

On the Second History of Anne Frank¹

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Résumé: Le *Journal d'Anne Frank* est l'une des oeuvres de la Shoah les plus enseignées dans le milieu scolaire. Toutefois, l'histoire de la réception de ce journal depuis sa publication en anglais est largement ignorée. Dans cet article, Deborah Britzman étudie la présentation du *Journal* en milieu scolaire de manière à comprendre non seulement comment les jeunes lecteurs perçoivent l'expérience douloureuse d'Anne Frank mais aussi comment l'espoir que la diariste tend à insuffler à ses lecteurs se transforme chez ceux-ci en une espérance de la voir échapper à son destin.

Summary: *The Diary of Anne Frank* is one of the most-taught Holocaust texts in the school curriculum. And yet, the history of its reception since its English publication is largely ignored in the teaching of the *Diary*. This article considers the arguments surrounding the packaging of Anne Frank's *Diary* in order to understand not just how the difficult knowledge Anne Frank conveyed is encountered but also the ways in which Anne Frank's hope for her readers transforms into the readers' hopes for Anne Frank to be rescued.

In the last year of entries to her Diary, a fifteen-year-old Anne Frank responded to a London radio broadcast calling for diaries that documented for future generations the experiences of war. "Of course," writes Anne Frank on March 29, 1944,

everyone pounced on my diary. Just imagine how interesting it would be if I were to publish a novel about the Secret Annex.... Seriously, though, ten years after the war people would find it very amusing to read how we lived, what we ate, and what we talked about as Jews in hiding. Although I tell you a great deal about our lives, you still know very little about us. (243-244)

Anne Frank names the pedagogical mystery that is her Diary: as a place of secrets, how can we be told a great deal and still know very little? As for its pedagogical purposes, this mystery becomes crystallized in two of its haunt-

ing and, at times, conflicting qualities: the traumatic context of its writing as one document of the European Jewish destruction and Anne Frank's hopeful knowledge that while addressing "Kitty," her Diary, she was also writing a diary to and for future readers. And yet, if we begin with Anne Frank's cautious hope for what readers might take from the Diary in order to study how the crafting of the figure of Anne Frank has been used in the last forty-odd years, what we find is a reversal of this hope: it is readers who seem to expect a great deal from Anne Frank.

Versions of the Diary have been translated into fifty-five languages.² The North American school curriculum largely preserves the 1950s representations of the Diary or, what Judith Doneson paradoxically terms, "an Americanized universal symbol" (150). This is partly because of the influence of the first Broadway play and then the 1957 Hollywood film, which largely set the terms for school-based curriculum guides. Over the course of the postwar years, the Diary has also been the subject of plays, films, musical compositions, and commemorative sculpture and art. Throughout Europe, streets have been named in memory of Anne Frank, educational foundations and youth organizations have been formed, and in Amsterdam, the "Secret Annex" has become an historic site of pilgrimage. There is even an Anne Frank website on the Internet. The young girl called Anne Frank haunts not just the writings about the Jewish European genocide, or the *Shoah*, where one must pass through Anne Frank on the way to the impossible thought of the sheer numbers of those murdered. One can also find reference to Anne Frank in the most unexpected places: in book advertisements for contemporary adolescent diaries, in television sitcoms, and even in legal disputes over blue jean labels.³ With so much to consider, we are also faced with far more complex pictures⁴ that lend pathos to the daily conditions of the Diary's writing and the painful death of Anne Frank in the Bergen Belsen camp. All at once, the figure of Anne Frank has been burdened with too much history, too much affect.

The crafting of Anne Frank's Diary over the course of forty-odd years, then, did not end with Anne's own efforts to rework her entries for future readers. Indeed, the Diary's crafting has remained, since it was first given over to Otto Frank a few months after he was liberated from Auschwitz, deeply contentious. This article considers some of the contentions over how the figure of Anne Frank has been crafted in order to understand the ways in which Anne Frank's hope for her readers transformed into readers' hopes for Anne Frank. While the history of the reception of Anne Frank's Diary for popular consumption has not become part of what contemporary students examine when reading the Diary in school (either in an attempt to not complicate what teachers understand as the force of the Diary's immediacy or because the contentions made from history seem too painful to consider), a study of the arguments about its crafting and reception do suggest central

difficulties in the encounter with the traumatic origins of the Diary and the Holocaust, and with the question of what these events can mean in relation to reading the Diary today. The titles of two recent books that return to the disputed history of the Diary's crafting suggest as much: Lawrence Graver's *An Obsession with Anne Frank: Meyer Levin and the Diary* and Ralph Melnick's *The Stolen Legacy of Anne Frank: Meyer Levin, Lilian Hellman and the Staging of the Diary*.

And yet, with the recent publication of a new translation and the more complete Diary known as the Definitive Edition, and with the Dutch government's 1986 authorization of the historical authenticity of the Diary as an answer to the revisionist attempts to deny the event of the Holocaust, the document must serve as both proof of the Jewish European genocide and of the existence of the particular experience of one Jewish female adolescent. In pedagogical efforts, these two purposes, however, point to a very large problem. The Diary is often approached as giving voice to the one and a half million Jewish children who were murdered in Europe during World War II.⁵ But even as it serves the popular imaginary, providing "part of the vernacular of tragedy" (Doneson 151) in pedagogy, the Diary is also used to consolidate an idealized figure for adolescent and adult identification. This fragile pedagogy, as we shall see, is neither outside nor beyond other debates over the history of the Diary's popularity and reception. In a way, one can ask, which Anne Frank is being encountered when one encounters the Diary?

