

arts/entertainment

Author's search for God continues in latest novel

By William Regier

Isaac Bashevis Singer's *A Young Man in Search of Love* (Doubleday) resumes the autobiography begun by *A Little Boy in Search of God* (1976). America's most recent Nobel laureate grows up a little in this book, though the object of his search, despite the title, is still God.

book review

Singer's path winds through the Warsaw ghetto between World Wars. He is a member of a writer's club and made livid by the success of his big brother, Israel. Israel offers Isaac money, but he proudly refuses it. Kept by a woman twice his age, Isaac can afford his pride. But she sickens, he leaves her and ponders both the God and the prose style he fervently desires. Speaking an imperfect Polish, he was able to pick up some English words and phrases. The word "prosperity" was adopted by Yiddish, Singer's native language. He picked up "split personality," "inferiority complex," and remembers, "As soon as I read of some phobia or neurosis, I immediately acquired it."

Prayed for a room

In the meantime he prayed most urgently, first for his stories to be published, then for a private room. He became aware of America through *The Jewish Daily Forward*, a New York Yiddish newspaper that paid contributors well.

He translated Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* into Yiddish, though the book bored him. It was a work "for critics, not readers." All the while he was certain that until he knew the essence of eternity, all he did was "sheer futility."

He was anti-feminist because modern women were "amazingly like me." A woman, pregnant by another man, offered to buy his way out of military conscription if he would marry her. It seemed a good deal to Isaac. She told him, "God cursed the female gender. He is an even greater anti-

feminist than Otto Weininger and Strindberg."

People drop by every few pages to restore Isaac to his sidewalk theology. Stefa, former rich miss, declares, "If He exists, then He is a comedian." Isaac quotes appropriate scripture. She laughs.

Warm mush

Isaac, even in his twenties, was impatient to reduce universal complexity to his own image. God "wants love (as I do) regardless of whether He has earned it. He frequently punishes His creatures but He demands that they forgive Him and acknowledge that all His intentions are of the best." This is followed by more comforting anthropomorphism, warm mush.

The Spinoza of Market Street, one of Singer's best known characters, knew Spinoza's *Ethics* by heart. Singer's autobiography pays frequent homage to the same murdered philosopher, and records Singer's reading of Kant, Schopenhauer, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Nietzsche. The Book of Deuteronomy, he then thought, was "the wisest work ever created by man."

When not exhorting the deaf heavens, Singer's book stays strictly autobiographical. The reader learns little about the Warsaw ghetto; Schocken's "Holocaust Library" portrays that mantrap far more completely. But Singer's lifelong distrust of Marxists is explained by his observation that Jewish factory workers were "a species that hardly existed."

Searching for love

A Young Man in Search of Love begins with Isaac in the arms of a woman; it ends with a lost love returning to him. In between, his success with women (redheaded heartbreaker that he was) is mentioned without boasting or indecorous detail. His affairs seem to have been frequent and they fatigued him. His search for love was irresolute and inconclusive.

Isaac's steadiest job was as a proofreader, though he wasn't very good at it. Neither are the proofreaders at Doubleday, which causes special problems with this book. It is spiced with numerous Yiddish words that few gentiles are likely

to know: *dybbuk*, *Aralim*, *Chamsin*, *shtetl*, *tosaphist*.

How many have heard of Shechina, God's female counterpart? When one reads "an anthema" (for "anathema"), "heresay" (for "heresy"), and Yiddish ioliums" (for "Yiddish idioms") one may

suspect more Yiddish yet.

A Young Man in Search of Love is a short book with fat print and abundant color illustrations. It may convince you that you read fast. It won't alter the opinion that Singer's best writing is fiction.

Movies booked on chance

By Doug Hull

Outguessing the Lincoln movie-going public takes luck and a sense of what ingredients have worked before in a movie, said a local theatre company owner.

David Livingston, vice-president and assistant buyer for the Douglas Theatre Co., said booking the right movie to gain a profit often is based on chance.

"I'm afraid more often than not it's guess work," Livingston said. "If you see a Burt Reynolds or a Barbra Streisand, it can up the ante."

Livingston said the method theatre owners use most frequently to book films is "blind bidding."

Theatre owners receive a notice three to 12 months in advance of a film release, Livingston said. The notice contains the name, release date, actors, director and producer of the film.

Livingston said theatre owners bid on the film being offered, but none know what the others have bid. The theatre owner who offers the highest bid runs the picture for an agreed amount of time.

Popularity factor

A rental agreement for a film can run an average of six weeks, depending on a film's popularity, Livingston said. The rental agreement for a film is made with the movie company's distributor.

Livingston said a movie company rents its films at a guaranteed minimum rate, or at 70 to 90 percent of the theatre's first week's sales, whichever is the highest.

This year, a film not yet released, *The China Syndrome* is an example of a bid decision made because of a director's past performance, Livingston said. The film is

directed by Michael Douglas, who also directed *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*.

