edgy, accurate, and darkly witty Think Beckett, think Pynchon, think Gaddis. Think." --Sven Birkerts, *The Atlantic*

Approaches to Teaching the Works of David Foster Wallace

One of *Vogue*'s Most Anticipated Books of 2020 One of *Esquire*'s 15 Best Books of the Winter One of *Vogue*'s 22 Best Books to Read This Winter “The memoir I’ve been waiting for: a bold, incisive, and illuminating story of a woman whose devotion to language and literature comes at a hideous cost. It’s Joanna Rakoff’s *My Salinger Year* updated for the age of *She Said*: a literary New York now long past; an intimate, fiercely realist portrait of a mythic literary figure; and now, a tender reckoning with possession, power, and what Jia Tolentino called the ‘Important, Inappropriate Literary Man.’ A poised and superbly perceptive narration of the problems of working with men, and of loving them.” – Eleanor Henderson, author of *10,000 Saints* A fiercely personal memoir about coming of age in the male-dominated literary world of the nineties, becoming the first female literary editor of *Esquire*, and Miller's personal and working relationship with David Foster Wallace A naive and idealistic twenty-two-year-old from the Midwest, Adrienne Miller got her

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lucky break when she was hired as an editorial assistant at GQ magazine in the mid-nineties. Even if its sensibilities were manifestly mid-century—the martinis, powerful male egos, and unquestioned authority of kings—GQ still seemed the red-hot center of the literary world. It was there that Miller began learning how to survive in a man's world. Three years later, she forged her own path, becoming the first woman to take on the role of literary editor of *Esquire*, home to the male writers who had defined manhood itself—Hemingway, Mailer, and Carver. Up against this old world, she would soon discover that it wanted nothing to do with a “mere girl.” But this was also a unique moment in history that saw the rise of a new literary movement, as exemplified by McSweeney's and the work of David Foster Wallace. A decade older than Miller, the mercurial Wallace would become the defining voice of a generation and the fiction writer she would work with most. He was her closest friend, confidant—and antagonist. Their intellectual and artistic exchange grew into a highly charged professional and personal relationship between the most prominent male writer of the era and a young woman still finding her voice. This memoir—a rich, dazzling story of power, ambition, and identity—ultimately asks the question “How does a young woman fit into this male culture and at what cost?” With great wit and deep intelligence, Miller presents an inspiring and moving portrayal of a young woman's education in a land of men.

Freedom and the Self

David Foster Wallace is invariably seen as an emphatically American figure. Lucas Thompson challenges this consensus, arguing that Wallace's investments in various international literary traditions are central to both his artistic practice and his critique of US culture. Thompson shows how, time and again, Wallace's fiction draws on a diverse range of global texts, appropriating various forms of world literature in the attempt to craft fiction that critiques US culture from oblique and unexpected vantage points. Using a wide range of comparative case studies, and drawing on extensive archival research, *Global Wallace* reveals David Foster Wallace's substantial debts to such unexpected figures as Jamaica Kincaid, Julio Cortázar, Jean Rhys, Octavio Paz, Leo Tolstoy, Zbigniew Herbert, and Albert Camus, among many others. It also offers a more comprehensive account of the key influences that Wallace scholars have already perceived, such as Fyodor Dostoevsky, Franz Kafka, and Manuel Puig. By reassessing Wallace's body of work in relation to five broadly construed geographic territories -- Latin America, Russia, Eastern Europe, France, and Africa -- the book reveals the mechanisms with which Wallace played particular literary traditions off one another, showing how he appropriated vastly different global texts within his own fiction. By expanding the geographic coordinates of Wallace's work in this way, *Global Wallace* reconceptualizes contemporary American fiction, as being embedded within a global exchange of texts and ideas.

David Foster Wallace and "The Long Thing"

State-of-the-art guide to David Foster Wallace's fiction, focusing exclusively on his novels, *The Broom of the System*, *Infinite Jest*, and *The Pale King*.

