

studies. The final chapter is a theoretical discussion that argues for the materiality of the concept of critique. It is suggested that 'critique' is not simply 'a form of theorising' but is 'something present within practices' and specifically has transformative potential.

It could be argued that edited collections give the reader more for their money in that the often found diversity of the articles brings together broader, wider insights into a specific topic or theme. Conversely it could be said that if seeking a specific context then actually it would be better to go straight to the relevant article. However, given the topic and central aim of this collection, I would suggest that anyone interested in exploring knowledge and learning beyond the traditional models and discourses that underpin educational research and, similarly, anyone new as I am to ANT, would find this an interesting read. There is, on occasions, an assumption that meaning and context of some of the language and terms used is implicit, and I did find myself at times challenged in recontextualising my understanding in order to grapple with the authors' intended meaning. Nevertheless, it has spurred an interest in wanting to discover more, given that these articles were published in 2012 and such theorising has no doubt moved on still further. It does not answer the question of the reconceptualisation of pedagogy but it does position sociomaterialisation in a range of different cultural and societal contexts, which has significance when reflecting on educational enquiry.

Chasing Literacy: Reading and Writing in an Age of Acceleration

Daniel Keller

University Press of Colorado (2014)

Review by Elizabeth Chapman Hoult

The process of reading *Chasing Literacy: Reading and Writing in an Age of Acceleration* was much like most of my other reading experiences these days. I read it over a week or so, sometimes on trains, sometimes at home, once in my office at work and sometimes in cafes. What linked all of these locations together was the fact that at no point did I ever just read the book. On nearly every occasion I had my iPhone switched on, my work emails close to hand, and my personal emails readily accessible. Reading for many of us now is a fragmented experience. A few moments of deep thought about what Daniel Keller means by his insight that participation in social media for many people is an attention-seeking practice – 'a rhetoric aimed at fading' (p. 91) – is broken by a text message flashing on my iPhone reminding me to pack a hat in my daughter's school bag because it's going to be a hot day. A few more moments thinking about his convincing argument that 'speed has become a defining feature of contemporary literacy' (p.69) are terminated by my memory that I must check, and then respond to, an email from an ethics board by the end of the day. Accompanying this scattered experience of taking in words from different sources at the same time is an underlying feeling of underperformance. A guilty sense that in some other place there are other people who still do 'proper' reading – of meditating on real books in quiet concentration for long periods of time and that what I'm doing, surrounded by my laptop, my iPhone and my tablet, is a shabby version of that. At some point, I tell

myself, I'll return to that other form of reading that I must have done before Web 2.0 became a defining feature of our daily lives.

Keller's argument, central to this useful book about contemporary literacy, is that my reading experience is now the dominant one and that scholarship on reading pedagogy has been slow to recognise this shift. Drawing on case-study research of young people's reading practices, he argues that we have adapted our reading and writing habits to a social and cultural environment that emphasises speed above any other quality. The experience of endless chasing – the latest message, the latest update, and the latest post – defines the way we engage in everyday reading these days. But his is not a plaintive, nostalgic call for a return to the sort of relationships that we used to have with books – the literary equivalent of committed serial monogamy. For sure, Keller values deep concentration on texts and what he calls the 'slow curriculum that makes room for repeated, reinforced experiences that support connection, practice and metacognition' (p.159). But his argument is that this is just one form of reading practice that we need in our contemporary repertoires. He argues that we are much more sophisticated readers than we were previously in the context of so much digital information; we 'shuttle' (p.154) both between print and digital texts and between our roles as readers and writers.

Far from being an empty performance of miniscule attention spans, these processes are actually highly sophisticated and involve making conscious decisions about what we are doing. We have not abandoned our ability to read slowly and deeply but rather we combine it with faster reading techniques, one of which he calls 'foraging' which he nicely describes as a 'purposeful wandering across texts that involves gathering materials and ideas' (p. 14). This book is primarily a call for literacy scholars to take fuller cognisance of the impact of what reading has become and to develop a clearer pedagogy for teaching reading in the light of it. The main contribution it makes, though, is to make us think explicitly about our own experiences of reading and writing; to be attentive to our current practices and to acknowledge, if not resolve, our love-hate relationship with information and communication technologies. Readers of this book who are not immersed in writing and reading pedagogy research might find the first sections a little dry, but it is worth persevering with because the accounts of the case studies are finely drawn with some exquisite details about the literacy-rich life of the average American teenager. Indeed I did wonder if Daniel Keller might adapt these ideas for a much wider audience: the problems he delineates go far further than the teaching of literacy in high schools – they affect all of us.