

Dictionary of Literary Biography

Volume 28:

Twentieth-Century
American-Jewish
Fiction Writers

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Twentieth-Century American-Jewish Fiction Writers

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Plan of the Series

... Almost the most prodigious asset of a country, and perhaps its most precious possession, is its native literary product—when that product is fine and noble and enduring.

Mark Twain*

The advisory board, the editors, and the publisher of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* are joined in endorsing Mark Twain's declaration. The literature of a nation provides an inexhaustible resource of permanent worth. It is our expectation that this endeavor will make literature and its creators better understood and more accessible to students and the literate public, while satisfying the standards of teachers and scholars.

To meet these requirements, *literary biography* has been construed in terms of the author's achievement. The most important thing about a writer is his writing. Accordingly, the entries in *DLB* are career biographies, tracing the development of the author's canon and the evolution of his reputation.

The publication plan for *DLB* resulted from two years of preparation. The project was proposed to Brucoli Clark by Frederick G. Ruffner, president of the Gale Research Company, in November 1975. After specimen entries were prepared and typeset, an advisory board was formed to refine the entry format and develop the series rationale. In meetings held during 1976, the publisher, series editors, and advisory board approved the scheme for a comprehensive biographical dictionary of persons who contributed to North American literature. Editorial work on the first volume began in January 1977, and it was published in 1978.

In order to make *DLB* more than a reference tool and to compile volumes that individually have claim to status as literary history, it was decided to organize volumes by topic or period or genre. Each of these freestanding volumes provides a biographical-bibliographical guide and overview for a particular area of literature. We are convinced that this organization—as opposed to a single alphabet method—constitutes a valuable innovation in the presentation of reference material. The volume plan necessarily requires many decisions for the

placement and treatment of authors who might properly be included in two or three volumes. In some instances a major figure will be included in separate volumes, but with different entries emphasizing the aspect of his career appropriate to each volume. Ernest Hemingway, for example, is represented in *American Writers in Paris, 1920-1939* by an entry focusing on his expatriate apprenticeship; he is also in *American Novelists, 1910-1945* with an entry surveying his entire career. Each volume includes a cumulative index of subject authors. The final *DLB* volume will be a comprehensive index to the entire series.

With volume ten in 1982 it was decided to enlarge the scope of *DLB* beyond the literature of the United States. By the end of 1983 twelve volumes treating British literature had been published, and volumes for Commonwealth and Modern European literature were in progress. The series has been further augmented by the *DLB Yearbooks* (since 1981) which update published entries and add new entries to keep the *DLB* current with contemporary activity. There have also been occasional *DLB Documentary Series* volumes which provide biographical and critical background source materials for figures whose work is judged to have particular interest for students. One of these companion volumes is entirely devoted to Tennessee Williams.

The purpose of *DLB* is not only to provide reliable information in a convenient format but also to place the figures in the larger perspective of literary history and to offer appraisals of their accomplishments by qualified scholars.

We define literature as the *intellectual commerce of a nation*: not merely as belles lettres, but as that ample and complex process by which ideas are generated, shaped, and transmitted. *DLB* entries are not limited to "creative writers" but extend to other figures who in this time and in this way influenced the mind of a people. Thus the series encompasses historians, journalists, publishers, and screenwriters. By this means readers of *DLB* may be aided to perceive literature not as cult scripture in the keeping of cultural high priests, but as at the center of a nation's life.

DLB includes the major writers appropriate to each volume and those standing in the ranks immediately behind them. Scholarly and critical counsel has been sought in deciding which minor figures to include and how full their entries should be.

*From an unpublished section of Mark Twain's autobiography, copyright © by the Mark Twain Company.

Wherever possible, useful references will be made to figures who do not warrant separate entries.

