Sheffield Hallam University

Literacy-as-event: accounting for relationality in literacy research

BURNETT, Cathy <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6087-244X> and MERCHANT, Guy <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8436-7675>

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

http://shura.shu.ac.uk/18855/

Published version

Literacy-as-event: accounting for relationality in literacy research

Cathy Burnett & Guy Merchant

Cathy Burnett
Sheffield Institute of Education, Faculty of Development and Society, 10107 Arundel
Building, Charles Street, City Campus, Sheffield Hallam University, S1 2NE
Tel: 0114 225 3666
c.burnett@shu.ac.uk

Guy Merchant
Sheffield Institute of Education, Faculty of Development and Society, 10107 Arundel
Building, Charles Street, City Campus, Sheffield Hallam University, S1 2NE
Tel: 0114 225 5555
g.h.merchant@shu.ac.uk

Literacy-as-event: accounting for relationality in literacy research

Abstract

Research in New Literacy Studies has demonstrated how literacy consists of multiple socially and culturally situated practices illuminated through a focus on literacy events. Recently, this sociocultural perspective has been complemented by relational thinking that views literacy as an ongoing reassembling of the human and more-than-human. This conceptual article proposes that, in exploring how relational thinking might be deployed in literacy research and practice, it is helpful to re-visit conceptualisations of literacy events. Specifically it proposes the notion of 'literacy-as-event' as a heuristic for thinking with the fluid and elusive nature of meaning-making, elaborating on three propositions: 1. event is generated as people and things come into relation; 2. what happens always exceeds what can be conceived and perceived; 3. implicit in the event are multiple potentialities. Approaching literacy research through engaging with literacy-as-event promotes an expansive, reflective, and imaginative engagement with literacy practices that aligns with relational thinking.

Introduction

Existing research in New Literacy Studies (NLS) has highlighted the fact that literacy consists of multiple socially and culturally situated practices (Barton, 2007). As patterns of communication have shifted in response to a variety of factors, including technological development, changing demographics and increased population mobility, literacies, together with the orientations, attitudes, practices, and skills associated with them, have continued to

diversify and evolve apace (Gillen, 2014). Researchers working in the NLS tradition have spearheaded the development of innovative, creative methodologies that acknowledge this change and complexity (see Albers et al., 2014). Their studies have generated nuanced, multi-layered accounts of literacy practices in different sites. In doing so they have helped to construct literacies, as more than the fixed set of transferable skills upheld by dominant models of policy and educational practice, and have generated recommendations for literacy education that challenge the predominance of a skills-based model (Mills et al., 2017).

Recently, a number of overlapping themes have emerged in literacy studies which complicate this conceptualisation of literacy practices as socially and culturally situated providing routes into thinking differently about literacy. Firstly, an interest in the field of Science and Technology Studies has offered new theoretical directions for the work of literacy researchers like Brandt and Clinton (2002) and Kell (2015). Drawing on the work of theorists such as Latour (1987) and Law (1994), this strand sees texts, along with those who produce and consume them, as part of dynamic heterogeneous networks with implications for how we think about the local and the global (Brandt & Clinton, 2002) and the workings of literacy and power (Kell, 2015). Such studies highlight how complex and inter-weaving sets of sociomaterial relations help sustain certain ways of doing literacy (Budach et al., 2015), but also how such relations must be constantly worked at; they are not fixed but continuously re-made (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010). Secondly, inspired by the poststructuralist orientations of Deleuze and Guattari (1988) and Massumi (2002), researchers have been drawn to the ways in which literacies unfold in the moment (Leander & Boldt, 2013), how they are woven into material and semiotic assemblages, and how affective intensities arise (Ehret, 2017). This perspective critiques not only the psychological-cognitive framing of much state-mandated literacy (Hamilton, 2012), but also the notion of multiliteracies and its focus on literacy as

design, which has been arguably the most influential pedagogical alternative arising from sociocultural accounts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Thirdly, Barad's (2007) agential realism and Bennett's (2010) notion of vibrant matter, which emphasise the entanglements of materiality, embodiment and subjectivity, have inspired literacy researchers to broaden their account of what counts in meaning making in the lives of children, in non-formal and formal educational contexts, and in doing so often challenge the very project of literacy itself (Rautio & Jokinen, 2015; Theil, 2015).

