The fifth chapter authored by a Canadian is entitled, "The Coverage of El Salvador in the Globe and Mail" by Veronica Schild. Schild discusses how the Globe and Mail presents a reality to its readers concerning El Salvador which conforms to normative expectations. This conclusion parallels Knight's conclusion in his discussion of Northern Ireland. In both instances, news media are found to reinforce mainstream, dominant beliefs.

In true academic fashion, this book has alerted scholars to the related work of others. In this case, scholars in three separate Canadian universities were conducting conceptually similar work, while unaware of each other's efforts.

For this reviewer, this book has performed well. As a point of constructive criticism, however, I would have liked an "about the authors" section. Without information about the author, other than current occupational affiliation, it is difficult to know where the author is "coming from." This would certainly help the readers construct a more informed meaning for the contents of each chapter.

Overall, I applaud and support the efforts of Sari Thomas as Coordinator of the Conference on Culture and Communication, and editor of this series. In spirit, and in fact, the mandate for academic diversity is being well served.

Reviewed by: Stuart Surlin
University of Windsor


This collection of 16 articles is remarkable for its high standard of scholarship and its comprehensiveness. Nearly all possible approaches to composition are represented, from the process to the product school, and from the scientific to the humanistic. The
editors have deliberately avoided taking a position of their own; they have simply tried to include all the points of view which are, in fact, taken by teachers of composition. It is true that anyone coming to this volume with ideas about the nature of the field still uncrystallized will find little inducement to adopt one position rather than another. But in my view this is an advantage. There are quite enough, perhaps too many, books about composition which adopt a polemical stance. This one comes as close to giving an objective, value-free account of the field as it is possible to come.

The book is divided into three sections, the first dealing with current research, the second with major problems and the third with basic writing. Some readers (particularly those who support what has become known as the process school) might consider that a disproportionate amount of space has been allotted to basic writing. The editors have anticipated this objection, and answered it in the Preface: 'With so much emphasis on concerns such as the writing process and invention, these other areas often associated with the return-to-basics movement, have not received that attention they deserve.' This is true. It is also true that most of us who teach rhetoric are required to spend a large amount of time in dealing with problems which are essentially remedial. Those who prefer to see writing as process are sometimes in danger of forgetting that the end of the process is the product and that, once outside the composition classroom, students will be judged by their performance, not by their progress or their potential.

Each of the articles offers a good survey of recent work in the area under discussion, and is followed by a useful bibliography. Though not exhaustive, the bibliographies at least offer a good starting point to those unfamiliar with the particular area, and in some cases do much more. In line with the editorial policy, most of the writers of these articles are concerned to open up the field rather than to narrow it down. This is what the discipline needs, for the present at least. The past few years have shown the folly of locking
oneself into one position and refusing to consider any other. Ultimately we may hope for clarification, but the time is not yet.

This point is made with particular force by Christopher C. Burnham, in 'Research Methods in Composition,' the first article in Part II, Major Issues. At present, no single research methodology has been found to be adequate. Each, however, has something important to offer. The emphasis in this article, (as indeed in many of the others), is on the necessity of taking an interdisciplinary approach. If Burnham's article adds breadth to an understanding of the discipline, John C. Brigg's adds depth and historical perspective. In 'Philosophy and Rhetoric,' Briggs not only addresses the question of what rhetoric is, but also incidentally gives us a useful survey of its history, albeit from a somewhat restricted point of view.

Other articles offer help of a more immediate and practical kind. In these the teacher of composition can find direction in addressing many of the problems confronted in the classroom, from how to deal with writer's block to how to grade papers and prepare assignments. The collection also includes useful articles on the paragraph, the sentence, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and usage.

From a Canadian point of view, the least satisfactory part of this collection is the two appendices: Donald C. Stewart's 'Textbooks Revisited,' and Marvin K. L. Ching's 'Evaluating Usage Manuals.' In his extensive survey of available textbooks, Stewart makes no mention of any produced by a Canadian. This is understandable, of course, since he is writing for an American audience. But the omission makes his survey less valuable to the Canadian teacher of composition. Ching's account of available handbooks of usage is likewise of limited value. For one thing, Canadian usage is not identical with American; for another, Canadians are in general, I think, less inclined than Americans to be wholly descriptive in deciding questions of usage. The difference among British, American and Canadian approaches is nicely illustrated by the definitions of 'fortuitous' given in The Concise Oxford Dictionary, The Random House College Dictionary and
Gage's Canadian Dictionary respectively: The American dictionary gives both the traditional meaning of the word and its newer (and some would say, incorrect) meaning which is synonymous with 'fortunate,' without comment. The British dictionary gives simply the traditional meaning and makes no reference to the newer one. The Canadian dictionary, though it does not legitimize the newer meaning, explains how the mistake came to be made, and suggests certain contexts in which it might be allowable.

In spite of these slight deficiencies (from a Canadian point of view), the book on the whole is a good one. It does not, because it cannot, offer any definitive answers to the questions of what exactly composition is, how it should be researched or how it should be taught. But it does serve to shed some light, and it may even help to reconcile some of the warring factions.

Reviewed by: Christine T. Masou Sutherland
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Boynton, Phil Ross and Doreen Boynton,
Sweepers in the Corridors of Power:
Canadian Broadcast Journalism.
(Toronto: Butterworths, 1986).

This book seeks to fill a number of functions as a practical text for broadcast journalism students. Focusing on news and touching on documentaries, it offers advice on research and writing, interviewing and listening, newscast structuring and reading, camera angles and lighting, participation in news conferences and political campaigns, and effective video story-telling. Beyond these skills, the authors consider some of the ethical and legal aspects of gathering and reporting the news. Partly structured in workbook format, a number of useful exercises are provided in the back of the volume. The style of writing is personal, casual, and anecdotal; the layout of the book includes wide margins with plentiful bold print headings to aid quick access to the information on "tape dubbing and editing," or "performing on camera."