Each *DLB* volume has a volume editor responsible for planning the volume, selecting the figures for inclusion, and assigning the entries. Volume editors are also responsible for preparing, where appropriate, appendices surveying the major periodicals and literary and intellectual movements for their volumes, as well as lists of further readings. Work on the series as a whole is coordinated at the Bruccoli Clark editorial center in Columbia, South Carolina, where the editorial staff is responsible for the accuracy of the published volumes.

One feature that distinguishes *DLB* is the illustration policy—its concern with the iconography of literature. Just as an author is influenced by his surroundings, so is the reader's understanding of the author enhanced by a knowledge of his environment. Therefore *DLB* volumes include not only drawings, paintings, and photographs of authors, often depicting them at various stages in their careers, but also illustrations of their families and places where they lived. Title pages are regularly reproduced in facsimile along with dust jackets for modern authors. The dust jackets are a special fea-

ture of *DLB* because they often document better than anything else the way in which an author's work was launched in its own time. Specimens of the writers' manuscripts are included when feasible.

A supplement to *DLB*—tentatively titled *A Guide, Chronology, and Glossary for American Literature*—will outline the history of literature in North America and trace the influences that shaped it. This volume will provide a framework for the study of American literature by means of chronological tables, literary affiliation charts, glossarial entries, and concise surveys of the major movements. It has been planned to stand on its own as a vade mecum, providing a ready-reference guide to the study of American literature as well as a companion to the *DLB* volumes for American literature.

Samuel Johnson rightly decreed that "The chief glory of every people arises from its authors." The purpose of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* is to compile literary history in the surest way available to us—by accurate and comprehensive treatment of the lives and work of those who contributed to it.

The *DLB* Advisory Board

Foreword

For the Jews from the cities, towns, and *shtetls* of the Old World arriving in the United States at a time of national reform, of primary importance were the problems of adjustment to the new culture and reconciliation of their old-country culture with that of the New World. Scrambling for a dollar, all family members working, they endured so that their children might become Americans. “Who has ever seen such optimism?,” asked Harry Golden. For the American-Jewish writer, under the pressures of the Americanizing process, new problems were added. With disdain for his parents’ ways, dress, and accent, he often opted for the New at the expense of the Old. Traditions, values, religion—all were subordinated to the need to emulate the Americans or the Jews who were no longer greenhorns. As the works of those writers from Abraham Cahan on in the first generation, and from Samuel Ornitz through Henry Roth to Saul Bellow in the next, show, Jews who bridged the two cultures in a host country wrote of the ongoing bridging experience. Their literary talents explored the sociological dimensions of a minority. As Jewish self-consciousness benefited from the national and international processes, so the American-Jewish writer wrote of himself, his people, anti-Semitism, the war, middlebrow America, and the attempt to understand himself and the society he inhabited.

For the more than two million Eastern European Jews who came to the United States between 1880 and 1920, the transatlantic crossing from the Old World to the New was, in the words of one commentator, “a kind of hell that cleanses a man of his sins before coming to the Land of Columbus.” From poverty, pogroms, and degradation, from hundreds of years of powerlessness, despair, and deferential adjustment, from a world of ghettos in which they knew who they were and what their values were, the Eastern European Jews came to a land where opportunity, success, and the American Dream ruled. No longer was the study of the Torah a sign of achievement; as Abraham Cahan’s David Levinsky was told, it was the American Dream that one had to achieve in the New World. True, there was a good chance of some upward mobility. But, sprinkled in with the possibilities of success—for one’s children if not for oneself—were the bitterness of disillusion, the unsureness of identity, the world of values in process. To David Levinsky’s

“peculiar state of mind that the experience [of seeing the Statue of Liberty] created in me,” were contrasted Michael Gold’s condemnatory words, that this “is a land where the lice make fortunes, and the good men starve,” and Genya’s disappointment, in Henry Roth’s *Call It Sleep*, on seeing her husband for the first time in months: “Ach! Then here in the new land is the same old poverty.” In the conflict of cultures that was the life of the new immigrants, it was the New World with its new values that triumphed.

