

Workshop: The Afterlives of Literature

Friday 9th June 2023, 12-2pm Oculus 1.02

Dr Ian Ellison (University of Kent / Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Open to all MA and PhD students with relevant interests. Please register [here](#).

In Anglophone literary studies, 'afterlife' is a term often used to encompass the influence and adaptation of texts. It seems regularly to have been employed in this way since the translation of Walter Benjamin's essay 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers' ('The Task of the Translator'). However, Benjamin does not use a German equivalent to the English term 'afterlife' at all.

This workshop will contextualize Benjamin's essay historically and within the development of his critical thought, discussing various readings of the text alongside translations into other languages. It will consider how translation choices have shaped perceptions of Benjamin's writing in different linguistic and cultural contexts. Participants are encouraged to bring along translations from any languages they are familiar with.

Building on the close readings, the session will open out into a discussion of how examining the literary 'afterlife' or 'afterlives' of texts – not only in terms of translation, but also posterity, influence, adaptation – might challenge ethnonationalist literary paradigms and historical periodization, allowing for multiplicity and complexity in the description and analysis of literary relation.