Drawing on different strands of thought referred to variously under the umbrella terms of posthumanism (Taylor, 2016), new materialism (Fox & Aldred, 2016) and sociomaterialism (Fenwick & Landri, 2012), these perspectives orientate to literacy as an affective encounter generated through an ongoing reassembling of the human and the more-than-human. This thinking has foregrounded the liveliness of literacy practices, complicating readings of the social and cultural by attending to fluidity, affect, and emergence. At the forefront of such work, however, is a focus on what happens as people and things come *into relation* rather than as separate pre-existing entities (Blackman & Venn, 2010). If literacy is understood as emerging through an ongoing reassembling of the human and the more-than-human, then it might be usefully seen as what Lenters (2016) calls an 'affective encounter'; it is never an isolated activity, but is always in relation with other people and things. Researching this sort of relationality however is challenging. How can we gauge what is felt as well as observed? If literacy is lived in relations, then how do we decide how to frame our studies? And how can we approach not just what is, but what might be? In addressing such questions, literacy researchers have worked with a variety of innovative approaches that are sensitive to ephemerality and sensation, such as sensory ethnography (Ehret, 2017), and rhizomatic analysis (Leander & Rowe, 2006), and experimented with representational forms (e.g. Kuby

& Rucker, 2017; Bailey, 2017). In sympathy with these approaches, this article proposes a methodological move which builds on existing work in the field. Specifically, we revisit the concept of event to suggest ways in which relational thinking might be deployed to reimagine the fluid and emergent properties of literacies in ways that are helpful to both literacy researchers and educators. We begin by outlining the pivotal role that 'the literacy event' has played in literacy studies, before exploring some alternative ways in which event can be conceptualised. This provides a platform for developing the notion of 'literacy-as-event' which we describe through three key propositions that reflect relational thinking. We go on to illustrate the move from literacy event to literacy-as-event on a number of dimensions before assessing the potential that this approach might have for literacy research and practice.

Literacy and event

The literacy event is a foundational concept in the NLS. As Street (2003) emphasised, a literacy event is a situated instantiation of wider practices, patterned by power relations. We can trace the event idea back to Heath (1982) who in turn drew on perspectives from linguistic ethnography with origins in the work of Hymes (1972) and Jakobson (Waugh & Monville-Burston, 1990). For Heath, literacy events are 'occasions in which written language is integral to the nature of participants' interactions' and in which those participants 'follow socially established rules for verbalizing what they know from and about the written material' (1982, p.50). As Barton & Lee (2013, p.12) observe, the perspective underlines the 'materiality of written language, through the physicality of texts'. This version of the literacy event has helped researchers to articulate a sociocultural position capable of elaborating on the all-important social interactions that happen around and through text. Indeed, richly drawn accounts of literacy events lie at the heart of some of the most compelling and

influential accounts of literacies of the last few decades (e.g. Heath, 1983; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gillen, 2014).

From a relational perspective, however, the notion of literacy event is problematic, chiefly because of its boundedness in time and space. The situatedness underpinning this model has been complicated in recent years by a recognition that many literacies are 'transcontextual' (Brandt & Clinton, 2002) and involve the 'traffic of texts' across sites (Kell, 2011). While not unique to practices involving digital media, this transcontextuality has come to the fore at a time when many literacy events are mediated by mobile devices and involve multiple participants and purposes in on/off screen activity across sites (Leander & McKim, 2003; Davies, 2014); just as context is fluid, hybrid, or even collapsed as Marwick and boyd (2011) claim, so literacy events are porous and permeable and may lack the patterned predictability of Heath's original conception (Authors, 2014). Moreover, the idea of patterned, rule-bound literacy events sits uncomfortably with notions of liveliness, affect, fluidity and emergence.

In order to illustrate these points, we begin with a short vignette taken from a collaborative study of virtual play undertaken with [Anonmysed for review][i] in which we observed children's uses of iPads in an early years setting. In this vignette, based on Guy's fieldnotes, the researcher is sitting on the floor in the construction area participating in a play sequence with four year-old Niamh.

