compositionists that depicts the professional lives of part-time teachers, such as Eileen Schell’s *Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers*. Nonetheless, they are surprisingly sympathetic to those who hold what they call “academic McJobs.” Narratives by part-time teachers appear throughout *Academic Keywords*. Perhaps more important, in the entry on *part-time faculty*, Nelson gives excellent advice about how to combat the creation and maintenance of part-time positions. He suggests, for example, that disciplinary organizations should stop wringing their hands over part-time employment; instead, they should establish and enforce minimum wages for part-timers. Furthermore, professional organizations should censured institutions that resort to abusive employment practices (a recommendation made almost fifteen years ago in the Wyoming Resolution). Finally, he recommends some specific tactics that professional organizations should adopt in order to force full-time faculty, who benefit from the exploitation of part-time teachers, to acknowledge their share of the responsibility for that exploitation: he recommends that full-time faculty and administrators from censured schools be barred from receiving privileges at professional meetings (for example, discounted convention room rates), barred from advertising in professional publications, and prohibited from publishing in the official journals of professional associations. These measures might wake up full-time faculty, especially since the list of censured schools would surely include highly privileged institutions such as Yale University.

Nelson and Watt defend controversial positions, and they are persuasive. They name names and present data to document their claims. I think that writing program administrators and composition teachers who read *Academic Keywords* will recognize the effects of the corporate management practices that Nelson and Watt dissect. Even though we might not accept all of the arguments advanced in its pages, *Academic Keywords* offers a coherent explanation of how we arrived where we are in higher education. Even better, it offers some good advice about how to get out.


Reviewed by Richard Marback, Wayne State University

Composition studies exists in a borderland. On the level of immediate experience, teachers of writing are all too aware of a mandate to teach
students to accommodate to standardized literacy conventions. At the same time, because teachers of writing acknowledge student resistance to schooling and standardization, they must reformulate curricula and pedagogies to more critically and more justly mediate between their mandate and student resistance to it. The local experience of writing teachers pulled between institutionalized claims for literacy and the counterclaims of students can be mapped on multiple borders. On the largest map, borders inscribed by strengthening multinational economies and the globalization of American culture situate English language and literacy education in conflicts, negotiations, and struggles between encroaching global forces and multiplying local contexts.

Teachers and researchers in composition studies have not fully explored that point on the map that locates teaching writing at the site where globalized markets and technologies meet fragmented cultures and environments. Certainly, there have been initial expeditions, such as earlier efforts in CCCC to develop a national language policy and efforts to theorize composition studies in response to the globalization of English, in response to the English Only movement, or in relation to research on English as a second language. For whatever reason, these efforts have not contributed greatly to the current formation of composition studies. This does not mean that compositionists have given up on responding to global issues through their actions in local contexts. I would argue that those compositionists who pursue this kind of broadly self-conscious local work enact composition studies at its best. We simply have not yet found comprehensive methods or strategies for mapping the globally inscribed local borderland in all its detail.

Words in the Wilderness represents the best of recent attempts to explore the global breadth and depth of the borderland of composition studies. Brown’s exploration of the borderlands of composition studies and the teaching of writing is itself a border text that can be read both literally and figuratively. Literally, Words in the Wilderness chronicles Brown’s experience as a teacher of primarily Athabascan students in the remote Alaskan village of Nyotek. He confronts the pedagogical challenges posed by global forces of cultural imperialism, economic development, and natural resource exploitation on indigenous Athabascan students, their families, and their way of life. Figuratively, Brown maps the landscape of his experience in the borderland of a Nyotek classroom with a critical pedagogy guided by postcolonial theory. Here, he charts the theoretical terrain of composition studies in terms of the global forces and local contexts that traverse the field.
The literal and figurative features of *Words in the Wilderness* are accentuated by the book’s organization as a travel narrative. On the surface, the chapters are chronological, recounting Brown’s trip to Nyotek and his journey, while there, deeper into Athabascan culture. At the same time, the chapters present a theoretical tour through critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory, highlighting the concepts of discourse community, contact zone, and cultural conflict, taking readers away from their expectation of easy answers and leading them more deeply into the uncertainty of critically aware pedagogies. Like all good travel narratives, *Words in the Wilderness* also tells a tale of self-discovery. Recounting his travel into territories inscribed with the struggle between indigenous cultures and multinational capitalism, Brown demonstrates how teachers of writing can confront the provincial nature of their own literacy theories and classroom practices.

Making sense of teaching writing as both global and local involves working in at least two directions at once. It involves listening to students and understanding as much as possible their account of why schooling does and does not matter to them. It also involves finding ways to make schooling matter, not only for students as individuals, but also for the world their presence helps to make. In the borderland of writing instruction, where students confront the representational authority of global forces, teachers have an opportunity to rearticulate the relationship between students and institutional organizations. Ideally, the rearticulation works for greater justice and more inclusion. Brown struggles honestly and openly in his book with the dilemma of making school matter. He is as unflinching in his admission that his practices are colonial as he is firm in his commitment to postcolonial theories. I admire his narrative for this. As Brown reminds his readers several times, a large part of the solution to the problem of schooling is in educating the educator, because the journey to teaching brings the borderlands of conflict and difference, of authority and power with it. In many ways, Brown’s elaboration of this point is the strength of his book. By keeping to the imperative of postcolonial theory to always acknowledge our complicity in marginalization—even as we struggle against domination—Brown’s theoretically reflexive personal narrative demonstrates the problems and possibilities inherent in navigating the borderland of composition studies.

