

Abstracts for MSA Session #510 at MLA (Tuesday, December 29, 3:30 – 4:45 pm)

1. “‘Che Sara Sara Devinytie Adieu’ in the Margins: Thomas Nashe and *Doctor Faustus*,” Allyna E. Ward, Booth College

On the two final leaves of a copy of John Leland’s *Principum* (1589) at the Folger Shakespaere Library, Thomas Nashe wrote, “Faustus: Che sara sara devinytie adieu” and in 1594 Nashe’s name appeared with Marlowe’s on the title-page of Marlowe’s, *Dido Queene of Carthage*, which was published posthumously, the same year Nashe’s *The Unfortunate Traveller*. Nashe’s name on the title page most likely signals editorial work by Nashe prior to publication. Nashe worked on *The Unfortunate Traveller* in 1593, the same year Thomas Kyd and Marlowe were arrested for heresy and atheism, and part of this paper examines Nashe’s interest in Marlowe via the thematic similarities between Nashe’s *Pierce’s Penniless, A Supplication to the Devil* (1592) and Marlowe’s *Dr Faustus*. The main concern of this paper is what Nashe found in the early performance of *Dr Faustus* that sparked his interest in Marlowe’s work.

2. “Shades of Marlowe” Paul Menzer, Mary Baldwin College

At the turn of the sixteenth century the Admiral’s Men welcomed Edward Alleyn back into their fold as they prepared to move to their new playhouse in Golding Lane. They were also turning over their repertory, selling playbooks and commissioning new plays. It is possible then to see the dawning of the seventeenth century as marking a new era for the Admiral’s Men, with new plays for their new playhouse. At the same time, the company was reviving the plays of Christopher Marlowe (yet again), while simultaneously commissioning additions to *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Dr. Faustus*, a play by Ben Jonson on Richard III, and a new prologue and epilogue for “the play of Bacon.” “Shades of Marlowe” argues that by making an investment in repertorial nostalgia, the Admiral’s Men constructed a performance history for themselves, ghosted by Christopher Marlowe.

3. “Specters of Alleyn,” Jeremy A. Lopez, University of Toronto

The only extant early text of *The Jew of Malta*, Q1633, is haunted by the ghost of Edward Alleyn, raised twice by Thomas Heywood in the Epistle Dedicatory and the Cockpit Prologue. For the reader who had seen the Cockpit performance, Q1633 is thus doubly ghosted by theatrical performance—by a nostalgic idea (perhaps even the actual memory) of Alleyn filtered through a memory of Richard Perkins. And the idea of Perkins-as-Alleyn’s-Jew is, itself, ghosted by the memory of Perkins’s other roles (Flamineo in *White Devil*, for example). Beginning with this idea of the playtext as a medium channeling the ghost of an actor and/or his roles, my paper makes some speculations about the character of Alleyn’s (and/or Marlovian) acting, especially as it might be seen in the textual traces of plays that responded to, and perhaps sought to modify or improve upon it.

Abstracts for MSA Session #740 at MLA (Wednesday, December 30, 1:45 – 3:00 pm)

1. “‘None Dare Speak a Word’: Performing Silence in *Edward II*,” Pierre Hecker, Carleton College

This paper will explore the use of silence as both a dramatic device and source of interpretable meaning in Christopher Marlowe’s *Edward II*. My underlying conviction is that Marlowe is as much a creator of drama to be performed as he is an author of literary texts, and that much of the meaning to be derived from the play lies not merely in what is spoken, but in what is done, or seen, or implied on stage. From numerous interpretations of described expressions (including Edward’s “frowns” or his “turning away and smiles,” Gaveston’s “scornful look,” Mortimer Junior’s cold “looks”); to the “form of Gaveston’s exile” (written, not spoken); to laden stage actions, like the exchange of miniatures between Edward and Gaveston or, of course, the murder of Edward, Marlowe uses a range of dramaturgical tools and devices involving silence to generate meaning in his play.

2. “Devil on the Doorstep: Diabolical Enactment in Marlowe and His (and Our) Contemporaries,” Brett Foster, Wheaton College (Illinois)

Mephistopheles, whether appearing in *Doctor Faustus* as foul demon, dragon, or friar, is literature’s most famous stage devil. Yet it is essential to situate Marlowe’s representation within the broader context of early modern works with similar diabolical figures. How might these comparisons help us to appreciate better Marlowe’s own dramatic intentions, and perhaps scenic ironies, in *Faustus*? After discussing a few Renaissance stage devils, I will consider Marlowe’s broader influence by introducing more modern representations of the demonic. I am most interested in the many resonances between Mephistopheles’ arrivals and confrontations and those in Conor McPherson’s *The Seafarer*, lately staged with much acclaim on Broadway and at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theater. McPherson’s well-dressed Irish devil Lockhart is a curious descendent of Marlowe’s infernal creation.

3. “Marking Female Judaism: Costuming Abigail and Jessica in Post-Holocaust British Productions,” Irene Middleton, Emory University

While the early modern English marked male Jewish identity with an abundance of traits, female Jewish identity is more uncertain, its boundaries fluid in comparison to the constant shoring-up of the male Christian / Jew divide. Post-Holocaust British stagings of Abigail in Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* and Jessica in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* use these uncertain religious signs to “rehabilitate” Jessica and Abigail despite their betrayals. In keeping with trend of sympathetic Shylocks comes a more general impulse to “rescue” all of the Jewish characters. The depictions of the daughters’ religious conversions change the plays’ messages about religious conflict and identity. If the daughter retains traits marked as “Jewish” after conversion, then the markers between Jew and Christian, so strongly reaffirmed by the text, are broken down. Other production choices result in Jewish sublimation into Christianity, ongoing tension between the two communities, or a counter-textual acceptance of difference.

4. “Fine Madness--Performing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe,” Jeff Dailey, Five Towns College

In his 1953 book *Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare*, F. P. Wilson states: “When we read plays which we have no opportunity of seeing . . . we too often forget that the dramatist’s lines were written to be spoken.” But why do people not have the opportunity of seeing Marlowe’s plays performed? Are they not stageworthy? In order to examine this question, Jeff Dailey founded a theatre company--the Marlowe Project--and directed all of Marlowe’s plays, including the early *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and the incomplete *The Massacre at Paris*. He found that Marlowe’s plays were extremely theatrical. In his presentation at the MLA, he will talk about his experiences directing Marlowe’s plays, and how their performance sheds light on the texts.