> *Niamh, who was dressed as a witch yesterday, looks over at me. Her eyes light up. Do you remember me? Of course I do. Are you here till lunch time? Yes. She walks off. I look across at Kim who has a small group gathered around her. Then Niamh comes back. She's got her handbag strap tangled up round the doll's leg. Can you help me?*

Yes. I sort it out, and then she plonks herself down next to me and starts riffling through her handbag. She pulls out a purse. I haven't got any money and my daddy's coming. Can you look after the baby? Of course. I'll be back in a minute. If she starts crying....if she starts crying I'll show her the iPad. In a few minutes she's back. She sits down, has a quick look at the shape matching app I've been sharing with the baby. She opens the purse again. Oh no - they usually give me money, but they haven't. Just a minute I'll give them a ring. She's found a phone and she's trying to get hold of someone. It's daddy's phone she says, but I don't know the password.

From this vignette we can identify play activity that appears to cohere around the interactions between adult and child, and within this the sharing of the iPad might well be seen as a literacy event, as an instantiation of socially situated practice. It could be seen as shaped socially and culturally, building in part from Niamh and Guy's memories of playing together previously and their other experiences of adult-child and parent-child interactions. This interaction could well form part of a wider analysis of literacy practices in the home, or more specifically of translations of home literacy practices in early years settings. However, if we applied Heath's rubric of literacy events as socially established conventions of interacting with written text we might struggle. While literacy arguably plays a part, there seems to be more to account for, particularly from a relational perspective.

If we approach literacy as an affective encounter generated through an ongoing reassembling of the human and the more-than-human, then we might read the vignette differently. We might foreground the fluidity, affect and emergence generated by people and things as they come into relation. The vignette might be viewed in terms of a convergence of bodies and interest (Daniels, forthcoming) involving a range of things – a phone, a doll, an iPad and a

handbag, a role play about a thwarted financial transaction – and shifting movements to and fro across the classroom floor. Guy, as researcher/amenable adult/iPad provider, is also overtly part of these ongoing and changing human - non-human relations: perhaps the feeling of being together is also generative of what goes on (author 1 & colleague, 2014). There are, of course, challenges in approaching fluidity, affect and emergence through such data. The narration is inevitably selective, positioned, and framed spatially and temporally. We are presented, rather artificially, with a sequence of actions and interactions that are cut-off from the flow of classroom life, a flow which could be divided up in different ways. However, this brief re-reading hints at some ways through which literacy researchers might acknowledge the 'scrumpled geographies' of literacy practices (Edwards, et al., 2009, p.496) whilst accounting for ephemeral literacy moments as part of an ongoing flow of activity. In interrogating this rather elusive complexity, we propose that it useful to complement literacy event with an alternative heuristic that helps to articulate the methodological implications of relational thinking for literacy studies.

From 'Literacy Event' to 'Literacy-as-Event'

One of the challenges in thinking about event lies in the word's semantic instability. In everyday contexts we use event to describe occasions of quite varied importance and magnitude. Some of these are fairly predictable (anniversaries, annual sporting contests etc.), others momentous, precipitating major cultural or political conflict (e.g. Tinnamen Square, the Arab Spring). A more technical meaning is found in science and philosophy in which an event describes a singular occurrence (Oxford Dictionary, 2018). Most work in literacy studies has tended to favour the idea of predictability. As Barton and Hamilton (1998, p.7) suggest, 'many literacy events in life are regular, repeated activities' and this is very much in

keeping with Heath's (1983) notion of interactions around text. But could we think differently about event?

Firstly, it might be helpful to discount the ways in which event has been used to describe political upheaval. So clearly, what Badiou (2005) refers to as event – variously described as disruption to the social order, or a rip in the social fabric (Robinson, 2014) is not relevant to our discussion. However, something about novelty could be salvaged, along the lines of Derrida's 'surprise, exposure, the unanticipatable' (Derrida, 2007, p.441). Could Massumi's (2015), ideas about the singularity of event as a never-to-be-repeated and vibrant co-mingling of body, affect, material, social and semiotic forces work?

