

The CODEX Foundation's first major event will be a three-day symposium, "The Fate of the Art, The Hand Printed Book in the 21st Century," to be held in Berkeley next February, just prior to the 2007 San Francisco International Antiquarian Book Fair. "This event is intended to be a landmark congress of the world's finest practitioners, presses, collectors, curators and educators, as well as an opportunity to raise public awareness of our existence and continuing creative vitality." Canadian Robert Bringhurst (who has collaborated with Koch on several projects) will be one of the keynote speakers. See www.codexfoundation.org for more details.

TRENDS IN COLLECTING

Collecting Bookers

TO BEGIN, TWO important but not always understood definitions: *modern first editions* refers to all books published during the twentieth century or later; *hypermoderns* refers to books published within the past ten years that have escalated rapidly in price following publication. A hypermodern is caused by the simple rule of economics—lots of demand for a very limited supply of a desired book. The supply is often small because the author is "new," and publishers seldom produce large first printings of unknown authors.

Customers of Pages 'N Pages have shown a keen interest in books published within the past thirty years, especially titles that have been shortlisted for or won major literary prizes. There is no doubt that the Man Booker Prize generates the most amount of activity among book collectors, and it will be the focus of this first column.

The prize includes fiction written by a citizen of either the Commonwealth or the Republic of Ireland. (The largest criticism of the prize is that it excludes a country that consistently produces top-quality fiction every year—the United States of America.) Collecting Man Booker prizewinners in pristine condition (and especially signed copies) has become increasingly difficult in the past few years, as some of the earlier winners, such as Stanley Middleton's *Holiday* or Bernice Rubens' *Elected Member*, have become extremely scarce.

Aside from the scarcity of some of the Man Booker prizewinners, complexity is added because there is confusion with some of the winners as to which edition is the true first edition. J.M. Coetzee won his first Man Booker Prize in 1983 for his book *Life and Times of Michael K*. There has been disagreement among even the more established book

dealers as to whether the true first is the U.K. printing or the South African printing by Ravan Press. My research into this question so far has revealed that the U.K. edition was published in January 1983 and the Ravan Press edition was published simultaneously. I am, however, still investigating to determine whether there really was a simultaneous release or whether there was a slight time difference between the publication of the two editions.

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, which won in 1981 (and then was named in 1993 the "Booker of Bookers" for being the best of the first 25 winners of the prize), has some history behind it as well. The U.K. edition—the more sought-after edition because it had a small print run of about 2,500 copies, of which an estimated 1,000 were absorbed by libraries in the U.K., and because Rushdie is a U.K. citizen who won a U.K. literary prize—is not the first published edition: due to labour strikes, it was released in early April 1981, about two to three weeks after the U.S. edition. Also, the U.K. edition was printed from the U.S. sheets (the U.S. edition was published by Knopf). Book dealers with the U.S. first printing will always claim that their copy is the true first edition (technically they are correct), but a collector of Man Booker prizewinners should be more interested in obtaining a really nice copy of the U.K. edition, for the reasons already mentioned.

Steven Palter is owner of Pages 'N Pages Bookstore (pagesnpages@hotmail.com) in Toronto, specializing in literary prizewinners and Canadian first editions.

ALIQUANDO CENTENARY

Canadian private-press legend Will Rueter continues his usual productive pace at The Aliquando Press, having already completed two books in 2006. He is beginning work on his 100th title, featuring a text by T.J. Cobden-Sanderson. "It will take at least a year of hand setting, but I'm sure I'll finally learn humility," he reports. His most recent publication is The Convergence of the Twain, a dark poem by Thomas Hardy on the sinking of the Titanic, printed "using a lot of very expensive Japanese paper. Reg Beatty, one of Canada's top binders, collaborated and the binding is a real joy." Rueter and Beatty are each binding half of the copies in the edition of 50. The horizontal format is 21.8 x 12.5 cm; the book is priced at \$65. Rueter's work (and workshop) can now be seen on his newly launched Web site, www.aliquando.ca.