Laughing Gland

A Very Small Literary Journal of Poetry Prose and Criticism

Spring 2000

Editor Lori Emerson
Managing Editor Greg Betts
Editorial Board Jenny Kerber
Andrea Mus
James Pound
Toni Smith

Laughing Gland (ISSN 1205-8866) is a Penny Press Publication published quarterly in Victoria. Free copies may be found throughout Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. Selections from Laughing Gland may also be found at http://web.uvic.ca/~englgrad

Submissions are always welcome. Please include a SASE.

Subscription rates: $10/year for individuals; $20/year for institutions. Prices include GST.

Lori Emerson
c/o Department of English
University of Victoria
PO Box 3070
Victoria, BC V8W 3W1
lori_emerson@hotmail.com

Many thanks are due in this issue—the first of which goes to the new managing editor and members of the editorial board, whose energy, initiative and willingness to contribute in whatever way has turned this publication into a truly exciting venture. Next, sincere thanks go out to Ellie Nichol, the bpNichol archives at Simon Fraser University, and Stephen Scobie for making it possible to include in this issue a previously unpublished poem by bpNichol — what an honour. And finally thank you to Patrick Finn, Alan Galey and Travil deCook for persisting in getting Laughing Gland on-line. Now enjoy!

BUIK: Glasgow Dialectics

BUIK: Glasgow Dialectics
for Stephen Scobie + Douglas Barbour

S	ah	hodn		nur	nay	oan		burd	sook
D		bowly	wis	noo		caur	coo	bunnit	

S	yir	aa	heilan	wan
D	shos	lolan	wance	

vocabulary derived from graffiti found in Glasgow + from poems by Ian Hamilton Finlay + Tom Leonard

each section of text to be treated as words +/or letter groupings
vertical lines mark transition points
duration of each section indeterminate

bpNichol
October 6 1982

--bpNichol

ripples

```
p(o)nd
fr(o)g
pl(o)p

( )o( )( )
( )( )o( )
( )( )o( )

( (o) ) )
( ( (o) )
( ( (o) )
```

plague

```
p      f  f
o      r pr
np   p o oo f
dopplegänger
 nolo    d  o
 dnop       g
  dp
```

plagued by word 6.0

oxy-acetylene welding nutshell,
noxious dope fiend –
non-transparent Dixieland.

western haiku

bullrush;
bullfrog–
bullrider.

5 bashos for gary barwin

1.

pond's ripple of water
a memory of tadpole youth

2.

basho
vowels shift
the sounds remain
the fronds refrain

3.

pond puzzle filled w/
frog shaped piece

4.

did the frog jump,
or did the pond pull?

5.

the old pond
frog jumps
thru surface of paper.

–Derek Beaulieu

Rob McLennan gave a reading at the University of Victoria in October of 1999 as part of a cross-Canada tour to promote his latest book, The Richard Brautigan Ahhhhhhhhhh (Talonbooks). The following poems are from bagne, or, Criteria for Heaven forthcoming in the fall of 2000 from Broken Jaw Press.

66. The moon is a tear caught by a tongue

fr natalee caple

at the final break,
finding belief where before there was none,
the real power hidden
behind parlour tricks
& the occasional sleight-of-hand

to be here in the morning
for you to read this,
almost to expect due closure

to disappoint between the gut & tongue
the grand human ego, that we
are the only voices speaking
, that we personally
would see apocalypse

schoolkids under 1950s desks
when the big one swooned, Miss Atom
Bombshell winking back,
the biggest tease in the modern world

/& where you might read as teardrop
i read rip, a small
torn scrap
or scar

turning on another one

71. He's had it up to here.

fr clint burnham

as the reader reads,
darkness over age & romantic drift,
already sick of angels

& premonition. those close to their own death,
he claims, have the ability
to see spirits.
nothing gained w/out a price.

hiding bodies in plain view, teethmarks
ravage new orleans flesh
& wisdom sleeps in comic books.

never is this glamour w/out substance.
slipping trade secrets in poetry books,

places no one would think to look.

–Rob McLennan

Excavating the 'real story': An Interview with Karl Siegler

INTRODUCTION:
What follows is the transcript from my interview with Karl Siegler, president and editor of Talonbooks, which took place on August 30th 1999. I was fortunate to be able to work for Talonbooks this past summer, and by the end of my stay there I felt clear about several things: that I still knew very little about the history of Canadian publishing; that other students of Canadian literature seemed to know even less about the role small and medium-sized (literary) publishers have played in the development of our national culture and literature; and that, as one of the 'founding fathers' of Canadian publishing, Karl himself is a valuable cultural institution well worth listening to and learning from. An interview seemed like an ideal way to mesh these three. And now, three months later, while I am still wondering at the strange silence in classrooms about publishing in Canada (is it because it is seen as not quite fitting into the rubric of either history or literature, in which case it is almost entirely ignored?) and the surprising disjuncture that exists between the realms of academe and publishing, my hope is even stronger that this interview will help fill the silence.

INTERVIEW WITH KARL SIEGLER, AUGUST 30TH 1999:
LORI EMERSON: So first of all I have to confess that when I started working at Talon it was embarrassing how little I knew not just about the basics of publishing but also about Talonbooks. I mean, I felt I knew quite a bit about Coach House Press, like a lot of other people I knew, but for some reason none of us knew about one of the more important literary publishers left in Canada. And as far as I can see now, your booklist has always been as important as the Coach House Press booklist, not to mention the fact that Talon, unlike a lot other presses including Coach House, somehow managed to stay afloat after the cutbacks in '95 and '96. So do you have any thoughts on why you continue to get so little coverage from the media and from the academy or the public in general?

KARL SIEGLER: Well I like to re-phrase people's questions [laughs]. So what I think you're trying to say, or trying ask, is 'How is it that I knew so much more about Coach House than I did about Talon even though Coach House was in Toronto and Talon is right here, and I grew up here!'--is that really what you're trying to say?

EMERSON: Well sure, that'll do.

SIEGLER: It's a good place to start actually, and there are a number of reasons for that--there are exactly two reasons for that actually, because you asked about the media as well.

EMERSON: Yeah

SIEGLER: One of the most important things to know about Canadian publishing is that it didn't exist before the 60s, ok? If you go back and look at the origins of Coach House and Oberon and Talon and everything, they were all founded in the mid-sixties. And they were all founded, incidentally, in an age when the liberal government of Canada under Trudeau created all kinds of youth employment projects because at that time fifty percent of the population of North America, including Canada, was under twenty-five, and the governments in the western world all faced this huge problem of having a vast wave of baby-boomers entering the employment market and there not being enough jobs. So the government invented all kinds of things, they introduced the student loan program to keep these people in university as long as they possibly could. They introduced a whole bunch of public policies between the mid 60s and the mid 70s, the sole purpose of which was to stretch out this wave as it impacted the employment market so that you wouldn't have a re-creation of the 1930s when you had twenty-five or thirty percent unemployment, which is what the government was looking at. So one of the things that resulted from these programs was that students went to university far longer, really took their time because the regulations were lax and the bursaries were vast. Access to capital was easy. And in a way the government was ready to do almost anything to keep people off the job market, and one of the most effective ways of course was to keep them in university. They also started a whole number of other things like Katimavik, a bunch of youth programs, sort of like the Canadian equivalent of the Peace Corps. They sent people overseas for ridiculous wages and in Katimavik you went all over Canada--you worked in Banff National Park and so on, basically for pocket money and room and board. Another way of preventing this wave of potential employees from inundating the industrial market was to encourage entrepreneurialism. If there were no jobs that you could go to, and there were no companies you could get a job from, you could always start your own company. So there were a number of so-called 'youth opportunity' programs like LIP and ELIP, and these were grants intended to set people up in small businesses. A lot of the presses that were started between '63 and '73 basically were started by graduate students who, at one and the same time, were on some student loan program, had a bursary, were doing part-time student stuff and were getting their entrepreneurial grants on the side to start their own business. So what I'm saying to you is that all of these programs that the government had at the time, the public policy programs to slow down this wave, were very effective. And they accomplished their goal, leading these people into the job market at a much slower rate than some great tidal wave that's going to overwhelm the economy, right?