This might help us to argue for a different conception of event - one that sees event as fluid and elusive, and allows not just for what happened, but for what might have been, and in doing so accounts for potentialities. Rather than focusing on the analysis of events as microcosms of more pervasive or invisible patterns and relationships, we propose an approach to event more akin to that of Massumi who writes, 'Nothing is prefigured in the event. It is the collapse of structured distinction into intensity, or rules into paradox' (p. 27) or as Bourassa suggests,

> It is important not to confuse the event with a state of things, with bodies and
> materials that come together to produce results. Rather than being a set of bodies and
> things, rather than being the mingling and colliding of these bodies, the event is the
> *effect* of their mingling and colliding. (Bourassa 2002, p. 66)

9

In capturing the essence of this ontological move we propose *literacy-as-event* as a generative heuristic to work with. Rather than using event to explore the social situatedness of literacy as located in time and space, our conceptualisation of literacy-as-event rests on three related ideas: 1. event is generated as people and things come into relation; 2. what happens always exceeds what can be conceived and perceived; and 3. implicit in the event are multiple potentialities, including multiple possibilities for what might materialise as well as what does not. Below we consider each of these in turn.

1.Event is generated as people and things come into relation

In our earlier vignette we illustrated how people and things (Guy, Niamh, doll, iPad etc.) came into relation as events unfolded, and how these unfolding relations helped to propel events. Relational thinking foregrounds other kinds of movements, too. For example, the following vignette (based on Cathy's fieldnotes) describes what happened to one iPad over the course of an hour.

> *The iPad has been left on the floor in front of the basket. Guy picks it up, taps it awake, opens the Fireworks app and shows it to Bobby and George. George takes it and places it flat on top of the yellow iPad basket, where he bangs it and bangs it with his flat hand. I'm not sure if the excitement is in the fireworks or the banging or both. Later I notice that the iPad must have fallen off the basket a bit, because now it's resting half on the basket and half on Bobby's foot. George picks it up and passes it so it's in front of Bobby. I THINK he moves to take Bobby's arm to guide him to swipe the screen or tap. Just at that moment, Guy reaches across and taps something on the iPad. George moves it back in front of himself, looks at it, and kneels on it. He taps it,*

then heads over to get my pen, which he takes over to the iPad and uses to swipe from screen to screen. Then abandons it. Louisa wanders over, sits down by it and starts to tap. She swipes and swipes. Then picks it up, strokes the back, holds it, presses it, screams - aaaggghhh- then hands it to Guy and sits next to him. 'Where's Peppa Pig' he asks. She taps the Peppa Pig app which opens with its familiar tune, presses it, giggles, looks up and giggles again. An exchange of delight.

Again, we could identify literacy events: Guy's invitation to play the Fireworks app, Louisa's engagement with Peppa Pig, or George's apparent mashup up of mark-making and swiping. We could draw parallels between these and other similar events, tracing different ways in which stories were shared, or pen/iPad mergings occurred across the piece. However, in a shift from the socially and culturally situated, we could also explore the emerging and evolving relations between people, places and things, foregrounding not just how people take up things as part of meaning making but how materiality shapes meaning making. We might focus on what was happening *in between* such events, the moments of inactivity, and apparently random actions and interruptions (Moberg, 2017). Doing so, we might sense the obdurate materiality of the iPad as a thing to be passed, pressed, taken, or simply 'there' - or how the iPad itself shapes what happens, offering up possibilities just by being available or in the way. Reviewing video footage at the end of each day, for example, we found that iPads had sometimes archived video that we found difficult to tag to children's activity: long blurry footage that did not seem to be about anything much, generated perhaps when iPads were accidentally left on:

There's been trouble overnight. 0379 has been secretly filming the other iPads. You can tell because her batteries are really low. And looking on her camera roll there's a

really long movie of nothing much at all. It makes Warhol's film of John Giorno

sleeping look like an action movie! How did that happen? It certainly wasn't in the

plan, and we don't have permissions for that.