Within the questions of how the Diary is represented and then encountered (of being told too much and knowing too little), three very different senses of time unconsciously occupy the same space: the time of the writing, the time of the finding and publishing of the Diary, and our own time of pedagogical engagement. More often than not, what we are asking Anne Frank's name to bear versus the knowledge she did offer, has more to do with what contemporary students and teachers themselves can bear to know. For instance, Ernst van Alphen suggests one difficulty in encountering the Diary. As an adolescent growing up in Amsterdam in the 1960s, he admits to being bored by the knowledge of the Holocaust. It is a stunning admission, one that now makes him ashamed. But as an adolescent, the moral lessons his teachers offered did not permit a study of the difficulties of accepting the traumatic residues of his country's history. Instead, he was offered stories of heroism, resistance, and the view that the past has resolved itself.

The time of our own pedagogical engagement, then, as highlighted by van Alphen's admission, suggests something painful about the more general stakes of Holocaust education in public schooling. For if, as Alvin Rosenfeld argues, we know that the Holocaust happened, "what we lack is not an adequate written record but the means to assimilate it to the conceptual norms of interpretation" ("Anne Frank and Us" 80). What is it, then, to explore the pedagogical limits of "the conceptual norms of interpretation?"

How might these competing histories — the history recounted in the Diary and the historicity of engaging in a reading of the Diary — shape our pedagogical efforts? And, why complicate what seem to be the curricular efforts at preservation?

This article, then, explores some of the contentious history of the Diary's reception and how this history lives unconsciously in contemporary pedagogical efforts. While our school history books may promise that history can be narrated chronologically, in a linear fashion, and thereby allow time itself to be rationally apprehended and placed into categories of "before," "during," and "after," van Alphen's engagement with his own history books suggests that arranging time as resolved and as closure can also work in the service of denial. Traumatic time can be neither conceptualized nor narrated in such clear-cut ways. Traumatic time is recursive and deferred, so that its restless play is back and forth, and incapable of putting itself into a past. Traumatic time, in Cathy Caruth's terms, "does not simply serve as a record of the past but precisely registers the force of an experience that is not fully owned" ("Introduction" 417). This is because in trauma, experience itself is lost. Hence, for traumatic time to become something more than its repetition, the loss of experience, of subjectivity, must somehow be mourned. Sigmund Freud ("Mourning") called this interminable work, "the work of mourning," where slowly, one comes to grips with what has been lost in the self. But such work, as we will see, is subject to reversal: sometimes, the mourner cannot let go of what has been lost and continues to demand something from the dead. Freud's suggestion that mourning entails both the mourning over the loss of an idea and the loss of actual people, means that bringing together these two losses (to keep within memory both the relations one had, or even could have had with others, and to remember the fact of death) particularly in Holocaust education, requires a great deal of knowledge and thought on the part of the educator.

The Time of the Writing

Any consideration of the historicity of the Diary must begin with "history" — the skeletal facts of the Frank family and the story of education they force us to confront. In 1933, the year that Freud's books were publicly burned in Vienna and the year Hitler was popularly elected as Chancellor of Germany, the Frank family fled Frankfurt for Amsterdam. Anne Frank was four years old and upon the family's arrival in this new country, her parents enrolled her in a Montessori school. In Jon Blair's documentary, *Anne Frank Remembered*, we can listen to Otto Frank recall one reason why the family went into exile in Amsterdam: "I didn't want to raise my children in German education." In 1942, when Anne Frank was thirteen years old and received as a birthday gift a diary, the Dutch government surrendered to the German Army

and the Netherlands came under German law. As with all Jewish children, Anne Frank was forbidden to attend Dutch schools. This law was upheld by educators. On July 5, 1942, Anne Frank's sister, Margo, was required to report to the Gestapo for her transport orders. The next day, the Frank Family, along with one other family, went into hiding. Later they were joined by an eighth member. Otto Frank had been preparing the attic of his Pectin factory for over a year. The factory was located two and a half miles from their home and on that morning, the family walked to what Anne called "the secret annex."

The family lived in hiding for about two years. Their connection to the outside world was facilitated by four of Otto Frank's Christian employees, by books smuggled in, and by a radio. An anonymous phone caller to the Dutch police reported on the Franks. On August 4, 1944, the Frank family, the Van Dam family, and Mr. Dussel were arrested. Of the 25,000 Jews in hiding in Amsterdam, approximately 9,000 were betrayed by their neighbours. Of the 60,000 Dutch Jews deported and interned in Camps between 1942-1945, only 6,000 people survived. And, of the eight people who lived in the Secret Annex, only Otto Frank survived the war. Miep Gies entered the Annex the day after the arrest and gathered from the floor the scattered pages of the Diary. She returned the Diary to Otto Frank a few months after he was liberated from Auschwitz. The first issue of the Dutch Diary's publication in 1947 was modest; the publisher worried whether there would be an interested public to receive it.

These are the skeletal facts of the Diary's writing and finding. One must pass through the overwhelming numbers to reach the singularity of the event. Our understanding must be burdened by the weight of implication, what Cathy Caruth calls *history*, where the past as reconstructed, "is no longer straight forwardly referential (that is, no longer based on simple models of experience and reference)" (*Unclaimed Experience* 11). The simple model of experience and reference, however, cannot think beyond the normative expectations we have for a society not to destroy itself and others. When a society consents to destroy itself, when civility itself is shattered, how do we think about our own responsibility for its destruction? One must take the skeletal facts of the Diary's writing and finding on a detour and confront the failings of an educational system and its teachers to serve its citizens; the failings of a democracy and its public to refuse fascism and legalized anti-Semitism; the failings of publishing industries and their readers to refuse state censorship; the failings of civil law and its citizens to resist compliance with legalized mass exclusions and legal murder, indeed the failings of the social imaginary of pedagogy itself. One must confront the loss of civility toward neighbours, the loss of what Ernst van Alphen calls the capacity to make and to sustain affective bonds, indeed, the loss of any idea of ethical conduct. To confront each of these failings and their attendant social break-

downs, each of us might ask, what is at stake for the learner and teacher when the time of learning and the time of history itself, are, in the words of Shoshana Felman, "*dissonant*, and not just *congruent*, with everything ... learned beforehand?" (53).

