

Much useful information has been compressed into this slim, portable volume, which is aimed at readers who are already competent in English and not, as its title suggests, at those who are struggling to achieve this goal.

Gabrielle Sampson
Champlain College

Wilson R. Thornley.
SHORT STORY WRITING.
New York: Bantam Books, 1976.
179 pp. \$1.25.

Divided into three parts, *Short Story Writing* deals first with the definition of a short story as "...a series of reported scenes in which a *causative situation* arises which requires a *deciding character* with a *governing characteristic* to try to solve some kind of *problem* along lines which he decides on as best for his purpose and to suffer *interruptions* or *intensifications* until he comes to the *result* of his final decisions." (p. 4) a definition which provides a sturdy framework for the rest of the exegesis.

In Part I Thornley amplifies what he means by "scene," spreading it out like a table top on the six sturdy legs of his definition. The table is then laid with the piquant fare of technique (characterization, point of view, dialogue, and organization) and garnished by carefully selected illustrations in Part II. From his well-stocked larder Thornley has chosen stories which not only serve to underline his points, but also appeal to the taste of high school pupils. With good pedago-

gical instinct he divides the pages in Part II, putting the text of his examples on the left-hand side and his comment on the right — a device which seems practical, since it both illustrates and reinforces his definition.

Part III contains "Five Short Stories for Reading and Analysis", followed by a "Guide to Analysis" and assignment exercises.

The technique of his presentation is methodical, even to the numbering of each separate scene, and the assignments are original and relevant: "Study your newspaper and list as many potential Story Situations as you can find. They needn't be spectacular," or "List some characters with problems," or "Select an actual problem which you are facing now. This is for real." Thornley also includes a sound list of readings.

Although the format seems somewhat clumsy at times, it strikes me as a clever expedient that one must read the whole text of a story in one part of the book to follow the propositions and illustrations in another part. The author thus ensures that the whole book gets read.

For the high school teacher interested in helping students write short stories, this book is a tidy and indispensable furnishing. The highest tribute I can pay is to acknowledge that from the moment I read the book for the purpose of reviewing it, I incorporated its ideas into my own teaching.

Mary E. Bews
McGill University