EMERSON: Yes, ok.

SIEGLER: Once that purpose was accomplished in the mid-70s and all these people had found a niche, usually a poverty niche of some sort, the government started cutting off all the programs. What this meant was that by the early 70s neither Coach house nor Talon nor Oberon nor anybody else could have survived had the government not put in place programs in support of Canadian publishing.

EMERSON: Right.

SIEGLER: Now, the most interesting thing about public policy and publishing in this country, which still sustains the industry thirty years later, was that the royal commission--which began to suggest that we have public policy in Canadian publishing, that we have Canadian publishers, and that they be supported with taxpayers money--was not a federal royal commission. It was an Ontario royal commission because at the time eighty-two percent of Canadian-owned publishing

was based in Ontario. So it ended up being a provincial royal commission and they made certain recommendations and the province of Ontario, in 1971, began public policy on publishing actually about six months ahead of the feds. In response to its provincial royal commission, it put into place a number of programs: it put into place a cultural grant program of the Ontario Arts Council for publishers, it introduced distribution legislation, it introduced legislation in the public school system to get Canadian books into the schools, it instituted a guaranteed loan program. What happened was that Ontario was then quickly followed by the federal government who then put into place the Canada Council block grant program to sort of supplement the Ontario program. So Ontario publishers, since 1970, always had a huge advantage over B.C. in terms of the amount of public money available to them to allow them to do what they were doing. B.C. did not get a publishing program until 1986--

EMERSON: wow--

SIEGLER: which is seventeen years after Coach House and publishers in Ontario had access to all these Ontario programs. What this meant was that Ontario publishers always were much better capitalized and were much more financially flexible than any other publisher in the country. Now historically, as it happened, Coach house and Talon were the earliest, they both began in '63 in some incarnation or another, they developed pretty much on a parallel basis, they used initially all the public policy programs generally available to that generation, to the entrepreneurs who stayed in school which is why so many of these presses were actually started by graduate students. But Coach House simply always had more capital and so they could afford to do things that Talon could never afford. And one of the things, of course, they could afford to do much more effectively was to promote themselves and their press and their list and their authors. When I first joined the company in 1974 it was bankrupt, it was technically bankrupt. And I appealed to the province of B.C. and they bailed us out, or Talon would have died the year I joined it. By 1979 Talon was again bankrupt. Talon had a deficit that was half its annual sales by the end of 1979. Now the reason for that is we were competing with Coach House and spending as much money on production and authors, and trying to spend as much money on publicity and promotion as they were but without the provincial support. We also had no line of credit at the bank, because of course we had a deficit so no bank would lend us any money or give us an overdraft, we were horribly trapped in terms of cash flow, right? We were competing with Coach House on a very non-level playing-field, and we always have done so. That's one really important, sort of objective difference between Talon and Coach House and why their public profiles are quite different.

But the other reason, I said there were two reasons for this, the other reason for this is that in Canada, still today, and it was the same back then as it is now, you can't really be a national anything in Canada without being based in Toronto. I mean, most business addresses that you see of companies located in Ontario, they just give their address and then they leave out the province. They don't even bother mentioning that it's Ontario because it's understood that if you're national you operate from the imperial centre. And commercially in anglophone Canada if you're a national company you're located in Toronto, and if you're not located in Toronto it means that you're not a national company. And in the 80s, as we struggled on this completely non-level playing field, to use contemporary economic terminology, people kept asking us 'Why don't you just move to Ontario?' But part of the ideology at Talonbooks has always been anti-imperialist, and we felt then, as we feel now--and ironically this has become more and more possible with the evolution of the global village, and communications technology and so on--we always felt back then, even when we didn't have that technology, that it was just as legitimate to run a press, a literary press, a cultural press, from anywhere in Canada. We always said that you could be a press of national importance from anywhere. You don't have to be in Ontario. Now unfortunately, the book market never agreed with us.

One of my absolute favourite stories goes back to when we were flirting with cookbooks in the early 80s, we did Susan Mendelson's cookbook and then we did Umberto Menghi's cookbook, and at that time I was selling the chains which were Coles and Smiths. And we were getting into these cookbooks because we thought they would generate a lot of commercial profits, and internally subsidize our literary stuff that we were actually interested in. That's why we did it. So off I went to Montreal to sell to Coles and Smiths. And when I went to present the Umberto Menghi book to the national buyers, they gave me the order and the order was only for Alberta and B.C. And I looked at the guy and I said, 'What's wrong with this?' I mean, here's a national buyer, you know, how come this order is only for Alberta and BC? Where's the national order? How many copies do you want in Toronto and so on? Because we had announced our plans, Umberto had actually borrowed somebody's kitchen, we had TV coverage in Toronto and *The Globe and Mail* was there, all the major media was set up. So I told the buyer this, but they still only bought for B.C. and Alberta. And I said, 'What is this? Why is this a regional order? This is a national book!' And the guy said to me, 'Well you know it's because it's a regional book.' I looked at him, and I didn't know what to say, I mean I was actually dumbfounded at first and I looked at him and I thought, well what can you say, think of something really clever [laughs]. I thought about it for a second and I looked at him and I said, 'you know, you're absolutely right, you're absolutely right. This is a regional book. I understand now. But the region is not British Columbia, the region is Tuscany!' And the guy looked at me and he literally did not understand what I was saying. I mean it kind of felt good to get the shot out, but he didn't understand what I was trying to say. Of course what I was trying to say was that had any press in Toronto published a book like Umberto Menghi's book, an Italian cookbook specializing in the region of Tuscany, had we been based in Ontario and published the same book by the same author, we would have got a national order. So what the chain was really saying to me had nothing to do with the book, it had to do with where the book was coming from, from what publishing house it was coming from, and it was coming from a west coast publisher. Therefore, by definition, it was a west coast book--never mind the fact that it was an Italian cookbook.

EMERSON: That's wild.

SIEGLER: Well so that's the story. It's maybe one of the three or four stories, in my twenty-six year career as a publisher, that I treasure most because it is one of the most indicative illustrations of how the Canadian book market actually works, and how the Canadian economy actually works . . . I'm actually surprised that we managed over the years to keep up. And I have to in this regard give credit where credit is due. There's no question that in the long process of my gradually buying out all of my partners, and being the classic last man standing in the Talon empire, it's very important

to recognize that everyone that was at Talon books for this whole period from the 60s right up to today has brought to the company a kind of stubborn, bull-headed determination that's astounding. The fact of the matter is that in the thirty some odd years that Talon has been around it has burned out a hell of a lot of people. I guess, from my own point of view, the only reason why I'm still here is because my skin was thicker than anybody else's. Keeping up with Coach House, if that's the way you want to contextualize the question, which I think is as good a way as any other, them having the advantage of location and provincial support, has been brutal on the people who have worked here. Actually, we have not managed still today to rise to a position of public recognition of pre-eminence that I think this company actually deserves, if I can say that in a totally uninterested way. I think it's just starting now and ironically, although I regret this deeply, the fact that Talon is now emerging as a national literary publisher of note, I think regrettably, tragically, has more to do with Coach House going out of business than anything that we have done here since '96. I think that when the Coach House board got together in 1996 and looked at the lay of the land and looked at what was happening in public policy and looked at the emergence of Chapters and Pegasus and everything, that they all got together and made the right rational decision. They looked at it and they said, 'We can't continue, and we can't ask anyone to do this for us, just shut down now before we're forced out of business.' I think that was the right decision at the level of reason. And it was very good for us for them to make that decision. Had they not made it, we wouldn't be as well known today as we are.

