

CALL FOR PAPERS

One-Day Symposium

The Afterlives of Literary Classics (2):

Audiovisual and Material (Re)Interpretations and (Re)Imaginations

27 March 2026

Université de Lorraine, Nancy, France

The research unit IDEA (Interdisciplinarité Dans les Etudes Anglophones / Interdisciplinarity in English Studies) at the Université de Lorraine, in France, is delighted to announce a call for papers for the second symposium in a series of international symposia and conferences devoted to **‘The Afterlives of Literary Classics’**, and more particularly English-language texts. This pluriannual, interdisciplinary project seeks to explore the various ways in which literary classics have been reinterpreted and reimagined across space, time, cultures and media, and to better understand the phenomenon of literary afterlives.

Literary classics are indeed characterised by their continuous and global presence, in their original form but also in other, derived forms – such as translations, illustrations, adaptations or even by-products, to name but a few. These forms of consumption and perpetuation of literary texts and their authors have frequently been named ‘afterlives’ by academics, notably in the last few decades. Since the late 1990s, a number of critical works have indeed envisioned the afterlives of a book, a character, an author or even a period of time, or also an artistic movement or a literary genre. Similarly, several symposia and conferences originating from a variety of academic disciplines have looked into this phenomenon yet without ever really defining it. The term **‘afterlife/afterlives’**, which comes from German art history (*Nachleben*, Aby Warburg), therefore remains vague, being used at times to refer to adaptations, appropriations and/or interpretations (Blyth, Dow and Hanson, Grossman and Stephens, Mackie, Mazierska, Howey, Storskog, Vanacker and Wynne), or as a synonym for reception, influence and/or legacy (Kingsley-Smith, Morse, Tsagalis, Wichelns), or even sometimes to refer to all of the above (Clark, Forni, Regis and Wynne, Stahlberg). The notion thus fails to relate to a precise and useful definition. In an unprecedented categorisation of textual and post-textual afterlives in the introduction to *Transmedia Creatures* (2018), Francesca Saggini noted that ‘it is essential to provide a working definition of the concept of “afterlife” as it relates to issues of reproducibility, transmissibility, adaptation, and cultural legacy – while no longer relying on fidelity and authenticity as guiding principles’ (2).

The goal of this project is precisely to try and offer a definition, or perhaps rather definitions, of literary afterlives through **a series of symposia and conferences** which will allow scholars interested in the subject to reflect on the different forms which the phenomenon has taken and the different meanings which the notion can encapsulate. It will also enable us to examine the various forms of afterlives that have been produced by writers, artists and amateurs alike – textual and iconographic (**14 November 2025**), as well as audio-visual and material (**27 March 2026**). This project also aims at establishing literary afterlives as valuable objects of study, and afterlife/ves studies as an academic discipline in its own right. The ensuing conference (**Spring 2027**) will be devoted to ‘Literary Afterlives and Literary Afterlife/ves Studies: Towards a New Discipline’.

If the **first symposium** was dedicated to textual and iconographic afterlives, this **second symposium** will tackle audiovisual and material afterlives in two consecutive panels. The **first panel** will focus on examples of audiovisual afterlives of literary classics, such as stagings, movies, TV series, animated productions, ballets, musicals, operas, music videos and videogames. By considering the transformation of a literary text into another medium or other media, speakers are invited to reflect on the notions of intermediality and transmediality. The inherent interdisciplinarity of the panel will invite

scholars specialised in various fields (adaptation studies, cinema, television, music, theatre, and more) to reflect on possible definitions of 'afterlife/afterlives'.

The **second panel** will deal with material and cultural afterlives of literary classics. We invite scholars to study the various and evolving ways of consuming literature, such as merchandising (objects, clothes), tattoo art and nail art inspired by literary classics, as well as literary tourism, exhibitions, fan culture (notably events centred around a particular author or work), theme parks, themed cafés and restaurants, escape games and yet other forms. The aim of this panel is to investigate what texts can become when they transcend their original nature and are turned into material, consumable objects, and to consider what stories can or do become when they are turned into cultural and immersive experiences which go beyond the experience of reading.

For this second symposium, **'The Afterlives of Literary Classics (2): Audiovisual and Material Re-interpretations and Re-imaginings'** (27 March 2026), we invite proposals that address, but are not limited to, the following issues and topics:

Adaptations and Reinterpretations:

- Modern retellings of classic stories
- Successive retellings of classic stories
- Adaptations of a text across different historical periods and socio-cultural contexts

Intermediality and Transmediality:

- The transformation of literary forms into various other media
- Transmedial adaptations and their implications
- The evolution of adaptations and adaptive media throughout time

Canonical Revisions and Challenges:

- Re-evaluating the literary canon and the impact of such re-evaluation on its evolution
- The link between canonical works and popular culture
- Forgotten or marginalised texts and their resurgence

Literary Legacies:

- The enduring influence of authors and their works on subsequent generations
- New ways of consuming literature

Submission Guidelines: We welcome submissions from established scholars, early career researchers, graduate students and independent researchers. Please note that papers will not exceed 20 minutes. Shorter presentations (10-15 minutes) are also welcome.

Submission Process: Please submit your abstracts (300-500 words) and a brief biographical note (150 words) including your current affiliation and contact information to nathalie.colle@univ-lorraine.fr and pauline.schwaller@univ-lorraine.fr in a single Word document titled: LAST NAME_First Name_Afterlives2026.

Submission Deadline: 1st December 2025

Notification of Acceptance: 12th January 2026

Publication: A selection of articles based on the papers presented at the 2025 and 2026 symposia and at the 2027 conference will be considered for publication. More information on the subject will be circulated in due time.