

# Dr Seán M. Williams FRSA

DPhil: Oxford, 2014; MSt. (Oxon), MA (Oxon)

Scribbling... **published** as of July 2020

## Book:

2019. *Pretexts for Writing: German Romantic Prefaces, Literature, and Philosophy*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press. New Studies in the Age of Goethe. Sponsored by the Goethe Society of North America. Hardback and paperback. 278 pages. Shortlisted for the Novalis Prize. Reviews:

*Modern Language Review:*

“To say that Williams has done his homework on the literary and philosophical preface would be putting the matter at its very mildest. Not alone has he immersed himself in the prefatorial writings (across multiple editions) of his focal triumvirate of German titans (Goethe, Jean Paul, Hegel), he has also engaged with a comparative and cross-disciplinary tradition reaching back to antiquity and forward all the way to poststructuralism. The range of primary sources he cites along the way is simply prodigious. This due diligence helps him steer clear of facile periodization: for every general trend sketched, signal exceptions are scrupulously noted. [...] **This debut book, in short, contains much that is scintillant and surely announces the arrival of an important new scholarly voice in Germanistik.**”

*The German Quarterly:*

“An erudite study of sustained analytic depth [...] the strength of Williams’s analysis lies in his historically embedded, detailed close readings [...] Overall, Williams’s book is a study of tremendous academic rigor with original insights.”

*Choice:*

“Including excellent endnotes and an extensive bibliography, this challenging study proves that prefaces are far from perfunctory and challenges readers to reevaluate this neglected form. Summing up: Recommended.”

## Edited volumes:

2019. Forum for Modern Language Studies. 55.4. Edited Special Section: *Modern Central European Hotels and Spas in Cultural Criticism*. 79 pages.

2017. German Life and Letters. 70.1. Special number: *Das Erblühen der Blumenlesen. German Anthologies, 1700-1850*, edited and introduced with Nora Ramtke. 136 pages.

2014. Oxford German Studies. 43.1. Special issue: *Post-War Literature and Institutions*, edited and introduced with W. Daniel Wilson. 105 pages. (& Preface, 1 – 3.)

## Academic articles and chapters:

2020. Anniversaries, the Public, and Academia. *German Life and Letters* 73.3, 490-517.

2019. Home Truths and Uncomfortable Spaces: Swiss Hotels and Literature of the 1920s. *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 55.4, 444-465.

2019. Grand Hotel Nostalgia. *Forum for Modern Language Studies*. 55.4. 415-425.
2019. The research impact of broadcast programming reconsidered: Academic involvement in programme-making. *Research for All* 3 (2), 218-223.
2018. Williams & Kari Nyheim Solbrække. “Cancer Coiffures”: Embodied Storylines of Cancer Patienthood and Survivorship in the Consumerist Cultural Imaginary. *Body & Society*, 24 (4), 87 – 112. (As reported on *Breitbart* and in *The Yorkshire Post*.)
2018. Consumption, Creativity, and Authors around 1800: The Case of E. T. A. Hoffmann. *Publications of the English Goethe Society* 87, 81-98.
2017. E.T.A. Hoffmann und die Alltagskultur um 1800. *E. T. A. Hoffmann-Jahrbuch*, 7-28.
2017. Williams & Nora Ramtke. Approaching the German Anthology, 1700 – 1850: An Introduction. *German Life and Letters* 70.1, 1-21.
2017. The Celebrification of Adolf Hitler. *Celebrity Studies* 8 (4) Forum, 1-5.
2017. On clichés, post-colonialism and the politicisation of Swiss literature: an interview with Martin R. Dean. *German Life and Letters* 70.2, 284-290.
2016. E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Hairdresser around 1800. *Publications of the English Goethe Society* 85, 54-66.
2016. Philologische Notizen zu Blähungspulver und Jean Paul. *Jahrbuch der Jean-Paul-Gesellschaft*, 183-195.
2014. C.F. Gellert als Vorredner des Genies. In Matthias Schaffrick and Marcus Willand (eds.), *Theorien und Praktiken der Autorschaft*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 333-362.
2013. Kant’s Novel Interpretation of History. *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 49 (2), 171-190.

### **Broadsheet and magazine journalism — print and online:**

The Economist’s [1843 Magazine](#): on Liechtenstein (2,500 words and pictures, 7-page feature).

[The Literary Review](#): on micro states and fiction.

[History Today](#): on Swiss hotels in the 1920s.

[The Observer](#): on the history of luxury (950 words, 1-page feature).

[The Literary Review](#): on wild swimming and diving into books.

[BBC Online](#): on lapdogs in the eighteenth century.

