THE GAMES BIBLIOGRAPHERS PLAY

As every schoolboy knows, the problems of a bibliographer are many, his sufferings long, and his rewards few. And because his rewards are few, and because his job is joyless, because his patience is as sorely tried as Job's, to save his sanity he must soon begin to play some sort of game. I am not yet insane, even though I have worked on two bibliographies: in short but concentrated stretches over about seven years I worked for Dr. R.E. Watters; for almost eleven long and lonesome years I have been working on one of my own. Neither are real bibliographies. I know a real bibliography when I see one, but for convenience I use the word as a sort of shorthand. I am not here trying to do Dr. Watters in the eye: he too knows the difference or else would not have called his great work *A Check List* . . . My own contribution to Watters was in searching the University of British Columbia library for titles and in finding out if their authors were Canadian, in typing the final manuscript, and in putting it through the press when Dr. Watters was absent in Australia. Because I had had experience, the Humanities Research Council in 1961 asked me to survey the Australian and New Zealand holdings in Canadian libraries. I agreed in haste and in June began working at the National Library. I expected to spend two summers on the job.

My education began the moment I started compiling what will now probably be called, out of modesty, lack of imagination, and out of respect for bibliographers, something like *A Check List of Australian Literature and Background Materials to 1965 and Their Locations in Canadian Libraries*; or, *The Education of a Philistine*. Besides learning about Ottawa's long hot summer, over that first couple of months I recognized the need for a master list of authors and titles of Australian and New Zealand material before I could know what to look for in Canadian libraries. No one seemed to have thought that to survey what libraries do contain one must know what they should or might contain, one must first know what authors and titles to look for. To do the little job I would have first to do the big one, and in doing the big one I would make the little one redundant. About that time I began to suspect that I would require more than two summers.

By the end of the second long summer I had learned that New Zealand is not in the mainstream of Australian development, that Australia and New Zealand are individual entities, and that though they may appear to be near each other away down there in that bottom corner of the map, they really are separated by a vast distance. I had also learned that I was not doing what a real bibliographer does, and that the job I was attempting to do was too big for anyone perhaps but God. My original idea was to list every book written by an Australian; I am now less close to being mad, and modestly hope for a fairly comprehensive list of poetry, fiction, and drama, with a selected list of background materials emphasizing history to some extent.

By the end of that second summer I was also having other problems. I often dreamed of a newspaper report that Old Elliott had died just as he put the last location into his lifetime work. A ouija board told me that I was going to have

trouble with Maysie Greig. And I began to have nightmares about computers outwitting me at the very last moment. I developed a twitch at the thought of at least five years, and a tic at the thought of ten. When such dismal dreams and thoughts occurred, I went out from Ottawa, crossed the river, and went into the hills where a crystal gazer told me that I required either games or therapy, or even both.

Now the games that bibliographers play are many, and over the last ten years I have not only played them all, but have created a few of my own. A simple one is to develop unchecked and uncheckable theories about the information that Watters's check list or mine might reveal merely in the printed form. A more complicated or sophisticated or challenging game is to balance the information from one against the information from the other and draw new conclusions about the comparative cultural or social milieus in which Canadian and Australian writers work. These games are indeed fraught with error, but part of the fun is that the ladder of high theories might land you on a snake which wriggled your conclusions into a string bag.

Before showing you how to play the game, I must say something about the equipment. Dr. Watters's check list includes Canadian materials up to 1950. At present he is adding titles and is updating to 1960. My work at present is incomplete and unpublished. In fact, even when published it will be incomplete. What I say here about the two check lists relates to one which has been thoroughly weeded and published once, and to one which has yet to be either thoroughly weeded or published. In other words, my statements about the Australian entries are based on more information than you will eventually have.

At the outset, the paternity of the Australian check list is immediately obvious. Because I worked for Dr. Watters there are similarities in format and in categories, as well as in title. Both are in English and list books published in English. Both list by author, with titles, place of publication, publisher, date, and number of pages — where possible. Both show, or are planned to show, one location for each of five regions in Canada, but I want also to use the National Library symbol where possible, and to add a new symbol, probably W, to indicate that a book is widespread, to show a book held in the five locations but also held in more than ten.

