

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910466027803321
Autore	Letzler David
Titolo	The cruft of fiction : mega-novels and the science of paying attention / / David Letzler
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Lincoln, [Nebraska] ; ; London, [England] : , : University of Nebraska Press, , 2017 ©2017
ISBN	1-4962-0164-7 1-4962-0166-3
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (vii, 303 pages)
Collana	Frontiers of narrative
Disciplina	808.3
Soggetti	Fiction - Psychological aspects Reading, Psychology of Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Based on the author's dissertation (doctoral)--City University of New York, 2014.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction : information and attention in the mega-novel -- The dictionary -- The encyclopedia -- Life-writing -- The Menippean satire -- Episodic narrative -- The epic and the allegory -- Conclusion : the fate of the mega-novel.
Sommario/riassunto	What is the strange appeal of big books? The mega-novel, a genre of erudite tomes with encyclopedic scope, has attracted wildly varied responses, from fanatical devotion to trenchant criticism. Looking at intimidating mega-novel masterpieces from <i>The Making of Americans</i> to <i>2666</i> , David Letzler explores reader responses to all the seemingly random, irrelevant, pointless, and derailing elements that comprise these mega-novels, elements that he labels "cruft" after the computer science term for junk code. Letzler suggests that these books are useful tools to help us understand the relationship between reading and attention. While mega-novel text is often intricately meaningful or experimental, sometimes it is just excessive and pointless. On the other hand, mega-novels also contain text that, though appearing to be cruft, turns out to be quite important. Letzler posits that this cruft requires readers to develop a sophisticated method of attentional

modulation, allowing one to subtly distinguish between text requiring focused attention and text that must be skimmed or even skipped to avoid processing failures. "The Craft of Fiction" shows how the attentional maturation prompted by reading mega-novels can help manage the information overload that increasingly characterizes contemporary life.
