



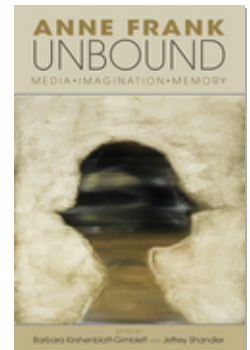
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Anne Frank Unbound

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Anne Frank's Moving Images

Leshu Torchin

I have a vivid memory of watching the 1980 television adaptation of the Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett play *The Diary of Anne Frank*, especially my response to Melissa Gilbert, who played the role of Anne. Gilbert was then best known for portraying Laura Ingalls Wilder on the television series *Little House on the Prairie* (NBC, 1974–1983). Her Anne did not resemble the one I had imagined in my own prior reading of the diary. I didn't care for the dramatic adaptation—I found the characterization of Anne too childish—and I suspect that the casting of Gilbert buoyed my annoyance, because I associated her primarily with what I perceived to be another unsatisfying interpretation of a beloved memoir: Wilder's *Little House* series, rendered sentimental and borderline histrionic in the adaptation. This was not the stoic, complex, and vivid portrait of American pioneers that had proven so compelling in the original books.

Casting Gilbert as Anne demonstrates how media works inform one another, here adding layers of meaning that are extrinsic to the original work in question. To use a concept drawn from Chris Rojek's work in tourist studies, Gilbert "drags" Wilder and her distinctly American memoir into a European narrative.¹ This casting decision reinforces the Americanness of the telecast, rooted in the English-language adaptation of Anne's diary for the Broadway stage. Gilbert's performance as Anne exacerbated my dissatisfaction with the Hackett and Goodrich script. Yet for some other viewers—and for those who produced the 1980 telecast—Gilbert's presence may have added value to the production precisely by enhancing its presentation of Anne Frank's story as comparable



Melissa Gilbert as Anne
in the 1980 American
telecast of the play *The
Diary of Anne Frank*.

to that of an American heroine. What is at issue here is not a question of what constitutes fidelity to the source text, its stage adaptation, or even the target audience. Rather, my recollection of this telecast points to the importance of considering the specific ways that the media of moving images contribute to public understandings of Anne and her diary. This issue concerns not only a sizable body of work—dozens of films and television programs, as well as countless online videos, all produced internationally over the past half-century in an array of genres. The issue also entails audiences, sometimes quite large, including both those who are also among the diary's many readers and those who have no other acquaintance with Anne's life and work.

The challenges of remediating Anne's life and work that are specific to the media of moving images arise as the private encounter of reading a text—especially such an intensely personal work as a diary—becomes a

communal experience. Anne's diary, written in epistolary mode, directly invites the individual reader into her confidence. Shifting to a medium that is both collaborative and public disrupts this intimate, confessional relationship. There is no longer a fixed authorial "I," and the "you" to whom the work is addressed is no longer Kitty (or the individual reader) but has become an audience, generalized and plural.

These media works further complicate encounters with the diary by presenting it as a work of Holocaust testimony—typically understood as a first-person narration of experience with morally transformative properties—and its author as a witness to the Holocaust. Anne herself understood her diary's testimonial value by reworking what was originally a private journal into a document of wartime experience meant for publication. Film and television adaptations of the diary elaborate on Anne's redaction of the text by structuring the encounter with Anne and her writing to facilitate a number of transformations: to teach about the Holocaust as the culmination of European anti-Semitism; to create a community of support for universal human rights, inspired by the Holocaust as a paradigmatic event; or to motivate young people to creative personal expression, among others.

Mediating Anne's diary as testimony through film and television both maintains the text's communicative intention and challenges its testimonial authority by shifting from a first-person narrative, in the form of a written text, to images and performances. These media works employ various strategies in an effort to close the "veracity gap," a term that media scholar John Durham Peters employs to characterize the "trustworthiness of perception" of both the human and the mechanical eyewitness that is the camera.² Films and television broadcasts about Anne Frank wrestle with the "veracity gap" at two levels: first, this issue arises when these media works address the challenge of providing Anne's authorial voice when adapting the diary text for the screen. Second, this issue arises when these adaptations strive to present both the diary and, by extension, the films and telecasts themselves as Holocaust testimony, which entails providing evidence of events not reported in the diary or witnessed by the author at the time of its writing. Thus, even as these films and telecasts seek to produce an encounter with Anne's testimony by remediating the diary, they also demonstrate the text's testimonial

limits. In doing so, these moving image mediations assert their own testimonial value, both by bearing witness to the significance of Anne and her diary and by guiding viewers toward the expected encounter with her testimony.

Adaptations

The most widely familiar adaptation of Anne's diary remains its authorized dramatization, Goodrich and Hackett's *The Diary of Anne Frank*, produced on the Broadway stage in 1955 and then filmed, under George Stevens's direction, in 1959. However, this is neither the first nor the last screen adaptation of the diary. Others include translations of the Goodrich and Hackett script produced in Yugoslavia (*Dnevnik Ane Frank*, 1959), the Netherlands (*Dagboek van Anne Frank*, 1962), East Germany (*Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank*, TV, 1982), and Spain (*El diari d'Anna Frank*, 1996). There are additional adaptations of the diary, both authorized (*The Diary of Anne Frank*, England, 2009), and unauthorized (the anime *Anne No Nikki*, Japan, 1995, and its French version, *Le Journal d'Anne Frank*, 1999; the 2001 ABC-TV miniseries *Anne Frank: The Whole Story*), as well as unrealized projects. Among these is a much-publicized version to be penned by American playwright David Mamet; as of this writing, the future of this production is uncertain.³ This uncertainty may be linked to the comic response that news of this adaptation elicited, with various websites posting their own versions of Mamet's Anne, usually deadpan and edgy and always foul-mouthed.⁴ This response speaks to the investment many hold in the idea of an original text (which, in this case, may be not only the diary, but also the most prevalent adaptation) and the talent appropriate for its mediation.

Although Anne's diary was written and first published in Dutch, English has played a leading role in its dramatic adaptation for both stage and screen: its first screen adaptation was for American television, the authoritative film version and model for most subsequent screen versions was made in Hollywood, and several of the most recent adaptations have been in English as well. Therefore, English-language adaptations of the diary warrant special attention both in their own right and as influences on other mediations.

Before the authorized Goodrich and Hackett dramatization, there were others. On November 16, 1952, NBC television's ecumenical religion series *Frontiers of Faith* aired the first American dramatization of the diary: *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, adapted by Morton Wishengrad and produced by the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS).⁵ This thirty-minute teleplay, appearing only a few months after the U.S. publication of the diary, introduces narrative and thematic features that continue to appear in subsequent adaptations. Wishengrad's script presents different aspects of the diary's author: the pubescent Anne, who quarrels with her mother and entertains a romance with Peter; the writer Anne, who narrates key components of her life in hiding and articulates her aspirations for the future; and the hopeful and faithful Anne, who expresses her feelings about humanity, religion, and God. These plotlines and characterizations relate the story of Anne and her diary as a series of conflicts and reconciliations that validates the importance of religion for peaceful resolution and coexistence, in keeping with the larger agenda of *Frontiers of Faith*.

The play begins shortly after the liberation, with Otto Frank and Miep Gies returning to the ransacked Annex, which, Miep assures him, has remained untouched since the day of the arrest. She kneels and, from the debris, pulls out a single book—the diary—which she delivers to Otto. This exchange condenses discrete historical events: Miep had, in fact, found the diary, which actually comprised several notebooks and a sheaf of papers, shortly after the Franks were arrested. She kept the diary in anticipation of Anne's return and gave it to her father only after he learned of Anne's death. The sequence in Wishengrad's script tacitly assures the legitimacy of Otto Frank's stewardship over the diary, including its subsequent publications and adaptations. Moreover, this enactment of the diary's discovery demonstrates that its untouched voice, once abandoned, has been preserved and is now ready to speak. Such a gesture obscures any attention to the diary's mediation, whether Otto Frank's redaction or Wishengrad's adaptation, and suggests instead a seamless portal to a moment in history.

