

Rajan's chapter on Indira Gandhi extends the debate of public power and private realms, contesting simplistic readings of women political leaders as surrogate males or icons of motherhood, or the idea of separate feminine traits as the necessary basis of democratic ideals. Gendered explanations of political authority are questioned, and some of the paradoxical relationship between Gandhi as Mother India and her declaration of emergency conditions are highlighted. The discussion of allegories of power, women under emergency conditions, and rural village infrastructures and communities versus the pluralism of modern democracy invites some comparison with African structures and conditions. Rajan's study generally highlights areas of intervention in complex feminist and postcolonial debates, and offers detailed readings of texts as well as lucid summations of problematic areas in outlining a cultural construction of female subjectivity that allows for contestation and agency. The general direction of her thesis moves towards a sense of women as "conflicted subjects and sites of conflict" (135). The general direction of the photographs and historical occurrences cited moves towards a sense of Indian wives as the passive objects of their husbands' and society's volition. This contradiction may be an example of one of the problems she opens her discussion with: is subversion located within reading or writing practice? Iconography moves us towards a static contemplation, an aesthetic response. Politics, the non-essential essence of feminism, seems to require more than contemplation.

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A *Globe and Mail* article, August 27, 1998, reports the discovery of several missing pages of Anne Frank's diary. The subtitle of the article quickly moves from the "sadness" of the excerpts to the real news, that is, the possible violation of copyright. For the article observes that the Anne Frank Fund has called in its lawyers to examine this apparent violation. In turn, the Amsterdam daily *Het Parool*, which published the excerpts on its front page, responds that their lawyers are ready and waiting. *The Diary of Anne Frank* is, as it has been for much of its his-

tory, big business. So much for Otto Frank's hope that publishing his daughter's diary, albeit in an edited form, would help change the world.

From the very beginning of the diary's fame, people have been arguing over what Anne said and what she meant, leading Cynthia Ozick recently to make the "shocking" (87) suggestion that it would have been better if the diary had never been found. First published in 1947, then by Doubleday in an English translation in 1952 under the title *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, three years later a Pulitzer-Prize winning play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which in turn became the basis for the Hollywood film in 1959, the diary and its adolescent writer have become a symbol of idealism and artistic talent tragically destroyed by the Holocaust. The July 15, 1944 diary entry "in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart" continues to be quoted in isolation, apart from the diarist's prior acknowledgment that "ideals, dreams, and cherished hopes rise within us, only to meet the horrible truth and be shattered" (263). Too often we forget such complexities in the diary, and the fact that less than three weeks later such a shattering occurred when the Frank family and the others hiding in the secret annex were betrayed. We would rather not dwell on the unlikelihood of maintaining belief in the goodness of people when one is dying of typhus in Bergen-Belsen. It is not surprising then that the diary and its theatrical interpretation remain the canonical way to tell children about the Holocaust. For children's literature demands that we teach that people are really good at heart, a lesson that is difficult to teach given the historical realities that drove the Frank family into hiding. Reading superficially, we find in the diary the lesson we wish to hear.

Why do we read this particular diary? There are many diaries of Holocaust victims, and even more memoirs of Holocaust survivors. What accounts for the canonical status of this particular work? Do we read it only because the voice is witty and sensitive, offering such a wonderful role model for child readers? And why does it matter so much what this particular Holocaust victim wrote? Do Anne's words sharpen or lessen our ability to remember that there were many other victims of Nazi genocide, not all of them as articulate as Anne but victims nevertheless? That of the six million Jewish victims, one and half million were Jewish children speaks brutally to the nature of Nazi genocide. That such children were statistically the least likely to survive confirms that Anne's death is not part of some vague romantic tragedy but the result of an organized genocide whose main victims were targeted for only one reason. Whether or not they were witty, sensitive, and eloquent—indeed we sometimes forget how many of those victims literally could not speak—they were still victims.

How Anne Frank became the "authentic Holocaust voice" for Meyer Levin, and how that voice was altered for "ideological" reasons is the

subject of Ralph Melnick's impressively researched and persuasively argued *The Stolen Legacy of Anne Frank: Meyer Levin, Lillian Hellman, and the Staging of the "Diary."* Melnick refers to this "search for an authentic Holocaust voice" in his opening sentence; he obviously believes that establishing where such authenticity lies is both possible and crucially important. To prove that Anne Frank's was such an authentic voice but one that we cannot hear because of what is usually regarded as a fairly trivial American theatrical battle is the goal of Melnick's book. In it, he argues that Meyer Levin, an American Jewish writer who died in 1981 still convinced that he had been the victim of a Stalinist plot engineered by Lillian Hellman and her minions (the term seems appropriate given Hellman's behind-the-scenes manipulation of writers, producers, and publishers), was the writer who first heard that authentic voice. But despite all the evidence Melnick presents, his book concludes gloomily that it is too late now to restore Levin's accurate perception of the meaning of Anne's voice:

But if there is reason to hope for a reassessment, there is greater reason to believe that the falsely crafted, ideologically determined image of an adolescent, stripped of her Jewish identity, naively proclaiming on stage and screen a simplistic and unwavering belief in the goodness of people, will remain fixed and unchallenged, denying the reality of the Holocaust—both the enormity of its evil and the very specificity with which those targeted for slaughter were hunted down and murdered.