My approach to the historicity of the Diary's reception is inspired by what Erik Erikson called, in his explorations of the ethics of psychoanalytic inquiry, "dimensions of a lonely discovery" (19). The discovery has to do with how we can consider the limits of conscious knowledge when we typically insist that knowledge in the curriculum should settle our questions and that the goal of education is to produce more rational learners who master knowledge. This dominant assumption suggests that teachers are not encumbered by the act of pedagogy or that their knowledge can somehow remain unaffected by the relationships made with students. Psychoanalytic inquiry, in Erikson's view, offers a very different way of thinking by regarding inquiry as being "*accompanied by some irrational involvement of the observer, and that it cannot be communicated to another without a certain irrational involvement of both*" (original ital., 36). It begins with accepting the reach of unconscious influences that structure perception, knowledge, and subjectivity as a question. To leave behind objectivity, however, means that certainty and truth will always plague our learning.

The ethics of psychoanalysis pose central questions to education. What is involved when an individual grasps the connection between past events and present life, given that the grasp will change not just the object of perception but, centrally, the perceiver herself. What does the work of mourning entail? The ethics of psychoanalysis begin with the haunting reach of history that cannot be put to rest because it cannot be mourned. We might extend this ethical obligation to the Diary itself. As Anne Frank sorted through her own conflicted understandings of self and other and grappled with the otherness of the self, she, too, was involved in her own lonely discovery. The finding of the Diary, then, is a second time of "that lonely discovery." And now, perhaps, that lonely discovery can be made from our present reading.

The Curious Time of Learning

In our own time (which, after all, is never just our own time), how can we grapple with the stakes of learning about the Holocaust when the learning attempts to be made from identifications with what can only be called "*difficult knowledge*"?⁶ Can the terms of learning acknowledge that to study the experiences and traumatic residues of genocide, ethnic hatred, aggression, and forms of state-sanctioned and hence legal social violence requires educators to think carefully about their own theories of learning and how the stuff of such difficult knowledge becomes pedagogical? How shall each of us confront the difficulties of learning from another's painful confrontation

with victimization, aggression, and the desire to live on one's own terms?

These questions cannot be settled by the slogan, "We are all Anne Frank" (Rosenfeld "Anne Frank"; Lester). This slogan hopes for an easy identification, for the capacity of the reader to somehow merge with Anne Frank's experience, somehow become Anne Frank. What is lost in such a wish for identification is the idea that if those who lived and were murdered within the Holocaust were denied their own status as ethical subjects and as citizens and in their chaotic time could not grasp, as the event unfolded, what was happening, how can we expect to know what happened? The event itself continues to be inconceivable. How can we look back with any certainty? If we are honest, we should acknowledge that the Diary actually provokes, what Felman and Laub call "the crisis of witnessing." When we are asked to listen to another's pain, there is an incapacity to respond adequately because the knowledge offered is dissonant, in the order of trauma. And, also because our response already comes too late, the response can only be a working through of belated knowledge (Felman and Laub; Friedlander; LaCapra; Moses; Stern).

Educators are aware of the idea that knowledge of human cruelty can be depressing, debilitating, and defensively engaged. Indeed, this very worry is an implicit tension in discussions of Holocaust education (Felman and Laub; Hartman; Linenthal) and in the teaching of the Diary (Doneson). Can the study of genocide avoid a painful encounter? Is it the amount of pain or its avoidance that provokes disengagement? Paradoxically, these anxieties may be an effect of the educator's disavowal of her or his own difficulties of engagement. The educator's worries transfer into an ambivalent pedagogy that wishes to protect adolescents from — even as it introduces adolescents to — these representations. The disavowal, or the refusal to engage a traumatic perception of helplessness and loss, often pushes educators to the opposite spectrum of affect: the focus on hope and courage as the adequate lesson to be made from difficult knowledge. However, hope is a very complex affect that may actually take the form of a defence. Michael Silberfeld argues that hope is neither a static concept nor "a token that can be given or taken away ... The dynamic concept of hope is related to the feelings of loss and in turn, to the sense of entitlement" (47). This is so because hope is a fragile bridge to continuity and to expectation. Precisely because hope speaks to the wish for attachment, it is also quite vulnerable to the very conditions that constitute its founding moments: times where one must also come to terms with discontinuity and loss.

But in a pedagogy that insists upon hope as a strategy to slide over the pain of loss, and that ignores its dynamic qualities, hope works as idealization. Idealization involves efforts "to place some aspect of oneself or the group on a pedestal to then derive faith, hope and sustenance from this idealized part" (Moses 193). Paradoxically, idealization, or the attempt to

separate out the good from the bad, may well be a symptom of the “crisis in witnessing.” How is this so?

The problem with the desire to idealize is that its strategies are also an attempt to find an ultimate truth in a context that, to return to Rosenfeld’s point, defies any of our personal means “to assimilate [the event with] the conceptual norms of interpretation” (80). When the vicissitudes of life and death cannot conform to the idealization, it becomes very difficult to live with or in loss. While the recourse to hope and courage may serve as an ego-ideal, the injunction for hope and courage can be felt as tyrannical to the ego and hence may inhibit any allowance for experiences where hope and courage cannot be mustered or where these desires can only be considered in the belated time of mourning. As we will see, however, the various placings of the Diary on a pedestal of affirmation as a means to dissipate the dissonance and loss of its context is not outside of the traumatic histories of the Diary’s reception. Indeed, the histories of the Diary’s reception may well mark our pedagogical unconscious.