It must also be immediately obvious that both Dr. Watters and I first had to become involved in what is probably the most dangerous single game played by every national bibliographer, that of identifying the quarry. We had, respectively, to try to decide just who is a Canadian or Australian, or just what writing is Canadian or Australian. Many illustrations can serve as a warm-up for this one. A. M. R. Kinahan, "Kinahan Cornwallis", lived in Melbourne during the La Trobe administration but subsequently left Australia and published in England. Henry Kingsley stayed five years in Australia before returning to England where he wrote novels based on his Australian experience. Hume Nisbet wrote end-of-century romances after living in Australia seven years. Neville Shute, towards the end of his life, left England to become an Australian citizen. The bibliographer of Australian writing must decide whether to include these people as Australian. Does he include D. H. Lawrence in an Australian bibliography

because Lawrence spent a few months in Australia before he wrote *Kangaroo*? Or Havelock Ellis because he spent four years there? J. I. M. Stewart, or "Michael Innes", taught for eleven years in an Australian university before returning to England. These are all easy. Similar decisions face Dr. Watters. Frances Brooke was an established writer in England before coming to Canada and she returned to England after five years in the Quebec garrison. Hers might be the first novel about Canada, but can *The History of Emily Montague* really be considered the first Canadian novel? Think of Malcolm Lowry, and Brian Moore. No two people will accept all the names in either check list: everyone will discover errors of omission and many will call for the referee. Unfortunately, the referee must be the compiler himself who will doubtless use some criteria of birth, education, and length of residence, but criteria which themselves will doubtless be arbitrary and sliding.

A first notable difference in the two check lists will be in the detail. Dr. Watters's entries are more complete than mine. Many of mine give initials instead of full Christian names, many omit the place of publication, or the publisher, or the date, or the number of pages. Or the author's dates. Watters omits some, but not many. This difference might point to something about Dr. Watters's attention to detail and to mine, or it might point to something about our sources. My belief is that Dr. Watters's more complete entries testify to the good training, efficiency, loving care and attention of Canadian bibliographers and librarians, as well as to that of Dr. Watters. My incomplete entries testify in part to my own carelessness, but also to the lack of efficiency — to say nothing of training, loving care, or attention — of early employees of such institutions as the Royal Empire Society, the Colonial Office, or the Mitchell Library of Sydney.

Another notable difference is in publishing. Many titles in both lists come from the same English publishing houses. One expects to see the big ones like Ward Lock and Sampson Low and Hodder and Stoughton, to say nothing of Macmillan, Oxford, and Clarendon, but both lists show many titles coming from a single vanity house which was first located in London and then, after the war, in Ilfracombe. A question arises about why one English vanity publisher should be so popular, in both Australia and Canada, and whether or not it sent out agents. Canadians, moreover, publish extensively through their nearest neighbour, whereas Australians publish very little through theirs. Jumping to conclusions about markets and population and proximity is the simple game, but one can perhaps develop the conclusions into a more complicated theory concerning social and political isolation.

Australia seems to have publishing connections with only one major power, while Canada has connections with two. Hardly anything by an Australian is published in the United States unless it had been first published in England. On the other hand, a Canadian sometimes has little success in England or in Canada unless first published in the United States. The Australians' publishing as well as geographic isolation probably increases their sense of social and political isolation, and makes them more culturally frightened and more mentally garrisoned than we Canadians. The converse might be, though, that their

isolation makes them more self-sufficient, less dependent than we, and more authentically Australian in their literature than we are authentically Canadian.

This geographic and cultural isolation produces an interesting side effect. The Australians have a greater number of established and reputable general publishing houses than we, houses like Rigby, Lothian, and Tyrells, and of course Angus and Robertson and Mullens or almost any combination of those three. And Australians also have houses which, until recently, seemed committed to publishing only Australian writers and Australian writers of a certain kind of material. The Bookstall of Sydney, and Ure Smith, are two examples. National and Currawong are two more. And Jindyworobak. While Canadian popular writers like William Lacey Amy published detective and thriller and romance novels mainly in New York and London, Australians like James Holledge, or like John Winton Heming who writes also as "Tom Barton", "Paul de Wreder", and "Val Winton", publish theirs in houses like Associated, Emu, Transport, Australasian, Georgian, Lansdowne, and Horwitz.