EMERSON: Yeah, that doesn't really surprise me. It's also interesting how on the one hand there almost seems to be a nostalgic, un-real cult following growing up around the idea of a Coach House, but on the other hand I don't see another generation of determined people coming into Canadian publishing, who are dedicated to Canadian culture in that way. Actually, in an interview you did with *Line* in 1986 you implied that the sort of publishing we've been talking about came out of a 60s mentality and so was a one generation phenomenon. So, now thirteen years later, do you see another generation of stubborn, idealistic committed young publishers on the rise?

SIEGLER: Sure I do. They are there. I mean, I'm going to this conference put on by the Small Press Action Network . . .

EMERSON: Generous Margins.

SIEGLER: Yeah, and I'm on a panel to talk about small presses and so on from my point of view, what it was like to be one, because we no longer are a small press. And we've got authors like Rob McLennan whose style of publishing, self-publishing, pamphleteering, and chapbook publishing is exactly the same, in all its material conditions, as what was going in the 60s with the early Talon, or Coach House, or whatever. That kind of thing has really always gone on, in any country, even when it's officially suppressed. I mean there's all that publishing that was going on in the former east block, where people were secretly cranking stuff out on their mimeograph machines, and what Rob McLennan does in the western world is exactly the same kind of publishing. It's underground publishing, it's anti-establishment.

EMERSON: To me, though, Rob McLennan is the exception, and I don't think there are very many people out there other than him and a few others not just publishing, but actively, openly supporting the idea of a Canadian literature or culture or whatever. It seems that where there is a public will to fight for a nationalist culture or literature it's expressed in terms of so-called 'International' popularity, or in terms of high-sales books like your cookbooks.

SIEGLER: Well, first of all I don't think Rob McLennan is an exception. I think that when I look back on those of us who started Canadian publishing we were pretty exceptional characters, and that we managed to build companies since the 60s and employed a certain number of people is a whole other matter. But the fact of the matter is that the people who started literary publishing in this country you can count on the fingers of two hands.

EMERSON: I guess so.

SIEGLER: So somebody like Rob, who's writing and editing, working and doing and collating and printing and distributing and so on, we were all like that and at that time we were just like him and we were as exceptional as he is. The point I'm trying to make is that we were able to build an infrastructure to draw a lot more people into that community, whereas I don't think he will be. That's one thing. The other thing I learned too was that while the cookbooks that we did, and the children's books that we experimented with, were successful beyond our wildest dreams, one of my favourite things about having done those kinds of books was that it proved to me beyond a shadow of a doubt--see we always wondered whether the fact that we couldn't sell our literary books was because we weren't good enough business people and we didn't know how to market and we didn't know how to distribute, all the usual kinds of insecurities you have in a society that's governed by monetarism. So we always wondered about ourselves--are we just grant junkies, and welfare-bums, and could we, were we forced to, really publish a book the way you're supposed to publish it! Well lo and behold, we did these four books and they were just incredible successes, I mean we just couldn't keep them in print fast enough and we did the national tours and we got the national coverage and people did change their minds and they jumped on the band wagon and all that. But the whole problem with that is even though those books sold 80 000 copies, you can only create that volume of sales by really promoting the hell out of the books and making them really cheap because populist books tend to be very price-competitive. The more discretionary a book purchase is, the lower the price has to be. If you absolutely have to have the book you pay a hundred dollars for it, like all the MIT economics books that the neo-cons are buying now, they're a hundred bucks. Paper-backs, two hundred page trade paper-backs! And they'll buy it because they have to have it if they want to succeed in their money-trading ventures. But you can't sell a two hundred page novel for a hundred dollars, much less can you sell a two hundred page cookbook for a hundred dollars. So the more populist the material becomes the more price sensitive it is, right? So you had a couple of problems with really popular books. Even if you were really good at packaging them and publishing them and selling them and so on, which we were, even if you could do that the margins were tiny because the cost competition was so high you had to price them low, which meant you had to sell hundreds and thousands of units of them to make any money. So our initial dream of subsidizing our literary list by doing more commercial books turned out in fact to be an illusion, even though those commercial books were very commercial and were very commercially successful. In fact if you look at the statistics, even the US publishing

industry as a whole, which has way better economies of scale than we do, the American book publishing industry is not profitable before subsidiary rights. So what that tells you is that trade publishing is a highly competitive market with tiny tiny margins, and even if you had a whole list of cookbooks your margins on them are very small. The proof of that is that there are children's books specialists, cookbook specialists and self-help specialists--there are some very populist companies working in Canada and none of them are wealthy, none of them! Name me one person who has made a fortune in Canadian publishing--there isn't anybody. What that tells you is that even very commercially successful trade publishing has very slim margins, and so in fact the idea of starting a list of commercial titles and using the profits from that to subsidize your literary titles does not work, because even in the best of circumstances you can't subsidize a single poetry book with three cookbooks. That's what we've found, and it's one of the reasons I ended up arguing with the last of my partners and buying him out because in the 80s when we could sense the government was withdrawing its support for culture and we learned that we were just as good as anyone else commercially, my partner David Robinson wanted to abandon literature entirely! He wanted to do, in 1984, what Coach House did twelve years later. He knew, we knew, that sooner or later it was going to be all over, and my partner at the time said 'let's just stop doing literature, we know how to do this so let's just do it! Let's get that BMW!' I mean he literally said this! [laughs] He was driving this old beat-up Suzuki, but he wanted a BMW so he said let's forget all this literature! We've paid our dues, we can see everyone's retreating from this, they're never going to support us the way they should. He was very prescient at the time. And we had this big argument over it, he walked out and never came back. I decided to stay on and fight the good fight, but one of the things I did right away was I stopped doing these commercial titles because I had learned that you couldn't cross subsidize and that's when I started figuring out that the way to survive, if you're going to survive at all, is to go for a narrower and narrower focus. First of all what's happened is that there are no mid-sized companies anywhere doing anything, there's only the global company and then there's the niche market. There's nothing in between. So the way you survive is you define your niche ever more closely, which is why we are now in the process of remaindering the cookbooks which actually outsell eighty percent of our literary titles. I want them out of our catalogue because in the new reality we are entering in the new millennium, which is going to be totally governed by e-commerce, everyone knows this, it's totally obvious, you want to have a presence there that is squeaky clean. In this brave new world of e-commerce they're going to corrupt my catalogue, and I can't have that. If I want to survive, people will want to come to me for a very specific product and they're not going to trust me if I start diversifying, and you know cheating, doing a little of this and a little of that.

EMERSON: Alright, but in the eyes of the government funding agencies and federal policy makers, now that you're not selling high-volume cookbooks, but rather carving out your literary niche, how has this affected funding? Or has the government somehow gotten a little less shortsighted and more refined in its approaches to assessing publishers' needs?

