

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to welcome you as members of the seminar “‘Washed in Lethe’: Renaissance Cultures of Remembering and Forgetting.” We have a full seminar and a strong group of participants, and we look forward to a truly interesting, productive seminar. Please find attached a welcome letter with more details about the seminar and the schedule for submissions in preparation for our meeting in Washington. Some of the deadlines are set by the SAA, but we have tried to keep the schedule as relaxed as possible.

If they have not already done so, the SAA organizers will also send you an official letter of invitation soon, which you can use to apply for travel grants from your universities.

Should you have any questions that are not clarified by our letter, please let us know.

Once more, welcome on board!

All best wishes,
Isabel Karremann & Jonathan Baldo

Attachment: welcome letter

September 26, 2018

Dear Colleague,

We are delighted to welcome you as a member of the seminar “‘Washed in Lethe’: Renaissance Cultures of Remembering and Forgetting.” We have a full group of fifteen participants, and are delighted that you have accepted our invitation to explore this topic together. We would like to encourage papers on as many different approaches to the subject as there are participants. Here is the longer version of the proposal that we submitted to this year’s Program Committee:

This seminar invites contributions on the workings of cultural memory in early modern England, with a particular focus on the role that acts of remembering and forgetting play in the formation and transformation of culture. Papers for this seminar will be asked to explore ways in which a medieval and Renaissance culture of memory met resistance and challenges from the spread of print culture, the growth of nationalism, and the English Reformation. In what ways was the relationship to the past altered or renegotiated by these developments? And how were such alterations enabled by, or even dependent on, acts of forgetting? To what extent did texts that constructed these new relationships between present, past and an imagined future address the forms and functions of memory and forgetting? How did such acts of revision engender specific experiences of time and temporality? And what role, in particular, did poetic and dramatic texts play in this process? While attitudes toward forgetting expressed in historiographical, physiological, and religious or moral discourses often tended toward the negative, imaginative texts seem to have recognized and explored the transformative, even creative potential of forgetting. How, then, were remembering and forgetting represented in as well as performatively brought about in early modern literature? What rhetorical devices and dramatic practices were

employed or newly devised? Did the mnemonic properties of a text play out differently in different media or performance sites? How can the reception of texts in reading or in performance be accounted for in terms of certain effects of remembering and forgetting? We plan to organize the seminar around questions you submit to one another. Once we've received all your papers, we will divide you into groups of three or (at most) four and ask you to write short responses to one another's papers, to be sent only to the authors of the papers and to us. We will also ask you to devise a question about each paper in your group, which will be shared with the whole seminar. These will form the basis for our discussion in April. Our hope is that from a discussion of these questions will emerge a productive and focused discussion of larger issues, common concerns, and some lively debate.

Below you will find dates and assignments. Please stick to these dates, and let us know if you have any doubts about being able to meet a deadline.

By Agincourt Day, October 25: Email us to confirm that you wish to participate in the seminar and that your contact information on the attached list of participants is accurate. If by any chance you would prefer to receive correspondence and future mailings in paper form, we will be happy to oblige, but please let us know.

By December 1: If you have audio or video needs, you must let us know no later than this date, so that we can send your request for equipment and/or services to the conference organizers.

By December 16: Two things. (1) Submit to us a working title for your paper and a brief (200-300 word) abstract, in Word format, of the argument you propose to make. This, of course, will not be binding! Once we have received the abstracts, we will distribute them to all participants so that we can collectively see the emerging shape of the seminar. And (2) by this date, too, please send us the titles of two or three books or articles (with bibliographical data) that you have found particularly helpful to your work on our topic. From these we will assemble a bibliography to distribute to everyone during the holiday break.

By February 15: Send your completed paper, in Word format, to us and to all the other seminar participants. Papers should be no longer than 3000 words. The reason for this is that participants, particularly those responding to your work, will want to read and reread your paper; so the more tightly argued and crisply illustrated your paper is, the easier it will be to recall and discuss. Think of it as more a position paper than a discursive essay. Please note that the SAA requires us to let the conference organizers know on February 15 who has completed papers. If we have not received yours by then, your name will not appear in the conference program. By March 1 we will send to everyone a list of the groups into which we have divided participants. That division will be made, wherever possible, according to shared interests.

