

Anthony W. Riley 1929-2003

Anthony W. Riley came to Queen's as an Assistant Professor in 1962, when he was in his early thirties. He had taken his first degree at the University of Manchester in England, and his doctorate at the University of Tübingen, where his supervisor was Friedrich Beissner, the great editor of the German poet Hölderlin. Tony rapidly achieved promotion at Queen's, gaining the rank of Associate Professor in 1965 and Professor in 1968. Among numerous administrative posts, he served as Head of the Department of German for ten years from 1967 to 1976, with two further one-year terms as Acting Head. His achievements received recognition both within Queen's and externally. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1981, in 1983 he was awarded the Queen's Prize for Excellence in Research, and in 1987 he became the first recipient of the Hermann Boeschstein Medal, the latter being awarded by the Canadian Association of University Teachers of German to colleagues chosen not just for their research productivity but also for their humanitarian qualities. In 1994 he received the tribute of a Festschrift for his 65th birthday, and in 1996 he held a guest professorship at the University of Munich. But perhaps the greatest honour was the Konrad Adenauer Research Award of the Federal German Chancellor, a prize allocated by the august Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which enabled him to devote the whole of the year 1990 to his work on Alfred Döblin.

Many of Tony's early publications deal with Thomas Mann and with the work of the Catholic author Elisabeth Langgässer, of whose works he compiled an indispensable bibliography. In the 1970s his chief interest shifted towards the great modernist writer Alfred Döblin, and in 1978 he was appointed General Editor of the multi-volumed edition of Döblin's Selected Works, a position he held until a year before his death. In this position Tony personally edited eight volumes and supervised the publication of fourteen more. He was an inspired choice for this role. As a devotee of Anglo-Saxon common sense, but also as the student of Beissner, Tony had the ideal intellectual equipment and training for an assignment of this kind: infinite patience and persistence, a boundless respect for original texts, and not just an attention to detail but almost a cult of it. The volumes that he produced, often complicated collections of occasional pieces, are exemplars of what scholarly editing can and ought to be. When one of his volumes appeared in the 1990s, it was greeted not just in academic publications but by a note in one of the major German quality dailies, in which the editor's labours received a generous tribute. Tony was highly regarded in Germany. He had many friends there, and when he used the National Archive at Marbach am Neckar, as he so often did over a long period of time, he was treated by the staff as an extremely distinguished guest.

As a colleague, Tony was no shrinking violet. He was a campus heavyweight, well known and influential throughout the university not just for his academic work but also for his colourful personality. He was an energetic and forceful man, at times even a combative one if he thought that a vital principle was at stake. His passion for his subject was never in doubt,

however, and he threw himself wholeheartedly into all aspects of his job. As a teacher, Tony took on a full range of courses on German language and literature at all levels during his thirty years in our Department, and he supervised a number of M.A. and Ph.D. theses. To Tony's two terms as Head of Department, as well as to his reputation as literary scholar, one can attribute a good deal of the standing that the Queen's Department of German has enjoyed and continues to enjoy.

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(Author's title given as of the time of writing)