SIEGLER: Well, there's a couple of answers to that. Actually, there's three answers. At the provincial level, the program that was introduced by the province in 1986 has never been re-capitalized despite the growth of the industry over the past thirteen years. Basically, neither the B.C. cultural grant program nor the Canada Council block grant program, which is also a cultural grant, neither of those two programs have had any significant additions to their capital-base since 1986. What this means is that, at the cultural level, support for Canadian publishers and books is eroding by attrition. For example, in 1986 the Canada Council block grant program budget had what they figure was close to 100 % financing for the average deficits generated by all publishers in Canada in all genres. Right now, that amount has gone down to thirty-two percent. And see the other thing that is not accounted for in any of this is inflation since 1986, we did get inflation under control by the late 80s but there has been some. So in fact we are getting less than between a quarter and a third of what we were getting thirteen years ago from both the provincial and the federal cultural funding agencies. Over that same period, however, the other program that the federal government runs which is called the Book Publishing Industry Development Program, run by the Department of Canadian Heritage, over that same period their budget has more than doubled. Now the way their budget works is that they give you money simply based on your sales. The more sales you get the more money you get. The effect of those two programs, let's just leave the province aside for a minute because it's petty cash anyways, if you look at just the Canada Council and the BPIDP, what's really happened since 1986 is that the amount of dollars available to do cultural books, culturally significant books, has shrunk to about a quarter to a third of what it was thirteen years ago. The sales-based grants, however, have more than doubled and what that's doing is it's pushing the industry more and more in the direction of doing that cookbook instead of that poetry book. If I published two cookbooks next I could do as much sales out of those two cookbooks as the three hundred literary titles I have in print. The problem is that the profitability on those sales would not be any different, let's say, than the profitability on the literary titles after grants, even given the small amount of grants we get. So there's no big profit incentive but there's a huge public policy incentive. If I wanted to get twice as much money from the Department of Canadian Heritage next year, all I'd have to do is my eighteen literary titles like always, sell my backlist, and add two cookbooks. I could double my grants from the feds. So it's really really clear what direction public policy is pushing these days, and its also why I believe, because of watching those trends, I again believe it's a one-generation phenomenon. I mean like, who's going to dedicate their lives to, you know, publishing commercial schlock. You might as well be selling shoes or widgets or any other kind of paper product [laughs].

EMERSON: Right. But the Department of Canadian Heritage has commissioned a needs assessment and competitiveness study which should be finished by the end of this summer, the first ones that have been done in, I think you told me, almost ten years. And I suppose whatever comes out of these studies will shape Canadian publishing for another ten years to come--so what's your guess? Do you think there will be any helpful changes made?

SIEGLER: Ten years is a bit of a stretch. What really happens at that level of government and at that level of dollars is that the programs all run for three years, and the government has the option every three years to either renew the programs or do a study. If they feel that the public policy isn't accomplishing their objectives, they'll do a study to figure out why so that they can redirect the policy or get rid of it or whatever. It's true that in its current iteration we are now in the last year of the third three years, say, package life. It's very clear though, if you look at the numbers that have come out of this program, that it is beginning to not accomplish its objectives. And so what the department has done is commission a couple of needs and competitiveness studies to look at the

industry, to look at their program, and see how the program might be modified so that these publishers' competitive positions and their needs to be more competitive can be met by appropriate public policy. So yeah, those studies are underway. Unfortunately, the Association of Canadian publishers has essentially lost its heart as a cultural lobby, they now simply consider themselves like any other industry association. The word 'culture' which used to be writ large on their agenda is now almost indiscernibly small. After thirteen years of public policy pushing publishers to go more and more commercial, be more and more export-oriented and to publish 'Value-neutral' product from a cultural point of view, just do product, create paper products attractively packaged to look like books, the more the industry has drifted in that direction the less the Association of Canadian publishers has become a cultural lobby and the more it's become a small business lobby. And that transition pretty much completed itself over the last nine years, since the last set of studies, to the point where this year the association made no effort whatsoever to call these meetings, to meet with these people, to negotiate the parameters of the studies, and so on and so forth. I quit the association at the end of June, in which I've been totally involved since I got into this business, and just sent in my own critique of the proposals. As with so many things, people are no longer agreed, even at the level of the participating publishers you can't organize--you know there's only a hundred and forty publishers in the country, and you can't organize them anymore around an issue even as large as this, the potential complete re-building and redirecting of public policy in publishing, you can't get them together on it!

EMERSON: I guess the lack of togetherness in the publishing community doesn't make much difference to the large houses, or the American backed houses in Canada, but I guess what I'm trying to ask is whether this, in combination with public policy pressuring publishers to be more commercial, leaves you concerned about the future of small and medium sized literary publishers?

SIEGLER: Well I mean, obviously I have lots of concerns about them. For one thing, I know that should public policy be severely curtailed, either through a process of attrition like it's happened with the arts councils or now with the DCH, I mean, who knows what these studies are going to say, maybe the studies are going to say publishers actually only need about half your support. So the extent to which that removal of public support is ongoing is the extent to which we lose more and more publishers. That is of a concern to me. I think that what will happen, if I take the long-term view and the non self-interested view, is that the kind of publishing that I am interested in, which is the unique and the culturally valuable, the specifically Canadian, whatever you want to call that--I mean we're living in an age of the death of the nation-state. We're living in an age where questions of culture and ethnicity and historicity and so on have been demonized. All you have to do is look at the Balkans to recognize that, right? I mean, nationalism and heritage somehow have all become bad words, they're politically incorrect. On the other hand everything that I've studied and learned in my lifetime tells me that the Orwellian future the global village offers us is neither a healthy nor a viable alternative for human societies. So there has to be some way of introducing some sort of particularity, some sense of community, of particularized community of discourse. I think one of the interesting things about the new electronic technologies is that they do provide a vehicle for the survival of that kind of very particularized cultural stance, statement, articulation. Unfortunately none of the cash flow mechanisms, the real sort of objective business things about the net, have been worked out. In books you have copyright law, patent law, they have been up until now difficult to copy although no longer. I mean, the students are copying books like it's going out of style and we now have copyright collectives which are highly ineffective because I just got back from Office Depot where they're selling student copiers for three hundred bucks, which means you can copy any book in the world that you want and not be subject to payment of intellectual property licenses to anyone--by Cancopy, Kinko's or in the schools. Sure Cancopy has issued all these blanket licenses for photocopying, so there's some revenue flow coming in when people use public facilities for photocopying. But once that becomes totally privatized, and you're buying the equivalent of a tape deck to photocopy all your text books, there goes book publishing as we know it and love it. So it's not just public policy because there's a lot going on in these technologies that is really undermining what book publishers are doing. The new technology, I think, is very double-edged. On the one hand it gives us access to put ourselves up there, whatever we want to put up there we can put up there. But the problem is that, unlike book publishing or any of the other traditional cultural industries, we haven't worked out the mechanisms whereby the cash will flow from the end-user to the producer, either of the intellectual property or the edited commodity. And my fear is that the people who currently work in the older technologies, the hard-copy technologies, in making the transition from there to the electronic world before those cash flows have all been worked out and people's labour can be paid for, we're going to get a lot of slippage there. In other words, when I think of taking Talonbooks completely electronic, which incidentally Stan Bevington is trying to do with Coach House, I don't see a company like Talon making that transition into that new technology. I don't think we could bridge-finance the invention and implementation of those kinds of cash flow strategies. But I'm aware enough to see that there are other avenues and I'm historically aware enough to know that in any society in human history since writing was invented, people will always find a way to publish, and writers, authors, speakers will always find a way to articulate, and somebody will always find a way to make that public through whatever technology, under whatever political or fascist circumstances they'll always find a way. But I think it's going to be very difficult, that transition. And I don't think many of us are going to go with it.

EMERSON: Thank you Karl, it's been a pleasure.

Defining the Present in the Past: Marlowe and Sodomy Discourse

Today, one cannot read Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* without an awareness of the instability of sex and gender classification. Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality, Volume One* has become an important critical tool in reconceptualizing early modern sexuality, and, particularly, renaissance constructions of homosexuality and/or homoeroticism. With regard to Marlowe's play, for example, one can no longer apply a straightforward reading of homosexuality in Edward and Gaveston's relationship. For, as Foucault argues, it was not until the nineteenth century that the "homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology" (*History of Sexuality, Volume One*, 43). Following this frame of argumentation, then, a homosexual reading of the play cannot be applied simply because the "homosexual" did not yet exist.