Melnick's story of how the diary became a contested symbol is both fascinating and disturbing. We know that Otto Frank withheld portions of his daughter's diary; the recently published newspaper excerpts confirm how Frank withheld material that was flattering neither to himself, his dead wife, nor to the way he wished his daughter to be remembered. Melnick persuasively argues that the Broadway play represents an even more thorough revision in which Anne Frank's growing Jewish self-awareness is excised for a seemingly more universal presentation. He thus demonstrates that the controversy over the staging of the diary was more than a Broadway tempest, and that by replacing Levin with two Hollywood screenwriters, Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, a McCarthy-shocked Lillian Hellman determined how the diary of a murdered adolescent could be used to further her own political ends. Reading Melnick's account, it is hard to believe that people really are good at heart, or that Hellman cared that much. Did she really think that the public perception of the character of one Holocaust victim would make any difference? Melnick's perspective essentially agrees with Levin's: both see Hellman as the archvillain (Hellman's motives are constantly described as "ideological" whereas Levin's, in contrast, are always heartfelt, the psychological burden of his traumatic memories as a war correspondent who was among the first Americans to enter the death camps, including Bergen-Belsen, the camp where Anne died). And the evidence Melnick presents of

a struggle to control the meaning of Anne's voice is overwhelming. Melnick insists that there was no commercial theatrical need to make Anne's voice less Jewish for the predominantly Jewish audiences that attend Broadway theatre; instead he presents Hellman as both a self-hating Jew and a Stalinist who saw in the diary a cultural property by which she could indirectly propagate her own communist views at a time when her recent appearance before the House on Unamerican Activities necessitated a public silence.

Basing his argument on a careful and detailed reading of the archival papers of Otto Frank, Lillian Hellman, Meyer Levin, the Hacketts, and the other key participants, Melnick does not tell the usual story of Meyer Levin's paranoid and pathetic obsession (for that, see Lawrence Graver's 1995 aptly named text, *An Obsession with Anne Frank*). Seeming to quote every relevant letter and statement recorded since 1950 when Tereska Torres, Levin's wife, gave Levin the French translation of the diary (a decision she would later regret, even attempting suicide in despair over her husband's behaviour), Melnick painstakingly shows how easily a diary written by a young Jewish victim of the Holocaust became the dramatic tale of a "universal" female adolescent experience, universal as defined by two screenwriters whose questionable qualifications for writing the adaptation include their friendship with Hellman and prior success in writing light comedies such as the *Thin Man* series.

Playing to Otto Frank's own self-perception (according to Melnick "secular, uneducated in Judaism, and anti-Zionist"), Goodrich and Hackett, not themselves Jewish, consulted Jewish sources but also relied heavily on Hellman's advice, and became "unwitting coconspirators." With producer, Kermit Bloomgarden (Hellman's friend and "sometime lover") and director, Garson Kanin, the Hacketts were easily swayed by Hellman's perspective, so that even though they were later judged guilty of plagiarizing Levin's script, Melnick suggests that their more significant cultural crime was their willingness to omit nearly all Jewish references. For example, the Hacketts originally included, as did Levin, Anne's argument with Peter about the long history of Jewish suffering. Anne tells the non-religious Peter, "We're not the only Jews that've had to suffer. Right down through the ages there have been Jews and they've had to suffer." In the seventeen-page critique Kanin sent the Hacketts, he called this speech "an embarrassing piece of special pleading" for its characterizing of the Holocaust as a specifically Jewish event, and urged them to delete it. For Anne—who dies precisely because she is Jewish—was to Kanin a symbol who "reduces her magnificent stature" if she mentions that somehow embarrassing fact. Thus in the play's final draft, Anne says instead, "We're not the only people that've had to suffer. Sometimes one race . . . sometimes another" (a statement later to be echoed in Hellman's own

memoir *Pentimento*, and rightly criticized by Melnick for its casual acceptance of Hitler's racial rhetoric). Fearing ticket sales would be affected because the play was perceived as "too serious," the Hacketts and Hellman spent the weekend together "to give the play a lighter tone." Even more Jewish references were cut, and the Hebrew *Ma'oz Tzur* was replaced by a less "alienating" and more upbeat American Hanukkah song.

In a culture determined to make of the Holocaust a lesson, what is the lesson here? Surely Levin's need to see himself as the one most sympathetic to Anne Frank's intentions is understandable given how his enthusiastic front-page review of the English translation of the diary in the *New York Times*, June 15, 1952 helped to make the diary a bestseller. Yet not everyone whose work is rejected sees himself as another victim of the Nazis. In what Melnick understatedly calls "an unfortunate parallel," Levin not only sued Otto Frank and Kermit Bloomgarden for damages, but wrote repeatedly to Frank that he was being tormented by the equivalent of the Nazis who had destroyed his daughter. Unable to understand why Frank ignored his work as the diary's first playwright, Levin accused Frank of acting the way the Nazis did when they took away an innocent Jew's business and gave it to someone else. The public agreement finally and problematically reached in 1959 that Levin would no longer publicly discuss whether the Hacketts' adaptation should have been produced did little to silence him. Having "made the public relations mistake of the century" when he decided to sue the father of Anne Frank, Levin died still tormented by the injustice he had been dealt. One wonders what the diarist, with her keen satiric eye for the foibles of those around her would have made of all of this. For does it really matter whether Anne Frank came to a realization of her Jewish identity in the months preceding her death? Does it lessen the impact of genocide to believe this? Or does Levin's need to see in Anne Frank's words such a realization demonstrate only our post-Holocaust desperate need to find a redemptive meaning in events that offer no redemption to anyone?

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