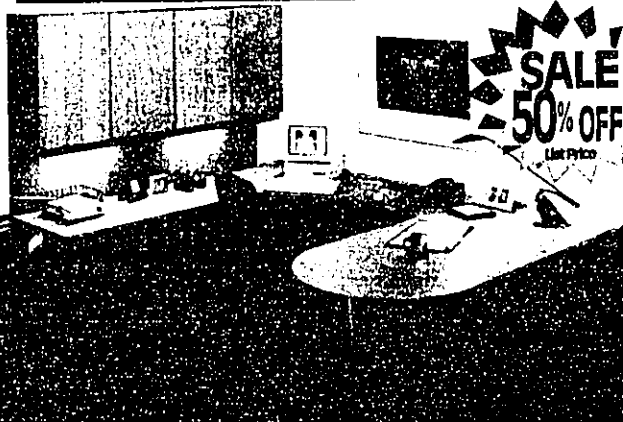


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BOOK BREAK

Heston's bio drags, but has some appeal



VICTORIA DIAZ

ton's words) "big enough to knock someone down with."

Hitting readers over the head is not really the purpose of a book, though. And, while I'm sure the worldly-wise Mr. Heston knows this, he seems to have lost track of it when he sat down to write "In the Arena," (reportedly with no ghost writer). This weighty tome, short a pound or two, would have made a much better read. As is, it wobbles beneath its own excess verbiage.

Heston's tendency to repeat himself may be its most serious handicap. God

knows what his editors were thinking (or even where they were), but this book is absolutely riddled with twice-thrice-told comments on various subjects. Only Americans make good West-erns, he tells us — again, and again. "Ben-Hur" ran for a very long time in New York theaters. He often naps in the makeup chair. His wife suffers migraine headaches. In themselves, these comments are not tiresome, of course. But repeated again and again, this is exactly what they (plus many others) become.

When this repetition is wedded to Heston's inclination to ramble on (even to the point of including numerous verbatim "baby-talk" quotes from his two children), the autobiography seems to plod along even more.

Especially as Heston's story lengthens, his format doesn't help much, either. After a while, things begin to feel too much like an extensive list of his

See DIAZ, 4D

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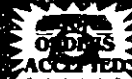
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