Foucault's theory, however, has been met with numerous criticisms. If Edward and Gaveston's relationship cannot be labeled "homosexual," how can we speak of it? This question has become an important element of gay and lesbian scholarship, and, in true academic fashion, has not been answered satisfactorily for all those concerned. In this paper, I will discuss the use of the term "sodomy" in relation to *Edward II*. Where critics such as Alan Bray use the term to discuss the slippery relationship between male friendship and homoerotic/homosexual desire, I will emphasize Marlowe's insistence on exposing the problems with the term "sodomy" as it was used in early modern England. My goal is to show that the contemporary debate over the use of correct historical terminology and classification is not specific to the latter half of the twentieth century. Readings of *Edward II* that merely argue for the inability to accurately explain early modern examples of homoeroticism miss a fundamental aspect of the play: Marlowe's own role in the debate over correct terminology. I have divided this paper into two sections. Section I briefly describes the current debate within historical scholarship on homoeroticism/homosexuality, revealing some of the concerns theorists have regarding the need to define the early modern period. In section II, I will move into a more focused analysis of *Edward II*, with particular attention being paid to how the current critical debate interprets the play and how my own reading of the play attempts to situate Marlowe directly within the same debate.

I.

Foucault's *History of Sexuality* may have provided the impetus for numerous explorations of how to correctly define sexualities as they were understood in the past, but any discussion of the critical debate concerning homoeroticism in early modern England must begin with Bray's *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*. Largely inspired by Foucault's claim that "the homosexual" did not exist prior to the nineteenth century, Bray centers his analysis of homosexuality on the widespread use of the term "sodomy" in the early modern period. Central to his argument is the fact that sodomy was not synonymous with our present understanding of homosexuality. Although, today, it is perceived as an act only a homosexual would perform, Bray suggests the term, as it was used in the early modern period, can better be understood as an act of debauchery, which was "a temptation to which all [human beings], in principle at least, were subject" (16). Ultimately, he suggests historians cannot talk of "the homosexual," or, indeed "the sodomite" in the period because sodomy was not yet connected with any form of identity or individuality.

Although heralded as a valuable study of the early modern period, Bray's book, and the analysis it provides, has not gone uncontested. Claude J. Summers, for example, argues that, "Bray's (re)construction of early modern sexuality traps sodomites within a hegemonic ideology that denies them both self-awareness and agency" (28). The concern here is that by viewing sodomy as an effective way of speaking about homosexuality prior to the advent of "the homosexual," Bray fails to acknowledge the possibility of homoerotic self-identity outside of sodomitical discourse. Mario Digangi further emphasizes this point in his suggestion that the early modern definition of sodomy was "neither a neutral description of a sexual act nor a synonym for homoerotic relations generally, but a political category deployed to stigmatize and control a multitude of social disorders" (ix). Although Summers and Digangi agree with Bray's refusal of the term "homosexual," they both reject his historical reconstruction of "sodomy." Instead, they assert "homoeroticism" as a more correct application for exploring the multitudinous forms of same-sex *desire* in the early modern period. Bray's act-based definition of sodomy, they argue, fails to acknowledge erotic tendencies that would not have been considered sodomitical. Summers provides a good example in his argument that the relationship between Scudamor and Amoret in book IV, Canto X of Spenser's *The Fairie Queen*, "clearly recognizes homoeroticism as a discrete sexuality" while also "[taking] pains to represent the male lovers as nonsodomitical" (32). Thus, Bray's work may have been groundbreaking, but, according to Summers and Digangi, it refuses to allow any sense of same-sex self-awareness outside of sodomitical discourse.

Summers' example of homoeroticism in *The Faerie Queen* raises another important criticism directed at Bray. Bruce Smith, for example, is highly critical of Bray's overemphasis on early modern moral, legal and medical definitions of sodomy:

> "Sodomy" is an action; it can be observed from the outside; it can easily be labeled. Homosexual desire is a feeling; it can be known only from the inside; it needs to be talked about, not simply named. About the physical act of sodomy sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers could speak in direct increasingly exact legal terms. "Sodomy" is a topic in moral, legal and medical discourse; homosexual desire is a subject that only poetic discourse can express.(18)

Although Smith does not assert the term "homoerotic," his analysis operates along similar lines as Summers and Digangi. By focusing on the distinction between inner feelings of desire and the outer act of naming sodomy, Smith enables a reading of homoeroticism that does not reproduce a certain problematic contemporary analysis of homosexuality, one that is of immediate concern for Digangi. I am referring here to the goal of some historians to provide a detailed account of the historically diverse persecution of the homosexual. Bray's focus on medical, legal, and moral discourse comes dangerously close to providing such an account. Insofar as these discourses are intimately involved in the process of naming "sodomy," they reinforce a reading of same-sex desire

in the period that focuses on deviance, repression, and persecution. Such a focus, Digangi argues, "can inadvertently serve to reinforce homophobia" ("Marlowe, Queer Studies," 202), even when it is homophobia that is being critiqued.

Digangi analyzes a U.S. Supreme Court case, *Bowers v. Hardwick*, in which "the majority justices upheld the constitutionality of Georgia's sodomy laws. [...] They justified their decision on the grounds that 'homosexuality' has always been legally forbidden in western societies." Furthermore, Digangi suggests, "the claim that homosexuals have been transhistorically oppressed does not necessarily combat homophobia. In *Bowers v. Hardwick*, it justified it" (202). Of course, this justification works only if sodomitical discourses in the past are applied to homosexuality. Digangi, Summers, and Smith are not so sure that such a feat is possible. Regardless, the *Hardwick* case has captured the attention of a number of theorists with interests in the early modern period. Jonathan Goldberg and Janet Halley, for example, both reveal the importance that early definitions of sodomy have regarding the way in which homosexuality is understood today. Halley is highly critical of Foucault's periodization model of sexuality, in which there is a clear historical transition between the early modern period's act-based conception of sodomy and the twentieth century's notion of identity-based homosexuality. She argues that the case effectively created a "hybrid" model of homosexuality "in which identity and [act-based] conduct simultaneously appear as logical alternates and implicate one another" (18). In support of Halley's argument, Goldberg argues that Foucault's model ignores "not only the persistence of the sodomite as a means of defining homosexuality, but also how unstable the modern regime of supposedly discrete identities is" (10). Both arguments suggest that looking for homosexuality in the past through a sodomitical discourse, as Bray does, is highly problematic. The process all too often becomes a search for *the* sodomite, *the* subject of a historically repressive legal system, while, at the same time insisting there is a direct act-based correlation between sodomy and homosexuality, one that can justify the continuation of current legal prohibitions against homosexual acts. Thus homophobia does not cease in the process of "outing" the sodomite; rather, in instances such as *Hardwick*, it thrives.

II.