The Times of the Finding

In our pedagogical efforts, the *Diary of a Young Girl* becomes unhinged from its own contentious historicity. The time of Anne Frank becomes static, as if there was only the ethnographic present where Anne, safely seated at her desk, endlessly writes her entries. And while this quality may be implicit in the genre of diary and sustained by the 1950s play and Hollywood film, the figure of Anne Frank placed only at her desk seems to preserve the wish to keep her safe in hiding. This observation is not to imply that the Holocaust is somehow left unmentioned either in the Diary or in pedagogy. Indeed, while the wish to keep Anne Frank safe from harm may well be a rescue fantasy provoked by the knowledge of what happened, it is also difficult to read this Diary without considering the painful conditions of its writing and its finding. The ethnographic present, however, itself an ambivalent sense of time, works as a wish for preservation and as a defence against loss.

But the Diary’s history did not end in its writing or with its finding. Its history begins with postwar Jewish ambivalence over our status in European and North American societies after World War II. And this history is entangled in an exponential Jewish sense of loss and an ongoing mourning marked partly by an anxiety about the general public’s anti-Semitism and partly by a despondency over the magnitude and traumatic residues of the destruction. When Anne Frank’s Diary was first considered for publication, the question raised — albeit differently by Otto Frank and the Dutch publisher — was, how could postwar Christians read the Diary as relevant to them? Behind Otto Frank’s decision to promote the diary as embodying universal values was his own hope of restoring the loss of Anne’s humanity.

The question haunted how the Diary was originally promoted and then returned to structure the bitter arguments around casting the Diary for the 1955 Broadway play and 1959 Hollywood film.

Otto Frank believed the reception might best be facilitated by framing the publicity around the Diary's publication to stress its universal appeal. For Otto Frank, the Diary should represent a story of adolescence, not a Jewish story. Before the War, the Franks were a highly assimilated middle-class Jewish family. They were German citizens and proud of that. Indeed, Otto Frank served in the German army in World War I and the family considered themselves German citizens and, in the prevailing anti-Semitic definitions of their time, racially Jewish (Graver 55-59). By 1947, albeit in different ways, Otto Frank and the Dutch publishers understood that Jewish particularity would not sell well to the general public who had grown weary of the sheer magnitude of the Jewish genocide. The ambivalence was whether a Jewish child could or even should be a universal figure capable of standing in for every child. At the same time, Otto Frank hoped that the publication of the Diary could be a means to educate Christian readers as to the humanity of the loss. When the Diary was translated a few years later into English, Otto Frank justified his choice of Eleanor Roosevelt as the writer of its preface: "I always said that Anne's book is not a war book. War is the background. It is not a Jewish book either, though Jewish sphere, sentiment and surround is the background. I never wanted a Jew writing an introduction for it. It is (at least) read and understood more by gentiles than in Jewish circles" (quoted in Graver, 54).

It may have been clear to Otto Frank just who would read Anne Frank's Diary, but what is not so clear is how universalizing his daughter would allow readers to understand her. The tension between universalization of Anne and her particularity is still debated today (Ozack). Historian Saul Friedlander discusses the central tension made when one begins with claims of universal status for the Holocaust: "Whether one considers the *Shoah* as an exceptional event or as belonging to a wider historical category does not affect the possibility of drawing from it a universally valid significance. The difficulty appears when this statement is reversed. No universal lesson seems to require reference to the *Shoah* to be fully comprehended" ("Trauma" 54). The problem, and many writers on the Anne Frank Diary have pointed this out, is that Anne Frank's particularity, as a German-Jewish citizen whose citizenship was revoked because of her Jewishness, is disclaimed (Doneson; Levin; Ozack; Rosenfeld "Anne Frank and Us").

Both the Dutch and English versions of the Diary were marketed originally as an extraordinary statement about a young girl's hope for humanity in spite of war. Recall one of the most famous extrapolated sentences from one of the last entries to the Diary that now works as synecdoche: "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart" (332).⁷ In

her wish for a normal life and for a magical healing (where “people would find it very amusing”), parts of the Diary do wonder about the capacity of humans for hatred and despair. But what tends to be lost in this idealization of belief is not just why Anne must actually live with hope but also that her hopes for continuity and entitlement were betrayed. And, much of the Diary is a meditation on Jewish suffering and on the melancholic condition of being, for the simple fact of her Jewishness, an outcast.

Here is what Anne Frank wrote near the end of her April 11, 1944 entry, after a break-in and police examination of the first floor of the Pectin factory:

We've been strongly reminded of the fact that we're Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights, but with a thousand obligations. We must put our feelings aside; we must be brave and strong, bear discomfort without complaint.... The time will come when we'll be people again and not just Jews!

Who has inflicted this on us? Who has set us apart from all the rest? Who has put us through such suffering?... In the eyes of the world, we're doomed, but if, after all this suffering, there are still Jews left, the Jewish people will be held up as an example.... We can never be just Dutch, or just English, or whatever, we will always be Jews as well. And we'll have to keep on being Jews, but then, we'll want to be. (261)

Unlike the Hollywood film that rewrites this entry into a universal declaration that all people and nations have suffered and thereby loses the emphasis on Jewishness, Anne's passage is complex, conditional, and ambivalent. It sets in conflict Anne's experience of the world's need for Jewish denial with the Jewish demand to choose Jewishness. One of “the thousand obligations” that emerged from this antagonism was the injunction to idealize bravery in a context where bravery could not surmount, repair, or even make sense of Anne's knowledge of deportation and her thoughts on impending death. Paradoxically, the only proof of bravery becomes silence, the prohibition against narrating one's doom. Within this prohibition lies still another obligation: being forced into a confrontation with an anti-Semitic definition of Jewishness that renders irrelevant the ambivalent longing both to belong without distinction and to be seen as distinct. The Diary becomes a space for working through such obligations. In her persistent struggle against claustrophobia, Anne Frank can also refuse these impositions by inventing a fantasy of life in the past, present, and future. Then, the Diary defies any obligation, specifically in those entries that examine her inner world and that craft small pleasures from listening to Mozart on a radio broadcast, commenting on her collection of pictures of Hollywood film stars, and exploring the mysteries of love and sexuality. But even these passions are haunted by her terror of and incredulity before the cruel actions of those who

complied with the Nazi occupation.