American-Jewish writers have had to fashion their products out of the life they knew, and they worked usually in an uncaring or hostile framework. For too long, as in the case of black literature, stereotypes persisted, drawn mainly by the host culture but aided and abetted by the minority. Overcoming these images was one aspect of the writers’ problem. Learning the language and the symbols was another. Most important, the writers had to deal with a Jewish image brought into existence by Gentiles and Jews both and then create what had never existed before—an American-Jewish literature.

By the 1920s, America’s Jews, now American Jews, with one foot in the old country and one in the new, were struggling with problems no longer tied to the ghetto. As Jews, their adherence to traditional values and ethics was honored. As American Jews, shown in Samuel Ornitz’s anonymously published novel *Haunch, Paunch and Jowl* (1923), the compulsion to succeed and to wield power, no matter how correctly, surfaced for the first time. Though it was an isolated case, surrounded by pathos and humor, Meyer Hirsch’s rise as chronicled by Ornitz went beyond David Levinsky’s acceptable entrepreneurship in its earthiness—so much in the Yiddish tradition—and grotesqueness. As the drama of the generations was played out, Jews as Jews and as American Jews rebelled against their parents, struggled for their own identities, succeeded and failed, cried and laughed, as did others.

In the 1930s, in the grip of the Great Depression, Jews moved into prominence in literature. Nathanael West, Daniel Fuchs, Michael Gold, Henry Roth, and Meyer Levin were some of those in whose novels social and economic, generational and religious problems appeared. Writing about intellectuals and workers, hoboes and farmers, they con-

centrated on the attempts of people to identify with the poor and the oppressed. Some glorified the new energy of the Soviet Union or the Communist party at home as alternatives to what appeared a sick society. Michael Gold's *Jews Without Money* (1930), a novel from an ideologue, surprisingly kept to its last pages a plea for Communist brotherhood. Most Jewish writers, characteristically, reflected the external pressures of a depression-ridden society in which Jews struggled to be Americanized and survive. Many also joined in the decade's widely supported protests, spearheaded by President Roosevelt's New Deal for some and the Communists' program for others. Exchanging religious attachments for secularism, they sought new answers, perhaps new messiahs, in the social order. As Michael Gold wrote, "We had not Santa Claus, but we had a Messiah." No wonder he promised his mother, ideologically, "I must remain faithful to the poor because I cannot be faithless to you."

It was unusual that Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* (1934) shifted focus in so many ways. Unlike any other novel of the era, this superb psychological work narrated from the viewpoint of a child summed up the truths and the traumas of the immigrants' experience. Confronted by a father who was maddened by ghosts of the past and by present poverty and despair, little David Schearl balances his existence precariously between the traditional values of his mother and the *cheder* (religious school) and those of the outside world. The most Freudian of the interwar novels, involved with oedipal conflict, God, and phallic imagery, it is, said Leslie Fiedler, "the best single book by a Jew about Jewishness written by an American, certainly through the thirties and perhaps ever." Whether *Call It Sleep* is a proletarian novel, which I doubt, is unimportant. What comes across is the inner psychic pain of the second generation and its social and familial revolts.

Jews in the United States have responded in many ways to the pressures of the New World. Some from the beginning and into the present desired to be and were quickly or eventually assimilated. Some attempted to find a middle way by which they could become Americans and still retain their sense of being Jews. Some were so alienated or estranged as to drop out and pass into the great other—the Gentile world. Still others were doubly alienated, no longer at home either in the Jewish or non-Jewish context. And some didn't care one way or the other. Meyer Levin, accepting biculturalism, wrote, "Godless though I profess myself, I have responded with more than warmth to the mystical elements of Chasidism. As a writer, I have considered that I

accept the material as folklore. But in my soul I know that I take more than this from these legends." Ben Hecht vacillated from self-hating and nearly anti-Semitic prose to some essays and stories in the 1940s calling on Jews to defend Jewish rights. For Saul Bellow, who has had no struggle in identifying himself as Jewish, there has been unconcern for the definition of what that means.