Homosexual, homosexuality, sodomite, sodomy, homoeroticism, homophobic. These are but a few of the terms that have been tossed around in the critical debate I have discussed thus far. Another important concern, raised by Goldberg, involves those who add the prefix "homo" to their analysis of historical same-sex relationships. Insofar as *the* heterosexual, like *the* homosexual, was not a fully-formed sexual identity until the nineteenth century, Goldberg's analysis suggests that even terms such as "homoeroticism," or even "heterosexuality," cannot be applied to our explorations of the past. In his analysis of Gaveston's opening soliloquy in *Edward II*, for example, Goldberg challenges Sarah Munson Deats suggestion that the minion's erotically ambiguous desire to entertain the king (I.1. 49-72) hints at a number of sexual perversions:

> Hints? Innuendos? By only hearing "hints," Deats seeks to rescue Marlowe from what she nonetheless characterizes as "sexual perversions"; the lines seem calculated, however, flung out in the face of such a response, taunting it, provoking it. Not that Marlowe has anticipated the modern critic; rather, Deats's response is a familiar one. (105)

Goldberg, here, challenges the assumption that Marlowe would have understood a distinct difference between what we would call heterosexuality and homosexuality. Furthermore, he takes offence at those who suggest that Marlowe presents Gaveston's desire as sexually perverted. Following Bray's argument that sodomy was "a crime which anyone was capable of, like murder of blasphemy" ("Signs of Male Friendship," 40), Goldberg rejects the argument that such desires would have been considered perverted in the early modern period. Perversion, after all, was not relegated to the homoerotic until the homosexual became a separate and unique identity. Goldberg, thus, throws an important loop into the critical debate I have thus far mentioned. More importantly for this paper, his analysis serves to move the debate into a direct discussion of Marlowe's play.

Like Bray, Goldberg has been criticized for his sodomitical reading of Edward and Gaveston's relationship. Digangi, for example, refuses to read Edward's love as sodomitical. Similarly, Summers argues that, although the play "indicates how the sodomitical construction of homoeroticism is used by the king's enemies to discredit him and Gaveston, [the play] never endorses that construction nor even credits those who promulgate it with actually believing it" (39). Thus, the critical debate on *Edward II*, like the larger debate in general, is intensely focused on the instability of terminology available to discuss Edward and Gaveston's love for each other. Goldberg and Bray both follow Robert Padgug's argument that "in any approach that takes as predetermined and universal the categories of sexuality, real history disappears" (5). Nevertheless, they have been criticized for too strong an emphasis on favouring sodomy as a better historically related term than all other available terminology.

Although my own argument inclines towards a similar criticism, my reading of Marlowe's play suggests that, despite Digangi and Summers' insistent refusal on acknowledging a sodomitical reading of Edward and Gaveston's love, Marlowe *was* intensely aware of the sodomitical implications of their relationship. More importantly, the play refuses all terminology available in the early modern period to define and categorize Edward and Gaveston. Other readings of the play and the period in general focus on the critical practice of defining the past as if we can come to know precisely how societies in other historical periods understood sexuality. I want to argue that such projects miss a crucial point regarding sexual terminology: just as today such terms as homosexual and heterosexual are not completely stable, similarly the terms available in Marlowe's own period were also unstable.

It is important to remember that, like contemporary theorists, Marlowe was involved in a project of interpreting the past, in this case the history of Edward II as outlined in Holinshed's chronicles. Of particular interest to Marlowe, and to contemporary theorists, is Holinshed's graphic description of Edward's death, which, although obviously an act of sodomy, does not outright define the act as such. It is necessary, here, to cite the passage in full:

> Whereupon when they saw that such practices would not serve their turn, They came suddenly one night into the chamber where [Edward] lay in bed fast asleep, and with heavy featherbeds or a table (as some write) being cast upon him, they kept him down and withal put into his

> fundament an horn, and through the same they thrust up into his body an hot spit, or (as others have) through the pipe of a trumpet a plumber's instrument of iron made very hot, the which passing up into his entrails, and being rolled to and fro, burnt the same, but so as no appearance of any wound or hurt outwardly might be once perceived. His cry did move many within the castle and town of Berkeley to compassion, plainly hearing him utter a wailful noise, as the tormentors were about to murder him, so that divers being awakened therewith (as they themselves confessed) prayed heartily to God to receive his soul, when they understood what the matter meant. (cited in Burnett's notes to *Edward II*, 565)

Regarding the above passage, Emily Bartels argues that, "when Marlowe brings Edward's history to center stage he reveals the ways in which the terms of sodomy were being occluded within a political discourse" (156). More importantly, I argue that Marlowe displays a conscious awareness of the implications surrounding the project of defining the past and what that project says about the present. Can we call it "sodomy" if Holinshed refused to do so? Marlowe's play, then, revolves around the cultural necessity of explaining exactly what one is witnessing in both *Edward II* and Holinshed's chronicles.

It is beneficial here to make reference to the legal definitions of, and restrictions against, the practice of sodomy in Marlowe's era. In 1533, 25 Henry VIII c. became England's first civic regulation of illicit sexual acts. The statute explicitly forbade "the detestable and abhomynable vice of buggery commyttid with mankind or any beaste" (cited in Mager, 142). Just as in Marlowe's own play, and in Holinshed's chronicles, the word "sodomy" does not appear in the statute. Nevertheless, as numerous analyses of the period have shown, "sodomy" *was* significant in the early modern period as a condemnatory reference towards illicit sexualities. Summers notes that, "while the term could potentially denote a variety of offences and sexual deviance generally [as Bray has argued], it was also increasingly subject to quite specific definition" (29). Edward's death, for example, although not specifically defined as sodomy, would have been understood in the period as an example of "the vice not to be named amongst Christians." Thus, Marlowe's dramatization of the scene clearly implies a sodomitical act. Lightborn's seemingly erotic attempt to comfort the king is given a sinister quality, particularly in his suggestion that "Ne'er was there any / So finely handled as this King shall be" (V.5. 39-40). The pun on "handled" suggests all too clearly that Edward's death is purposefully sexualized and given a sodomitical taint, not that the pun is needed considering that Edward is killed via anal penetration. Furthermore, the methodical nature through which Lightborn effectively sodomizes Edward is so precise as to suggest that the process is not only sexual, but almost medical as well.

Earlier, I made reference to Smith's critique of Bray's emphasis on medical/moral/legal discourse as the correct path through which same-sex relations can be observed in early modern social reality. Smith ultimately suggests that looking for homosexuality in the period is, "in a way, to play the role of the anthropologist" and that "we must remind ourselves that it is we, not our subjects, who are doing the [searching]" (27). Yet, Smith does not recognize that Marlowe *is* a subject engaged in a similar search, not for homosexuality *per se*, but for same-sex relations existing outside of a sodomitical (i.e. medical/legal/moral) framework. Lightborn sodomizes Edward within such a framework, and, thus, according to a medical definition of sodomy, but the term "sodomy" as it applies to Edward's death, cannot be applied to the most important same-sex relationship in the play: the one between Edward and Gaveston. Thus, Marlowe is intimately concerned with revealing the inadequacy of the term "sodomy" in his own period to explain same-sex desire.

There is no doubt, however, that Edward and Gaveston's friendship would have been considered in the early modern period as transgressing dangerously close to sodomy. Bray's analysis of the play suggests male friendship in general, as an important part of social life, "was far removed from the 'uncivil' image of the sodomite." Yet, Bray continues, "there was still between them a surprising affinity, as in some respects they occupied a similar terrain" (Signs of Male Friendship 42). Displaying acute awareness of this affinity, Marlowe explores the social usage of both "friendship" and "sodomy" as terms describing distinct male-to-male relationships. The play emphasizes the perceived distinction between Edward's flatterers, who are criticized for transgressing too closely towards a sodomitical relationship with the king, and Edward's peers, who are the only ones with an inherent right to Edward's friendship. Upon deciding to betray the king, Kent declares, "I'll to France, and cheer the wronged Queen, / And certify what Edward's looseness is. / Unnatural King, to slaughter noblemen / And cherish flatterers" (IV.1. 6-9). Here, the word "cherish" is highly ambiguous because it does not suggest exactly what kind of relationship Edward maintains with his flatterers. Nevertheless, Kent's implicit suggestion of sodomy is noticeably administered through such critically loaded terms as "looseness" and "unnatural." The play, however, does not allow for a sodomitical reading of Edward and Gaveston's friendship. On the one hand, Edward and Gaveston are accused of crossing the line between male friendship and sodomy, while on the other hand Edward has refused the natural right of the peers to advance their courtly status. There is a sense that the peers are upset at the king solely because he favours Gaveston, a character of poor birth. Yet, there is little doubt that, in their pursuit of advancement, the peers would gladly exchange places with him. Thus, if the term "sodomy" is to be applied to Edward and Gaveston's relationship, it must also be applied to the peers' desire to climb higher up the social rank. Marlowe refuses to allow the possibility of categorizing the king/flatterer relationship as essentially sodomitical, because to do so would be to effectively define all courtly relationships between men as potentially sodomitical.

