

**Dr Elystan Griffiths** MA (Cantab), PhD, FHEA

Senior Lecturer in German

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## About

My main research interests are in German literature of the period 1750-1815, with a particular interest in literary responses to political and social change. I am currently working on a monograph on the German idyll during this period. I have also published on the development of German literature in the context of the unification of Germany in 1871. I teach widely across the German Studies curriculum at Birmingham, and offer courses on German language, history and literature, and on German cinema.

## Biography

Originally from Cardiff, and a native speaker of Welsh, I studied Modern Languages (German and French) at Robinson College, Cambridge and completed my doctorate in German Studies at the University of Birmingham under the supervision of Professor Michael Perraudin (now Sheffield). I have been a staff member at the University of Birmingham since 2000.

## Teaching

Within the Department, I teach German language, literature, history and film, and I contribute to European Studies courses in Film Studies. In second year, I offer an introductory course on German film, as well as a course of Germany in the Age of Enlightenment. I also teach a final-year option on *German-Language Cinema since 1960*.

## Postgraduate supervision

I am happy to supervise postgraduate projects within my areas of interest. I have recently supervised an MPhil project on the historical dramas of Franz Grillparzer and co-supervised a PhD on 'Nietzsche, Goethe and the Nineteenth-Century Tradition of *Bildung*'. I am currently involved in supervising Leila Mukhida's PhD project *Authority, Authenticity and the Contemporary German-Speaking Auteur*.

## Research

My research is focused on German literature from 1750 to 1815. My previous research publications include a monograph on Heinrich von Kleist's politics and a first edition (with David Hill) of J.M.R. Lenz's writings on social and military reform (the so-called 'Berkaer Projekt'). I am currently working on a monograph on the idyll in German in the 'Age of Goethe'.

I serve on the Steering Committee of the **Birmingham Eighteenth-Century Centre** (<http://www.becc.bham.ac.uk/>).

## Publications

### Books and scholarly editions

- (Ed., with Seán Allan), ***Performance and Performativity in the Works of Heinrich von Kleist. Guest-edited Special Issue of German Life and Letters, 64/3 (2011)***. (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/glal.2011.64.issue-3/issuetoc>)
- (Ed., with David Hill) Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz, ***Schriften zur Sozialreform: Das Berkaer Projekt*** (<http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?event=cmp.ccc.seitenstruktur.detailseiten&seitentyp=produkt&pk=38659&concordeid=54641>) (Frankfurt: Lang, 2007). viii + 667 pages. Reviewed in the *Lenz-Jahrbuch* and in *The Modern Language Review*.
- Political Change and Human Emancipation in the Works of Heinrich von Kleist*** (<http://www.boydell.co.uk/www.camden-house.com/71132929.HTM>) (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005). Reviewed in *CHOICE*, *German Quarterly*, *Modern Language Review*, *The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies*, *Colloquia Germanica* and *Germanic Review*.

### Articles in peer-reviewed journals

- 'Sophie von La Roche, Shaftesbury and the Problem of Virtue: Inheritance and Self-Creation in *Die Geschichte des Frauleins von Sternheim*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 50 (2014), 82-96.
- "'Oft reiss' ich mich aus der Stadt los, und fliehe in einsame Gegenden": Social Criticism in Salomon Gessner's Idylls', *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 83 (2014), 22-36.
- 'Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism and Women's Education: The European Dimension of Sophie von La Roche's Journal *Pomona für Teutschlands Töchter* (1783-84)', *Oxford German Studies*, 42 (2013), 139-57.
- "Die unverhoffte Wirkung": Revolutionary Violence, "Beschränkung" and the Rewriting of the Domestic Idyll in Kleist's Works', *German Life and Letters*, 65/4 (2012), 399-420.
- (with Seán Allan), 'Introduction. Heinrich von Kleist: Performance and Performativity', *German Life and Letters*, 64/3 (2011), 327-36.
- 'Religion, Power and the Instability of Performance in Heinrich von Kleist's Stories', *German Life and Letters*, 64/3 (2011), 421-36.
- 'Gender, Laughter and the Desecration of Enlightenment: Kleist's *Penthesilea* as "Hundekomödie"', *The Modern Language Review*, 104 (2009), 453-71.

- 'Hermanns Schlachten: Gender, Culture and the German Nation in the Long Eighteenth Century', *German Life and Letters*, 61 (2008), 118-36.
- 'Action, Communication and the Problem of Form: J. M. R. Lenz's Social and Political Thought', *German Life and Letters*, 59 (2006), 1-24.
- 'A Nation of Provincials? German Identity in Gustav Freytag's novel-cycle *Die Ahnen* (1872-1880)', *Monatshefte*, 96 (2004), 220-33.