As Otto proceeds to read aloud from the diary, Anne's disembodied voice joins in. Father and daughter read in unison, a gesture that forges the connections between past and present, writer and reader, and child

and parent. Their conjoined voices underscore Otto Frank's authority over the diary's publication; then, Anne's voice becomes the only one reading, as Otto's image fades out. This reading precipitates a flashback, which outlines the wartime persecution of Jews and introduces the diary's other characters, thereby realizing the text's function as historical testimony. The stage directions specify the next scene as "the landing outside the secret cupboard," where Miep fumbles in the dark before offering a coded knock.⁶ The choice of the "secret cupboard" as the first site of the past reinforces this notion of reading (and the performance of reading) as portal. After the knocks and the opening of the door, the Annex and Anne become visible. The plot proceeds swiftly through a series of episodes that demonstrate the adaptation's own testimonial function. Anne fights with her mother, who calls her "headstrong and conceited"; this is a hostile and frustrated Anne, who cannot bring herself to love her mother as much as she does her father. When Anne confesses as much, her father shakes his head and an object lesson follows: "Outside . . . there's a world full of hate. Human beings are taking other human beings and loading them into cattle cars. At least here let there be no hate and no enmity and no misunderstanding."⁷ His statement ushers in details of the Holocaust taking place outside the world of the Annex, while providing a new understanding for the tension between Anne and her mother. The drama is not only about the expected friction between a mother and her daughter but also a morality play about the need for humans to overcome their differences and get along. Soon viewers see that Anne has absorbed this lesson. "Things are better between Mummy and me," she writes, and continues, "The sun is shining, the sky is a deep blue."⁸ As with Otto's lesson, the inside and the outside are intimately connected. What Anne learns or expresses inside has bearing outside, and, implicitly, what happened in the past is relevant in the present.

These connections are reinforced in Anne's scenes with Peter, as she tutors him first in French and then in faith. She explains to him how she cheers herself: "I . . . look out the window and remind myself that the world is full of beauty. This way I can find myself again, and God."⁹ When Peter expresses his own bitterness and frustration with the God who has created "this unhappiness and suffering" for Jews, she responds by

acknowledging that others suffer as well, Christians and Jews together, and that what remains is to “wait calmly for its end.”¹⁰ Anne’s lesson conforms to her father’s earlier instruction, echoing his observation that Anne and her mother were split by a lack of mutual understanding. Beyond its general humanitarian value, this endorsement of greater tolerance and unity exemplifies JTS’s approach to promoting Jewish integration into the American mainstream in other ecumenical broadcasts that it produced during the early postwar period. Wishengrad’s dialogue posits a Jewish identity that is “loyal and well-integrated” and suggests that any moments of historical particularity were “incidental to the fundamental universalism of Judaism.”¹¹ This portrayal of Jewishness contrasts with Anne’s assertion of an essentialized Jewish difference, articulated in national terms, in her diary entry of April 11, 1944: “Here we can never become just Netherlands, or just English, or any nation for that matter, we will always remain Jews, we must remain Jews.” Instead, on American ecumenical television in the 1950s, Anne speaks more generally of the uplifting power of faith: “People who have religion should be glad, for not everyone has the gift of believing in heavenly things,” Anne is heard reading in voiceover as she is shown writing in her diary. “It isn’t the fear of God, but the upholding of one’s own honor and conscience,” she continues, as the wails of sirens and the explosions of bombs grow louder.

The escalating sounds of war outside only distract Anne momentarily; the script indicates that she looks up before taking to the floor to continue writing. At this point, her most often-cited words are voiced (and penned): “I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can’t build up my hopes on a foundation of confusion and death.” Although Wishengrad’s Anne also expresses her fear of the “approaching distant thunder,” per the original diary entry of July 15, 1944, she concludes by voicing the belief that “it will all come right.” Here, Anne’s commitment to writing and her expression of hopefulness merge, recalling an earlier moment in the script that links her writing with her faith and hope. Before telling Peter that Jews and Christians must wait together for this time to pass, she states, “[I]f God gives me the gift of expressing all that is in me, I won’t be insignificant.” This earlier sequence augurs the teleplay’s conclusion. After the narrator reports Anne’s fate,

the screen shows the image of a candelabrum (perhaps a menorah, though this is not specified in the script), as Anne is heard in voiceover: "Will I ever become a journalist or a writer? Oh, I hope so very much. I want to go on living after my death. And therefore I am grateful to God for giving me this gift, this possibility of developing myself and of writing, of expressing all that is in me."¹² The placement of this narration after the announcement of her death suggests that Anne does live on through the diary, which has superseded both the confusion and the death that she mentions in the now-famous passage. The diary is the ultimate witness—and yet is also an impossible one. According to the script, the cover of the diary appears "out of" the candelabrum, rising until "it fills the entire screen." With this sequence, the diary and its adaptation for television are presented as testimony of a historical event that here serves a distinctly American ecumenical mission: to bring Christians and Jews together in peaceful union.

George Stevens's 1959 feature film version of Goodrich and Hackett's play *The Diary of Anne Frank* offers audiences a similarly hopeful Anne. Running almost three hours, the film provides an extended look at the lives of the eight Jews hiding in the Annex. Like Wishengrad's television adaptation, the screenplay (also by Goodrich and Hackett) pays particular attention to Anne's friction with adults, her love of writing, and her romance with Peter (Richard Beymer). The film's Anne also observes in one of her speeches, albeit briefly, that the conflict in the world will also pass, much like her disagreements with her mother. Still other similarities to the 1952 telecast evince a common approach to introducing the diary as a work of testimony in cinematic terms. The film opens with Otto's postwar return to the Annex, and his reading of the diary (in its distinctive plaid cover) launches the flashback to 1942, as the voices of father and daughter merge. Here, too, the postwar Annex appears in a state of disarray, intimating that the diary has remained untouched, a documentation of the past preserved for revelation—what literary scholar Cathy Caruth characterizes, in her study of trauma, as "a voice crying from the wound."¹³ By reading the diary, Otto (Joseph Schildkraut) liberates Anne's voice from its hiding places—the diary as well as the Annex—and presents it to the public.

As the film locates Anne's testimony in both the diary and the Annex, it secures Otto's legitimacy as the bearer of her legacy. In the opening scene, he is seen arriving at the building on Prinsengracht, traveling on the back of an open truck with other people who are presumably returning from wartime displacement. Among them is a man wearing a striped prisoner's uniform, implying that Otto has also returned directly from a concentration camp. Unlike the Wishengrad version, Otto enters the Annex alone in the film; only later do Miep and Kraler (a composite character created by Hackett and Goodrich)¹⁴ join him, having noticed Otto's arrival. At the end of the film, which returns to the postwar attic, Otto informs them of the fates of each of the other Jews who had been hidden in the Annex. As he speaks, Otto is positioned in the center of the frame and appears to look directly into the camera, providing a testimonial encounter that implicitly exhorts the audience to take moral responsibility for this history. His awe—or rather, as he states, his “shame”—in the face of Anne's hopeful expression in her diary privileges her testimony as offering a lesson for all, even her father.

Millie Perkins, a twenty-year-old model making her acting debut, plays Anne. Her portrayal is very much that of a teenager in the postwar American mold, whose vivacious expressions of frustration annoy the stodgier adults. Anne doesn't care to be “dignified,” she tells her mother, after being chastised for stealing Peter's shoes; she wants to have fun. Perkins's pouting and prancing, which highlight Anne's irrepressible spirit, aspire to the gamine qualities of Audrey Hepburn, who reportedly turned down the role despite the personal request of Otto Frank that she play the part.¹⁵ Perkins's petulant, coy performance is consistent with the screenplay's avoidance of the diary's many precociously insightful, sometimes cutting, observations of the adult world, as well as Anne's considerable discussion throughout the diary of her developing sexuality. Instead, the film presents Anne's romance with Peter as very chaste; the squabbling between them echoes the fussing before reconciliation of Hollywood screwball comedies.

The film's tempering of the more provocative elements of Anne's thoughts and behavior, as revealed in her writing, renders her more an innocent child than a developing, occasionally moody adolescent, a



AT 20TH CENTURY-FOX, GEORGE STEVENS HAS COMPLETED

the diary of anne frank

IN WHICH A GIRL WHO HAS NEVER APPEARED ON THE SCREEN
IS ALREADY WORLD FAMOUS

strategy that serves the film's depiction of Anne as a universal symbol of hope. Unlike Wishengrad's adaptation, scripted for a program produced by a Jewish religious movement, the film diminishes Jewish specificity in order to provide a more universal Anne in both identity and message. The film's Anne does not discuss the particularity of Jewish suffering, as do many of the actual diary entries, nor does she express pleasure at the assassination attempt on Hitler, as the actual Anne did in her diary entry of July 21, 1944, in which she wishes that "the impeccable Germans" would "kill each other off." Instead, she responds to Peter's anger over their situation as persecuted Jews by reminding him that "We are not the only people who have had to suffer. Everyone has to suffer, sometimes one race and sometimes another."

