
PAPERBOUNDS

GIMPEL THE FOOL and Other Stories. By Isaac Bashevis Singer. Farrar, 1957, republished 1978. 205 pp. \$4.95 (cloth, \$9.95)

Two years before the 1978 Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Isaac Bashevis Singer, 74, the Polish-born American writer told a reporter, "I don't think I am famous but if you say so, who am I to say no?" Deliberate or not, the echo of *Gimpel the Fool*, one of the writer's most unforgettable creations, could not escape any devoted Singer fan (*Gimpel*, for instance, told by the townspeople that the moon had come down in Turbeen, asking plaintively, "What was I to do? I believed them"). For years, Singer's publishers have been steadily making paperback editions of his novels, short stories, fables, and allegories available to an ever growing public. In addition to *Gimpel's* title story, crisply translated by Saul Bellow, there are 11 vivid village tales—of marriage beds and deathbeds, of saintly rabbis and evil *dybbuks*, of four generations of industrious little shoemakers, and of a man called Pelte the Wife Killer, who had four wives "and, may it not be held against him . . . sent them all off to the other side." Most were first published in Yiddish in New York City's *Jewish Daily Forward*.

TO FEED THIS WORLD: The Challenge and the Strategy. By Sterling Wortman and Ralph W. Cummings, Jr. Johns Hopkins, 1978. 454 pp. \$6.95 (cloth, \$25)

The Rockefeller Foundation's Wortman and Cummings are more optimistic than most recent writers on global hunger. They argue that techniques are emerging to help farmers feed an even more crowded world of the future—and quote chapter and verse, theory and statistics, to support their case. Some examples of

recent successful drives to accelerate food production: comprehensive national efforts in Taiwan, Mexico, India, China; special commodity programs (maize in Kenya, wheat in Turkey, rice in Colombia and the Philippines); and "defined-area" projects in Bangladesh and elsewhere. One major success came in Mexico's state of Puebla. There, with the use of local maize instead of new hybrids, and without irrigation, small farmers' average crop yields increased by 30 percent between 1968 and 1972. This was accomplished, essentially, through direct technical assistance and involved use of more fertilizers, better crop management, and provision of credit. In addition to analyzing the world food situation in words the non-agronomist can cope with, Wortman and Cummings provide a useful review of the most important literature on their subject, from Malthus to the National Academy of Sciences' reassuring 1977 report on nutrition research.

KINSHIP IN BALI. By Hildred Geertz and Clifford Geertz. Univ. of Chicago reprint, 1978. 226 pp. \$3.95

This tightly woven piece of scholarship is not for everyone. But it is interesting and important in its field. Time was, note the Princeton-based authors, when all anthropologists agreed that every people possess a vital "kinship system" that can be identified, described, analyzed, and classified. Nine months of fieldwork in 1957-58 on the densely populated island of Bali off the coast of Java led the Geertzes to a different conclusion: "Whatever may be the case in West Africa, or Australia, Balinese society is in no way dominated by the institutions of kinship." Are there substitutes? Religion, they say, to a degree. Also, the concept of "origin-point," with distinctions between "core and peripheral