Depression and Dysphoria in the Fiction of David Foster Wallace

Since its publication in 2003, *Understanding David Foster Wallace* has served as an accessible introduction to the rich array of themes and formal innovations that have made Wallace's fiction so popular and influential. A seminal text in the burgeoning field of David Foster Wallace studies, the original edition of *Understanding David Foster Wallace* was nevertheless incomplete as it addressed only his first four works of fiction—namely the novels *The Broom of the System* and *Infinite Jest* and the story collections *Girl with Curious Hair* and *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*. This revised edition adds two new chapters covering his final story collection, *Oblivion*, and his posthumous novel, *The Pale King*. Tracing Wallace's relationship to modernism

and postmodernism, this volume provides close readings of all his major works of fiction. Although critics sometimes label Wallace a postmodern writer, Boswell argues that he should be regarded as the nervous leader of some still-unnamed (and perhaps unnamable) third wave of modernism. In charting a new direction for literary practice, Wallace does not seek to overturn postmodernism, nor does he call for a return to modernism. Rather his work moves resolutely forward while hoisting the baggage of modernism and postmodernism heavily, but respectfully, on its back. Like the books that serve as its primary subject, Boswell's study directly confronts such arcane issues as postmodernism, information theory, semiotics, the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, and poststructuralism, yet it does so in a way that is comprehensible to a wide and general readership—the very same readership that has enthusiastically embraced Wallace's challenging yet entertaining and redemptive fiction.

David Foster Wallace: The Last Interview

Finally back in print—David Foster Wallace and Mark Costello's exuberant exploration of rap music and culture. Living together in Cambridge in 1989, David Foster Wallace and longtime friend Mark Costello discovered that they shared "an uncomfortable, somewhat furtive, and distinctively white enthusiasm for a certain music called rap/hip-hop." The book they wrote together, set against the legendary Boston music scene, mapped the bipolarities of rap and pop, rebellion and acceptance, glitz and gangsterdom. Signifying Rappers issued a fan's challenge to the giants of rock writing, Greil Marcus, Robert Palmer, and Lester Bangs: Could the new street beats of 1989 set us free, as rock had always promised? Back in print at last, Signifying Rappers is a rare record of a city and a summer by two great thinkers, writers, and friends. With a new foreword by Mark Costello on his experience writing with David Foster Wallace, this rerelease cannot be missed.

Global Wallace

In this rare peak into the personal life of the author of numerous bestselling novels, gain an understanding of David Foster Wallace and how he became the man that he was. Only once did David Foster Wallace give a public talk on his views on life, during a commencement address given in 2005 at Kenyon College. The speech is reprinted for the first time in book form in *This is Water*. How does one keep from going through their comfortable, prosperous adult life unconsciously? How do we get ourselves out of the foreground of our thoughts and achieve compassion? The speech captures Wallace's electric intellect as well as his grace in attention to others. After his death, it became a treasured piece of writing reprinted in *The Wall Street Journal* and the *London Times*, commented on endlessly in blogs, and emailed from friend to friend. Writing with his one-of-a-kind blend of causal humor, exacting intellect, and practical philosophy, David Foster Wallace probes the challenges of daily living and offers advice that renews us with every reading.

David Foster Wallace's Balancing Books

American novelist, essayist, and short story writer David Foster Wallace was known for his experimental writing style influenced by contemporary American culture. Essays from his most noted works, including his critically acclaimed novel, *Infinite Jest*, s

Although Of Course You End Up Becoming Yourself

"Elegant Complexity is the first critical work to provide detailed and thorough commentary on each of the 192 sections of David Foster Wallace's masterful *Infinite Jest*. No other commentary on *Infinite Jest* recognizes that Wallace clearly divided the book into 28 chapters that are thematically unified. A chronology at the end of the study reorders each section of the novel into a sequential timeline that orients

the reader and that could be used to support a chronological reading of the novel. Other helpful reference materials include a thematic outline, more chronologies, a map of one the novel's settings, lists of characters grouped by association, and an indexed list of references. *Elegant Complexity* orients the reader at the beginning of each section and keeps commentary separate for those readers who only want orientation. The researcher looking for specific characters or themes is provided a key at the beginning of each commentary. Carlisle explains the novel's complex plot threads (and discrepancies) with expert insight and clear commentary. The book is 99% spoiler-free for first-time readers of *Infinite Jest*."--Publisher's website.