Such data take us out of the realm of patterned predictable activity and invite us to engage

with the unpredictable and perhaps irreproducible. A focus on literacy-as-event prompts us to

focus on inactivity, absence and the erratic as well as activity, presence and regularity. Such

relations are difficult to track, and their effects may well be felt rather than thought.

Moreover, as we explore further in the next section, there is always much in event that

escapes our grasp (Manning, 2011).

2. What happens always exceeds what can be conceived and perceived

Holding together multiple relations involves a constant re-framing. It does this partly through

sensitising us to affect. We might read our classroom vignettes, as Hollett and Ehret (2016)

do in their analysis of media making, in terms of 'affective atmospheres' as subtle rhythms

pulse across the room and as bodies and things come into relation moment by moment. Or we

might catch how traces of different times and places play out in what happens, and how these

moments ripple into other times and places. We could foreground other stories that weave

through these narratives: the early years educational policies that play through certain

practices, or the industrial and commercial processes, and associated working practices and

environmental consequences, through which things – toys, baskets, carpets, and iPads - came

to be present, or even the micro-ecologies of headlice, mites, bacteria and other living beings

that exist around bodies and screens (Hirsh et al., n.d.).

Thinking relationally prompts us to keep interrogating what is going on and to seek out other stories of what is folded into the flow of activity. For example, Greenpeace's *Guide to Greener Electronics* argues that,

> *There is no question that smartphones, PCs, and other computing devices have changed the world and our day-to-day lives in incredible ways. But behind this innovative 21st-century technology lie supply chains and manufacturing processes still reliant on 19th-century sources of energy, dangerous mining practices, hazardous chemicals, and poorly designed products that drive consumption of the Earth's resources. This hidden reality stands in stark contrast to the forward-thinking, environmentally conscious image most IT companies project. (Greenpeace, 2017: 3)*

The working conditions and environmental impacts folded into the fabric of schooling and text-making - are all implicated in what *goes on* moment to moment; and what happens *in* the moment (hyperlinks followed, screens tapped, etc) will shape what happens at other times elsewhere as resources are manufactured, recruited, re-equipped or refuelled. A more expanded, fluid take on event pushes us to keep re-focusing our analysis of what goes on, and to keep pushing at spatial-temporal boundaries. Rather than focusing on patterns of human activity - or what people do with things - this opens us up to think about the other things that are going on that exceed the event, those things that are inter-imbricated with it as well as those generated.

This process of continual re-framing, of combining an affective engagement with the tracing of multiple relations, can never catch everything that is going on. The sense that is generated

will always exceed the sense we can make. However, thinking with literacy-as-event hints at that which escapes more ordered accounts, holding together different registers, different ways of knowing. This has an ethical dimension as ultimately a cut has to be made, and by making this cut we exclude certain relations that could have been interrogated, nurtured or celebrated.

3. Implicit in the event are multiple potentialities

If we accept that event is constituted through multiple relations between people and things, and that what happens is always beyond what we can perceive, then it follows that socio-material-semiotic assemblings can be generative in unexpected ways. In describing her experience of the act of writing StPierre (2014, p.378) refers to the 'un-thought' and what is 'to come', capturing the sense of setting out to write without any clear plans of what will unfold, and of being surprised at what emerges. Words assemble with thought, feeling and life and so meanings get generated and settle, sometimes in surprising ways. In another time and place something else may have emerged. The act of writing then involves the ongoing realisation of potentialities, many of which may never have been consciously apparent beforehand. And as certain meanings and manifestations are realised, others disperse or are left behind.

These reflections help articulate the potentialities inherent in all meaning-making practices. Ehret, Hollett and Jocius write,

> Literacy experiences, in all their vital materiality, are lived intensely while making meanings immanent to the ongoing flow of experience. These intensities cannot be

felt-thought through constructed contexts or mind-body-environment intersections alone. Literacy in the making matters. (Ehret et al., 2016, p. 372)