Stevens's film was highly praised for its universal message, including by some Jewish observers. John Stone, the director of the Jewish Film Advisory Committee, declared, "this screenplay is even better than the stage play. You have given the story a more 'universal' meaning and appeal."¹⁶ This universal Anne was open to metaphor for audiences anywhere. As other scholars of the film have remarked, American audiences could relate her generalized moral insights to injustices closer to home, including McCarthyism and racial discrimination throughout the United States, especially Jim Crow laws of the South.¹⁷

Indeed, the film's conclusion implies a distinctly Christian understanding of redemptive suffering. At the close of her observation of cycles of human suffering throughout history, Anne states, "I still believe that people are good at heart." Although these words appear in the diary entry of July 15, 1944, the script shortens Anne's thoughtful struggle in this entry with the challenges that suffering poses to faith and hopefulness. Moreover, the film follows Anne's speech about suffering and goodness with a double climax: the arrest of the Jews hiding in the Annex and a kiss between Anne and Peter. This structure imposes onto Anne's life a Christian trajectory of martyrdom, the proclamation of faith followed

A 20th Century-Fox promotion for the 1959 film version of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, featuring model Millie Perkins in her screen debut as Anne.

by bodily suffering. As the eight Jews stand in the Annex, awaiting their arrest, Anne's demeanor suggests a willingness to die for her cause. She does not weep or hide, but stands still, solemn, and upright.

Otto then echoes Anne's hopeful message, telling the other occupants of the Annex, "For two years we have lived in fear, but now we can live in hope." This sentiment is puzzling, at the very least, given that viewers know it to be so at odds with what awaits these Jews, but it reaffirms Otto as the legitimate heir to his daughter's testimonial, and therefore moral, legacy. Anne is heard in voiceover, reading what is an impossible diary entry: a narration of the arrest, followed by a request to the diary's reader (and, by extension, to the film's viewer) to preserve the diary, because, "I hope—." The film's version of the diary ends with these words, presenting not an Anne robbed of the ability to live the rest of her life in peace (as readers of the published version of the diary learn in an epilogue) but an Anne who provides audiences an open-ended expression of optimism. During these final words, an image of Anne awaiting her fate appears on screen, superimposed on the open diary, suggesting that this message moves from Anne to the diary and then to all who read it. Indeed, as Otto completes both the diary and his grim narration of Anne's fate, he nonetheless can still promise, "From now on, we'll live in hope." This message is extended beyond the characters in the Annex to the audience, as the camera pans out the window to show a sky filled with birds and clouds, emblematic of the uplift that Anne's words have inspired.

This film's uplifting conclusion differs from the ending originally envisioned by Stevens, who, as a member of the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War II, had filmed the liberation of Dachau concentration camp and helped prepare Nazi atrocity footage for presentation as evidence at the first Nuremberg trial. Stevens had wanted to end *The Diary of Anne Frank* by showing Anne's fate following her arrest and screened a version of the film at a cinema in San Francisco that concluded with Anne "in a concentration camp uniform swaying in a numb miasmic fog."¹⁸ The audience (or perhaps the studio) responded poorly to this ending, which "was deemed too tough in audience impact and against 20th [Century-]Fox's desire to have the film considered 'hopeful' despite all."¹⁹ In later years, the on-screen depiction of Anne's fate in

Bergen-Belsen would come to be seen as key to a more complete mediation of Anne as witness to the Holocaust.

Other than translations of the authorized dramatic adaptation of the diary, no others appear on film or television until almost forty years after the Stevens film. These more recent screen adaptations not only reflect the diary's continued popularity among an international readership but also respond to new developments in its public presence. The publication of the *Critical Edition* of the diary in 1986 in Dutch, followed by an English-language version in 1989, presented readers with the full text of Anne's diaries and their redaction both by her while in hiding and by her father after the war. A new English-language *Definitive Edition* of the diary, much expanded from the early redactions of the 1950s, appeared in 1995. In addition to prompting new understandings of Anne's life and writing, these new editions of the diary fueled criticisms of its authorized dramatic adaptation. Subsequent adaptations have either engaged this expanded diary text directly or, when denied permission to do so, approached the story of Anne's life obliquely, without citing her writing.

Such was the case with the 2001 ABC-TV miniseries *Anne Frank: The Whole Story*, based on Melissa Müller's unauthorized 1998 biography of Anne.²⁰ The miniseries courted controversy on more than one count. First, it presented Anne's fate after the diary is abandoned. This decision rectified the muting of the Holocaust of the earlier adaptations, challenging how they used "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are really good at heart," twisted into an expression of banal, hopeful optimism from a child martyr (a usage that author Cynthia Ozick argues, in a 1997 essay for *The New Yorker*, gives off "a perfume of bitter mockery").²¹ Second, the miniseries is based on a provocative source. Bernd Elias, chairman of the Anne Frank-Fonds in Basel, Switzerland, and cousin of Anne, had disavowed the Müller biography for incorporating passages from the diary in which Anne reflected on the unhappiness of her parents' marriage—passages that had been excised in the initial publication of the diary. The foundation refused to grant the producers of the miniseries permission to cite directly from Anne's diary; like Müller's book, the script could only dramatize her life without recourse to her writing. Elias raised his objections regarding the planned miniseries, on the grounds of copyright infringement, with Steven Spielberg, then on board to be

世界中に愛されたベストセラー、はじめてのアニメ映画化
“The Diary of Anne Frank”

アンネの日記

原作/アンネ・フランク

(「アンネの日記 完全版」文藝春秋刊)

監督/永丘昭典 音楽/マイケル・ナイマン

脚本/船野八郎 ロジャー・ハイルバース 企画/古元孝則 脚本/永本正徳

プロデューサー/丸山正雄 音楽/永本正徳

オリジナルキャラクターデザイン/窪 誠之

メカニックデザイン/大塚 泰志 作画監督/藤森 義朗

音響監督/本田保則 色彩設計/上田 勇

色指定/工藤 秀子 美術監督/池田 浩二 撮影監督/八尋 哲

●製作/「アンネの日記」製作委員会

(TBS・文藝春秋・TOKYO FM・IMAGICA・博報堂)

●設計/荒本事務所 ●配給/東宝 00002299C 2004-08 202

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アンネはあなたにちやうど似ている。

its executive producer, and Michael Eisner, then CEO of Disney, which owns ABC. As a result of Elias's objections, Spielberg withdrew from the project.²² The entire affair speaks to the complexity of the question that Ozick posed in the title of her essay: "Who Owns Anne Frank?"

The 1999 animated film *Le Journal d'Anne Frank*, the French version of the Japanese *Anne No Nikki* of 1995,²³ challenges the task of addressing the "veracity gap" not only by a lack of citations from the diary, but also by dint of being an animated film. In the West, at least, this genre is often associated with comic and fantastical cartoons. However, this medium also enables the reenactment of events described in Anne's diary with a level of control over detail that live-action film cannot rival. Instead of quoting passages from the diary, which would require permission from the Anne Frank-Fonds, the film portrays them, following the diary as if it were a script. *Le Journal d'Anne Frank* begins not with the postwar discovery of the diary but, much as the diary does, early on the morning of Anne's thirteenth birthday, when she is given the diary as a gift. She lies in bed, wriggling about before she bursts out from under the covers and runs to a window, where a cat brushes up against her legs. The detail is striking in its correspondence to the diary entry of June 14, 1942, per the *Definitive Edition*, in which Anne chronicles the day. She recalls waking at 6:00 A.M. but needing to stay in bed until 6:45 A.M., after which she could not wait any longer. She went to the dining room where "Moortje (the cat) welcomed me by rubbing against my legs."²⁴ In this opening, which links Anne's introduction to her diary with the audience's introduction both to her and to her writing, the diary is implicitly present, even prior to its presentation to Anne as a gift.

