



16 October 2009

To: Members of SAA 2010 Seminar #9, Marlowe and Shakespeare

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We are glad to be in touch with you, and welcome you to our enterprise. The idea for it arose early this year as we worked on our (forthcoming) edited collection for Ashgate, *Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman: Lives, Stage, and Page*. Although there have been excellent Marlowe groups and sessions at SAA over the last decade, there doesn't seem to have been a seminar devoted exclusively to Marlowe and Shakespeare, or their mutual lines of influence, for a good while. So we are immensely gratified that there was such interest in our topic, and that you chose our session, Number Nine. Thank you.

There are many fine studies devoted to the topic of Marlowe and Shakespeare over the last sixty years. We look forward to seeing what you contribute to scholarship in this field. We request two things from you, our participants: that your work encompasses both authors; and that you infuse it with the theme of utility or practicality. We would rather not receive an overspecialized essay, one that discusses Marlowe or Shakespeare without reference to the other, or a lengthy book or dissertation chapter.

The happiest outcome of our labors would be two hours of scintillating conversation in which all of us listen to, learn from, and talk with each other. Everyone should have a turn. This is what SAA would prefer, rather than a series of regulated responses or paper critiques. We propose that once the essays have been submitted, we, as seminar leaders, read them, discover interlinking patterns in our arguments and observations, and propose a series of discussion topics. Of course, we welcome suggestions. We hope that you will have the opportunity to read each other's essays and enjoy them as much as we know we will.

We wish to assure you that your final product does *not* need to be an article-length, publication-ready essay about Marlowe and Shakespeare. Your total contribution should fall between 5-10 pages. This will make it much more manageable for all of us to read, since we are also enjoined to circulate our work before we meet, as is customary. If we include the two seminar leaders, our number at the table will be sixteen, although inevitably at least one person drops out, and often said leaders do not contribute essays, although I (Michael) cannot take a vow of abstinence on this score. I for one would rather not read more than 160 pages, which is what ten pages from all sixteen of us would comprise. (I once heard of a very full seminar whose total page contribution from its members verged on *four figures*, a ghastly prospect.) So, if a workshop member's contribution is egregiously long, we will send it back to her or him and ask that it be shortened.

We must now discuss the matter of deadlines. SAA admonishes us to set and to observe them with some strictness. We are sorry to report that no shriving of time can be allowed. These dates in 2010 seem to us to be the most workable.

1. Although it is customary in seminars to request paper abstracts, we thought that a brief summary (three sentences?) of your contribution would be appropriate instead. The deadline for this is **15 January**. Please email us this preliminary material in any form—a Word attachment, or even in the text of an email would be fine. We'll prompt you at the turn of the New Year so that you remember to keep this on your calendar.

2. Your contribution for the workshop itself is due by **14 February**. *This should be emailed in a separate Word attachment rather than as part of an email message*. We will offer a prod or spur if we have not heard from you 48 hours past the deadline (16 February). If we don't hear from you at all, we'll assume that you are not on board with us. **Early contributions would be greatly appreciated.**

3. By **19 February**, we are required to send our sponsoring organization a list of our participants, which may only include those who have met the deadlines, as the policy states. **N.B:**

No member, even if registered in the seminar or workshop, may participate in the session at the annual meeting without completing the advance preparation set by the Leader(s). Seminar or workshop members should follow procedures established by their Leader(s), particularly regarding paper length and circulation deadlines. Any seminar or workshop member who has not completed the assigned work by the deadlines specified by the Leader(s) will not be listed on the program and may not join in the discussion at the meeting.

4. Once we have everyone's primary work, we will then create a document that consists of our brief summaries and email it to you, by **1 March**.

May we ask you all to follow this format for your main contribution? Please use 10 or 12-point Microsoft Word. Do not include a title page. Include your name and university affiliation in the top right-hand corner of your first page, instead. To reiterate: since our workshop has sixteen people in it, 5-10 pages per member is sufficient.

(The matter of circulating our work and communicating with each other will occupy an addendum / P.S. to this letter. In any case, the essays will be available soon after the circulation of the abstracts, but no later than **10 March**.)