[The Daily Telegraph](#): on the dog and the eighteenth century (950 words, 1-page feature).

The Economist's [1843 Magazine](#), on the history of Germany and the dachshund (950 words).

[The Guardian](#): on ice-skating in the eighteenth century (re-printed in CUP's *Advanced English Trainer*).

BBC History Magazine: on Bern, Switzerland ("my favourite place" column, 1-page feature), July 2018.

[Public Domain Review](#): on walking and the eighteenth century (also anthologised in [print](#)).

[The Statesman](#) (Indian newspaper): on cancer cultures.

[Times Higher Education](#): on empathy and literature.

+ [History News Network](#), , [The Conversation](#), [The Chronicle](#), [The Huffington Post](#) (and [here](#) or [here](#)), the [Institute for Modern Languages Research](#) blog on "literature in lockdown", and the [British Comparative Literature Association](#) blog on "culture in quarantine", and multiple interviews with the AHRC press for their website. I write on issues related to higher education at, among other blogs, [WonkHE](#).

### **Book reviews for general audiences:**

2020. Andrew Edwards and Suzanne Edwards. *Ghosts of the Belle Epoque: The History of the Grand Hôtel et des Palmes, Palermo*. [The Literary Review](#) (June 2020).

2017. James Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany*. [History Today](#) (October 2017), 104-105.

2015. T. J. Reed, *Light in Germany. Scenes from an Unknown Enlightenment*. *History Today* (October 2015), 57-58.

2014. Christiane Florin, *Warum unsere Studenten so angepasst sind*. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. 28 September 2014, 26.

2013. Michael Cobb, *Single: Arguments for the Uncoupled*. [Culture Wars](#).

### **Research featured in:**

Newspapers: *The Yorkshire Post*, *Breitbart*, and significantly on [Quartz](#), on hair salons and barbers in lockdown from a historical perspective.

### **Academic book reviews:**

2020. Christopher R. Clason, *E.T.A. Hoffmann: Transgressive Romanticism*. *European Romantic Review*, 31.4, 516-519.

2018. Miriam Albracht, Iuditha Balint, and Frank Weiher (eds.), *Goethe und die Arbeit*. *Modern Language Review*, 113.4, 896-897.

2017. Malte Osterloh, *Versammelte Menschenkraft. Die Großstadterfahrung in Goethes Italiendichtung*. *Modern Language Review*, 112.2, 535-536.

2015. Julia Bertschik and Wolfgang de Bruyn (eds.), *Der Schatten des großen Königs. Friedrich II. und die Literatur*. *Arbitrium*, 33.3, 325-327.

2015. Charlotte Lee, *The Very Late Goethe. Self-Consciousness and the Art of Ageing*. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 23.2, 308-309.

2014. Jörg Kreienbrock, *Malicious Objects, Anger Management and the Question of Modern Literature*. *Monatshefte*, 106.4, 693-696.

2013. Thomas Wegmann, *Dichtung und Warenzeichen. Reklame im literarischen Feld 1850-2000*. *Modern Language Review* 108.1, 322-3.

2012. Christoph Jürgensen and Gerhard Kaiser (eds.), *Schriftstellerische Inszenierungspraktiken – Typologie und Geschichte*. And Stephan Pabst (ed.), *Anonymität und Autorschaft. Zur Literatur- und Rechtsgeschichte der Namenlosigkeit*. *Modern Language Review* 107.4, 1297-1300.

2012. Olaf Kramer. *Goethe und die Rhetorik*. *Modern Language Review* 107.4, 1279-1280.

2010. Marcel Sturm, *Goethes Weg nach Weimar: Kontinuität des Sturm und Drang in den Jahren 1770- 1790*. *New Perspectives on the Eighteenth Century*. *Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 7.1, 99-101.

2010. Andrea Geier and Jan Süselbeck (eds.), *Konkurrenzen, Konflikte, Kontinuitäten: Generationenfragen in der Literatur seit 1990*. *Focus on German Studies* (17), 125-127.

2010. Agnes Jäger, *History of German Negation*. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 29.1, 191-195.

### **Miscellaneous academic pieces:**

2019. Published public lecture: “Haargenau”: Hairdressers, Pedants, and an (Un)academic History of German Culture in newsletter of the *Society of Friends of London’s Institute for Germanic and Romance Studies*, 7-15.

2018. Contribution to collaborative essay: Doing German Differently: New Research Practices and Partnerships around the UK. *German Life and Letters* 71, 374-394 (my section: 389-391).