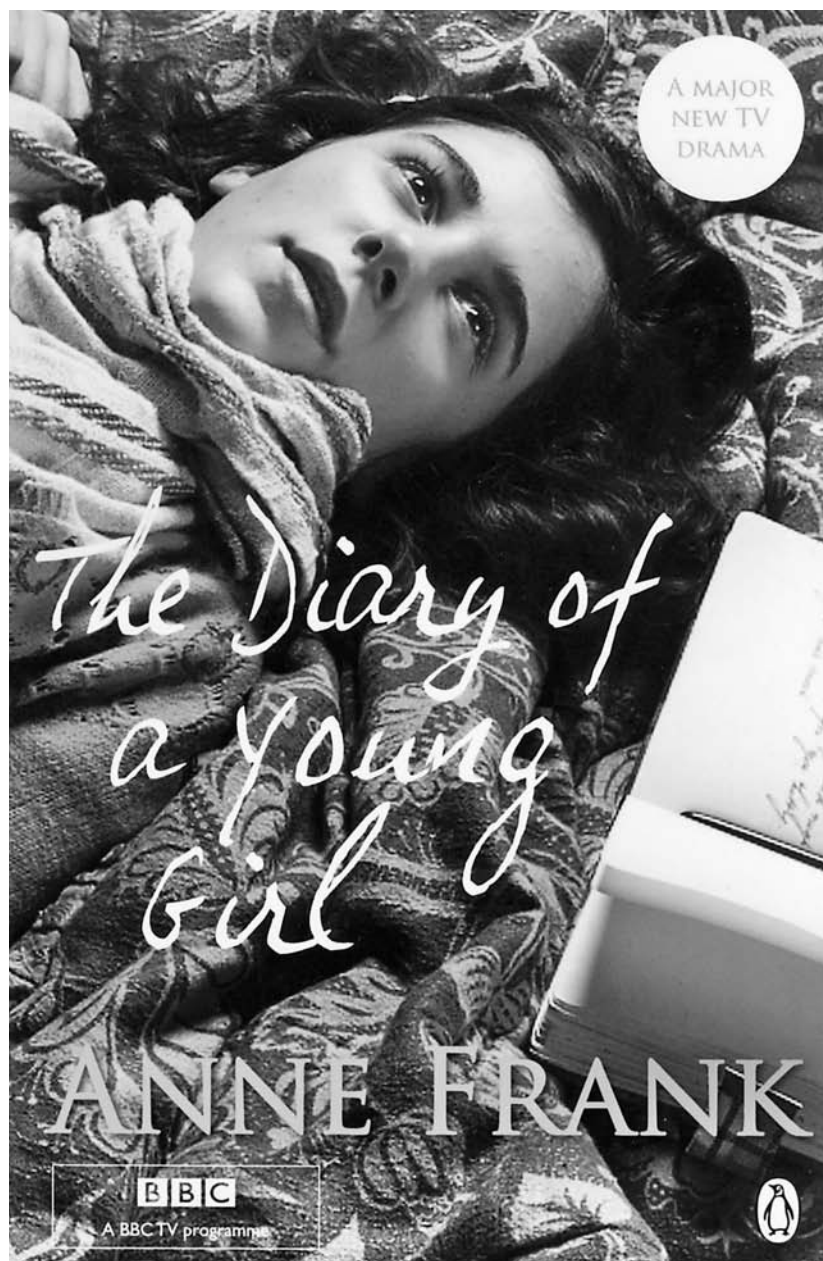
Like the adaptations of the 1950s, *Le Journal* characterizes Anne as righteous, if giddily girlish, and it uses voiceover to simulate Anne's writing her diary entries. And similar to the Stevens film, the animation treats the diary as a testimonial document to be entrusted to a future reader. Upon the arrest, Anne prepares her bag. She pulls the diary—again, a plaid notebook—from the bag to place on her desk. "Goodbye,

Poster for *Anne No Nikki*, a 1995 Japanese anime adaptation of Anne's diary. Photographer: Matt Jones

Kitty," she says, "Don't forget me. Someone will protect you." Her hopeful farewell suggests the diary is a "message in a bottle," a metaphor that sociologist Fuyuki Kurasawa uses to characterize the practices and risks of testimony.²⁵ The message is provided explicitly in a voiceover that follows the arrest. As in the Stevens film, it takes the form of an impossible final diary entry, delivered over a meticulously recreated Amsterdam cityscape that is eerily empty of people: "Dear Kitty, You are my friend, and I know you understood my message of freedom, humanity, compassion for all children, women, and men, no matter their race, religion or belief. Help me to make this world a better place."²⁶ After these words, text appears on the screen to inform viewers of Anne's fate. In its conclusion, *Le Journal* conforms to the earlier, authorized adaptations by offering Anne's testimony, followed by her martyrdom, as a universalized moral exhortation. The medium of animation facilitates the universalizing of Anne's life and work by allowing for dubbing the dialogue in different languages (here, Japanese and French) and, potentially, for changes in the script. Animation roots the story's specificity in the visual, with its carefully detailed depiction of wartime Amsterdam.

The 2009 BBC-TV miniseries, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, directed by Jon Jones and written by Deborah Moggach, revisits the project of adapting the diary for the screen by using the full text that had been made available in the 1980s. In an interview, Moggach explains that the miniseries offers a more honest and nuanced portrait of Anne than seen heretofore, as it is the "first adaptation to have permission to use Anne's own words and also to have had full access to passages of the diaries previously excised by the family."²⁷ The BBC's adaptation is thus positioned as not only truer to the diary but also a corrective to earlier renderings. Although attempting to cover some of the same aspects of Anne that caused *The Whole Story* to be denied permission to cite from the diary, this miniseries affords a picture of a more historically specific Anne with the benefit of her own words.

Opening with the Frank family's walking in the rain to go into hiding in the Annex, before flashing back to the day Anne (Ellie Kendrick) received her diary, the miniseries distinguishes its approach to its source text from the outset. This strategy emulates devices that Anne used in her own reworking of the diary for publication to establish a novelistic



Cover of the Penguin paperback edition of *The Diary of a Young Girl*, promoting the 2009 BBC miniseries *The Diary of Anne Frank*, starring Ellie Kendrick as Anne.

narrative sequence for her readers within the rubric of chronological diary entries, by providing background information about her life, her family's history, and the broader context of Amsterdam under German occupation. Aired in thirty-minute installments over the course of five days, the structure of the miniseries suggests the diary format of periodic entries that provide a chronicle of daily life. Indeed, the miniseries portrays Anne's everyday existence in this otherwise extraordinary circumstance. The opening installment shows scenes of the tedium of a life in hiding, narrated by Anne in voiceover. These scenes include the family sitting quietly at the table, waiting for lunchtime and the opportunity to move and speak, as well as the challenges and personal habits of bath time. Distasteful moments, too, receive attention, such as a scene that reenacts Anne's account, in her diary entry of March 25, 1943, of her father using a long stick to tackle a clogged toilet.

The miniseries establishes its portrayal of Anne as an adolescent with the first voiceover delivery of a diary entry, in which Anne reflects on her sense of isolation within a life of popularity. Over the images of her thirteenth birthday party, she asks how a girl with "thirty people I can call friends" can be "alone in the world," echoing the diary entry of June 20, 1942, in which she explains the value of her diary as a friend. Presenting the adolescent Anne also entails, in Moggach's words, revealing a "sexual young woman whose hormones are all over the place." This comment, which appeared in an article in *The Sunday Times* titled "BBC Unveils Anne Frank the Sexual Teenager," demonstrates that the juxtaposition of this new portrait of Anne against more established ones was integral to the conception of the miniseries as well as to its public reception.²⁸

The miniseries pays considerable attention to Anne's sexuality, incorporating material from the diary not included in previous adaptations and introducing the subject into more familiar episodes. In a conversation with Margot (Felicity Jones), Anne announces the "whitish smear" she finds on her panties, which surely means that her period will come soon, a piece of dialogue drawn from the entry dated October 20, 1942.²⁹ Like earlier adaptations, the miniseries chronicles Anne's evolving romance with Peter (Geoff Breton), including their occasional make-out sessions. The fervor of their relationship is tempered by also presenting both Anne's early exasperation with Peter and her later waning inter-

est in him. This dynamic follows the progression of Anne's feelings as chronicled in the diary. It begins with her dismissive characterization of Peter as "a clot" (a word choice that identifies this as a British portrait of Anne), referencing the August 21, 1942, entry: "I still don't like Peter any better, he's so boring he flops lazily on his bed half the time, does a bit of carpentry and then goes back for another snooze. What a fool!"³⁰ And after the height of their romance, the miniseries' Anne begins to doubt the relationship, echoing Anne's growing awareness, voiced in the diary, that "he could not be a friend for my understanding" (July 15, 1944).³¹

The miniseries' more complex portrait of Anne includes her more petulant side and dramatizes some of the more unpleasant confrontations between Anne and Margot, Edith (Tamsin Greig), and even Otto (Iain Glen). In one scene, Anne brazenly ignores her mother, walking past her to dote on her father. As she does so, a voiceover diary entry discusses the conflicted relationship with her mother and expresses the impulse "to slap her across the face."

Moggach characterizes the inclusion of such scenes as part of a corrective move away from images of Anne as "sanctified," the "child martyr and symbol of Jewish suffering."³² Producing a distinct counter-portrait to the previous sanctioned adaptations, Moggach's Anne is significantly less hopeful than earlier portrayals—or rather, the miniseries presents Anne's efforts to maintain hope within moments of despair. Moggach includes Anne's popular and often decontextualized statement, "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart." But whereas previous adaptations offer this sentence on its own or as a chipper palliative for Peter's angst, in the miniseries Anne's most famous words are embedded within a more extended citation of the original diary entry of July 15, 1944, wherein Anne articulates her doubts, fears, and amazement that she hasn't abandoned ideals in a "world being slowly transformed into a wilderness."