The David Foster Wallace Reader

Where do you begin with a writer as original and brilliant as David Foster Wallace? Here -- with a carefully considered selection of his extraordinary body of work, chosen by a range of great writers, critics, and those who worked with him most closely. This volume presents his most dazzling, funniest, and most heartbreaking work -- essays like his famous cruise-ship piece, "A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again," excerpts from his novels *The Broom of the System*, *Infinite Jest*, and *The Pale King*, and legendary stories like "The Depressed Person." Wallace's explorations of morality, self-consciousness, addiction, sports, love, and the many other subjects that occupied him are represented here in both fiction and nonfiction. Collected for the first time are Wallace's first published story, "The View from Planet Trillaphon as Seen In Relation to the Bad Thing" and a selection of his work as a writing instructor, including reading lists, grammar guides, and general guidelines for his students. A dozen writers and critics, including Hari Kunzru, Anne Fadiman, and Nam Le, add afterwords to favorite pieces, expanding our appreciation of the unique pleasures of Wallace's writing. The result is an astonishing volume that shows the breadth and range of "one of America's most daring and talented writers" (*Los Angeles Times Book Review*) whose work was full of humor, insight, and beauty.

Elegant Complexity

Do lobsters feel pain? Did Franz Kafka have a funny bone? What is John Updike's deal, anyway? And what happens when adult video starlets meet their fans in person? David Foster Wallace answers these questions and more in essays that are also enthralling narrative adventures. Whether covering the three-ring circus of John McCain's 2000 presidential race, plunging into the wars between dictionary writers, or confronting the World's Largest Lobster Cooker at the annual Maine Lobster Festival, Wallace projects a quality of thought that is uniquely his and a voice as powerful and distinct as any in American letters.

The Broom of the System

In *David Foster Wallace: Fiction and Form*, David Hering analyses the structures of David Foster Wallace's fiction, from his debut *The Broom of the System* to his final unfinished novel *The Pale King*. Incorporating extensive analysis of Wallace's drafts, notes and letters, and taking account of the rapidly expanding field of Wallace scholarship, this book argues that the form of Wallace's fiction is always inextricably bound up within an ongoing conflict between the monologic and the dialogic, one strongly connected with Wallace's sense of his own authorial presence and identity in the work. Hering suggests that this conflict occurs at the level of both subject and composition, analysing the importance of a number of provocative structural and critical contexts - ghostliness, institutionality, reflection - to the fiction while describing how this argument is also visible within the development of Wallace's manuscripts, comparing early drafts with published material to offer a career-long framework of the construction of Wallace's fiction. The final chapter offers an unprecedentedly detailed analysis of the troubled, decade-long construction of the work that became *The Pale King*.

In the Land of Men

David Foster Wallace's works engage with his literary moment--roughly summarized as postmodernism--and with the author's historical context. From his famously complex fiction to essays critical of American culture, Wallace's works have at their core essential human concerns such as self-understanding, connecting with others, ethical behavior, and finding meaning. The essays in this volume suggest ways to elucidate Wallace's philosophical and literary preoccupations for today's students, who continue to contend with urgent issues, both personal and political, through reading literature. Part 1, "Materials," offers guidance on biographical, contextual, and archival sources and critical responses to Wallace's writing. The essays in part 2, "Approaches," discuss teaching key works and genres in high school settings, first-year undergraduate writing classes, American literature surveys, seminars on Wallace, and world literature courses. They examine Wallace's social and philosophical contexts and contributions, treating topics such as gender, literary ethics, and the culture of writing programs.

Understanding David Foster Wallace

In this exuberantly praised book - a collection of seven pieces on subjects ranging from television to tennis, from the Illinois State Fair to the films of David Lynch, from postmodern literary theory to the supposed fun of traveling aboard a Caribbean luxury cruise liner - David Foster Wallace brings to nonfiction the same curiosity, hilarity, and exhilarating verbal facility that has delighted readers of his fiction, including the bestselling *Infinite Jest*.

A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again

In recent years, the American fiction writer David Foster Wallace has been treated as a symbol, as an icon, and even a film character. *Ordinary Unhappiness* returns us to the reason we all know about him in the first place: his fiction. By closely examining *Infinite Jest*, *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*, and *The Pale King*, Jon Baskin points readers to the work at the center of Wallace's oeuvre and places that writing in conversation with a philosophical tradition that includes Wittgenstein, Kierkegaard, and Cavell, among others. What emerges is a Wallace who not only speaks to our postmodern addictions in the age of mass entertainment and McDonald's but who seeks to address a quiet desperation at the heart of our modern lives. Freud said that the job of the therapeutic process was to turn "hysterical misery into ordinary unhappiness." This book makes a case for how Wallace achieved this in his fiction.