Canada has nothing like Australia's popular press and Canadian libraries pay little or no attention to it. Horwitz alone has published hundreds of thrillers of every kind: sin and skin and science fiction, wild westerns, dramatic detectives, and travel. At least 150 of these titles are by "Carter Brown", who is really Alan Geoffrey Yates, and they carry delightful alliterative or punning titles like *Bella Donna was Poison*, *Bid the Babe By-By* and *Bird in a Guilt-Edge Cage*, to mention only 3 off the top of the alphabet. From the bottom comes *Venus Unarmed*, *The Wench is Wicked*, *Widow Bewitched*, *Wreath for a Redhead*, and *Yogi Shrouds Yolande*. My own favourite is *Nude – with a View*. Of these "Carter Brown" titles only 7 are held in Canadian libraries, and 4 of those 7 in the National. None of Horwitz's 99 titles by James Edmond MacDonnell can be located in Canadian libraries, and none of the 60 by John Slater, or "Ray Slattery". We Canadians get our jollies from the popular press of Britain and the United States, even when the books are the work of Canadian writers. Of Luke Allen's 40 titles, only 2 were first published in Canada. Of the 20 by Lily Adams Beck, none. Of 21 by Henry Bedford-Jones, none. Nor were any of those by Alice Burton. Hulbert Footner published 53 titles, 4 first in Canada.

The lack of a popular press in Canada could prove disastrous for the Canadian identity because the average Canadian has no choice of ordinary material written and published for common Canadians. Most reading Canadians with no university education have never heard of Ernest Buckler or Sinclair Ross, but most of them have read some James Bond, or even Zane Grey.¹ I have a very old-fashioned idea that reading can affect a person's attitudes. This nineteenth-century thinking leads me to believe that Australian presses publishing inexpensive Australian-oriented reading by and for Australians must surely influence Australianism or Australianness or the subconsciousness of being Australian. A study of the literature published by those Australian-for-Australians presses

¹ John Muckeridge wrote recently that "The battle for our cultural identity will be won or lost not in university libraries but in local drug stores and dirty book shops." *Saturday Night*, 86 no. 5 (May 1971) p. 30.

might reveal something new and interesting about Australian tastes and mores as well as about Australian attitudes.

One might expect that titles would also be a source of information, but too often titles are vague and contain little specific direction. Less positive than publishers, titles nevertheless do reflect some national differences, indistinct and vague though both the titles and the differences might be. Reading through both check lists time and time again has given me an impression of wonder and adventure in Australia, but an impression of people and action in Canada. Titles generally suggest that early Australians were far more interested than early Canadians in describing their new country, that Canadians prefer reading about a man and his travels through the landscape rather than about the landscape itself. The idea of a journey appears in Australian titles too, but not so frequently as in Canadian where you find *Mountain and Prairie. A Journey from Victoria to Winnipeg . . .*; *A Holiday Trip, Montreal to Victoria and Return . . .*; *A Trip to Bow River*; *A Six Weeks' Tour in Western Canada*; and, ideally, *Rambles among the Blue Noses*. Australian titles tend to be more factual while focussing on the countryside or landscape itself: *Australia As It Really Is*; *Excursions and Adventures in New South Wales, 1851*; *The Bushman, or Life in a New Country*; *Wild Adventures in Australia and New South Wales beyond the Boundaries*; and, *The Golden Colony, or Victoria in 1854*. A. H. Chisholm might have the ideal Australian title: *Strange New World: The Adventures of John Gilbert and Ludwig Leichhardt*.

The difference in approach to the country might be historical. English-speaking Canadians coming into their new land as Loyalists knew the country fairly well because earlier French and British travellers had described and recorded it, and because the Thirteen Colonies had fought for generations to win it from the French. Unless a territory had not been recorded before, like that of Hearne or Mackenzie or Fraser, incoming Canadians seem to have had more interest in man in the country, in man and his adjustment to the environment, in man's actions in the wilderness, than interest in the wilderness itself. On the other hand, Australians coming into their new land were recording something exciting, exotic, foreign, new, strange. Canadian flora and fauna, after all, had European counterparts; often Australian flora and fauna had counterparts nowhere. Australians therefore reported their bizarre new world to the old much in the way the early Jesuits and John Smith reported theirs.