Even as the BBC miniseries complicates the traditionally simplified sentiment associated with Anne's expression of hope and moves away from portraying Anne as a child martyr, the plot retains traces of a Christian testimonial. The scene in which Anne writes her diary entry of July 15, 1944, is followed immediately by an extended, emotionally terrifying depiction of the arrest. Unlike Stevens's version, which avoids showing

the encounter between the eight Jews in hiding and the arresting officers, the miniseries affords Anne no chance to narrate the experience and express her hope. Instead, she is seen crying, hiding, and holding fast to her parents. As officers ransack the Annex in search of valuable goods, they take Anne's bag, spilling its contents to make room for their loot. In the process, Anne's diary—here comprising the plaid notebook, along with an additional journal and sheaf of papers, representing the full scope of her diary in its original and reworked versions—is thrown to the floor. The gesture provides a powerful, if tacit counter-argument to earlier portraits of Anne. Here we have not only a physical suggestion of the entire diary but also a presentation of a young girl fiercely attempting to retain faith in humanity despite evidence to the contrary.

Yet even as the miniseries provides this more human vision of Anne, it occasionally upholds the sainted child martyr. Indeed, I argue that the desire for a more complex, fully human portrayal of Anne, as offered in this miniseries, is part of this devotion to her, as it gives her increased relevance in a contemporary world that finds earlier portrayals of her too facile. Moggach also clings to the notion that Anne's life and work convey a broader message of hope and redemption. Like Wishengrad, she links this message to the power of Anne as a writer, declaring the diary to be "a real testimony to the power of imagination and writing—how that sets you free, whatever your circumstances."³³

Closing the "Veracity Gap": Mechanisms of Truth

Part of testimony's strength relies on the power of a first-person narration of suffering. Therefore, dramatic adaptations of Anne's diary face the challenge posed by the "veracity gap" to maintain the authority of Anne's voice as a witness to history in a genre that involves multiple voices. Film and television adaptations employ a range of strategies to secure this witnessing presence that, as communications scholar Paul Frosh observes about television documentaries, "anchors the discursive authority of the film as a source of testimony about an event which is removed from the audience in space and time."³⁴ As these adaptations strive to preserve Anne's witnessing presence, they seek to legitimize their mediation of her testimony by extending its scope.

One key strategy to assuring Anne's witnessing presence in these films and telecasts is their use of the diary as a material object. Not only does the plaid notebook appear in all these dramas, but it is also regularly positioned as the point of entry to the on-screen presentation of its (ostensible) contents. The diary figures in some of these adaptations even before the drama proper begins. For example, the video of *Le Journal d'Anne Frank* arrives in a box designed to look somewhat like the diary, with a ribbon tie to be undone by the viewer. This physical portal to this adaptation of the diary anticipates the film's narrative, which opens on the day Anne receives the diary. The film proper maintains the diary's presence, sometimes implicitly; for example, the kitchen table in the Annex also bears a similar red-checked covering, a visual reminder of the diary's cover. The BBC television miniseries juxtaposes opening credits with photographs of Anne and the original scrawl of her diary entries. These images move outward, suggesting that one is plunging deeper into this world of words, a vortex that eventually delivers the viewer to the televisual adaptation. Just before this transition, the last of the opening credits appears alongside a photograph not of Anne, but of the actress Ellie Kendrick as Anne. Kendrick is posed like a photograph of Anne sitting at a desk, in the act of writing, familiar to many for its appearance on the cover or as the frontispiece of published editions of the diary.

In Stevens's film, by contrast, Otto opens the notebook to reveal the distinctive scrawl of Anne's handwritten entries (in Dutch) and, more notably, a photograph of the actual Anne Frank, as opposed to a picture of actress Millie Perkins. This photograph and the diary notebook, which carefully replicates the appearance of the original, signify Anne's presence and thereby authenticate the film, reducing the "veracity gap" inherent in the diary's translation and dramatic adaptation. At the same time, the presence of the "actual" Anne still relies on mediation in the form of a photograph; similarly, the single notebook offers a condensed representation of Anne's multiple diaries—and, of course, even the diary entries themselves, by their very nature, constitute a mediation of Anne's experience.

The 1988 docudrama *The Attic: The Hiding of Anne Frank*, based on Miep Gies's memoir *Anne Frank Remembered: The Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family* (1987), honors Gies as a righteous gentile, who



Pages from the souvenir program for the premiere of George Stevens's 1959 film of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Made to resemble Anne's original diary notebook, these pages feature the screenwriters Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett and the composer Alfred Newman. *Photographer: Matt Jones*

risked her own safety to protect not only the eight Jews in the Annex but also Anne's diary. In one scene, Miep (Mary Steenburgen) and Anne (Lisa Jacobs) have a conversation about diaries. Lamenting the loss of her own diary, Miep comments that she would have liked to have it, in order to know what sort of girl she had been. This remark implicitly validates Anne's diary (which here is also represented by the iconic plaid notebook) as a portal to her wartime experiences, a role it serves in docudramas and documentaries as well as dramatic adaptations. At one point in their conversation, Anne asks Miep for more paper, as she has almost filled the diary she received for her birthday, and she expresses her dismay with Miep for having thrown away her own diary. "You should have kept it for always," she chastises, before continuing, "I'm keeping mine for always." Miep is subsequently shown honoring both of Anne's wishes: in addition to bringing papers and notebooks to Anne, Miep rescues the diary after the arrest, preserving it first for Anne and then for the world, extending her wish that the diary be kept "for always." *The Attic* defers to the diary's primacy as conduit to the historical actuality. Although Gies's memoirs serve as the basis of the docudrama, it refers to

the characters by the pseudonyms given to them in published versions of the diary: the van Pelses remain the Van Daans, and Fritz Pfeffer is known as Albert Dussel. Seeking to go beyond Anne's writing in order to know her better, the film still relies on Anne's own mediation of her life.

Two documentaries distributed through the Anne Frank House—*"Dear Kitty": Remembering Anne Frank* (1999) and *The Short Life of Anne Frank* (2002)—engage this complex negotiation of historical referentiality and mediated testimony. As these two films look beyond the diary, they, too, rely upon it as the authoritative conduit to Anne's life and work. The menu on the DVD for both films is telling: it displays an image of the diary, its strap undone, poised to allow the viewer to enter each chapter of Anne's life in hiding and the larger context of the war. *The Short Life of Anne Frank* begins with a close-up of the diary's plaid cover. Before the image dissolves into a close-up of a written entry, a girl's voice is heard: "Will I ever be able write something great? I hope so. . . . Writing allows me to record things." With that statement, Jeremy Irons takes over as narrator, recounting Anne's life, as the viewer sees Frank family photographs and actuality footage from the period, including depictions of political rallies in Germany, Jewish persecution, and the liberation of concentration camps. Prompted by Anne's reference to her writing as a record, the film establishes the diary as the point of entry not only to her life but also to a broader history of the Nazi era and World War II, using actuality footage that documents events outside Anne's diary and her own ability to witness. For example, liberation footage shows an event that Anne did not live to see.

In *Dear Kitty* the same tensions are enhanced. The documentary features recollections of Anne and the others in hiding by Miep Gies, as she walks through the rooms in the Annex. A female voiceover reading passages from the diary, illustrated by photographs and actuality footage, punctuates Miep's recollections. One of these passages refers to stories of Germans gassing prisoners, which Anne had heard about while in hiding; the delivery of this passage is accompanied by footage of a concentration camp. However, while Anne was haunted by radio reports of the camps, filmed reports were beyond her point of reference (especially given that newsreels with footage of concentration camps were not shown to the public until the very end of the war in Europe).

The footage of the camp is the record of another witness—most likely, a member of the Allied military forces. Although the use of such images may call attention to the limits of the diary as a point of entry to a larger narrative of the war, the intent is clearly to elide these limits and extend the diary's scope, thereby securing Anne's role as a Holocaust witness.

The Anne Frank House, which authorizes the films, uses them to bolster the significance of Anne, her diary, and the site of the Annex, now a museum. *Dear Kitty* establishes the museum as a site of testimony by presenting Gies's recollections as she walks through its rooms. Each space prompts a new remembrance, in particular the bookcase that hid the door to the Annex. It is not surprising that this artifact should be so resonant, as it provides a physical manifestation of the diary's secret world as well as its revelation. Like the plaid notebook, the bookcase appears in all the dramatic adaptations of the diary. In Stevens's version, the bookcase is present at the time of the Franks' arrival at their hiding place and is linked with the diary both aurally (Anne's voiceover chronicles the family's arrival) and visually (soon thereafter, she is seen receiving the gift of the diary). As with the diary notebook, the physical reproduction of the bookcase is accurate, but its appearance at this point in the narrative is not. Anne's diary reports on August 21, 1942 that the bookcase was added weeks after the Franks' arrival; she writes of this addition that "now our Secret Annexe has truly become secret." All adaptations of the diary wrestle with the challenge of an efficient dramatic exposition; this particular conflation of events unites the diary and the Annex, thereby producing two icons—the plaid notebook and the bookshelf—to serve as twin portals to Anne Frank.

