

STEVE STERN: STORYTELLING REDISCOVERED

// How old a writer do you think he is?
Does he have this 1st-hand?

Biographical Sketch

- born in Memphis < 83 > ultra-assimilated Reform background
- ran off to England; haunted the British Museum
- then off to the Ozarks (Arkansas) dirt farm
- returns home

~~Biographical~~ Account

Literary Roots

1) European Masters

- a) dichotomized < 84 >
- b) real fictional landscape < 85 >

2) ISAAC BABEL

< 88 > list of Lazzar's souvenirs

Shimmele-Fly-By-Night = Benya Krik

3) "bits of unrealized heritage" → literary manner

4) FOLKLORE

- a) real historical setting bursting w/ color
- b) Jews integrated into the folk mishmash
- c) folk life that admits of no dichotomies
- d) director of Ethnic Heritage Project: reconstructing the Pinch
< from Pinchgut: impoverished status of original Irish inhabitants >

5) Malamud

Angel Levine

use of fiddish locutions

but w/out doctrine of suffering

Immigrant Saga Thrice Removed

- 1) from Lower East Side to Memphis
Uncle Mordecai < 168 >
Leah Rosenthal

- 2) Restoring the Pinch to its former glory
 - < 28 > Julius, narrator of "Lazar Malkin"
 - < 85 > Morton Gruber goes back to write there
Leonard Shapiro's odyssey
- 3) Rendering that historical experience as myth

How Do We Know its 2nd-Hand

- < 37 > JIMM - p. 114
- so many of the protagonists we book worms
- NATHAN SIRIPKIN in Moishe the Just : local historian
- < 18 > cf to sword in the stone
- < 19 > Poe
- knows about o'j'ill - JNT
- THE GRAMAPHONE: Arnold's whole bibliography!
- heraldy believable < 46 >
- AARON MAKES A MATCH

Elements of Stern's Storytelling

NORTH MAIN STREET

- no division between public / private
- characters larger-than-life < 3 >
- symbolic landscape < 5 >
- shul, mikveh, Talmud Torah

WORLD-UNTO-ITSELF

- < 91 > world of Goyim
- Shimshel can't believe in the world beyond < 104 >

OTHERWORLDLY FIGURES CUT DOWN TO SIZE (cf. Peretz, IBS, Malamud)

- Moishe the Just
- Angel of Death in "Lazar Malkin"
- The Lord and Morton Gruber
- Azazel in "Aaron Makes a Match"

MYTHOLOGIZED LANDSCAPE < 248-49 >

- requiem to Eastern Europe destroyed in Hol. as well