Newness and strangeness might also account for what may be a difference in attitude towards the native peoples. In Canadian writing native peoples often appear in titles of literary works. Louis Olivier Armstrong's play incorporates the name "Hiawatha"; James B. Mackenzie wrote *Thayendanegea*, a drama about the Mohawk Joseph Brant; Charles Mair wrote *Tecumseh*. We also have fiction like Susan Jones's *The Micmac* and John Richardson's *Wacousta*. In Australia, until recently, few individual aboriginal people appear in literary titles. It is true that James Devaney wrote *The Girl Oona* and *I-Rinka the Messenger*, but he is rare. Arthur William Upfield did write of "Bony" the detective in *Bony and the Black Virgin*, *Bony and the Kelly Gang*, *Bony and the Mouse*, and others, but Bony is a half-caste; he is not pure Aborigine. Whether Australian background

material truly avoids the blacks, I cannot say without reading the material, but it certainly avoids them in titles. And remember that reading is not part of the game.

The differing ways of looking at the natives might be explained in terms of familiarity and economics. After two centuries of experience with Indians a Canadian writer knew that they were human and he could, therefore, use them as central figures in a work of art about human emotions. John Richardson, for example, demonstrates a very warm side to his Indians. Not until anthropologists began working in Australia — and, admittedly, that was early — did many Australians consider the “Abo” anything but sub-human. Canadians had always known the Indian; they had used him, nurtured him, kept him when necessary, for he was a source of fur-company wealth. In Canada the only good Indian was a live Indian. That the only good Indian is a dead Indian is an American expression, not a Canadian one. The historical Australian attitude toward the Aborigine approximates that of the American toward the Indian, and both might be based on religion, misunderstanding, lack of interest, economics, and fear. The consciousness of colour in both countries might have been planted early, although few Australian titles give any indication of a White Australia policy. With a growing awareness of aboriginal art and culture there developed a growing interest in the Aborigines themselves; and in the future they will no doubt figure more strongly as central characters in Australian writing.

Australian writers, however, might ignore the Aborigines mainly because the Australians have not had to go to the Abo for romantic literature, or because they skipped through the romantic period a little more quickly than we did. It is possible that the Australians have no great need for “cowboy and Indian” writing in spite of the Australian popular press turning out real westerns with titles like *War in Tucson*, *Twins Shoot Alike*, and *Cattle Thieves' Honour*. Canadian publishers do not produce this kind of material. When we Canadians need a romantic world we can always go to the *ancien régime* with such works as Kirby's *Chien d'or*; Parker's *Valmond*; Ashworth's *La Roux* or his *The Seigneurs of La Saulaye*; Leprohon's *Antoinette de Mirecourt*, *Armand Durand*, and *Le Manoir de Villeraï*; Macdonell's *Diane of Ville Marie*; and Marquis's *Marguerite de Roberval*. For the stuff of purely English sword and bosom fiction we can go to Robert Allison Hood whose titles actually include such romance words as “quest” and “chivalry”. Or we have Thomas Raddall. The unfortunate Australians never did have a “romance” society like ours, and their romantic writers were forced to use Australian explorers and convicts. Ernestine Hill uses Matthew Flinders in *My Love Must Wait*; Carlton Dawe writes of convict life in *Confessions of a Currency Girl*, as did Price Warung (pseud.) in *Tales of the Convict System* and *The Escape of the Notorious Sir William Heans*, a romance of Tasmania.² The check list rapidly squelches the old rumour that Australians never mentioned the convict past.

² Australians also turn to romantic family chronicles. Although titles do not indicate such information, we have only one writer of family chronicles, Mazo de la Roche; the Australians have several: Martin Boyd, M. Barnard Eldershaw (pseud.), Vance Palmer, and Henry Handel Richardson, to name but a few.