Though some critics have termed these authors collectors of pathological characters, anti-Semitic, or simply nonwriters because their concerns are not in accord with a set of predefined goals, it is clear to me that they are writers first, who are Jews. I realize that some will ask that a writer be held to a specific commitment (individually defined), to a specific religious framework in which the writing goes on, but searching for truth takes many forms. One form it will take only perilously is that of the didactic story or essay; however, the search must take the form that the characters and their situations determine. If Jews in America are religious or not, or are rooted in the values of the past or not, so be it. If they are engaged in a generational conflict, so be it. And if they are Americans who are Jews, trying to find their way in a world that has meanings and structure somewhat different from that of the past, or that seems to lack meaning, or that needs new interpretations of the past, so be it. The writer's province is insight and honesty, not religious or political activism, and the degree to which he succeeds as a writer, as an American-Jewish writer, is the most important criterion.

From World War I through World War II, American literature was dominated by concepts such as alienation and the wasteland. In spite of the fact that estrangement produced some masterpieces, its time passed. When the older generation moved on, there seemed to be few replacements. At this point, in Bellow's opinion, the writer had to exercise his own intelligence, to think, and not merely of his own narrow interests and needs. For Bellow, who had no fight about being a Jew—"I simply must deal with the facts of my life, a basic set of primitive facts," he said in 1964—the Jewish people's experience was a universal metaphor. Inasmuch as the modern writer specializes in what have been called grotesque facts and cannot compete with the news itself, as both Bellow and Philip Roth pointed out, he must go beyond reality. He must turn away from current events, for what seems lacking, concluded Bellow, is a firm sense of a common world, a coherent community, a genuine purpose in life. Man has to strive for a life of significant pattern.

With the same goals in mind, Bernard Malamud has quested for moral salvation and self-realization. Whether he is writing about Morris Bober and his assistant, or Fidelman, or a Levin who would like to be a "Free-man" in a world that is not easy for Jews, the theme of meaningful suffering is present. Bober, for example, knows painfully that he has been a failure in the eyes of the world. But, as becomes clear in the end, he is a good man in the biblical sense of the word. One of the Hasidic rabbis said that he would rather be devout than clever, but rather than both devout and clever, he should like to be good. Becoming the essential Jew, therefore, is what is sought. And that goal is at least distantly related to what Bellow refers to as consummation of a heart's need.

That there are similarities in the works of some American-Jewish writers can be demonstrated. The differences are more striking. Philip Roth, for instance, has written most often about extreme behavior in ordinary situations. From the beginning, he has been concerned with men and women whose moorings have been cut, who have been swept away from their native shores and out to sea, sometimes on a tide of their own righteousness or resentment. Take "The Conversion of the Jews," a story of a Jewish boy who could no longer stomach his rabbi's evasions and thus responds as a child who can no longer act like "a little rabbi." Take Alexander Portnoy, a productive member of society on the job, whose problems, rightly or wrongly understood, lead him to live beyond his psychological and moral means. In short, we learn from Roth, the fantastic situation must be accepted as reality at the same time as the reality of the fantastic and horrible. Or, to go back to an earlier explanation, the world of fiction, wrote Roth, "frees us of circumscriptions that society places upon feeling . . . and allows both writer and the reader to respond to experience in ways not always available in day-to-day conduct."

In the second half of the twentieth century the American-Jewish writers came of age. They were American writers, of course, but they were also American-Jewish writers because they were born Jewish, and, regardless of the intensity of their religious or cultural commitment, they have written about some essential aspect of the Jewish experience in America. Unlike the Lost Generation writers—Gentiles who seldom wrote about urban or ethnic conditions—the Jewish community was defined enough to support their work. In the early 1940s, American-Jewish writers responded as no

other group to the country's urgent cultural need. The biblical past, the rise of Hitler, the Holocaust, the new State of Israel, and the need of Americans to again believe in humanity helped. As Saul Bellow put it, affirming his belief in the humanity of the patriarch Abraham, he knew his debt—it had to do with the presence and continuation of life.

