

THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

LEONARD R. N. ASHLEY
Brooklyn, New York

You may remember that people used to worry about what the word was for the fluff that one finds in the corners of one's pockets. Sometimes people invent words for things that have long gone unnamed: Gelett Burgess thought up **blurb** for the self-promoting material on a book jacket; someone came up with **gridlock** (and **pedlock**, but the latter did not catch on). And some people seem to know the name for everything: the little decorative thing that screws on at the top of a lamp to hold the shade on is a **finial**, and it screws on to the top of the **harp**.

Now, Howard Rheingold has come up with They Have a Word for It: A Lighthearted Lexicon of Untranslatable Words and Phrases (J. P. Tarcher, distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1988; \$7.95). Of course, these odd words from strange languages are not untranslatable. So here is the translation and the language. See if you can guess a few of this dozen of odd words. This is **aargh** (comic-bookese for "I can't stand this!") in most cases, I warn you. As the Swedes say to offer sympathy when you are in pain--**uffda!**

1. unusual appetites or longing of pregnant women (Sanskrit)
2. predestined hour of one's death (Indonesian)
3. spiritual trance performance (Korean)
4. emotion common to a group or gathering (Spanish)
5. truth everyone knows but nobody speaks (Trowinian)
6. blissful dreams (Bantu)
7. peace offerings to irate wives (German)
8. macho type who struts and flexes his muscles (Italian)
9. space between things (German)
10. a mess caused by incompetence (French)
11. alleged improvement that makes things worse (German)
12. awakening from a nightmare (Indonesian)

Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.