By April 1: Three things. (1) Send your response to each assigned paper (a page will suffice; no more than two) to its author and to both of us. Try to focus on the important issues raised in the paper rather than on minutiae; in other words, offer the author commentary on the particulars of the paper while attending to the larger conversation we'll be having. (2) Send a question which the paper stimulated, and which you would like to pursue when we meet, to all members of the seminar, including the two of us. In this way we hope to effect a balance in our discussion

between points raised by individual papers and broader questions about the play. And (3) send to us an abstract of your completed paper for distribution to auditors when the seminar meets. If we don't receive one, we will assume that you want us to use the abstract you submitted in December.

April 17-20: The SAA conference in Washington, DC. We will let you know the meeting day and time of our seminar as soon as we have official word. We would also like to suggest that we go for drinks and/or dinner after the seminar. Should any current or former Washingtonians have a recommendation in this regard, please let us know closer to the time of the conference.

We hope this clearly details what the seminar will be about as well as your responsibilities to the seminar. We have a superb group of participants, and we look forward with eager anticipation to reading what all of you have to say about remembering and forgetting in early modern England and to meeting you at the conference. If you have any questions at all, don't hesitate to email or phone us: our contact information is included below.

With warmest regards,
Jonathan and Isabel

Jonathan Baldo
Department of Humanities
Eastman School of Music
University of Rochester
26 Gibbs Street
Rochester, NY 14604
USA
jbald@esm.rochester.edu
Office phone: (585) 274-1611

Isabel Karremann
Lehrstuhl für Englische Literaturund
Kulturwissenschaft
Neuphilologisches Institut
Universität Würzburg
Am Hubland
D-97074 Würzburg
GERMANY
isabel.karremann@uni-wuerzburg.de
Office phone: +49 931 31-89388

P.S. I am attaching here also the full list of participants with contact data - please check whether we were given your correct university affiliations and email addresses, so that future communication among seminar members will run smoothly.

Dear Colleagues,

We have compiled the abstracts and bibliographic suggestions for our seminar "Washed in Lethe." As I think you will find, this group of original projects is especially diverse and exciting. We look forward to receiving your papers by Feb. 15.

The SAA organizers have informed us that our seminar is scheduled for Thursday, April 18 from 10-12 am. I hope that time slot proves to be convenient for everyone.

I hope you are all enjoying a restful and rejuvenating winter break. All best wishes for a warm, healthy, and happy new year,

Jonathan and Isabel

Dear all,

Our SAA seminar is about to take place only ten days away from now, and I for my part can hardly wait to meet you all in person and discuss your wonderful essays with you. Jonathan and I are extremely grateful that you've worked so well as a group in preparation, submitting your essays as well as your responses to your subgroup and the general questions prompted by them on time. In order to facilitate getting an overview over shared concerns we might profitably discuss in the seminar, we have compiled all questions submitted in one document. They are still ordered by subgroups for easier reference, as some are specifically on or prompted by individual essays; but most have a general character well worth pondering by members of the other subgroups as well.

Jonathan and I are still in the process of working out how best to avail of the paltry two hours we have -- the richness of ideas obviously stands in diametrical relationship to the time allowed for our seminar. We will have to run a rather tight ship, I'm afraid. We would like each subgroup to be able to respond to responses, answer the questions posed and raise new ones, but also to open up the discussion to general questions, and, if time allows, to questions from the audience (to whom the abstracts submitted will be made available). For the sake of saving time for this, we will keep the introduction to a minimum.

Of course, much of the exchange on ideas has taken place already in preparation for our meeting, and we hope it will also continue afterwards. While we do have in mind approaching a publisher for a collected volume of essays, let's start with continuing our discussions over lunch after the seminar. Please let us know if you have different plans for Thursday lunch; otherwise we'll assume that you will all join us. Please also let us know if you have any dietary restrictions or preferences -- we will try and book a table at a restaurant nearby that caters to all our needs and desires.

All best wishes for a safe and pleasant trip to Washington!

Very much looking forward to seeing you there,

Isabel & Jonathan