Livingston said UNL students weigh heavily on the program decisions made by the Douglas Theatre Co. He said that studies show the average movie-goer to be in their early 20's.

Busy holidays

The busiest seasons for theatre owners are Christmas and the Fourth of July. During these periods theatre owners assume the films released are the "cream of the crop," he said.

Sarge Dubinsky, president of Dubinsky Bros. Theatres, said his decisions on movie bids also are based on luck.

"Anyone who thinks it's not guess work doesn't know the business," he said.

"You weigh everything: cast, title, producer, everything you have," Dubinsky said. "A theatre owner has no idea how popular a film will be."

Dubinsky said *Animal House* and *The Goodbye Girl* are two films which were surprisingly successful when first released.

"If you rank pictures from one to 10, you're invariably going to be wrong," he said.

Being wrong can add up to a dollar loss for theatre owners, according to Dubinsky. He said theatre owners with larger funds can absorb the losses, but in some situations "theatre owners must remember that it is a seller's market."

Dubinsky said a deal known as a "split" can be made among exhibitors. Theatre owners agree to divide the movies which are up for bidding, and each owner bids without competition, he said.

Although the legality of splitting has been questioned, Dubinsky said, most legal cases have supported it.

Students foresake best sellers for fascinating textbooks

By Mary Fastenau

The *New York Times* may have to worry that their best seller book list will soon have a replacement—UNL's own version.

Students are replacing the *New York Times*' winning book *Chesapeake* with such books as *College Algebra* and *Chemistry: A Modern Introduction*.

It is difficult to single out one book as the top bestseller, but Jerry Mullinix, textbook manager of the Nebraska Bookstore, said the books for Speech 109, Sociology 153, Chemistry 109, Math 100 and 106 and Life Science 101 contend for the top spot.

At University Bookstore, Cheryl Davis, supply clerk, said textbooks for Economics 210, Life Science 101, Math 100, Accounting 103 and Educational Psychology 216 are their bestsellers.

Little synopsis

If you are interested in buying one of these top books, a little synopsis may be helpful.

Mentioned by both stores was the Math 100 book, 411 pages by Beckenbaugh, Drooyan and Wooton, entitled *College Algebra*. The reason for the book's popularity may be the tear-out pages in the back which give you a chance to rate the book and then mail your evaluation, postage paid.

The graphic gray, white and black design on the cover with a large "A" near the bottom, could fool the average reader into thinking it was not a textbook. The contents, printed in basic black, with brown highlights, would, however, remind the reader of the book's purpose.

Biology seller

Both stores also rate *Biology, the Unity and Diversity of Life*, by Kirk, Taggart and Starr as a top seller. Full-color pictures and

illustrations must be the reason for the high volume of sales, though some may argue the book is a hit because it is required for Life Sciences 101.

Another widely read science book, according to Nebraska Bookstore, is *Chemistry: A Modern Introduction*. This book must be directed toward people who like to get to the subject in a hurry as the front cover contains a scientific-looking structure and there is a periodic chart before you even open the first page.

This book is new this year and expected to remain in the best sellers because it is used for two chemistry classes, the textbook manager said.

Proven winner

A proven money maker for University Bookstore is *Economics, Principles, Problems and Politics* which is used for three economics classes. This 954-page book, which has been used through the years, is now in its seventh edition.

It appears that the book is widely read in Nebraska because the author, Campbell R. McConnell, is an economics professor at UNL. Nebraskans once again show pride in their state by making this book a bestseller.

If you've read an economics book, you may have also been exposed to *Elementary Accounting*, 988 pages of graphs, figures and tables. If students get impatient with this book, which is used for two accounting classes, they should read the dedication. The authors write, "To our wives, Dorothy, Beatrice, Maple for their patience, understanding and inspiration."

Black and white

The book used for Sociology 153, entitled *Sociology* by Robertson, may also be inspirational because its black and white photographs show all kinds of people doing all kinds of things. This book also contains seven white pages in the back, which ap-

pear to be reserved for autographs.

People pictures are also a big part of *Human Communication, A Revision of Approaching Speech/Communication*, the required reading for Speech 109. This book contains such interesting shots as people hugging tombstones, loading a dishwasher and watching television. The black cover appears to have no effect on book sales or leave people with a sense of gloom.

The black on white, black on white, black on white pages of Thomas's *Calculus and Analytical Geometry* may cause

gloomy feelings for some people, but that repetition of black appears to be the popular style in math books. This book is a record setter, not only in terms of sales but in number of pages with 1,034, making it the longest book in the UNL bestseller list.

The only paperback on the list is El-kind's *Children and Adolescents*, used in Educational Psychology 261. The only color in this book is the bright green of the cover, but it appears most people can endure 186 pages of basic material.



Romeo and Juliet will be performed by The Acting Company tonight at 8 p.m. in Kimball Recital Hall. Photo courtesy of Bob Thurber