Both Australian and Canadian titles display an interest in the outback or backwoods, but the Australian, in his wonder or his fear, turns more rapidly and honestly away from the romantic to the realist and naturalist philosophies. J. H. M. Abbott wrote *Plain and Veldt*; John Armour, *The Spell of the Inland*. Rolf Boldrewood, in *Robbery under Arms*, combined convicts, countryside, and mining camps. His *Plain Living* he subtitled "A Bush Idyll", and his *Last Chance*, "A Tale of the Golden West". Both titles have romantic implications, but Boldrewood also published his realistic urban-oriented *A Sydney-Side Saxon* as early as 1891. The Australian turns to realism quickly, perhaps, because he could not see a way of utilizing or explaining the incomprehensible landscape or wildlife in romantic terms. Australians appear to write little fiction based on animals — except in books for tiny tots — and appear to produce nothing like the works of our Bodsworth, Conibear, or Saunders. The same reasons for seeing few aboriginal heroes might account for the few animals as central characters. The wilderness or outback might also explain the idea of "mateship" in Australian titles. A mate or companion in a strange new and forbidding world would be no small comfort, especially if you were an escaped convict on the run. I am not at all sure, though, how to explain the title *Mateship with Birds!*

Sport though speculating on titles and publishers might be, the most intriguing game comes out of the names of the authors. Like the Canadian list, the Australian has a name beginning with every letter of the alphabet but X. Both lists contain German and Swedish and Polish names, but in the Canadian list there are no Chinese names while in the list of "White" Australia there are at least two. In the Australian list very few writers with French names appear and those few usually write about exploration or about glamorous countries. Each time I meet Marcel Aurousseau in the check list he is doing something new, but usually something geographic; he will probably have to go eventually, but I'll keep him around for a while. Each time I go through the work my eye lights on different titles depending on my current game or interest: at first, because I make wine, I always noticed titles about vineyards, wines, and grapes, but after discarding that material as not really belonging to the humanities regardless of how humane it is, I began noticing titles about Borneo or Japan or Spain or Istanbul — any place far from a 3 x 5 card. Canada has many writers of English with French names: Le Rossignol sticks pretty well to fiction, and Le Page to poetry; Le Pan does both, and Le Moine covers the field; and we still have Le Long, de Paley, Des Barres, Des Brisay, and Beauregard. In addition to a greater number of writers with French names Canada has had well over three times as many more obvious Scots who wrote than Australia has had, but Australia had had nearly twice as many who are obviously of Irish background. Watters shows one Doyle, I show six; Watters shows six Murphys, I show sixteen.

The relative number of Scottish and Irish names allows for some great speculation apart from calculating the number of filing cabinets needed for a library catalogue. For example, titles by Scottish writers seldom reflect the reasons for the Scots' leaving home, while titles often indicate that the Irish in Australia left home not because of famine but because of politics. Nor does the Scot in Canada seem to be absorbed by ancient problems, but the Irish in

Australia write such works as *A History of Ireland under the Union*, *The League of North and South*, and *A Bird's Eye View of Irish History*. Irishness is kept alive in Australia if one can judge by such titles as *Australia's Debt to Irish Nation-Builders*. Judging by author and title, in Australia it is the Irishman who is always to be found in the political ring, while in Canada it is the Scot, and the Irishman here seems generally to be without political drive.

The Scots are essentially Presbyterian while the Irish are Roman Catholic, and national differences emerge here too. The Australian might not be more conscious of religion than the Canadian, but the check lists suggest very strongly that the Roman Catholic influence helps mould the Australian national character just as surely as the Presbyterian helps mould the Canadian. Both countries have writing on Hedonism, and Buddhism and Spiritualism, but the strength of the two major religious influences is never challenged. In fact, the national game of both Canada and Australia in the nineteenth century seems to have been neither cricket nor hockey, but publishing religious tracts and sermons. Canadian writing on religion, from ocean unto ocean, has a very Protestant ring to it, few titles in English suggesting a Roman Catholic point of view; in Australia, probably because of the strong intellectual Irish Catholic background, the reverse is true. Australian education and religious writing generally has a Roman Catholic slant, and Australians have written about twice as many biographies of Roman Catholic priests as have Canadians.

What is more, Canadian titles breathe sin and seriousness, work and welfare, but seldom fun and games. Canadian titles seldom contain the words "sun" or "light", while Australian titles abound with those words. The Australian's preoccupation with fun and pleasure might also be an offshoot of the Irish Catholic background, with a later and strong infusion of the Italian and Greek. Australian writers, Protestant and Catholic — and that information is not on my title cards — write about boating and boxing, cricket and hiking and horses, about running and race tracks. I have not counted the number of novels about horses and horse racing, but there must be hundreds.