Rather than working towards text and language as *instantiations of life* or commentaries on it, this process emphasises the process of making meaning as *part of life* (Leander & Hollett, 2017). It recognises that in all literacy encounters, multiple potentialities exist, and meanings may be felt or sensed as well as cognitively realised. This perspective invites literacy research to focus more on the *relations mediated through the process of making meaning*: the new collaborations, stories, conceptualisations, directions, intentions and so on that emerge as people engage in making meanings, all of which can and often do turn out in unexpected ways. Approaching literacy-as-event therefore facilitates our engagement with the possibilities enabled through literacy, the affordances and limitations of form to mediate who we are, what we want to do and want to be. It foregrounds how such possibilities can never be completely planned but emerge as event. In another time, and in another place, something else may have emerged. As certain meanings and manifestations are realised, others disperse or are left behind. Sensitising ourselves to potentialities therefore may help us grasp not just what has happened but also what might happen.

With multiplicities acknowledged in these ways, a focus on literacy-as-event not only foregrounds how certain relations sustain, but also the potentialities of relations otherwise imagined. It is a stance that leans towards new possibilities, etching out new kinds of relations even within apparently highly structured sites. As well as inviting us to keep asking what else is going on, it also prompts us to engage with what *might* happen next. Rather than fixing literacy so we can study it, literacy-as-event aspires to 'set it up so you sunder it,

dynamically smudge it, so that the relational potential it tends toward appears' (Massumi, 2011, p.52).

Literacy-as-event as heuristic

The idea of literacy-as-event aims to account for relational perspectives by pushing at the boundaries of event in a number of ways: moving from socio-cultural to socio-material relations, foregrounding in-between-ness rather than situatedness, and being as fascinated with unpredictability as regularity. This stance approaches event as a momentary occurrence with multiple, alternative or virtual possibilities, as always more than can be perceived or conceived, replete with potentialities. It involves a shift in emphasis along a number of dimensions as Table 1 illustrates.

[Insert Table 1 Moving from literacy event to literacy-as-event about here.]

In summary, literacy-as-event offers a generative heuristic for thinking with the notion of event. It is at once more minor and more expansive than earlier conceptions of literacy event; it considers what happens moment to moment, but sees written into these moments multiple possible pasts and futures. It requires us to keep asking, what *is* going on, to slow down and ponder the details, to acknowledge the multiplicity of meanings and possibilities that are always immanent. Moreover literacy-as-event suggests an expansive, reflective, and imaginative engagement with practice. Since researchers (and their materials) are also part of the event, intervention and experimentation are as important as description.

Conclusion

Our proposed re-working of event might at first appear purely semantic. Why, one might argue, is it useful to think in terms of event at all? Perhaps notions of event are incompatible with the fluidity and permeability evoked by relational thinking? Surely more radical thinking is needed in relation to methodological resources? While we support methodological innovation, the urge to keep engaging with event is driven by a commitment to political work that builds on the legacy of NLS. Pioneering research in literacy studies foregrounded literacy events partly as a means of analysing how the workings of power played out in local literacy practices, and through doing so challenged the individualist model of literacy that dominates educational and public discourses.

The ways in which literacy researchers engage with education matters now as it always has done, perhaps even more so in uncertain and difficult times, in new and rapidly changing political and economic formations, and under the influence of neoliberalist educational policies that reduce literacy to a set of skills. However, we side with Massumi (2015) who argues that attempts to challenge the dominance of the market through the critical tradition have been ineffective because they adopt ways of knowing that echo the ontologies that uphold the status quo. Critical approaches are unlikely to disrupt existing ways of doing things because, 'in order to critique something in any kind of definite way you have to pin it down' (p.14), and this process may dissipate the generative potential that holds the possibility to be otherwise. For Massumi, this capacity emerges partly through affective engagement with the world, as people and things assemble in some ways and not others. This perspective is useful in thinking about how educational provision always has the potential to be otherwise, and how change happens through what happens moment to moment in local sites.

But it also has implications for the ways in which we think and work with practice through our research.