2013. Published prize lecture: 2013. Vorrede zu Vorreden: Jean Paul's Pretexts for Literary Parody. Sylvia Naish lecture in newsletter of the *Society of Friends of London's Institute for Germanic and Romance Studies*. 10 pages.

8 general reference entries for germanlit.org, on C.F. Gellert, Frederick the Great, E.T.A. Hoffmann; Thomas Hettche, Martin Dean, Melinda Nadj Abonji.

**Academic peer reviewing and publishing service:**

2020 onwards: book reports for translation houses, and *New Books in German*.

2019 onwards: pre-publication reports for monographs at Bloomsbury, Rowman & Littlefield, and University of London Press. German and Austrian history, and Comparative Literature.

2015 onwards: reviewer for *Angermaion*, *The German Quarterly*, *The Goethe Yearbook*, *Seminar*, and *German Studies Review*. Topics range across the eighteenth century, and Swiss intellectual history.

2010 — 2012: Assistant to the Germanic Editor, *Modern Language Review*.

## Talking... **broadcasts** as of May 2020

### **Radio:**

As presenter and script writer of programmes:

BBC Radio 3 *Sunday Feature*: [The Deluxe Edition](#) (45 mins): on luxury since the eighteenth century. — Radio 4's *Pick of the Week*. Chosen by *The Daily* & *The Sunday Telegraph*, *BBC History Extra*.

BBC Radio 3's [Free Thinking](#) (45 mins): on Laurence Sterne and travel writing in Europe.

BBC Radio 3's [Sunday Feature](#) (22 mins): on everyday life and the German *Lied* around 1800.

BBC Radio 3's [Sunday Feature](#) (15 mins): on lapdogs since the eighteenth century.

BBC Radio 3's [Proms Plus](#) (20 mins): on Beethoven and Friedrich Schiller.

BBC Radio 3's [The Essay](#) (15 mins): on the rise and fall of the hairdresser.

As contributor, 2016 — present:

BBC Radio 4's [Lift Going Up](#) (2020): on the cultural history of the lift in Germany.

BBC Radio 3's *Proms Extra*, on [Friedrich Schiller and sentimentality](#) (2017) & *Proms Plus*, on [Romantic walking](#) (2018).

\*BBC Radio 3's *Free Thinking*: on the [New Generation Thinkers 2016](#), [Nietzsche and higher education](#) (2016), [concentration camp barbers](#) (2017), and [W.G. Sebald and German literature](#) (2019).

BBC Radio 3's *Jazz Record Requests*, interview on hair (2017).

BBC World Service's [Newsday](#), on Hollande's hairdresser scandal and history (2016).

Swiss national radio station SRF2's [cultural magazine](#) (in German), on the cultural history of the hairdresser (2016).

BBC Radio Sheffield: Rony Robinson show x5, on the hairdresser in history (twice), Liechtenstein, and the “baring all” life interview (2016 — 2019).

BBC Radio Shropshire on the hairdresser in history (2017), and cures for baldness (2018).

Independent radio, Resonance FM (2016).

Phorest FM: podcast for haircare product suppliers and salon owners, on hairdresser history (2019).

“Textual Therapies” [podcast](#): interviewed guest, talking about cancer and wigs (2020).

Continuity announcements / introductions for BBC Radio 3’s Sunday Features (2018, x2).

**Commissioned podcasts:**

[Literature in Lockdown: Liechtenstein](#). In conversation with Benjamin Quaderer, for the Austrian Cultural Forum (2020).

[Kafka in Quarantine](#), for the Ingeborg Bachmann Centre for Austrian Literature and Culture, in conjunction with the Royal Ballet, among others (2020).

**Television:**

*Heir Hunters*: BBC One & BBC Two (7 March 2017), on the history of the hairdresser.

BBC Arts (online): [Cancer Coiffures](#).

[Youtube](#) videos, e.g. *The Hairdresser in History around 1800*.

**Local and National Festival Talks:**

Hay Festival (2016); Festival of Debate, Sheffield (2016); Sheffield SongMakers (2016), Sage Festival, Gateshead (2017); Proms (2017); Off The Shelf, Sheffield (2017); SheFest, Sheffield (2018); 24-hour Inspire, Sheffield (2018); Sheffield DocFest (2018); Proms (2018); Proms (2019).

**Local exhibition and cultural event:** A Visual History of the Hairdresser in Sheffield, May 2016. (As reported on BBC Radio Sheffield.)

**Leadership, related to writing and engagement specifically:**

2017 — 2020: Impact & Engagement Lead, School of Languages and Cultures, Sheffield.

2018: AHRC Engaging with Government Fellow (Institute for Government, London).

2016: BBC & AHRC New Generation Thinker.