But perhaps the greatest difference in the Canadian and Australian author lists is in the use of pen names. No one can browse through the Australian card catalogue without noticing the number of Australian pseudonyms, anonymous publications, or those signed only with initials. Watters shows about 350 Canadian pseudonyms; mine has 350 from A to H alone. Surprisingly neither has Pro Bono Publico. Some Australian pseudonyms one would expect: Anglo-Australian, Australianus, Mr. Flotsam, Junius, and Pro Patria. Others are more antipodean: Boomerang, Digger, and Trooper Bluegum. Still others are merely cute: Ame Perdue, Gabriel Bumpkin Bigfellow, An Oyster, Ricketty Kate, and Skittish Vein.

Asking why so many Australians write pseudonymously or anonymously drives one's thoughts in as many directions as Leacock's horse. Part of the explanation may be in the convict background of some of the people who wrote when publication by a convict or ticket-of-leave man was forbidden. Many highly educated and erudite convicts were forced to work and write secretly.³ Pseudonyms, of course, have long been used to cover the frivolity of serious

academics, but part of the answer in Australia might also lie in a fear of political reprisals.⁴ The transported Chartists could have adopted pseudonyms as they continued to blaze away at transportation, imperialism, and labour or parliamentary ills. Irish supporters of Home Rule or of Parnell also required some protective colouring, as did early or unpopular advocates of Australian federation or independence.⁵ Pseudonyms can also add a certain cachet or mystery to an author, can give him an aura of derring-do. This type of pseudonym became popular in Australia when men like James Anthony Froude, Rider Haggard, and Rudyard Kipling were coming to the fore and when the English readers devoured guide books and travel literature as avidly as they did when Lemuel Gulliver wrote for them. Drifting through the Australian countryside on their way to the gold rush or to the coral beds or to the desert, disaffected or dispossessed young Englishmen wrote of their adventures in the strange, mysterious, and dangerous land, and to their actual names added "Bushman" or "Wanderer" or some such descriptive adjective to give themselves a little more panache. Calling himself "New Chum", for instance, A. J. Boyd published a collection of prose and verse in 1882 and called it *Old Colonials* in order to catch the attention of the home market. The camouflage, the mystery, the daring or the derring-do can also be pure and simple public relations, or an attempt to avoid "over-exposure" of one's own real name.⁶ For whatever reason, however, the use of these names in Australia is marked, though the use may be disappearing somewhat now.

In the meantime, though, one cannot help but wonder what William Astley

³ A good example is Henry Savery, a former Bristol broker transported for forgery. He worked for the *Colonial Times*, a Hobart newspaper, and in 1829 wrote about conditions in Hobart, but wrote under the name "Simon Stukely". He concealed his identity well for Andrew Bent of Hobart Town later published the series anonymously as *The Hermit of Van Diemen's Land*. By 1832 Savery had his ticket-of-leave, and published *Quintus Servinton*, Australia's first novel in book form, again anonymously.

⁴ The first book of verse by an Australian-born author was published in 1832: *Australia: A Poem*. It had been written by Charles Wentworth for the medal of the Chancellor of Cambridge University. Wentworth had not been so bold as to sign his name seven years earlier when he had been writing his "Satire on Colonel George Molle".

⁵ Bernard O'Dowd exemplifies one type who wrote under a pen name. As a junior and then a senior civil servant from 1887 to 1929, he was secure only so long as he was quiet and exemplary in public. Privately he was neither: O'Dowd was interested in anarchism, communism, mysticism, socialism, and spiritualism; he dabbled in politics, supported the Labour party, and spoke out for Australian independence. Because the civil service would not tolerate such activities, he covered his tracks by writing as "Danton" or "Fenton" or "Gavan the Blacksmith". None of his pseudonyms appear in my bibliography because he used them in writing other than books. Bruce Nesbitt and Susan Hadfield, in an unpublished manuscript on Australian pseudonyms, show that O'Dowd used at least thirty-one different names.