Classroom literacies - as our vignettes illustrate - are rich with potentialities. In such contexts, practices may materialise in ways that are in line with mandated curricula, as children produce texts that adhere to the specific criteria of standardised assessments, for example, but they also emerge in ways that serve other purposes (see Maybin, 2007; Dyson, 1993). If meaning making is always charged with multiple potentialities then so is literacy in classrooms, regardless of how far policy-makers (or indeed teachers, researchers, or other experts) seek to bound it. Literacy pedagogy may unfold in multiple ways and always has the potential to generate the unexpected in the form of stories, relationships, transactions, thoughts, meanings, ideas, and so on.

By thinking about literacy-as-event we move towards the unique and unpredictable effects of social, material and semiotic emergence that lie at the heart of meaning making, gesturing towards its fluid and elusive nature, and turning our attention towards this sense of potentiality. This highlights what might be possible; it provides a way of sensing what else might get produced if things assembled in other ways; and hints at what is virtually there. It does this through an affective-reflective engagement with literate encounters. It may also help us better articulate and develop research methods that bring indeterminacy and affect into play, and that work with complexity rather than seeking to order it through linear accounts. Importantly, such work needs to be approached with an ethic of care that involves ongoing review of what happens and what is generated as people and things come into relation. With all this in mind, we propose that engaging with literacy-as-event holds the promise of reinvigorating literacy studies' radical edge.

References

Albers, P., Holbrook, T., and Flint, A. (Eds). (2014). New methods of literacy research. New York: Routledge.

Burnett, C. & Bailey, C. (2014). Conceptualising collaboration in hybrid sites: playing *Minecraft* together and apart in a primary classroom. In: Burnett, C., Davies, J., Merchant, G. & J. Rowsell. (Eds.) *New Literacies Around the Globe: Policy and Pedagogy*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. Pp.50-71.

Burnett, C. & Merchant, G. (2014). Points of View: reconceptualising literacies through an exploration of adult and child interactions in a virtual world. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 37 (1), 36-50.

Badiou, A. (2005). Being and Event. London: Continuum.

Bailey, C. (2016). Free the Sheep: Improvised song and performance in and around a Minecraft community. Literacy, 50 (2), 62-71.

Barad, K. (2007). Meeting the universe halfway. Durham: Duke University Press.

Barton, D. (2007). Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of written language. Oxford: Blackwell.

Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (1998). Local Literacies: Reading and writing in one community. London: Routledge.

Barton, D. & Lee, C. (2013). Language Online: Investigating digital texts and practices. London: Routledge.

Blackman, L., & Venn, C. (2010). Affect. Body and Society, 16(1), 7-28.

Bennett, J. (2010). Vibrant matter: A political ecology of things. London: Duke University Press.

Bourassa, A. (2002). Literature, language and the non-human. In: B. Massumi (Eds.),

A shock to thought: expression after Deleuze and Guattari (pp. 60-76). Abingdon: Routledge.

Brandt, D. & Clinton, K. (2002). Limits of the local: Expanding perspectives on literacy as a social practice. Journal of Literacy Research, 34(3), 337-356.

Budach, G., Kell, C., & Patrick, D. (2015). Objects and language in trans-contextual communication. Social Semiotics, 25(4), 387-400.

Cope, B., & Kalantzis. M. (2000). Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures. London: Macmillan.

Davies, J. (2014). (Im)material girls living in (im)material worlds: identity curation through time and space. In C. Burnett, J. Davies, G Merchant, & J. Rowsell (Eds.), New literacies around the globe: Policy and pedagogy (pp. 72-87). New York: Routledge.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1988). A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia. London: Athlone.

Derrida, J. (2007). A certain impossible possibility of saying the event. Critical Inquiry, 33(2), 441-461.

Dyson, A. H. (1993). Social worlds of children learning to write in an urban primary school. New York: Teachers College Press.

Ehret, C. (2017). Mapping place, affect and futures in an adolescent's new media making: schizoanlaytic cartographies. In B. Parry, C. Burnett & G. Merchant (Eds.), Literacy, media, technology: Past, present and future (pp. 93 -108). London: Bloomsbury.

Ehret, C., Hollett, T., & Jocius, R. (2016). The matter of new media making. Journal of Literacy Research, 48(3), 346-377.

Fenwick, T., & Edwards, R. (2010). Actor-network theory in education. London: Routledge.

Gillen, J. (2014). Digital Literacies. Abingdon: Routledge.