With the publication of the Definitive Edition, we now know Otto Frank edited entries where Anne discusses candidly both sexuality and her stormy relationship with her mother. This might be the second finding, the one that concerns Otto Frank's ambivalence about publishing his daughter's Diary and his worries over how those depicted in the Diary would be remembered. But a parallel history of the Diary's reception coexists in the crafting of it by postwar Jewish communities in North America, Europe, and Israel (Gilman; Graver; Melnick; Ozack; Rosenfeld). Part of this other history crystallizes in the author Meyer Levin's unsuccessfully bitter and epic thirty-year battle with Otto Frank over the rights to publish his play about the Diary.⁸ For Meyer Levin, while the Diary could come to represent a story of Jewish suffering, that only a Jew could tell, there would always be the question of those who would not listen and acknowledge — even within Jewish communities — the particularities of Jewish suffering. Whereas Otto Frank desired Anne Frank to be universalized as a hopeful adolescent, Meyer Levin desired Anne Frank to be a monument, indeed, what Volkan terms in his work on complicated mourning, “a linking object”⁹ to the memory of six million. And while both responses may have in common the desire to memorialize, the directions each took are not outside the traumas of loss and the ways the vulnerable work of mourning becomes interrupted, even as it must proceed bit by bit with knowledge that comes too late.

Meyer Levin first came to the French version of the Diary in 1950 while living in Europe. Prior to the war, Levin had published many novels of Jewish life but always felt fame had eluded him because the publishing industry viewed his work as “too ethnic” and “too Jewish” for mass appeal. In 1945, he was an eyewitness reporter to the liberation of Buchenwald. When Levin first encountered the Diary, he became convinced that this document *along with his efforts to make it known*, would radically reshape how the Holocaust could be understood. When the Diary was published in English and carried a preface signed by Eleanor Roosevelt, its popularization and reprinting was largely due to Levin's 1952 essay review first published in *The New York Times*. In that review, one sentence continues to stand out in terms of contemporary pedagogical efforts: “Anne Frank's voice becomes the voice of six million Jewish souls” (quoted in Graver, 26).

Meyer Levin then wanted to write a play based on the Diary. Otto Frank agreed that he try. But while, for Levin, only a Jew was capable of identifying with and writing about the suffering of Anne Frank, Otto Frank desired a play that would focus on the indelibility of the human spirit. Otto Frank viewed the identity of the author as irrelevant and eventually selected the Christian team's play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett¹⁰ over Levin's own play. For Levin, this choice was an affront to Jewish memory and, what Levin would come to see as “the second death” of Anne Frank.

This betrayal, from Levin's perspective, inspired his thirty-year public struggle against Otto Frank.

By 1974, still hoping for vindication and sympathetic acceptance, Levin would write his own story of what he felt had gone terribly wrong. After all, Levin had sued Otto Frank for the rights to publish a play based on the Diary and this legal action was scandalous. Running over 300 pages, Levin's account of his near-epic battle is aptly titled *The Obsession*. And much of this text is a struggle to understand his three engagements in psychoanalysis where he tried to confront his own compulsion to control the reception of the Diary. His second analyst asks, "The enemies you tell of are undoubtedly real. The question is, are they worth all the trouble you give yourself over to them?" (19). The question does not stun him. For a larger struggle preoccupies this text. Levin cannot decide whether some obsessions are worthy, even if they result in misery. The first paragraph of *The Obsession* tells the whole story in miniature:

In the middle of life I fell into a trouble that was to grip, occupy, haunt, and all but devour me these twenty years. I've used the word 'fall.' It implies something accidental, a stumbling, but we also use the word in speaking of 'falling in love' in which there is a sense of elevation, and where a fatedness is implied, a feeling of being inevitably bound in through all the mysterious components of character to this expression of the life process, whether in the end beautifully gratifying or predominantly painful. (7)

Levin's fall into trouble repeated and reversed the mystery of the Diary. Anne Frank wrote: "Although I tell you a great deal about our lives, you still know very little about us." For Meyer Levin, the sentence might read: "Although I tell myself all, I understand little." For pedagogy, the sentence might repeat Levin's poetic insight into the fall, for educators cannot know whether their efforts with the Diary will be gratifying or painful.

Both Otto Frank and Meyer Levin desired Anne Frank's Diary to be an inspiration and an education. This, too, is the present pedagogical hope. But no one can agree, to return to Levin's poetic insight, "whether in the end [reading the Diary would be] beautifully gratifying or predominantly painful." Nor would there be agreement on whether the Diary would represent the particularities of Jewish suffering or the universal condition of adolescents. This, too, becomes our pedagogical dilemma if we think of adolescents as in need of protection from suffering, as incapable of engaging the suffering of another, and as too immature to study the arguments that are also the history of the Diary's reception. Indeed, if those who tried to craft the Diary themselves could not understand their response as a traumatic enactment of the very event that inaugurated the Diary in the first place, ignoring these disputes in contemporary pedagogy may sustain this traumatic re-enact-

ment. In these ways, the strained hopes for the Diary to settle what can be understood is symptomatic of significant anxieties that begin with questions of how it should be encountered and what it might take for readers to identify with Anne. This, too, is part of its pedagogical history where the time of Anne Frank continues to reside in an ethnographic present that works to preserve its status as a cultural icon and sustain the wish to rescue and hence not betray, again, the family in hiding.