⁶ Nesbitt and Hadfield indicate that Miles Franklin, who wrote for years as "Brent of Bin Bin", told Mary Fullerton, who wrote as "E", "Robert Gray", "Turner O. Lingo" and "Gordon Manners" — all in my check list — that "the preservation of the author's anonymity serves as an advertisement"

was camouflaging when as “Price Warung” he wrote of convicts. Was “Furnley Maurice” a cover for an underground press run by Frank Wilmot? Why did the balladeers adopt such pseudonyms as Ironbark, Dryblower, and Bluebush? Why did the Reverend Father Patrick Joseph Hartigan publish twenty-seven editions of *Around the Boree Log* as John O’Brien? And what the hell is a boree log anyway?

But the running down of strange terms like boree log and Huldowget is still another game. Couchiching really sounds and looks like a provocative participle, don’t you think? And so the games proliferate, but whether they are profitable except as intellectual exercises I know not. I do not really know who acts as referee in the argument about what can be considered Australian or Canadian. I do not really know whether Canadian librarians are better than Australian; maybe my Canada First button is showing. I do not really know how popular publishing or how isolation affects the Australian character. I have, as you see, some ideas but they are as yet untested; some are untestable. I am just playing games. My conjectures about attitudes towards seeing the country and the natives someone might challenge by a switch of titles, and perhaps I read too much into a religious difference which might exist only in the bibliography. My name game might be turned against me to show how interested I am in religion and how little I know of it. Nevertheless, the games themselves are more intellectual than monopoly, less costly than poker, and just as thrilling as a fast game of snakes and ladders. But most games are at least therapeutic, though serpents of one kind or another can be found almost anywhere. Eve met one in the garden, and the Book of Job predicted the gall of asps and the tongues of vipers for the wicked.

I worked last summer at the UBC library, but in August packed it up and went to a meeting in Winnipeg. The Poetess of the Humanities Division at UBC must have known that Job has become my hero over the past few years; with the help of the Na’amathite, she composed a Valentine poem and, Australian-like, sent it to me anonymously. The poetess – and she called herself “Poetess” directly in the face of Wimslib – obviously thought me to be hypocritical in my protestations about never finishing the check list and, knowing that I had flown away or deciding too that a hypocrite shall perish forever like his own dung, she ended her colourful epistle with the words, “For he has crushed and abandoned his cards, he has seized a task which he will not end”.

She is wrong. She has the rhythm, but not the logic. I haven’t seized a task which I will not end; the task has done the seizing and will not let me go. On leaving the library last August, I did not crush and abandon my cards; I took them with me, for they are ever by me. Those forty-six drawers of 3 x 5 cards have changed my night into day, they have crushed and encrusted my soul. Half out of their frames, the drawers are forty-six rattlesnakes trying to warn me about something. All out, their casing becomes forty-six mouths gasping in rows ready to devour me. On a chair or on the floor, each seems to be a squared-off saw-backed little dinosaur threatening to inch toward me. Shut tight and in place, the drawers are worms plugging their chrysalises, their single rectangular eyes daring me to come near. Sometimes, all closed up tight, their single block of

steel becomes an impregnable safe holding all knowledge on thin, hard-edged, pure white, 3 x 5 cards, and I bruise my hands while striking to get at them.

But as you see, I am not yet mad. I am merely sometimes bibliomaniac, sometimes a mere bibliomaniac. My sixty thousand cards and the hundreds of thousands I have seen, used, discarded, distorted or destroyed, haunt me, whirl at me, swirl around and through me. They are the birds in the Hitchcock movie. They are the snow flakes over David Canaan. They are the frogs and lice and flies; they are the murrain, and boils, and hail. They are the plague of locusts. I live in a swooping sliding slipping world of 3 x 5 cards. They smother me, they infest my days, and infect my dreams. Snow and hail and sleet are they. Not all of them. Not the little yellow ones. The little yellow author cards are beams of sunshine, soft rays of golden light which join heaven and earth, or God and me, or me and God. Especially on a wet, grey Vancouver day.

But as I say, I am not really mad. In truth I am like Job, perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil. But I now think that Job had the better of it, played the easier game. And after speaking to the Lord of the thing that was right, Job at least scored, even if he did not get a bull. The Lord blessed Job, as you recall, with fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. On second thought, though, after speaking to you of the thing that is right, I am grateful for having been rewarded simply with attention. My apartment is already filled with rule books for playing bibliography games and with filing cabinets for 3 x 5 cards; I could never find room for sheep, camels, oxen, and she-asses.

GORDON R. ELLIOTT