

A Tribute to Louis Trimble

Louis Trimble died on March 9, 1988 at home in Totnes, Devon. I am glad that we gave him his festschrift* before he died. We said in the editor's preface that Louis Trimble deserved a festschrift because he had a major personal influence on a whole generation of applied linguists and because he had made a major intellectual contribution to knowledge. We put it this way:

Louis Trimble some twenty years or so ago took the classical rhetoric of Aristotle et al. (e.g. 'definition,' 'classification' functions), applied these notions to a description of EST (English for Science and Technology) texts *where they fit*, modified these notions where they didn't fit, and created an original rhetoric based on the notion of those 'organizational choices' the technical writer makes at various levels of 'the rhetorical-process hierarchy' in attempting to transmit technical information. (italics in original)

Louis was a person who never took himself too seriously. It amused him to be "a small part" of an "et al." tradition in "Aristotle et al." He ran a hog ranch and did ditch digging, house painting, and accounting in his early years, as Mary Todd Trimble described in her biographical introduction to the festschrift. I remember him regularly wearing a "western tie," a beaded string, in the staid engineering college at the University of Washington. He wrote numerous science fiction, western and pulp novels. My favorite is entitled *The Noblest Experiment in the Galaxy* (1970, NY: Ace Books); my favorite title is *Just Around the Corner* (1948, NY: M.S. Mill Co.). They are now collector's items.

I honestly believe I wouldn't have this career if it weren't for Louis. In the days when all of linguistics was sentence-bound, Louis worked with discourse and showed us that (to paraphrase Jakobson) linguistics without discourse is meaningless. He effortlessly integrated concerns for learning and teaching with a solid view of language. And on top of it all, with a fine critical mind, he behaved in his everyday life "like a mensch." To Mary, we send our love and respects.

Larry Selinker, University of Michigan

*Reference for the "Trimble Festschrift": *English for Academic and Technical Purposes: Studies in Honor of Louis Trimble*, Eds: L. Selinker, E. Tarone & V. Hanzeli, 1981, Rowley: Newbury House. Trimble's bibliography, up until that date, is included in the festschrift; unfortunately, the volume is now out of print.