Although many critics have read the play along similar lines, Marlowe's concern with terminology and its limitations has received little, if any, critical attention. Bray argues that "Marlowe describes [...] what could be a sodomitical relationship [between Edward and Gaveston], but he places it wholly within the incompatible conventions of Elizabethan friendship, in a tension which he never allows to be resolved" (Signs of Male Friendship 49). Similarly, Goldberg suggests that Marlowe radically rethinks "the possibility of being a sodomite" even though "the deconstructive energies he bequeaths are not assimilable to the subsequent discourses of sexual difference" in Elizabethan England (141). Neither Bray nor Goldberg acknowledge that Marlowe may have been refusing all forms of discourse that approach Edward and Gaveston's relationship through a sodomitical lens. There is no tension between friendship and sodomy in the play. Instead there is a flat refusal to label Edward and Gaveston as sodomites. And because

Marlowe refuses such a label, there is no radical rethinking of what sodomy signifies. Sodomy clearly finds its signification in Edward's death, not in his love for Gaveston.

Goldberg, however, does poignantly observe that what it means to "love" undergoes a process of confusion in the play (119). Whereas the term "sodomy" does not occur in the play, "love" runs rampant throughout. The play's opening scene sets up the barrage of "love" to come when Mortimer Senior suggests to Edward, "if you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston" (I.1. 79). This strong ultimatum acts as a loose thread from which Marlowe unravels the concept and what it signifies or does not signify. Goldberg's suggestion that "the lubricant of 'love' smoothes the path of friendship, clientage, and promotion" (119) is noteworthy. Indeed, Mortimer Senior's ultimatum suggests that all the peers are asking for is a show of love from their king. However, "love" signifies more than just the correct relationship between king and peer. For the peers, there is a darker side to the term, one that Kent suggests "will be the ruin of the realm" (II.2. 208), namely Edward's love for Gaveston. Regarding the king's relationship with Gaveston, Mortimer Junior compares Edward to "a lofty cedar tree, fair flourishing, / On whose top branches kingly eagles perch, / And by the bark a canker creeps me up / And gets unto the highest bow of all" (II.2. 16-19). Although Mortimer means to suggest his displeasure at the disorder caused by Gaveston's cankerous climb up the social ladder (or tree), Digangi argues that, because the vine embracing the elm was an obvious emblem of mutual love in the Elizabethan period, Mortimer Junior must twist a clearly defined symbol of love into one of parasitism and the threat of sodomy (113). That this symbol could signify mutual love within both marriage and male friendships does not escape Digangi's argument. By using the symbol of the canker creeping up the cedar, Mortimer Junior attempts to draw a line between two meanings of one image, which cannot be done without implicating every member of the court in both meanings. All the peers strive to reach the top of Edward's cedar. Whether one is a vine or a canker is not so easily determined. To what extent, then, can love be seen as an element of male-to-male friendships? Can there be a difference between *vine* love and *canker* love? Can love and sodomy exist in the same relationship? These are the kinds of questions Marlowe provokes in his exploration of the terms used to define same-sex relations.

What emerges in the play, then, is a strong awareness of the inability to define the nature of certain male-to-male relationships. We might even go so far as to suggest that Marlowe predicts twentieth-century readings of early modern homoeroticism. The play's exploration of the terms available to describe Edward and Gaveston's relationship is surprisingly similar to contemporary critiques of Bray's argument. One almost hears Marlowe's voice in Summers' argument that "the points that need to be stressed are that sodomitical discourse is not co-extensive with the discourse of homoeroticism in the period and that Bray's construction of Renaissance homosexuality as exclusively sodomitical is misleading" (31). Yet, at the same time, Bray's analysis of sodomy as an act-based crime that anyone was capable of committing reinforces Marlowe's ultimate critique of the term. If we are set on looking for sodomitical relationships in *Edward II*, we must be ready to accept the possibility that *all* relationships between men in the play are potentially sodomitical. Marlowe, however, does not allow such a possibility. There is only one clearly defined act of sodomy in the play: Edward's death. Edward's relationship with Gaveston requires a different concept or classification if it is to be understood. The play thus resists the new historicist insistence that same-sex relations prior to the nineteenth century were strictly act-based. As Smith suggests, to search for acts of homosexuality in the past is to search from the outside. Marlowe's play, insofar as it rejects act-based (i.e. sodomitical) analyses of Edward and Gaveston's relationship, seeks to represent same-sex relations from the interior. Only from within can we begin to understand same-sex *desire* in the early modern period.

In bringing this paper to a conclusion, I would like to return to Foucault. His description of sodomy as "that utterly confused category" (101) has become an important banner expression in recent gay, lesbian, and new historicist scholarship. One has to wonder, though, if in the recent necessity for being constantly aware of how we construct the past through the language of the present, there has been a tendency to ignore the possibility that earlier historical periods were consciously aware of the problems within their own systems of classification. In our urge to accurately define the early modern period, we have forgotten that scholars such as Marlowe were intimately involved in the difficulty of defining and representing. Thus, this paper's title, "Defining the Present in the Past," works on two levels. On one hand, it addresses how recent historical projects have used various term usages in the past to discuss the (in)stability of current terminology. In *Bowers v. Hardwick*, for example, current conceptions of the illegality of homosexual acts were reinforced because of the consistent repression of homosexuality *in the past*. Theorists such as Goldberg and Halley are highly critical of the case's result, yet, they too are caught up in a project of defining the present through defining the past. On the other hand, the title is also suggestive of Marlowe's role in conceptualizing or resisting the terminology available to describe same-sex relations in his own historical present. Because *Edward II* exposes the impossibility of understanding Edward and Gaveston's relationship through sodomitical discourse, there is an affinity between Marlowe's critical discussion of how we define and categorize same-sex relations and the critical discussion of how current scholarship should define the past. Marlowe's engagement with current debates is precisely what this paper has revealed.

Works Cited

Bray, Alan. *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*. Morningside edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

----"Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship." In *Queering the Renaissance*. Ed. Jonathan Goldberg. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994.

Digangi, Mario. *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

----"Marlowe, Queer Studies, and Renaissance Homoeroticism." In *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality: New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe*. Ed. Paul Whitfield White. New York: AMS Press, 1998.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume One*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1978.

Goldberg, Jonathan. *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.

Halley, Janet E. "*Bowers v. Hardwick* in the Renaissance." In *Queering the Renaissance*. Ed. Jonathan Goldberg. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Mager, Donald M. "John Bale and Early Tudor Sodomy Discourse." In *Queering the Renaissance*. Ed. Jonathan Goldberg. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Marlowe, Christopher. "Edward II." In *The Complete Plays*. Ed. Mark Thornton Burnett. London: Everyman, 1999.

Padgug, Robert A. "Sexual Matters: On Conceptualizing Sexuality in History." *Radical History Review*. 20 (Spring/Summer 1979): 3-23.

Smith, Bruce R. *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Summers, Claude J. "Marlowe and Constructions of Renaissance Homosexuality." *Canadian Revue of Comparative Literature*. 21 (1994): 27-44.