In pedagogical attempts to teach the Diary, then, there is a profound ambivalence as to where to locate the import of Anne Frank. Should, for example, Anne Frank be viewed as an adolescent struggling, like any adolescent, with growing up? Is it, then, easier for identification to occur when the object is a supposed universal? And, if Anne Frank can be encountered in all of her normality, would identification with her become easier? Should Anne Frank's pain be located solely in her growing awareness of what it means to be Jewish, in the family's confrontation with anti-Semitism, and in the ways she noticed how the larger society denied her capacity to be an ethical subject? If contemporary readers have never encountered what it is like to have one's subjectivity shattered, what would be the basis of identification? How would those who encounter Anne Frank identify with what it is like to become so marginalized? Should Anne Frank's pain be associated with her wish for a magical healing, for her desire to make from hopelessness a hope for goodness? What is actually occurring when readers encounter another's desire for hope? In each of these questions, what it might take to identify with Anne Frank depends upon which Anne Frank readers are encouraged to meet. These worries, however, do not originate in pedagogical efforts; they are a part of the traumatic history of the Diary's crafting.

We are left with difficult pedagogical questions. How do the contentious receptions of the Diary unconsciously live in our pedagogy? How is it possible that histories of which we may have no knowledge return, but now as a symptom called education? Can the Diary serve as both a universal coming-of-age story and a voice for the vast numbers of murdered Jewish children? Does the appeal to universality actually work as a disavowal of the psychic work required when reading the Diary? Does the hope that Anne Frank be a universal figure standing in for adolescence itself sever the possibility of understanding not just the specificity and idiomatic experience of adolescence in general, but specifically what Jewish adolescence meant in Amsterdam during the Holocaust? How do these unresolvable tensions structure the fault lines of our own unconscious pedagogical efforts?

We might risk a few observations about how the haunting historicity of Anne Frank's Diary structures our pedagogical unconscious. It seems as though in our rush to make Anne Frank an object of adulation that can then serve as a means for identification, we have ignored the complex conditions of any hope. And these conditions are what Freud called "the work of mourn-

ing." If one can make hope for a future, if the qualities of hope are to be complex and dynamic, one must be willing to acknowledge the difficult conditions that invoke hope in the first place, namely the vicissitudes of loss and losing. After all, the Diary is also a document of profound loss. When Freud offered his formulations of mourning and melancholy, he was grappling with how individuals can face the death of the other as irrevocable and still desire to risk living. Freud suggested that the work of mourning can be interrupted if the living refuse to acknowledge the magnitude of loss and try to keep the dead alive by refusing to mourn. The melancholic, Freud argues, may know " *whom* he has lost but not *what* has been lost in him" (245). And while there can never be a suitable substitute to replace the lost object, the melancholic retreats into the hope that an unambivalent memory can somehow keep alive what has been lost.

My sense is that our pedagogy still resides in the fault lines of mourning and melancholia: we desire to remain loyal to the dead (by keeping Anne Frank at her desk and ignoring the conflicts made from the last fifty years of the Diary's reception) and we desire to make from the Diary an insight into ourselves (by offering young readers Anne Frank's daily observations). Perhaps these ambivalent desires, however differently lived, were also those of Meyer Levin and Otto Frank. But what seems to be in need of attention is how this demand to remain loyal shuts out consideration of the conflicts, ambivalence, and desolation that are a part of the work of mourning. The attempt to be loyal is not the same thing as identifying with the fate and position of another, for the very qualities of identification are themselves ambivalent. While the study of ambivalent responses to loss is sometimes viewed as ruining the goodness and stability of memory, denying the complexity of memory in the service of loyalty shuts out our own capacity to demand something from each other. And yet, if we can attribute to others our own complexity, then we might learn something about the difficulty of loyalty. When we identify with others, we do not take in the entire circumstances and idiomatic urges of the other. This, we cannot access. But if the demand is to be loyal, we often shut out the very conflicts that invoke this demand. And the idealization of hope which seems to be a compromise formation that ignores this difficult difference actually only covers over the pain of loss. What seems most crucial is a way to consider, then, what the risk of learning has to do with the work of mourning. And perhaps the greatest risk of learning is that lonely recognition that knowledge of loss and our own insufficient response can be made only in a belated time.

The Time of Pedagogy

At the heart of psychoanalytic work is an ethical call to consider the complex and often conflicting play of psyche and history. But education seems to

place elsewhere the conflicts between Eros and Thanatos, love and aggression. And then these forces come back at education as interruptions, as unruly students, as irrelevant questions, and as controversial knowledge in need of containment (Britzman). Disclaimed conflict can be felt as aggressive returns when education conducts itself as if the separation of good and bad was not a dilemma for the learner and the teacher, and as if stories and their conflicts somehow end on the last page and do not reach elsewhere. And yet, as Sigmund Freud ("Thoughts" 292) observed, these conflicts return in the symptom of the difficult knowledge held in curriculum, where we ask children and adolescents to engage with difficult knowledge of life and death while we ourselves barely acknowledge how our own anxieties, our own ambivalence, weigh heavily upon pedagogical efforts.

The individual anxieties we bring to the study of difficult knowledge also belong to the history we study. If history is viewed as having no reach in our present, as something resolved in history texts, then there is no chance of working through the repetitions of traumatic suffering. And so, part of our work is to tolerate the study of the difficult reception of the Diary and the ways this reception inadvertently returns in the form of pedagogy. For perhaps what the historicity of the Diary offers is not the voices of millions but the ways millions have tried to engage the voice of one. We cannot predict whether this engagement "falls into trouble" like Meyer Levin, or whether the engagement can become one of exploring the vicissitudes of loss and attachment and the woeful insufficiency of the belated response. In the study of difficult knowledge, we are offered too little and too much, too early and too late. To tolerate this time of otherness, is, I think, the challenge of pedagogy.

This challenge of pedagogy is also the challenge to the pedagogue. Learning, it turns out, is crafted from a curious set of intimacies: the self's relation to its own otherness and the self's relation to the other's otherness. This is forgotten when the adult's desire for a stable truth found in the insistence upon courage and hope shut out the reverberations of losing and being lost. Now, we reach our last lonely discovery: teaching, it turns out, is also a psychic event for the teacher. If the pedagogy of the Diary enacts the educator's desire for a rescue fantasy, for stable truth, and for the splitting of good and evil through the idealization of the good object, we lose the chance to work through the ambivalence that is also a part of the crisis of witnessing. If one sort of ambivalence has to do with the uncertainties that result from the question of what Anne Frank's Diary can mean to our own present, another sort of ambivalence can reside within the educator's own feelings about how knowledge of conflicts can matter and when knowledge itself is inadequate. In the context of Holocaust education, where we want our students to accept the veracity of the event and not negate or deny that the Holocaust happened, our tendency to emphasize its brute chronology may also encour-

age the belief that somehow learning the facts themselves resolves the event and then, that one does not also have to confront the cruel question of evil.

