

## Obituary

Katharina Reiss

(1923-2018)

ADITYA KUMAR PANDA

Katharina Reiss, a German linguist and a leading scholar in the field of Translation Studies, passed away in April, 2018. Scholars from Linguistics and Translation Studies acknowledge her scholarship and remarkable contributions especially to the field of translation evaluation. As one of the proponents of the functionalist approaches to translation, she is rightfully considered the co-founder of the Skopos Theory. She was also a great teacher as her student Christina Nord appreciates her as "a strict but fair teacher with a very subtle sense of humour."

Born in 1923 in Rheinhausen, Germany, Katharina Reiss studied at Heidelberg University where she received her first degree as a professional translator. She received her PhD in 1954 for a philological work on Clarin. She was a teacher at the Heidelberg Interpreters' Institute, Spanish Department from 1944 to 1970. She was the Director of Academic Studies at the Seminar for Romance Languages in 1971. She received her Habilitation degree on operative text-types from the University of Mainz where she lectured on Translation Studies. She was also a consultant to the United Bible Societies from 1980 to 1987. Reiss has published over 90 research papers. Her books which are seminal in the field include *Translation Criticism-The Potentials and Limitations- Categories and Criteria for Translation Quality Assessment* (1971) and another with Hans J. Vermeer titled *Towards a General Theory of Translational Action: Skopos Theory Explained*. Hans J. Vermeer received training as a translator from Katharina Reiss. Most of the theories developed till Reiss's *Translation Criticism* were

language/linguistic oriented. Reiss's functional approach to translation established a new dimension in the assessment of translation. In her first book, she mentions that a typology of texts to be translated is the first step toward determining the literary, linguistic and pragmatic categories which provide the points of reference by which a particular translation is to be evaluated. Decision making in translational activities has been the basis for all her publications and lectures. She integrated her concept of a correlation between text-type and translation method into Vermeer's theorization of translational action or *Skopostheorie*.

Katharina Reiss will be remembered, whenever there will be a discussion on the translation evaluation and methods of translation, for the text type schema as the determinant of translation method and evaluation: informative (content-focused), expressive (form focused) and operative (appeal focused). Her demise is a setback for the research fraternity of Translation Studies. Students/scholars have been benefitted from her writings and she will be influential as an eminent scholar in translation even in years to come.

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