David Foster Wallace's Toxic Sexuality

What do we value? Why do we value it? And in a neoliberal age, can morality ever displace money as the primary means of defining value? These are the questions that drove David Foster Wallace, a writer widely credited with changing the face of contemporary fiction and moving it beyond an emotionless postmodern irony. Jeffrey Severs argues in *David Foster Wallace's Balancing Books* that Wallace was also deeply engaged with the social, political, and economic issues of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A rebellious economic thinker, Wallace satirized the deforming effects of money, questioned the logic of the monetary system, and saw the world through the lens of value's many hidden and untapped meanings. In original readings of all of Wallace's fiction, from *The Broom of the System* and *Infinite Jest* to his story collections and *The Pale King*, Severs reveals Wallace to be a thoroughly political writer whose works provide an often surreal history of financial crises and economic policies. As Severs demonstrates, the concept of value occupied the intersection of Wallace's major interests: economics, work, metaphysics, mathematics, and morality. Severs ranges from the Great Depression and the New Deal to the realms of finance, insurance, and taxation to detail Wallace's quest for balance and grace in a world of excess and entropy. Wallace showed characters

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struggling to place two feet on the ground and restlessly sought to "balance the books" of a chaotic culture. Explaining why Wallace's work has galvanized a new phase in contemporary global literature, Severs draws connections to key Wallace forerunners Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, and William Gaddis, as well as his successors—including Dave Eggers, Teddy Wayne, Jonathan Lethem, and Zadie Smith—interpreting Wallace's legacy in terms of finance, the gift, and office life.

Both Flesh and Not

In *David Foster Wallace: Fiction and Form*, David Hering analyses the structures of David Foster Wallace's fiction, from his debut *The Broom of the System* to his final unfinished novel *The Pale King*. Incorporating extensive analysis of Wallace's drafts, notes and letters, and taking account of the rapidly expanding field of Wallace scholarship, this book argues that the form of Wallace's fiction is always inextricably bound up within an ongoing conflict between the monologic and the dialogic, one strongly connected with Wallace's sense of his own authorial presence and identity in the work. Hering suggests that this conflict occurs at the level of both subject and composition, analysing the importance of a number of provocative structural and critical contexts – ghostliness, institutionality, reflection – to the fiction while describing how this argument is also visible within the development of Wallace's manuscripts, comparing early drafts with published material to offer a career-long framework of the construction of Wallace's fiction. The final chapter offers an unprecedentedly detailed analysis of the troubled, decade-long construction of the work that became *The Pale King*.

White Tears

From the prizewinning author of *HHhH*, "the most insolent novel of the year" (*L'Express*) Paris, 1980. The literary critic Roland Barthes dies—struck by a laundry van—after lunch with the presidential candidate François Mitterrand. The world of letters mourns a tragic accident. But what if it wasn't an accident at all? What if Barthes was . . . murdered? In *The Seventh Function of Language*, Laurent Binet spins a madcap secret history of the French intelligentsia, starring such luminaries as Jacques Derrida, Umberto Eco, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Julia Kristeva—as well as the hapless police detective Jacques Bayard, whose new case will plunge him into the depths of literary theory (starting with the French version of Roland Barthes for Dummies). Soon Bayard finds himself in search of a lost manuscript by the linguist Roman Jakobson on the mysterious "seventh function of language." A brilliantly erudite comedy that recalls Flaubert's *Parrot* and *The Name of the Rose*—with more than a dash of *The Da Vinci Code*—*The Seventh Function of Language* takes us from the cafés of Saint-Germain to the corridors of Cornell University, and into the duels and orgies of the Logos Club, a secret philosophical society that dates to the Roman Empire. Binet has written both a send-up and a wildly exuberant celebration of the French intellectual tradition.

David Foster Wallace: Fiction and Form

Presents David Foster Wallace critiques philosopher Richard Taylor's work implying that humans have no control over the future and includes essays linking Wallace's critique with his later works of fiction.

The Unspeakable Failures of David Foster Wallace

Is John McCain "For Real?" That's the question David Foster Wallace set out to explore when he first climbed aboard Senator McCain's campaign caravan in February 2000. It was a moment when McCain was increasingly perceived as a harbinger of change, the anticandidate whose goal was "to inspire young Americans to devote themselves to causes greater than their own self-interest." And many young Americans were beginning to take notice. To get at "something riveting and unspinnable and

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true" about John McCain, Wallace finds he must pierce the smoke screen of spin doctors and media manipulators. And he succeeds—in a characteristically potent blast of journalistic brio that not only captures the lunatic rough-and-tumble of a presidential campaign but also delivers a compelling inquiry into John McCain himself: the senator, the POW, the campaign finance reformer, the candidate, the man.