In the 1970s and since, a most extraordinary development has been the emergence of a group of writers who write out of a sense of ongoing Jewish identification. Cynthia Ozick, Norma Rosen, and Hugh Nissenson, for example, have written of the centrality of the Jewish experience. In Nissenson's *A Pile of Stones* (1965), *Notes From the Frontier* (1968), *In the Reign of Peace* (1972), and *My Own Ground* (1976), there has been an attempt to examine the relationship of Jews to their religion in view of a God who is often absent or less than ideal. In Ozick's *Trust* (1966), *The Pagan Rabbi and Other Stories* (1971), *Bloodshed and Three Novellas* (1976), and *Levitization* (1982), there is an effort to develop a genuinely Jewish art in English along with what Ozick calls the "Judaization" of English.

As Ruth Wisse put it in a *Commentary* article in 1976, "Having no longer to defend themselves from real or imagined charges of parochialism, the new Jewish writers of the 70s are free to explore the 'trivial' and particularistic aspects of Judaism, and even, turning the tables, to speculate on the restrictive limits of English as a literary language." In other words, with an interest in trying to find out what it is like to think and write like Jews, they are using Jewish history and legend, they are not drawing caricatures, and they may be creating or completing what has been called one of the most distinctive cycles of literary expression in our time.

Twentieth-Century American-Jewish Fiction Writers contains essays on fifty-one authors whose novels and short stories deal with or come out of their American-Jewish experience. The writers may deal with that experience overtly or covertly, positively or negatively, confronting alienation, identity, acculturation, or assimilation. In this sense, writers such as Cahan, Bellow, and Ozick clearly fit in. On the other hand, some writers—West, Trilling, and Mailer, for example—are included because, although their fiction is not as overtly drawn from the Jewish experience, they are products of the Jewish cultural environment. In sum, it is the importance of the American-Jewish experience in shaping a writer's fictional world that has been crucial in my determination to include that author.

—Daniel Walden

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Dictionary of Literary Biography • Volume Twenty-eight

**Twentieth-Century
American-Jewish
Fiction Writers**

Dictionary of Literary Biography

Nathan Asch

(10 July 1902-23 December 1964)

Eva B. Mills

Winthrop College

See also the Asch entry in *DLB 4, American Writers in Paris, 1920-1939*.

BOOKS: *The Office* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925; London: Holden, 1926);
Love in Chartres (New York: A. & C. Boni, 1927; London: Holden, 1927);
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"Marc Kranz," *transatlantic review*, 2 (August 1924): 144-153;
"Gertrude Donovan," *transatlantic review*, 2 (December 1924): 608-622;
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Nathan Asch, circa 1937

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 "My Father and I," *Commentary*, 39 (January 1965): 55-65.

Not until after World War II did scholars and critics begin to pay much attention to American-Jewish writers as a group. Many of these—Norman Mailer, Philip Roth, and others—have received public acclaim. While not all sharing the same tradition—one need only contrast the tradition informing the work of Saul Bellow and that informing the work of Isaac Bashevis Singer—most of these writers draw on some identifiable tradition. Certainly Nathan Asch is an American-Jewish writer, but he felt he had no tradition. Asch questioned his being an American and being a Jew and often wondered whether he was a writer. In 1936 he wrote his mother: "What does it mean to be a European Jew? To feel you are a Jew and yet you are not anything that Jews are known to be? To have no conscious Jewish culture... to have never been in a

Synagogue, to have known no Yiddish; but to go to a European school, and speak a European language and have European friends, and symbolically not to wear a kaftan, but to wear the European clothes, and yet to be a Jew?"