Fenwick, T. & Landri, P. (2012) Materialities, textures and pedagogies: socio-material assemblages in education. Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 20(1), 1-7,

Greenpeace (2017). Guide to Greener Electronics. Available at:

http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/detox/electronics/Guide-to-Greener-Electronics/ .

Hamilton, M. (2012). Literacy and the politics of representation. Abingdon: Routledge.

Heath, S. B. (1983). Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heath, S.B. (2002). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. Language in Society, 11(1), 49-76.

Hirsch, E.B., Raux, B.R., Lancaster, J.W., Mann, R.L., & Leonard, S.N. (n.d.). Surface microbiology of the iPad tablet computer and the potential to serve as a fomite in both inpatient practice settings as well as outside of the hospital environment. PLoS ONE, 9(10), E111250.)

Hymes, D. (1972). Toward ethnographies of communication. In P.P. Giglioli (Ed.), Language and social context (pp. 21-44). Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Kell, C. (2011). Inequalities and crossings: Literacy and the spaces in-between. International Journal of Educational Development, 31, 606-613.

Kell, C. (2015). Ariadne's thread: Literacies, scale and meaning-making across space and time. In C. Stroud & M. Prinsloo (Eds.), Language, literacy and diversity: Moving words (pp. 72-91). Abingdon: Routledge.

Latour, B. (1987). Science in action: How to follow engineers and scientists through society. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Law, J. (1994). Organizing modernity. Oxford: Blackwell.

Leander, K. & Boldt, G. (2013). Rereading 'A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies': bodies, texts, and emergence. Journal of Literacy Research, 45(1), 22–46.

Leander, K. & McKim, K. (2003). Tracing the everyday 'sitings' of adolescents on the internet: A strategic adaptation of ethnography across online and offline spaces. Education, Communication and Information, 3(2), 211–40.

Leander, K., & Hollett, T. (2017). The embodied rhythms of learning: From learning across settings to learners crossing settings. International Journal of Educational Research. Advance online publication.

Leander, K., & Rowe, D. (2006). Mapping Literacy Spaces in Motion: A Rhizomatic Analysis of a Classroom Literacy Performance. Reading Research Quarterly, 41(4), 428-460.

Lenters, K. (2016). Riding the lines and overwriting in the margins. Journal of Literacy Research, 48(3), 280-316.

Manning, E. (2011). The shape of enthusiasm. Parallax, 17(2), 84-109.

Marwick, A., & boyd, D. (2011). I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. New Media and Society, 13(1), 114-133.

Massumi, B. (2002). Parables for the virtual: Movement, affect, sensation. London: Duke University Press.

Massumi, B. (2011). Semblance and event: Activist philosophy and the occurrent arts. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Massumi, B. (2015). The politics of affect. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Maybin, J. (2007). Literacy under and over the desk: Oppositions and heterogeneity. Language and Education, 21(6), 515-530.

Mills, K., Stornaiuolo, A., Smith, A. & Pandya, J. (Eds). (2017). Handbook of writing, literacies and education in digital cultures. New York: Routledge.

Oxford Dictionary (2017). Available at https://en.oxforddictionaries.com

Rautio, P. & Jokinen, P. (2015). Children and snow piles: Children's relations to the more-than human world beyond developmental views. In T.Skelton, J. Horton, & B.Evans (Eds.),

Geographies of children and young people: Play, recreation, health and well-being (pp.35-49). New York: Springer.

Robinson, A. (2014). Alan Badiou: The event. Ceasefire, 11(3)

St Pierre, E.A. (2014). An always already absent collaboration. Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies, 14(4), 374-379.

Street, B. (2003). What's 'new' in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy theory and practice. Current Issues in Comparative Education, 5(2), 77-91.

Theil, J. (2015). Vibrant matter: the intra-active role of objects in the construction of young children's literacies. Literacy Research: Theory, Method and Practice, 64, 112-131.

Waugh, L & Monville-Burston, M. (Eds.) (1990). Roman Jakobson on language. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

---

[i] iPad Use in an Early Years Setting, 2017, Researchers: Authors plus colleague