

Colleagues and former students in the Department of English, American, and Celtic Studies of the University of Bonn are deeply saddened by the loss of Prof. Dr. Götz Schmitz, who passed away after a long illness on 24 August 2019.

Professor Schmitz taught at the department from 1972 until he took early retirement for health reasons in 2006. During this time, he inspired hundreds of students with his erudition, intellectual rigour, and infectious passion for English literature. Professor Schmitz set the bar high for himself and his students. His lectures and seminars were meticulously crafted, and his extremely popular Introduction to Literature laid a solid foundation for the analysis of literature – from Chaucer and Shakespeare through the Romantics and Victorians to modernist and contemporary writers. Stephen Spender, one of the modernist poets Professor Schmitz published on, suggested that “when you read and understand a poem, comprehending its rich and formal meanings, then you master chaos a little.” Professor Schmitz’s poetry seminars allowed his students to do just that. His advanced research seminar on textual criticism and editing encouraged many students to take up a career in the publishing and editing world and to pursue further research in archives and libraries, from London and Hull to Washington, D.C., New York, and Austin.

Professor Schmitz studied with Prof. Dr. Arno Esch at the University of Bonn, where he received his doctoral degree in English philology in 1972. He was appointed *Akademischer Rat* at the Department of English in 1977 and, in 1990, *Akademischer Oberrat*. His PhD dissertation, which was published in 1974, explored questions of form and style in John Gower’s late fourteenth-century poem *Confessio Amantis*. His *habilitation* thesis on the genre of the women’s complaint, published in German in 1984 and a few years later in English as *The Fall of Women in Early English Narrative Verse* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), remains an important study on the reception of classical heroines like Dido, Philomela, and Lucretia in late medieval and early modern English literature. Professor Schmitz’s other research interests included modernist poets, especially Philip Larkin, Stephen Spender, and Ted Hughes.

A prolific and conscientious editor, Professor Schmitz prepared editions of Renaissance plays associated with the University of Cambridge for the Renaissance Latin Drama in England series published by Olms: Samuel Brooke’s *Adelphe; Scyros; Melanthe* (1991), and the anonymous play *Alphonsus* (also 1991). For the Renaissance English Text Society he edited Thomas May’s early seventeenth-century poetical life of Henry II, *The Reigne of King Henry the Second Written in Seauen Bookes* (2000).

Professor Schmitz always showed great interest in, and gave support to, the Bonn University Shakespeare Company, which had been founded by a group of students at the English Department in 1992. As the department’s Erasmus coordinator, Professor Schmitz contributed much to the internationalisation of the department and the University as a whole. Founding new, and fostering established, Erasmus links (among

them the Universities of Swansea, Perugia, and Oviedo), he created opportunities for many students of the department to study abroad. He was also committed to making any incoming Erasmus student feel welcome and integrated in the department by fostering exchange. Many former students will have fond memories of the hospitality shown by him and his wife to groups of Erasmus and “home” students.

Professor Schmitz leaves behind his wife and their two sons with their families. His funeral took place in Hochstätt am Inn on 10 September.

His former colleagues and students will always remember Professor Schmitz as a rigorous scholar, a committed, passionate, and patient teacher, and a generous, kind, and supportive mentor.

Canterbury, 20 October 2019

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