Yet, like many Jewish writers, throughout his life and in his writing he searched for a spiritual identity and in the process examined his own past and tried to come to terms with the present.

Asch, the first child of the well-known Yiddish novelist Sholem Asch and Mathilda Spira Asch, was born in Warsaw, Poland. At age ten, after having spent a few months with his maternal grandfather in Lodz, he joined the family in Paris, where the Asches had migrated. There he met émigré artists, including Chagall, Kissling, and Pascin, who later, when Asch returned to Paris during the 1920s, spoke with longing of their visits to the Asch family's beautiful home in Chatillon, a suburb of Paris. Within three years of settling in Paris, shortly after the outbreak of World War I, the Asches were again on the move—to America. There they settled on Staten Island in a neighborhood where there were no Jews. Nevertheless, young Asch did have extensive contact with Jewish writers living on the West Side of New York whom he met through his father, already one of the most prominent Yiddish writers of that time. Asch attended the public schools in New York City; he also studied at Syracuse University and at Columbia, but he never graduated from college.

In light of his father's strong identity with the Jewish and Yiddish language and culture, one might well ask why Nathan Asch was obsessed with his own rootlessness. Leaving aside psychological interpretations, one can readily see that Asch's frequent moves and his exposure to various nations and languages would raise questions in the mind of a sensitive child and young man. On the one hand, Asch seems almost emblematic of the wandering Jew; on the other, he is a precursor of a whole generation of writers, Jew and non-Jew alike, searching for their roots.

At age twenty-one, Asch returned to Paris, where his career as a serious writer began in 1924 with the publication of three stories in the *transatlantic review*. "Gertrude Donovan," "Marc Kranz," and "The Voice of the Office" later appeared as episodes in his first novel, *The Office*, published in 1925.

Asch soon became a member of the expatriate colony in Paris. He counted among his friends Josephine Herbst, John Herrmann, Kaye Boyle, Evan Shipman, Ford Madox Ford, Ernest

Hemingway, Malcolm Cowley, Eugene Jolas, and Pierre Loving, who in a 1925 article for the *Paris Tribune* called Asch one of the most interesting and promising young writers. Even after returning to the United States in 1926, Asch kept in touch with Robert McAlmon, Morley Callaghan, and Paul Shinkman, who spoke of him as "that well-known Quarterite . . . now in New York." Asch and his wife, the American Lysel Ingwersen whom he met and married in France, lived among former expatriates in Connecticut and in the same boarding-house with Hart Crane in Paterson, New Jersey. In 1929, their only child, David, was born in New Milford, Connecticut. Though always pressed for money, Asch seemed relatively satisfied. He was writing, and his work was being published.

His novel *The Office* had already appeared. The novel, a series of sketches narrating the effects of bankruptcy on the employees of a firm, was praised by many reviewers for its experimentation with structure, language, and point of view. The effect of the book upon the reader, according to one critic, "is like the experience of the art-viewer who observes a gallery of pictures." Walter Yust, in *Literary Review*, found fault in the book—"too ostentatiously restrained when it is restrained and too callously violent when it's violent"—and Joseph Wood Krutch was cautious with praise in a review for *New York Herald Tribune Books*. For Krutch, the novel's virtues and failings were typical of "much contemporary fiction"; Asch had mistaken "surface novelty for profundity" and imagined "that an ingenious scheme is sufficient to make a great work."

Asch had started his second novel, *Love in Chartres* (1927), in Paris but revised the manuscript after his return to New York. In this work, a fictionalized account of Asch's love affair with Lysel Ingwersen, the young American writer decides that he must forego marriage in favor of his career, breaks off the relationship in Chartres, and goes to Paris to write. Though the novel did not sell well, reviewers were mostly laudatory. At least one, however, complained that Asch's style was forced and unreal and reproached the novelist for not probing the psychological depths of his characters. Asch and Ingwersen were divorced three years after the novel was published.