In other films, the bookcase is used, like the diary, not to move further into Anne's private world but to move outward from Anne and facilitate access to the world beyond the limits of her experience. The documentary "Who Killed Anne Frank?," aired on the CBS television series *The Twentieth Century* in 1964, investigates the Nazi engineers of the Jewish genocide, using not only Anne Frank but also the Annex as its starting point. Journalist Daniel Schorr launches the quest for Anne's murderer by opening the bookcase, a gesture that authorizes the Anne Frank House and, implicitly, the diary as points of entry to the Holocaust as a whole.

The relationship between the diary and its mediations—dramatic adaptations, documentaries, the museum—is recursive; even as they extend the witnessing potential of Anne's diary, the mediations rely on its authority. Conversely, as the diary continues to provide the point of entry to Anne's life, it is only by going beyond the scope of the diary through these mediations that her life is thoroughly represented and its significance appreciated. The 1995 documentary *Anne Frank Remembered*, directed by Jon Blair, relies on diary passages (read aloud by an adult actress, Glenn Close) to establish authority but extends the role of witnessing to individuals who had known Anne before she went into hiding, such as Hanneli Goslar, a childhood friend, and Werner Pfeffer, Fritz Pfeffer's son. Werner Pfeffer is never mentioned in the diary, and his existence is denied in the Stevens film, in which Anne describes Albert Dussel as having no children.³⁵

The most touted moment in *Anne Frank Remembered* is a rare glimpse of Anne, lasting all of seven seconds, excerpted from a home movie of a wedding filmed in front of the Franks' home in Merwedeplein in 1941. Like all other photographed images of her, this footage shows Anne before she went into hiding. She is caught unawares by a camera casually surveying the crowd. Leaning out of a window of the Franks' apartment, she watches the bride and groom below. The amateur footage, with its loose, hand-held style, provides its own cinematic marks of authenticity, familiar to audiences from watching their own home movies or documentaries that deploy an observational, "fly-on-the-wall" style. The promotion of the documentary's "discovery" of this footage confers a revelatory ethos that enhances the truth. In fact, this footage had appeared previously in the 1967 documentary "The Legacy of Anne Frank," an episode of the ecumenical television series *The Eternal Light*. Whereas *Anne Frank Remembered* presents the home movie footage toward the end of the documentary, thereby positioning it as the climactic revelation of a mediation of Anne having an unrivaled liveness, "The Legacy of Anne Frank" incorporates the footage in its chronological narrative of Anne's life, as a last glimpse of her before she went into hiding. The status of this snippet of footage is elevated considerably between these two documentaries, as it moves from being one among an array of visual resources to offering a privileged glimpse—indeed, an apotheosis—of

Anne. At the same time, an irony underpins this wondrous experience of seeing images not of an actress playing Anne but of the actual Anne in motion—she is, for once, entirely voiceless, as the footage is silent. This seven-second clip ostensibly brings the viewer closer to Anne's life, but in doing so it leaves behind her intimate expression, her testimony.³⁶

The ABC miniseries *Anne Frank: The Whole Story*, having been denied permission to cite directly from the diary, found other ways to establish its authority and bring the viewer into intimate contact with Anne (Hannah Taylor-Gordon) and the diary. Early in the miniseries, Anne sees the plaid notebook in a shop window and gazes lovingly at it, declaring her desire for a diary. The structure of the shot establishes the bond between Anne and the diary as a physical object. Although the shop window keeps the two apart, it reflects a ghostly image of Anne superimposed over the notebook and then, in a reverse shot, provides a reflection of the notebook beside Anne.

Though never quoted in the miniseries, the diary is not silent, thanks to dramatizations of Anne's life prior to hiding and detailed reenactments of events mentioned in the diary. For instance, the depiction of Anne's thirteenth birthday party in *The Whole Story* includes Otto (Ben Kingsley) looping film through a projector. The film starts to play and an Alsatian dog appears on the screen, suggesting that this is the Rin-Tin-Tin film mentioned in Anne's diary entry of June 15, 1942, which describes the party. Another sequence dramatizes a sleepover between Anne and her friend Jacque van Maarsen, in which Anne asks if she might feel her friend's breasts—a clear reference to the diary entry of January 6, 1944, wherein Anne reflects on her body's changes. Even as this reenactment introduces a more pubescent and less innocent Anne than portrayed in earlier, authorized adaptations, it assures the miniseries' link to the diary.

The ABC miniseries makes use of other mediations of Anne and her diary, including images familiar from photographs, documentaries, and other adaptations. In addition to the plaid notebook and the bookcase guarding the entrance to the Annex is a sequence at the seaside, where the Frank family sits at the beach with friends, including Fritz Pfeffer and his girlfriend, Charlotte. Anne runs out of the water and wraps herself in a striped dressing gown, simulating a photograph taken in June 1939 of

the Frank family at the beach.³⁷ *Le Journal d'Anne Frank*, which also does not quote directly from the diary, similarly replicates Frank family photographs, seen positioned throughout their home on walls, tables, and the mantelpiece. These family photographs, which have been published in some editions of the diary and in other books about Anne, provide an ontological proximity to her that makes them logical mechanisms for closing the "veracity gap."

At the same time, *The Whole Story* appears to rely just as much on prior adaptations of the diary, which have familiarized a wide audience with an imaginary engagement with the events of Anne's life, especially in hiding. The poster for the ABC miniseries depicts a pensive Anne staring out a window, her chin resting on her hand, recalling a similar gesture of Millie Perkins as Anne in an advertisement for the 1959 adaptation. Although this pose also invokes photos of the actual Anne in a dreamy state, the placement of the actress by the attic window is an image familiar only from earlier dramatizations of the diary. A dialogue between adaptations emerges, in which they rely on each other as authoritative reference points. Similarly, both the Stevens film and the ABC miniseries provide vivid shots of a sky filled with soaring birds as emblems of Anne's inspirational worldview. Through this ongoing dialogue of references, these moving image mediations establish their own conventions for representing and authorizing Anne's testimony.

The Whole Story also interrogates the limits of the diary as testimony by placing the symbolic, hopeful Anne in a dialogue with the historical Anne, particularly in its rendering of her brutal life after her arrest. Her suffering is agonizing in its own right, and its impact is heightened by portraying the "wilderness" against which Anne struggled internally in the well-known diary passage of July 15, 1944. In doing so, the miniseries tests the burden of meaning that Anne has come to bear. Anne is seen receiving work in a munitions factory in the detention camp at Westerbork, where she attempts to inspire those around her, as well as herself, by asserting the feeling of hope one can take from hard work. The scene presents Anne's hopefulness in a context that calls such an inspirational message into question. As the film progresses, Anne loses those who are close to her, beginning with the separation from her father, and then from her mother, Mrs. van Pels, and finally, her sister. She watches fel-

low prisoners steal shoes and socks in their desperate bids for survival. In a stunning contrast to the image of Anne as the pensive and idealistic diarist, she is shown in Bergen-Belsen kicking a woman who attempts to steal some food that Anne has secured, in a frantic response to her horrific situation. Anne's loss of hope is painful to watch, in part because it demonstrates that in the *univers concentrationnaire* even the hopefulness epitomized by Anne Frank could be destroyed. As *The Whole Story* attempts to liberate Anne from sentimentality and beatification, its enactment of this brutal passion play demonstrates her vulnerability and extends her role as a witness to the Holocaust far beyond the scope of the diary.

Testimonial Presentation and Intention

Some films and telecasts extend the diary's testimonial function beyond the cause of Holocaust memory and into the struggle for social justice in contemporary scenarios. For example, the ABC ecumenical television series *Directions* aired an episode in 1972 titled "The Heritage of Anne Frank," in which teenagers from United States, Scotland, Japan, and the Netherlands gathered in the attic of the Anne Frank House to discuss the war in Vietnam and apartheid. Taking up issues that lie well beyond the scope of the diary at the site of its writing, these young people, who are approximately the same age as Anne was when she wrote her diary, attempt to identify these concerns with the "message" so often ascribed to her work. In a telling statement, an American girl fuses Anne and the physical site of encounter with her testimonial authority by describing the Anne Frank House as a "plea," before continuing, "She's trying to say, let's not have this happen again."