McCain's Promise

A compelling, comprehensive, and substantive introduction to the work of David Foster Wallace.

The Seventh Function of Language

Depression and Dysphoria in the Fiction of David Foster Wallace is the first full-length study of this critically overlooked theme, addressing a major gap in Wallace studies. Wallace has long been recognised as a 'depression laureate' inheriting a mantle previously held by Sylvia Plath due to the frequent and remarkable depictions of depressed characters in his fiction. However, this book resists taking Wallace's fiction at face value and instead situates close reading of his complex fictions in theoretical dialogue both with philosophical and theoretical texts and with contemporary authors and influences. This book explores Wallace's complex engagement with philosophical and medical ideas of emotional suffering and demonstrates how this evolves over his career. The shifts in Wallace's thematic focus on various forms of dysphoria, including heartache, loneliness, boredom, and anxiety, as well as depression, correspond to an increasingly pessimistic philosophy underlying his fiction.

Fate, Time, and Language

"A critical overview of the writing of David Foster Wallace, taking his persistent interests in philosophy, language and plurality as points of departure"--

Signifying Rappers

Brilliant, dazzling, never-before-collected nonfiction writings by "one of America's most daring and talented writers." (Los Angeles Times Book Review). Both *Flesh and Not* gathers fifteen of Wallace's seminal essays, all published in book form for the first time. Never has Wallace's seemingly endless curiosity been more evident than in this compilation of work spanning nearly 20 years of writing. Here, Wallace turns his critical eye with equal enthusiasm toward Roger Federer and Jorge Luis Borges; *Terminator 2* and *The Best of the Prose Poem*; the nature of being a fiction writer and the quandary of defining the essay; the best underappreciated novels and the English language's most irksome misused words; and much more. Both *Flesh and Not* restores Wallace's essays as originally written, and it includes a selection from his personal vocabulary list, an assembly of unusual words and definitions.

Infinite Jest

NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE, STARRING JASON SEGAL AND JESSE EISENBERG, DIRECTED BY JAMES PONSOLDT An indelible portrait of David Foster Wallace, by turns funny and inspiring, based on a five-day trip with award-winning writer David Lipsky during Wallace's *Infinite Jest* tour In David Lipsky's view, David Foster Wallace was the best young writer in America. Wallace's pieces for Harper's magazine in the '90s were, according to Lipsky, "like hearing for the first time the brain voice of everybody I knew: Here was how we all talked, experienced, thought. It was like smelling the damp in the air, seeing the first flash from a storm a mile away. You knew something gigantic was coming." Then *Rolling Stone* sent Lipsky to join Wallace on the last leg of his book tour for *Infinite Jest*, the novel that made him

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internationally famous. They lose to each other at chess. They get iced-in at an airport. They dash to Chicago to catch a make-up flight. They endure a terrible reader's escort in Minneapolis. Wallace does a reading, a signing, an NPR appearance. Wallace gives in and imbibes titanic amounts of hotel television (what he calls an "orgy of spectation"). They fly back to Illinois, drive home, walk Wallace's dogs. Amid these everyday events, Wallace tells Lipsky remarkable things—everything he can about his life, how he feels, what he thinks, what terrifies and fascinates and confounds him—in the writing voice Lipsky had come to love. Lipsky took notes, stopped envying him, and came to feel about him—that grateful, awake feeling—the same way he felt about Infinite Jest. Then Lipsky heads to the airport, and Wallace goes to a dance at a Baptist church. A biography in five days, *Although Of Course You End Up Becoming Yourself* is David Foster Wallace as few experienced this great American writer. Told in his own words, here is Wallace's own story, and his astonishing, humane, alert way of looking at the world; here are stories of being a young writer—of being young generally—trying to knit together your ideas of who you should be and who other people expect you to be, and of being young in March of 1996. And of what it was like to be with and—as he tells it—what it was like to become David Foster Wallace. "If you can think of times in your life that you've treated people with extraordinary decency and love, and pure uninterested concern, just because they were valuable as human beings. The ability to do that with ourselves. To treat ourselves the way we would treat a really good, precious friend. Or a tiny child of ours that we absolutely loved more than life itself. And I think it's probably possible to achieve that. I think part of the job we're here for is to learn how to do it. I know that sounds a little pious." —David Foster Wallace

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