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Targeteers and Sourcerers

Bryan Robinson

Discourse and the Translator Basil Hatim and Ian Mason *Longman 1990* £11.99
About Translation Peter Newmark *Multilingual Matters 1991* HB £43 PB £14.95

"Literal" or "free", "formal equivalence" or "dynamic equivalence": the language of Translation Studies appears to situate everything on one side or the other of a deep, dark ravine. These oppositions, seen to beat at the heart of the process of translation, are constantly under discussion, and apparently irreconcilable. However, here we have two books which, while setting out from opposite sides of a very flimsy-looking bridge, do encourage the reader to venture across that ravine, albeit for different purposes.

The two starting points referred to can be clearly distinguished just by looking at the covers of the books in question. *Discourse and the Translator* presents the reader with a collage in warm tones of red, beige, cream and ochre. The items clearly identifiable are bus tickets and numbered labels which unite discourse and translation (and not "the translator" of the title) in context. By way of stark contrast, Peter New-

mark's *About Translation* offers us a cold, black and white Félix Fénéon in the Offices of the Revue Blanche. Here, the subject is seated at his desk, pen in hand, papers around him, writing intently under the none-too-kind glare of a reading lamp. The shadows cast on his face emphasise his (and every translator's?) grey, drawn, concentration. Hence, from first contact, we are prepared for these two differing approaches to translation.

The authors of *Discourse and the Translator*, Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, are teachers in the Department of Language at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. Their book gives a process and product view of the analysis of translation in social contexts, and is intended as an aid to all who are involved in translation or interpreting, at whatever level.

To use Newmark's expression, they are "targeteers", as they examine the communicative, pragmatic, and semiotic aspects of the Source Text, in order to produce satisfactory renderings of these in the Target Language. Sub-

sequently, they apply the fruits of this examination to the translation process. Much of their work is a development of Halliday's approach to text, texture, cohesion, and so on, and the reader needs really to have a prior grounding in the subject in order to get the most out of their painstaking analysis. However, once you are able to begin working with the text, the wealth of illustration makes it a very satisfying, as well as enlightening, volume.

Peter Newmark, however, is a "sourcerer". And, it should be said, he's proud of it. He teaches at the Centre for Translation and Language Studies at the University of Surrey, and his outspoken, controversial views, have made him friends and, I suspect, enemies throughout the world of translation studies. I find that one of the most significant aspects of all of Newmark's work is the fact that, for the sake of controversy, he is able to appear to be saying one thing, while at the same time doing the opposite: *About*

Translation, a collection of articles previously published elsewhere, is no exception. Here, he deals with wide-ranging aspects of Translation, from "Translation for Language Teaching and Professional Purposes" to "Pragmatic Translation and Literalism", and he frequently condemns "targeteers" for their top-down discourse analysis approach to translation; he praises the bottom-up "literalist" approach of those whose prime interest is the original text.

Throughout the collection the reader is aware of a degree of passion and concern for his subject which is seldom found in academic writings, bringing author and reader close together, and making the author's more individualist views readily acceptable.

Both of these books are filled with examples taken from the working experience of their authors. These amply support the views expressed, while at the same time involving the reader in an evaluation of what is being proposed. Though in part they can prove difficult for the non-specialist to digest, they are nonetheless both commendable as they successfully achieve their stated aims. *Bryan Robinson teaches at the School of Translators and Interpreters, University of Granada, Spain.*



EFL Gazette
 Book Shelf

Second Language Learning and Language Teaching Vivian Cook *Hodder & Stoughton 1991* £8.95

Are you ready?