Asch was beginning to make a name for himself, not only in America but also on the Continent. His third work, *Pay Day*, (1930), was published simultaneously in the United States and in Germany; a year later it appeared in Hebrew translation in Warsaw. Although featuring a Jewish protagonist, Harry Grossman, the narrative centers on

the contrast between the young Grossman's hedonistic pursuit of pleasures and the night's sobering event—the Sacco-Vanzetti execution. The *Nation's* reviewer found it "an excellent study of the type," but one which according to the critic for *New York Herald Tribune Books* does not slight the "messy details" so often missing in the "dissections of mental and moral fibre of the younger generation."

Although Asch sometimes felt rejected by the New York publishing establishment, he was pleased by the popularity of his works in Germany, where translations of *The Office*, *Pay Day*, and several of his short stories sold well until Hitler outlawed all Jewish writing. Possibly as a result of his divorce, his lack of success in America, and his concern about the events in Germany, Asch became more conscious of his rootlessness. Unsure of himself, Asch felt he was neither a Jew nor an American. In January 1931, shortly after he returned from a trip to France to see his parents, he wrote Malcolm Cowley: "I am not American, and probably if I never went back to Europe and lost all contact with it, and remained in America I still would never be an American. Which probably explains why they read me in Germany and Russia more than they do here. But the curious thing is that I love this place and feel no sympathy with Eastern Europe. . . . I feel clean in America and not in Germany. . . . So you see I have no place anywhere, . . . I love America, and am not an American, not liked by Americans."

In spite of these doubts about himself, Asch had two more novels published during the 1930s: *The Valley* (1935) and *The Road: In Search of America* (1937), composed of tales and sketches in the manner of *The Office*. The sketches in *The Valley* concern the problems faced by rural men whose land has become barren. Most reviewers suggested that, as in his earlier works, Asch was looking at what one critic called the "outer aspects" of life. H. W. B. in the *Saturday Review of Literature* cast Asch as a "sympathetic outsider taking notes." Horace Gregory found *The Valley* "a reassertion of those qualities which have made his [Asch's] prose distinctive"—a judgment shared by many others.

The Road: In Search of America depicts people, places, and events from all over the American continent. According to some reviewers, though Asch showed sympathy and understanding, his writing at times bordered on sentimentality; others chose to emphasize the influence of Dos Passos, Sherwood Anderson, and Ernest Hemingway they perceived in Asch's latest book. Asch had gathered the material for this, his last work, while on a bus trip across the United States. Some of the sketches were first

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THE MYSTERIOUS LOLA

Probably, the coincidence wouldn't have struck Audrey so, if earlier that day she hadn't decided ~~finally~~ to get rid of the sofa. ~~But~~ The whole unpleasant business had been furthest from her mind, when after the movies ^{in even} she and Ed and the Grants had thought they'd ^{look} find out what this new place where they played jazz ~~was like~~: - and who would be considering an old-fashioned, black horsehair sofa, misgotten ^{there} ~~at~~ an enthusiastic moment at an auction, while trying to find a table in a crowded, dimly-lighted room, where a combination of piano, clarinet and drums was playing ^{the} ~~Dixieland~~ style? ~~That~~ Audrey had been thinking ^{was}, "There's a table. That man with the patch on his eye, I hope I won't have to sit next to him, he's staring at me." But she did have to sit next to him, and as he ^{rose} ~~rose~~ to make room for her, she thought, "Oh, my God, he's drunk!"

The man ~~was drunk~~, but he was controlling himself. After she sat down, he sat down, ~~too~~ in the chair beside her. She felt the two chairs touching, then she felt his elbow pressing against her arm, and she heard him whisper, ~~she knew it was to her:~~

"I've got a bugger for the sofa, Lola."

Audrey exclaimed, "What?"

Ed asked, "What's the matter?"

Revised typescript page from the second draft of a short story by Asch (Dacus Library, Archives & Special Collections, Winthrop College)