What makes Brown’s narrative so compelling and broadly interesting is his use of postcolonial theory to come to terms with the experiences and goals of English education in a landscape pervaded by global economic claims for resources and local struggles for cultural
identity. Locating his pedagogy at the intersection of global colonialism and indigenous resistance, Brown makes a turn that is now popular in composition studies: he foregrounds local cultural conflicts as a vehicle for the acquisition of critical literacy and the recuperation of the indigenous culture. He justifies pairing the acquisition of critical literacy and the recuperation of indigenous culture as the goals of teaching writing by describing student resistance to pedagogies of acculturation. Through his narrative of self-discovery, Brown comes to understand his students' resistance as personal experiences of much larger forces of cultural struggle, racial identity formation, global economic expansion, and natural resource exploitation. Constructing student resistance in this way, Brown uncouples the direct link between the process of schooling and the goal of acculturation through the acquisition of standardized literacy, troubling the borderland terrain of composition studies. Teaching writing cannot be—in the village of Nyotek, or anywhere else, for that matter—a simple matter of promoting direct inclusion in dominant economic and material conditions through the untroubled expansion of standardized literacy practices.

As *Words in the Wilderness* demonstrates, compositionists can make strategic use of postcolonial theorizing in their efforts to make sense of the tensions inherent in teaching writing. I have no doubt that the turn to postcolonial theory will continue to be a productive move for composition scholarship, and we have Brown to thank for taking us some distance on this journey. Still, we should not forget that the turn toward postcolonial theory is also a turn away from a kind of theorizing about language that some in composition studies would not characterize as colonial. This is a point well worth careful consideration. I think it is in attending to this border—between the turn toward and the turn away—that we discern how choices between theoretical strategy and research methodology become productive choices for surveying the field of composition studies and for orienting the intervention of compositionists in struggles for territory that get waged through language and literacy.

I raise this point here because the "Otherness" of Athabascans has been the subject of previous though quite different literacy research. During the 1970s, Ron and Suzanne Scollon spent years with Athabascans in both Alaska and Canada. Their research—published in *Narrative, Literacy and Face in Interethnic Communication*—follows what I would call a more social scientific methodology, compared to Brown's postcolonial, critical strategy. The distinction here between methodology and strategy reflects different emphases that have significant conse-
quences for how we chart the field of composition studies. Brown’s use of postcolonial theory is more strategic in the sense that his use of theoretical concepts are self-consciously contingent, a working through of cultural, economic, political, and social dynamics within which the researcher is inescapably immersed. Brown is strategic in the sense that he has demonstrated how research in the teaching of writing can be used by teachers to critically and self-consciously enact their commitment to social change. Scollon and Scollon are no less politically motivated, or involved, than Brown. While living and working in Alaska and Canada, Scollon and Scollon were active as consultants for school districts and government agencies. But they do not represent their work as a kind of self-reflexive unlearning of their privilege. One way to put it is to say that their privileged position as researchers enables them to better represent the inequalities and injustices expressed through distinct literacy practices. Scollon and Scollon take up a position that I would characterize as methodological: they are less concerned with acting on their situatedness and more concerned with utilizing the authority of their position to categorize and explain the features of oral and written discourse that obstruct communication between Athabascans and white Americans. However more (or less) committed they are to the goals of enacting a more just literacy education, Scollon and Scollon act on those goals within the constraints of institutionalized literacy education. Where Brown advocates teaching in ways that rearticulate the process of schooling with the empowerment of indigenous peoples, Scollon and Scollon promote institutional enlightenment and a fairer administration of educational resources.

The difference between Scollon and Scollon and Brown further defines the borderland of composition studies by illustrating a duality of focus. On the one hand, Scollon and Scollon develop their evidence through traditional ethnographic means (interviews, observations, transcripts). They navigate the field of research by orienting themselves to the concrete evidence of language and literacy, which then serves as an expression of divergent attitudes that contribute to group identification and differentiation. On the other hand, while Brown too uses field notes and observations, he does so more critically and reflexively, drawing on specific examples as expressions of the cultural politics of competing investments in language and literacy. Pushing the distinction further, I would offer that Scollon and Scollon are explicitly concerned with interventions at the level of language and literacy that might facilitate better interethnic communication and even contribute to greater inclusion.
of marginalized groups such as the Athabascan. At the same time, Brown is explicitly concerned with using language and literacy education as a means to intervene directly in the unequal distribution of respect and resources.

In the borderland of composition studies, we cannot (at least for now) choose between the research methodologies employed by Scollon and Scollon and the theoretical strategies employed by Brown. We cannot choose because the differences between the two inform each other; the tensions between the two circumscribe the contemporary borderland of composition studies. We cannot ignore the unrelenting demands of globalization, and we cannot neglect the obvious disaffection of marginalized students. For this reason alone, Words in the Wilderness is an invaluable contribution to composition studies. Brown has taken up issues that are crucial to composition studies today: issues of positionality, theoretical practice, and disciplinary formation.

One of the best ways I know of to consider such issues is in the context of a graduate seminar that juxtaposes Words in the Wilderness with the work of Scollon and Scollon, and then contextualizes the pair with reflections on ethnographic methodologies and postcolonial critical strategies. In such a seminar, students would be introduced to the borderland practices and purposes of research in composition studies where they can (perhaps) push the boundaries of the field.


Reviewed by Katherine H. Adams, Loyola University

When a discipline or group seeks to gain greater respect, its proponents often turn to historical research to stress the contributions of ancestors. As the women's movement developed in the 1960s, for example, women's studies scholars reintroduced many forgotten writers of earlier periods. For example, in its first years the Feminist Press published books and essays by Mary Wilkins Freeman, Kate Chopin, Jo Sinclair, and Josephine Herbst, stressing in its editorial statements the great obstacles they had to overcome and the great potential of other women to join them if they