We would like to remind you of three things in closing.

1) Between now and April, there are opportunities for you to see and to meet others who are interested in Marlowe and his work, including members of this seminar. Next week's Blackfriars conference in Staunton, VA, is one occasion. Another is the pair of Marlowe Society of America sessions at MLA in Philadelphia during the holidays. If you go to the MSA website and follow the link, you'll see a complete list of papers and abstracts, as well as meeting times and rooms at the Hilton. See www.marlowesmightyline.org

2) Heather James (University of Southern California) is planning the 2011 SAA in the Pacific time zone, and is very much interested in proposals for seminars and paper sessions. It would be a wonderful idea for Marlovians to make their presence felt at this meeting in this way. I hope that one or more of you will propose something, and should feel free to do so.

3) Finally, if you are not already a member, we invite you to join the Marlowe Society of America. We are a growing and dynamic organization and would appreciate your participation and energy. Please visit the MSA website and follow the Join Us link. One of us seminar leaders just happens to be the Membership Chair.

And, one last thing: in general matters about Number Nine, please contact **both** of us—it will be easier for the two of us to communicate if we have the same information. (We strive, always, to confuse each other as little as possible.) Email is always best: stapletm@ipfw.edu and sscott@msmary.edu

P.S. / Addendum (from MLS)

I have created a web site for our seminar, www.saa9.org. This should be easy to remember, since we are indeed Number Nine (a lucky digit, as ancient sources do report). I thought that at the very least, the site should contain a list of participants and email addresses; some links to resources, such as those on the new MSA homepage (I have created a reciprocal link on that site to our page so that the membership could be informed of our doings and profit from our good work); our abstracts; a page that contains the above deadlines as well as our communiqués, including this one; and, finally, each of our seminar contributions in a downloadable Microsoft Word file. (If you insist, I can create a password for this page, although I would rather not. Your fine work deserves as much exposure as possible, and I'd like to show you off. Let the home folks make a fuss over you. I, for one, want all the readers I can get.)

The idea for this website caper in the first place occurred to me as I pondered the matter of the circulation of essays, often an unwieldy process. It would be much easier for everyone if, instead of a giant, vintage-Buick-sized .pdf file with all of our contributions that comes a-cropper into your email, we could just refer to the web page and read the essays there. For that matter, instead of sending a file full of everyone's abstracts, I could just post them on the page, and email everyone with the message that the information is available: your abstract below your name, and a downloadable Word file with all the abstracts. Therefore, the entire seminar could be portable because you could call up the website and see what we've produced. When the time comes to gear up, you can just download the essays onto a flash drive the size of a lipstick or a shotgun shell and carry it with you and refer to it at will. (Or not.)

If you go to our website now, you'll see that there are page links that include name, academic affiliation, and email address; one including this letter, and those upcoming that we will be writing to you, as well as the deadlines above; another with material from two upcoming edited collections devoted to Marlowe: our own *Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman*, including our substantial bibliography, that we hope will be of some use to you; and materials from Sara Deats's collection, *Doctor Faustus: A Critical Guide*. I have also provided links to the new MSA page, the SAA, and other web loci. If you have a home page you would like me to link with your name, please pass it along. The best-case-scenario (if you will forgive the cliché) would be for our seminar to have some momentum and for us to engage with each other before we meet, and for it to have a life after we part. I hope to learn from you all as I embark on my current work on Marlowe, and to exploit each of you as shamelessly as possible for this purpose.

In the event that you come upon my own home page, I hope that, if and when you look at it, you will keep in mind the caveat that my current position at my university entails a bit of clowning—in fact, at times, outright *clownage*, to use one of Marlowe's words—e.g., talking about Shakespeare to six-year-olds, running bus tours for senior citizens, and other metaphorical equivalents of the wearing of funny hats.

Please let us know that you received this letter, and if you don't mind, that you visited the webpage: www.saa9.org. If you'd like anything added to your entry, let us know. We'll try to fulfill your request as soon as possible.