--Daniel Martin

Toy Story 2: A Review (sort of)

I love *Star Wars* because I saw it before I was postmodern. I was a child full of innocence and wonder, and I was secure in the authority and boundaries of my family and school. I had yet to understand the Madonna-Whore complex, the Peter Pan syndrome, or anything Freudian. I thought marketing was magical because it enabled me to have *Star Wars* Action Figures and the *Return of the Jedi* soundtrack record (yes, it's true), and I didn't worry in the slightest about how much I watched television or that my heroes at Disneyland had a "happy clause" in their contracts. Aaah, childhood.

Now I can't watch children's TV or movies--or anything else, truthfully--without deconstructing in disdain. The simplistic market-driven brainwashing is enough to make me want to scoop up all the children around me and raise them myself in Greenland. As much as I love *The Little Mermaid*, I can't quite suspend my understanding of role models for girls and the changes made to the gruesome original fairy tale, and I can't get past my horror at the appropriation of African culture (not to mention world Disney marketing taking over the animal world, having conquered all that is human) in *The Lion King*. And don't get me started on the multinational evil corporation that is Disney.

But guess what. I LOVE *Toy Story*, and *Toy Story 2* is just as good, maybe better. It's hilariously funny, it has fabulous animation, and I love Randy Newman (who composed and sings the soundtrack) as my personal saviour. But *Toy Story 2* is brilliant for some very interesting and highly original reasons--and it is a thoroughly postmodern film.

Both movies are about toys--more specifically toys that baby boomers and gen-Xers grew up with: Howdy Doody, all astronaut and dinosaur toys, the Slinky, Mr. Potato Head and his entourage, and in the sequel, Barbie. These are classic toys whose marketing has transcended social trends and instantly create emotional investment for any aged audience. And herein lies the rub.

Primarily due to the success of *The Simpsons*, conglomerate movie studios now understand that animation, and hence Disney movies, will be more successful if it offers something to more than just the 2-8 year old demographic. You can do more than throw in a few gags for parents, you can actually suck in people in the lucrative teen and young adult audience who will come even though they don't have kids at all! And so we get *Toy Story*, with a sophisticated iconography for all.

The movies are about toys, old-fashioned, family-value friendship, simple plots of saving friends from semi-plausible and very funny adventures; it's true. In this case, in the course of saving one toy-friend, head-toy Woody gets scooped up by a collector who wants to box him up and send him to a toy museum in Japan. The rest of the toy-gang rescues him and his new, also kidnapped friends, just in the nick of time (sorry, but the ending wasn't really a surprise). But the real theme of the movie--at least for the "uber-audience" of jaded film students--is one of

postmodern self-recognition. These are all toys who are thoroughly aware that they are toys, and come to understand exactly what their role in society is.

In the first movie, a new toy, Buzz Lightyear, astronaut, was introduced to the toy-gang. He didn't realise he was a toy, and made a hilarious fool of himself because he didn't realise his own limitations--he is an action-hero *figure*, not a *real* action-hero. In the end, friendship triumphs, and Buzz comes to realise that he is just a toy, but that he is also a valuable friend and playmate to human and non.

In the sequel, the brilliant twist is that Buzz and Woody reach the next level of self-understanding--toys as marketing device. In one primary scene, the toys head into a massive, Toys-R-Us-like store to look for Woody. There, much to his amazement, Buzz sees himself replicated thousands of times over, in boxes against the wall. At the same time, Woody, in the collector's home, comes to learn of his past identity as a 1950s mega-celebrity (complete with his own Howdy-Doody-like TV show). The two toys must battle other "selves" to re-establish that despite their market value, and inherent interchangeability with other selves as mass-produced commodities, they are individuals with a unique friendship and value to their human playmates.

So the characters, Woody and Buzz in particular, have to come to grips with the fact that they are toys, and therefore, by definition, inanimate, created objects. At the same time, though, the movie adds a startling, paradoxical level, as it tries to persuade the audience that this animated, on-screen world is actually REAL. There are cameos by characters from another Disney animation, *A Bug's Life*. There are animated "outtakes" at the end of the film which show the toys, <u>out</u> of character and behind the scenes as <u>actors</u>, playing hysterically funny jokes on each other during "filming". So we have a postmodern jumble of "actors", who are animated and therefore not real, playing the part of toys--also inherently not alive--who have to come to grips with their true identities and destinies as not-real-or-individual mass-produced commodities.

At the same time, the moral of the movie remains conventional: your responsibility as a toy is not to fulfill your marketing destiny by never coming out of the box and gaining value as a collector's item and sacred nostalgic icon, but rather to stick with your owner as long as she or he will have you, because your quality of life is so much higher that it is worth being torn to bits or forgotten for one day of being loved by a child.

Though all of this raises some very complex issues--any takers on a Marxist interpretation?--the most important, immediate issue for me is what, in all of Disney's attempts to challenge adult viewers, is the movie telling children? Kids will certainly understand Buzz's scene of looking at himself on the toy store wall, it's a familiar sight for them. They will snicker at the out takes, and spot the cameos before their parents. But will they experience the innocence?

This is an ironic, meta-cartoon--dare we say, "revisionist animation"?--that reveals the complexities for baby boomers of trying to reconcile 50s "simple" childhood memories with the jaded, ironic understanding that today it's all about image and money. But in trying to be hip, and contain that postmodern cynicism, are they depriving the child audience of the innocence and wonder that they are entitled to? What will happen if this generation is raised without a phase where it was all just fun, and there were no ulterior money-driven totally manipulative motives?

I know, it's probably best that they have their eyes open early, but I guess I'm suggesting that there's something a little disturbing about Disney coming out of the closet and being totally open about its own slick marketing core, and succeeding in having the audience (myself included) come out of the theatres star-struck and saying, "how original!" I guess I'm just wondering if this openness actually reflects the final triumph of the market-economy taking over culture and leaving us still idealistic liberal humanist dinosaurs to go back to the rock we climbed out from under.

Go see, laugh and try to figure it out for yourself--let me know if it's still possible to find definite answers when everything's relative, or if you believe it's all just a big conspiracy.

--Toni Smith

Contributor's Notes

bpNichol (1944-1988) wrote and published extensively throughout his lifetime. Although he is now best known for his long poem *The Martyrology*, Nichol first made his reputation with his work in sound and concrete poetry which continues to influence writers within and beyond Canada.

Derek Beaulieu spent several months suffering from one very specific amphibious plague from the Book of Exodus. now that he has recuperated his wits he is editor of housepress and co-managing editor of *filling Station* magazine (Calgary). The poems here are excerpted from *"(plop)"* (Coach House Books, 2000).

Rob McLennan is a poet, book reviewer, editor/publisher of above/ground press & *STANZAS* magazine, literary events coordinator & Ontario rep for the League of Canadian Poets. Winner of the 1999 CAA/Air Canada Award for Most Promising Writer under 30 (the only non-cash prize administered by the Canadian Authors Association), he is the editor of *Written in the Skin* (1998, Insomniac Press) & 4 poetry collections, 3 of which appear in 1999 – *bury me deep in the green wood* (ECW Press), *Manitoba highway map* (Broken Jaw Press) & *The Richard Brautigan Ahhhhhhhhhh* (Talonbooks). Drunk in 8 of our 10 provinces, he lives and breathes in Ottawa, Ontario.

Lori Emerson is a graduate student in English at the University of Victoria.

Karl Siegler is the president and editor of Talon Books Ltd.

Daniel Martin is a graduate student in English at the University of Victoria.

Toni Smith is a graduate student in English at the University of Victoria who has had a lifelong dream of being a movie reviewer.