This telecast stages something similar to a common classroom practice of adults giving Anne's diary to adolescents to read, with the expectation that this encounter will promote greater moral insight. This classroom encounter with Anne's life and work as a moral catalyst is staged in a number of films and telecasts, wherein the diary serves to inspire youth in both moral and creative arenas. In the 2003 feature film *Anne B. Real*, the subject of this transformative encounter is Cynthia Gimenez (Janice Richardson), a Dominican high school student living

in the New York neighborhood of Spanish Harlem, who aspires to be a writer and rapper. She lives in a tiny apartment with her immigrant mother and grandmother; Cynthia's sister is an unwed mother and her brother is a drug-dealer. The cramped quarters, as well as her experience of daily chaos and violence, ready Cynthia for identification with Anne Frank. In a flashback sequence, viewers learn that Cynthia's late father had given her *The Diary of a Young Girl* as a source of comfort and a guide to life after the murder of one of her friends. Cynthia finds inspiration from the diary and purchases her own plaid journal, in which she records her thoughts, feelings, and rhymes. The diaries—both Anne's and her own—give Cynthia the strength to stand up for herself when she learns that her brother has been selling her rhymes to a professional rapper, who has recorded them and presented them as his own. At the film's climax, Cynthia rises above these difficult circumstances to take the stage as the artist “Anne B. Real” and claim her creative voice. This use of Anne's diary as a catalyst for self-realization met with the approval of the Anne Frank-Fonds, which permitted the makers of *Anne B. Real* to quote directly from the diary.

Freedom Writers, a 2007 feature film based on the actual story of high school teacher Erin Gruwell (Hilary Swank), places the diary at the center of the creative and moral transformation of a group of adolescents—a class of Los Angeles high school students, many of them members of rival gangs, who are surrounded by violence, racism, and the tumultuous aftermath of the Rodney King riots of 1992. Anne's diary is only one of several reading assignments given to the class (another book they read is a memoir of a former gang leader), but it plays a weighty role in the film's narrative. *The Diary of a Young Girl* is the first book the students are seen reading; a montage sequence shows them in various locations—on a bus, in a park, at home—engrossed in the text. Each shot is accompanied by a different diary passage, read by the students in voiceover. This strategy both links Anne with the students, as their voices recite her words, and presents the students as a class, sharing in the same activity. This sequence also demonstrates the diary's paradigmatic value for these young people. Lines from the diary, such as “Who would be interested in my thoughts?” and “Here [in the diary] I can be myself,” implicitly express the students' own sense of isolation and helplessness. Living in

something akin to a war zone, they also share Anne's fear of violence. The diary's list of anti-Jewish laws, which are also read aloud in this sequence, may educate them about a historical period, but it also resonates with the racism they experience in their daily lives.

The story of Eva (April L. Hernandez), one of the students, highlights the transformative properties of their encounter with Anne's diary. Initially resistant to classroom activities, Eva also struggles with a powerful moral dilemma: as a witness to a murder, she has been asked to commit perjury in order to protect a gang member from her neighborhood, but doing so would condemn an innocent man to prison. Anne's diary both distracts and inspires the recalcitrant Eva. Her excitement is conveyed through questions to the teacher, such as "Why doesn't Anne smoke Hitler?" Gruwell responds that this is not a Hollywood action film; the answer to Eva's questions, of course, is to keep reading. And after reading the passage in which Anne characterizes the world as a wilderness, Eva is seen running into the classroom in tears, distraught upon learning of Anne's capture. "If she dies, what about me?" asks Eva, whose very question (including its use of the present tense) collapses the distance of geography and history, forging a potent, if naïve, identification with Anne.

Eva's fellow student Marcus (Jason Finn) provides the answer. "To me, she's not dead at all," he states, while taking note of all his friends who've been killed. "How many [of them] have you read a book about? Have you seen them on TV or in a newspaper? That's why this story's dope. . . . Anne Frank understands our situation. My situation." He voices his own identification with Anne, also expressed in the present tense, while declaring that it is her mediation that maintains her existence and her ability to speak for their contemporary situation. As the film continues, the diary's capacity to stimulate insight is repeatedly proven. Marcus is moved to research his new hero, Miep Gies, and soon involves the class in a mission to invite her to their Long Beach classroom. Gruwell sends the invitation to Gies, in care of the Anne Frank-Fonds (which also granted permission to cite from the diary in this film), along with the students' own testimonies about their lives and their feelings about the diary. As Gruwell prepares the students' materials, an advertisement for the documentary *Anne Frank Remembered*

is visible beneath the stack of papers on her desk. Only the portrait of Anne peers out, but her countenance serves as an imprimatur of moral authority and insight.

Miep Gies (Pat Carroll) appears in *Freedom Writers* as a central figure in mediating Anne Frank. Gies extends Anne's testimony not only by having saved the diary or through her recollections of the Frank family, but also with her capacity to inspire others in her own right. During her visit to the class, Gies recounts the Franks' arrest on August 4, 1944. Then, when Marcus calls her a hero, she demurs and instead turns the discussion to the present. Having read the letters the class wrote to her, she tells them they are "heroes" every day. They each have the capacity, she exhorts them, to "turn a small light on in a dark room." With this inspirational message, Gies performs her role as an extension of the diary's authority of witnessing. In addition to having protected the diary, which has since inspired countless readers, Gies herself inspires others by placing the power of transformation and expression within their reach. After Gies's visit, Eva decides to tell the truth at the trial, risking her safety but ensuring justice. In addition to moral inspiration, the students' creativity abounds; they decide to collect and publish their own diaries, a result of their classroom assignment, "like Anne Frank." Notably, it is not simply the private expression that prompts comparison but the act of public exhortation. Their texts are called the "Freedom Writer" diaries, a title that links Anne Frank's inspiration to the American civil rights movement, ensuring her continued relevance in the postwar United States by offering broader messages of creativity and tolerance.

(Ir)reverent Anne: Comic Mediations

The inspiring messages that educators seek to impart to students through the reading of Anne's diary are not always received as planned. The pilot episode of the ABC drama series *My So-Called Life* (1994) opens in an American high-school classroom, where students are discussing the diary with their teacher. She asks Angela (Claire Danes), the protagonist of the series, how she would describe Anne Frank. "Lucky," Angela responds. The teacher replies with confusion and outrage, asking how Anne, who had perished in a concentration camp, could be construed

as “lucky.” Angela grudgingly explains, “I don’t know. Because she was trapped in an attic for three years with this guy she really liked?” This interaction, which inaugurates the series’ scrutiny of the trials of being an American teenage girl in the 1990s, suggests the limited possibilities for “appropriate” responses to questions that well-intentioned adults pose to young people about the value of Anne Frank’s life as a moral paradigm, which had by then become a fixture of American adolescent education. This scene also points up the possibility that identifying with Anne, considered foundational to the text’s ability to offer moral inspiration, might lead to a “misreading” of her diary. Angela’s reading is, in fact, a genuine projection; she yearns for her classmate Jordan Catalano and so overlooks, among other things, Anne’s doubts about Peter that framed the diary’s potent expressions of longing for him. Indeed, why should Angela do otherwise? The adaptations and interpretations of the diary that were then available to the American public rarely did so; instead, they generally emphasized the romantic narrative and fused it to a reading of the diary as a message of hope.

“Misreading” the diary’s established significance as a hallmark of moral inspiration, broadly defined, figures in some of the comic mediations of Anne Frank appearing on television situation comedies and variety shows since the final decades of the twentieth century. Seemingly irreverent, these works implicitly define the “correct” response to Anne’s life and work by offering comically negative examples, while also critiquing what the creators of these comic works regard as mere platitudes about the diary as its misuse. These comic works do not disrupt the testimonial encounter or challenge the role of Anne as witness. On the contrary, they demonstrate how mediating Anne Frank becomes a limit case for good taste, whose threshold of propriety is found and crossed with each comic salvo.