A few years ago, a group of international analysts met in Israel for a conference titled "Persistent Shadows of the Holocaust: The meaning to those not directly affected" (Moses). In a curious way, this conference lived the tensions that come from engagement with and hopes for Anne Frank's Diary. The learning in this conference, like any learning, could only be approached by way of the breakdown of meaning, which began with disagreement over the adequacy of the conference's title. Participants could not agree on what being "not directly affected" meant, even as they could acknowledge the indirection of affect. While they could acknowledge that the Holocaust does not affect everyone the same way and those who identify as affected do so very differently, many analysts could not tolerate a conversation between a Jewish analyst and a Christian German analyst. Their views were incommensurable and broke down at the level of language. Many analysts worried over the ways the Holocaust has entered "part of the vernacular of tragedy" (Doneson, *op cit*) and has lost its specificity. But when they transformed the question of who is affected into one of "what affects for whom?" they began to consider the difficult work of mourning. But even then the analysts could not come to a common definition of mourning. They wondered if the work of mourning ever ends for the mourner. One member suggested that when it came to the event known as the Holocaust, the work of mourning is interminable because the loss is inconceivable even as it demands an addressee. Curiously, what brought them together was a hesitation. And it had to do with the question that returns us to education. If individuals do the work of mourning, can we also say that such work can be attempted by nations? How does a nation come to terms with its own traumatic origins, with its own internal violence, and how does its internal violence return in the form of a curriculum? How does a nation mourn its history? And what place does education have in such a project?

The figure of Anne Frank also haunted this conference. She returned in the form of a symptom known as "The Anne Frank Syndrome." The term is given over to children of survivors who try to rescue their parents from what the parents have already been through. The child or adult wishes to preserve a happiness that could not have occurred. And in this preservation (one that works in the service of denial in order to bury the traumatic knowledge that happiness could never have occurred), what is also denied is the capacity to glimpse one's own suffering and pain. This species of denial, the Anne Frank Syndrome, might haunt our own pedagogical attempts, our own crisis of witnessing.

If education is to become a working through, a learning, then we might work within the words of Anne Frank when she began reformulating her Diary for others: "Although I tell you a great deal about our lives, you still

know very little about us." We might now consider that although we say a great deal about the Diary, we still know little about how we read it through ourselves. The curious time of pedagogy is the time of knowing too much and learning too little, of being too early and too late. This dilemma is that of history, where the past returns but not in ways that one can predict or ever master. Studying the complex of arguments that shape our pedagogical unconscious will not settle the question of how readers make the Diary relevant to themselves. This must remain a question. If this question can be acknowledged, it might allow us new conditions for insight into the difficulties of the Diary's reception. Centrally, we must learn to tolerate the time when the contentious history of the Diary meets that other contention, each of our selves. Then, we might return to what Anne Frank wants from us.

Notes

- 1 A shorter version of this paper was given as a keynote address to the National Conference of Teachers of English in November of 1996. A more elaborate version, upon which much of this present discussion draws, appears in Britzman 1998.
- 2 For a critical discussion of the stakes in different translations of this Diary, see Rosenfeld (1991). While translation always means a transfiguration of meaning from one language to another, and thus poses a problem regarding loss of meaning, Rosenfeld studied how the Schultz German translation of the Diary changed Anne Frank's discussion of German responsibility for the Jewish genocide into a much vaguer condemnation of war. The Schultz translation leaves out specific references to German responsibility. Rosenfeld makes the argument that two contradictory understandings result from censoring the Diary. On the one hand, Anne Frank, who was born in Frankfurt, cannot be viewed as a German who lost her citizenship. On the other hand, the fact that Germans persecuted German Jews is also forgotten. In the censorship of the Diary, Rosenfeld notes, "some of the most telling features of Anne Frank's story have never been told to German readers, who for some four decades now have been reading a bowdlerized version of the diary" (268).

Years later, Cynthia Ozack in reviewing the history of the use of Anne Frank would make a similar accusation and charge the bowdlerization of the Diary with "floating over the heavier truth of named and inhabited evil" (87).

- 3 On February 1, 1997, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* reprinted Daniel Pearl's report on a legal dispute over the protection of Anne Frank's name from commercial exploitation: "The Anne Frank Fund and the Anne Frank House have rejected overtures from American companies proposing Anne Frank coins, persuaded Singapore investors to shut down an Anne Frank import-export company, and shamed a Spanish Company into dropping plans for Anne Frank jeans" (C 16). However, by 1994, The Anne Frank Fund officials attempted to register the name Anne Frank as an official trademark. But they learned that the Anne Frank House had already done so. Over the years, the Dutch and Swiss groups disputed use of the name, the relationship between the fund and the restoration of the Annex and, according to the fund's view, the house's downplaying of Anne Frank's Jewishness and the number of Jewish board members on the house's board of directors.

- 4 An exhibit at the Jewish Museum in New York in the fall of 1996 titled, "The Illegal Camera: Photography in the Netherlands During the German Occupation, 1940-1945" offers a sense of a country under German Law. The photographs were secretly taken because with the imposition of German Civil Law the taking of photographs was restricted. The photographs offer chilling documentation of the utter normalcy of life in Amsterdam during the Nazi Occupation and gradual social breakdown of that very normalcy.
- 5 Deborah Dwork discusses the difficulties of studying the experiences of Jewish European children and their lives under the Nazi regime. Dwork argues that, depending upon location, Jewish children under the age of ten were not required to wear a Jewish star sewn on the clothing. Children under the age of ten, deported to camps, were murdered quickly, as were their mothers. Dwork notes that only eleven percent of Jewish children alive before the war survived the war.

