

Alley, M.: **The Craft of Editing. A Guide for Managers, Scientists, and Engineers.** – Springer, New York – Berlin – Heidelberg – Barcelona – Hong Kong – London – Milan – Paris – Singapore – Tokyo 2000. ISBN 0-387-98964-1. 159 pp., DM 53.39, sFr 48.15, GBP 18.50, USD 19.95.

After a successful manual for authors of scientific communications ("The Craft of Scientific Writing"; for review of its third edition see *Photosynthetica* 35: 28, 1998), Michael Alley prepared the reviewed manual for those who are in some contact with scientific editing. Of course, if authors want to be welcome in editorial offices, they must be the first editors of own papers. Thus the scope of readers of this book will be very broad.

The book consists of six chapters. They deal with editing for content, style, and form, with differences in the English language according to time, position, and person, with writing a review and copyediting on paper and in a computer, with psychology of editing (constraints, idiosyncrasies, need to keep with schedule, spoken and written feedback), and with consecutive editors (at which stage should each of them appear in this process and what are their roles). Because the author gives many and often funny examples and stories from his editorial praxis, reading this book is certainly a pleasure. The reading is helped by a fairly large type size of the text (only examples are printed in smaller type size). The whole book could be read within one day. Nevertheless, it seems to me that content of its chapters could have been more concentrated (say to one half). Most interesting in chapters are the figures that contain, e.g., checklists for stylistic errors in reports and their format, hierarchies for commonly confused word pairs and errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling errors (arranged from those that would unsettle many readers to those that would distract only a few readers), checklist for reviewers, examples of positive and negative peer review, proof-reading

hierarchy, etc. Each chapter is introduced by a motto. Let me reproduce that by Somerset Maugham (it opens chapter 5): "People ask for criticism, but they want only praise."

Most interesting in this book is the Appendix (52 pp.). Alphabetically arranged are here 100 problems of style. They are classified and marked by symbols showing the category of problem and severity of the mistake. I would like to mention some of them: *Due to* modifies a noun, *because of* modifies verbs. Colons should not break continuing statements. *Continual* means repeatedly, *continuous* means without interruption. Prefer *different from* to *different than*. *Fewer* and *number* are for items that can be counted, *less* and *amount* for the other ones. Words *good* or *efficient* modify nouns and pronouns, *well* or *efficiently* verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. Beginning a sentence with *however* (followed by a comma) is standard. *Whether* indicates possibilities, *if* indicates condition. Do not use *impact* as a verb instead of *affect*. *Mis-spelling* is an error that can be recognised by a spell-checker, *typo* is an error that is not recognised in this way. *Over* is for physical position or range, *more than* or *greater than* for quantity. *Unique* or *critical* are absolutes that do not need a modifier. And there are many other interesting items.

Another very useful addendum is the glossary of editing terms. Do you know what the words *bleed*, *bullet*, *gutter*, *recto*, or *widow* mean in this connection? If not, buy this book. It will serve you (not only for this reason) well.

Z. ŠESTÁK (Praha)