## Articles in books

- 'Die Napoleonische Kolonialpolitik und die Zerstörung der Idylle: Kleists *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo* und Salomon Gessners "Inkel und Yariko"', in *Ich will ein Bauer werden: Kleist in der Schweiz – Kleist und die Schweiz*, ed. by Carsten Zelle and Anett Lütteken (Hannover: Wehrhahn, forthcoming 2015).
- (with David Hill), 'Die Berkaer Schriften', in *Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz. Leben - Werk - Wirkung*, ed. by Julia Freytag, Inge Stephan and Hans-Gerd Winter (Berlin: de Gruyter, forthcoming 2015).
- Article on F.W. Murnau's *Tartüff*. Submitted.
- (with David Hill) 'Drafting the Self: The Poet as Reformer and Performer in J.M.R. Lenz's *Berkaer Projekt*', in *The Text and its Context: Studies in Modern German Literature and Society Presented to Ronald Speirs on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. by Nigel Harris and Joanne Sayner (Oxford: Lang, 2008), pp. 79-94.
- 'Provincialism, Private Life and the Marginal Hero: Germany after Unification in the Works of Gustav Freytag, Friedrich Spielhagen and Paul Heyse', in *Germany's Two Unifications: Anticipations, Experiences, Responses*, ed. by Ronald Speirs and John Breuilly (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 209-23.
- 'Unity, Division and the Problem of Representation: German Unification in the Novels of Friedrich Spielhagen', in *Field Studies: German Language, Media and Culture. Selected Papers from the Conference of University Teachers of German, University of Newcastle, September 2002*, CUTG Proceedings, 5, ed. by Holger Briel and Carol Fehring (Bern: Lang, 2005), pp. 103-23.
- 'Heinrich von Kleist: A Nationalist Cosmopolitan?', in *Cosmopolitans in the Modern World: Studies on a Theme in German and Austrian Literary Culture*, ed. by Suzanne Kirkbright (Munich: iudicium, 2000), pp. 41-52.

## Online publications

- Entries on J. M. R. Lenz's plays *Die Soldaten* and *Der Hofmeister*, and Heinrich von Kleist's works *Amphitryon*, *Penthesilea* and *Michael Kohlhaas* in the **Literary Encyclopedia** (<http://www.litencyc.com/>).

## Knowledge transfer activities

- Programme notes for the Donmar Warehouse production of Kleist's *The Prince of Homburg* (July 2010)
- Interviewed for BBC Radio 3's Sunday Feature: 'The Tragical Adventure of Heinrich von Kleist', 7 January 2007 (repeated 22 August 2007).

## Reviews

- Dirk Götsche, *Zeit im Roman. Literarische Zeitreflexion und die Geschichte des Zeitromans im späten 18. und im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 2001), *Immermann-Jahrbuch*, 4 (2003), 131-37.
- Jeffrey L. Sammons, *Friedrich Spielhagen: Novelist of Germany's False Dawn* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004), *Colloquia Germanica*, 37 (2004) [published 2005], 345-47.
- Seán Allan, *The Stories of Heinrich von Kleist: Fictions of Security* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2001), in *The Journal of European Studies*, 37 (2007), 428-30.
- Rüdiger Campe (ed.), *Penthesileas Versprechen: Exemplarische Studien über die literarische Referenz* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2008), *Modern Language Review*, 105 (2010), 1180-81.
- Theo Buck, 'Der Poet, der sich vollendet': *Goethes Lehr- und Wanderjahre* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), *The German Quarterly*, 86 (2013), 222-23.
- Tim Mehigan, *Heinrich von Kleist: Writing after Kant*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011. *Monatshefte*, 103 (2013), 142-144.
- Mary-Elizabeth O'Brien, *Post-Wall German Cinema and National History: Utopianism and Dissent* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012) and *A New History of German Cinema*, ed. by Jennifer M. Kapczynski and Michael D. Richardson (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012). *Journal of European Studies*, 44/4 (2014), 445-46.
- *Heinrich von Kleist and Modernity*. Ed. by Bernd Fischer and Tim Mehigan. Rochester, NY: Camden House. 2011. *Modern Language Review*, 110 (2015), 284-85.
- *Heinrich von Kleist and Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Violence, Identity, Nation*. (Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture). By Steven Howe. Rochester/New York: Camden House, 2012. *Modern Language Review*, 110 (2015), 285-87.

## Expertise

German literature, 1770-1815; contemporary German film

Alternative contact number available for this expert: [contact the press office \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx)