For those who were able to go into hiding, few administrative records were kept, due to the danger of these documents becoming found. And except for the documentation preserved from the Theresienstadt ghetto, the vast majority of children could not document their lives. The documentation that does exist, in spite of State-sanctioned efforts to erase the genocide, offers, as Dwork argues, threads of specific lives woven in difficult conditions. In Dwork's words:

At a much younger age than their elders, and with far less maturity and a less developed sense of identity, children also had to cope with the Nazi (and their Fascist allies') process of differentiation (wearing a star), separation (segregation from their erstwhile "Aryan" companions), isolation (banishment from their former physical world of school, park, playground, library, cinema, ice cream parlour), and finally, deportation and extermination. (xxxii)

These were the conditions, as well, for Anne Frank. However, Anne Frank also represents the unusual conditions. Her family stayed together in hiding and attempted to live life normally. Despite their hiding, Anne Frank had, for two years, the conditions to write her diary entries. Dwork notes that the Diary written by Anne Frank is exception in this regard.

With the translation and English publication of Benjamin Wilkomirski's traumatic novel of childhood in *Concentration and Transit Camps*, we are offered a very different view of memory in two regards. First, Wilkomirski's narrative is made from fractured recollections, where the reader cannot know to which place or time memory attaches itself. He raises the question of what it is to write within the chaos of experience and what happens to memory when it attempts to narrate chaos, pain and inconceivable cruelty from the vantage point of an adult possessed by a childhood that remains caught in profound images of violence. Second, given that the authenticity of Wilkomirski's text is now highly disputed (questions have arisen as to whether he was in fact a survivor at all), readers are left to ponder more difficult problems of justifying the rise and fall of this text. (See, for example, Lappin.)

- 6 I develop this notion of "difficult knowledge" in *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning*. It is an attempt to bring more closely together the psychic conditions of teaching and learning with the social conditions of knowledge production. Difficult knowledge begins when the nature of knowledge (as opposed to the cognitive capacities of the learner) is viewed as traumatic, threatening, or incomprehensible to learners and when the knowledge engaged suggests profound fragmentation, conflicted interpretations, and temporal disjunction.

- 7 The sentences that grapple with this often-quoted declaration brings us to the central conflict in which Anne was caught:

It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too. I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. (332)

- 8 Graver's book is a richly detailed account of Meyer Levin's thirty-year struggle to craft the meaning and reception of the Diary. In documenting the very contentious Jewish response to the staging of the Diary, Graver makes the insightful argument that rather than a footnote in the history of Jewish secular arts, the episode of Meyer Levin's "obsession" with the Diary is emblematic of the trauma of the *Shoah*, Jewish response to North American anti-Semitism, and the conflicts within Jewish generations. The sum of these debates within Jewish communities over the past fifty years can be seen as a precursor to contemporary tensions in identity politics that centre on the question of who can know an event, the problems of epistemic privilege, and the rendering of suffering into a hierarchy based on direct experience and the myth of direct apprehension of history.

However, Melnick's study disputes Graver's approach, for Melnick seems to take the side of Levin in his research into the legal battles. Essentially, in Melnick's reading, Lilian Hellman's hand in crafting the script for the first Broadway production was muddled in what Melnick and Levin viewed as Hellman's own self-hatred for being a Jew. The influence of Communism, the Red Scare, Hollywood blacklisting, and the McCarthy hearings all affected, in Melnick's account, the Broadway crafting.

While Meyer Levin's struggle focused on the reception of the Diary (and the two books that analyze this long affair feature some of the debates), a different (and just as disputed) argument is offered by Bruno Bettelheim. Bettelheim, himself a survivor of the camps, argued that the Diary's acceptance in North America was an enactment of the general public's denial of the magnitude of the Holocaust. This idea emerges from what Bettelheim saw as the Frank family's refusal to understand the Nazi policy of Jewish destruction. Bettelheim writes: "By eulogizing how they lived in their hiding place while neglecting to examine first whether it was a reasonable or an effective choice, we are able to ignore the crucial lesson of their story — that such an attitude can be fatal in extreme circumstance" (247). This claim, however, is deeply disputed in Richard Pollack's biography of Bettelheim, even though at the end of his life Bettelheim softened his criticisms of Otto Frank.

- 9 While it is well beyond the scope of this article to discuss questions of pathological mourning, I introduce Vamik Volkan's term "linking objects" as a way to signify how in some cases, the figure of Anne Frank is used as a means to control how the Diary will or should be read. A linking object is a way for the bereaved individual to externalize his or her loss and preserve contact with the dead. The mourner thus sees in the dead elements of the self and must preserve the loss. Volkan writes: "By using the linking object, the mourner can keep alive the illusion that he has the power either to return the dead person to life or to 'kill' him; that is, he has the illusion of absolute control over the psychological meeting ground that is afforded by the linking object or linking phenomenon" (20). This dynamic is close to Freud's discussion of melancholia.

- 10 Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett were best known for being part of a script rewriting team for the MGM Frank Capra film, *It's a Wonderful Life*. They were also part of a writing team for the script of the play version of Anne Frank's *Diary*. While each succeeding draft lessened the writers' attempts to highlight humour, the writers continued to soften the dimension of its Jewish tragedy and emphasize instead a human spirit capable of rising above tragedy. But the Jewish references in the play seem to assume a non-Jewish audience and the play becomes awkward when, for example, during the Chanukah scene, Otto Frank pauses to explain the holiday to the Jewish Dentist. Much later, Mr. Dussell's surviving son attempted to correct the misperception of his father as being ignorant of Jewish learning (see Graver, 85-87; 125-131).

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