Consider, for example, a sketch from the HBO comedy series *Mr. Show* (1995–1998) aired in 1997 and set in the Anne Frank House.³⁸ A satire of the MTV reality show *Road Rules* follows Chut and Dilly, two American university students, on a reality program called “Culture Hunt,” which requires its participants to find six beanbags hidden in major landmarks throughout Europe. As they search the Annex, it soon becomes clear that they are not there to learn about Anne Frank but to

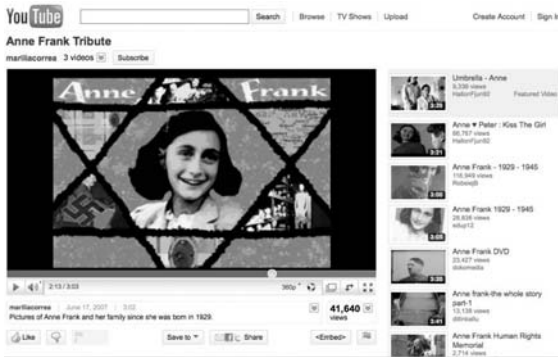
"find that beanbag and go straight to the hash bar." However, the space proves almost too powerful for them. Periodically, they consider Anne and her life, marveling at the details of her daily life in hiding, such as the inability to use the toilet during office hours or even the challenge of an adolescence experienced in such close, inescapable quarters with her family. But despite the strength of history or of this historic setting, Chut and Dilly's preoccupation with trivialities trumps these moments of reverence. "Thanksgiving from hell," one of them describes the prospect of going into hiding with one's family. The other conflates the historical moment at hand with his failure to comprehend it by stating, "At least they didn't have my landlord; he's a total Nazi." When they find the beanbag, the boys abandon all reflection and shout with delight, "We found it, we found it!"—a phrase with disturbing resonance in this site. The sketch ends with a freeze frame of the scene as a holiday snapshot, as a voiceover remarks, "Well, that was our trip to that place." Chut and Dilly prove to be comic lost causes, failing to be properly transformed by their encounter with what is widely regarded as something akin to a sacred space—unlike, say, the junkie Fontaine in a sketch from Whoopi Goldberg's one-woman show *Whoopi Goldberg: Direct from Broadway*, which was televised on HBO in 1985. During a visit to the Annex, this character, lost in the fog of dope, is pulled into a moment of sober reverence and awe. This response suggests the proper outcome of the testimonial encounter, even as that encounter itself is mediated by place and is not necessarily a result of actually reading the diary and engaging with Anne's own words.

Other comic broadcasts interrogate this sacred treatment of Anne's life and work, often using parody to point up the banality of overly earnest treatments. Among mock trailers for imaginary adaptations of the diary is one that aired on the first episode of *Monkey Dust* (BBC3, 2003–2005) a British animated comedy program.³⁹ A spoof of Hollywood's treatment of European history, the trailer presents an adaptation of *The Diary of a Young Girl* that willfully bears no resemblance to either the original text or its adaptations and is rife with errors (for example the American-accented voiceover describes the setting as "the tiny continent of Europe" and mispronounces "Reich" as "Reesh"). Anne hides in an "Amsterdam Holland attic" with a "tiny band of defiant Jews,"

who are shown wearing bright green clothes and dancing jigs in a pub, a ludicrous mishmash of Jews with Irish stereotypes. Anne appears as a busty barmaid with a cross around her neck who boasts, “We Jews enjoy the craic [a good time] as much as anyone.” Instead of Peter, Anne’s boyfriend is an American soldier named Johnny. Anne is captured and comes face to face with Hitler, who comments that this girl “has caused such trouble for the British Reich.” The animated sketch articulates multiple annoyances that British viewers have with Hollywood: its promotion of American heroism and portrayal of the British as villains, as well as a general lack of knowledge of European history and a willingness to transform history to suit American ideology. As sacrilegious as these comic portrayals of Anne Frank may seem, they suggest their protective and reverent impulse toward her by placing her at the center of their mockery. Indeed, while the creators of these irreverent portrayals of Anne may seem at first to have failed to learn anything from her life, they offer object lessons on the limitations of facile mediations.

The Vlogs of Anne Frank: Tribute Videos

Anne Frank tribute videos posted on YouTube might also seem at first to flout “proper” response to the diary’s testimonial value. However, they are in keeping with the history of creative engagement with Anne’s life and work, as well as with Anne’s own inventive approach to keeping her diary, which included revising it for an anticipated postwar readership. Earlier, Anne wrote diary entries in the form of letters to imaginary girlfriends, whom she named after characters in Cissij van Marxveldt’s *Joop ter Heul* series, inventing a bond with imaginary figures and incorporating them into her own creative idiom. At the same time, she also drew on the available idiom of the series, which was epistolary in format, with the main character first writing letters before eventually keeping a diary. Is it surprising, then, that readers of her diary might do something similar with mediations of Anne? Just as students have been handed the diary with the expectation that they, too, will become inspired to write, young people now encounter the moving image mediations of Anne Frank and are inspired to produce media works of their own. Media scholars Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin observe that the borrowing



Screen capture
of a 2007 Anne
Frank tribute video
on YouTube.

and refashioning inherent in remediation are forms of homage.⁴⁰ Or, perhaps a better word for this devotional and creative engagement is “fandom.” These videos are much like “vids,” the term applied to fan-made videos that pair source material with musical selections to explore characters and romantic pairings or celebrate texts. Similar to this fan phenomenon, these Anne Frank videos are user-generated works that mix a host of media samples—including diary excerpts, Frank family photographs, actuality footage, as well as dramatic adaptations—and set them to music. And like the fan vids, this practice allows the “vidders” (as they are known) to celebrate Anne and her diary and to explore various romantic pairings involving her.⁴¹ Yet these videos, drawing on source material based in history, also engage in memorial practices and the promotion of Holocaust awareness more generally. These videos integrate fan practice with the established valuation of the diary as a work of witnessing. In addition to incorporating samples from prior mediations of Anne Frank, they build upon them by extending the dialogue of references among different adaptations. In this regard these fan videos are a logical outcome of earlier mediations, combining devotional response with historical awareness and creative practice—in particular, a creative practice in an adolescent idiom. Like Anne Frank, vidders build on their favorite books and films to express their beliefs and feelings about the world.

The producers of these videos are mostly teenage girls located throughout the world, including (but not limited to) Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Italy, Peru, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, the United

Kingdom, and the United States. The range of hits that these videos receive varies significantly, from as few as 1,400 to over 300,000. Remarkably, the transnational community drawn together by an affinity for Anne Frank posts very few negative comments underneath these videos. When the occasional “troll” writes something unpleasant, the comment is either removed or is simply lost amid a flood of appreciations. Typically, comments on these videos echo established memorial sentiments, writing “R.I.P.” for Anne, the 1.5 million children, or the 6 million Jews who were victims of the Holocaust. Others profess their love for Anne or how her diary inspired them, or they offer condemnations of war and other forms of violence. Occasionally commenters exchange information, recommending films or describing other atrocities of World War II, such as the massacre of Poles in Katyn.

There are three genres of videos, each with their own subsets. The first type is a photo-tribute or commemoration. Like the commemorative videos Malin Walhberg describes in her work on YouTube commemoration, these are slideshows set to music.⁴² They combine Frank family photographs with vintage images of Hitler, concentration camps, their prisoners, and Jews wearing yellow stars, followed by pictures of sites of Anne Frank remembrance: the monument to Anne and Margot Frank at Bergen-Belsen, the diary’s plaid notebook, the Anne Frank House, and the statue of Anne in Amsterdam’s Westerkerk Square. Typically, classical music, or popular music in a classical idiom, accompanies these montages, underscoring the gravitas of their mission of placing Anne in the historical context of the Holocaust. (More than one of these videos uses the theme from *Schindler’s List*, composed by John Williams.) Mournful pop songs, such as the instrumental version of “My Heart Will Go On,” the theme from James Cameron’s 1997 film *Titanic*, is also a common choice, most likely for its evocation of historical tragedy, tragic lovers, as well as its resonance with Anne’s wish to “live on even after my death.” This and other quotations from the diary, especially “I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are good at heart,” appear in these videos as intertitles or superimposed on images. The frequent quoting of Anne’s desire to live beyond her death both reinforces the memorial nature of these videos and celebrates the broader power of creativity.⁴³

Whereas most tribute videos have simple sound tracks, "Anne Frank 'Speaks' + Holocaust Documentary," posted by Ubuntubird of Tonga in 2007, is unusual in that it includes diary passages in a girl's voiceover instead of relying solely on visual text.⁴⁴ In common with the other Anne Frank photo tributes, this video brings together personal and political history. Ubuntubird conflates the diary's list of anti-Jewish decrees with its account of Margot Frank's call-up notice, thereby invoking the diary's historical value as a means of securing the value of the video itself. "Anne Frank 'Speaks,'" like some of the other videos, also incorporates "Give," one of several short prose pieces Anne wrote while in hiding. (In 1943, she copied these works into a separate book, entitled *Stories and Events from the Annex*.)⁴⁵ In this essay, Anne questions the humanity in the treatment of beggars; in the video, this text becomes a comment on the Holocaust. "It's terrible, really terrible, that people treat each other this way," Anne laments, as images of starving children and prisoners in concentration camps appear. She continues musing about the lack of essential difference between the beggar and the person with money, as the video presents images of the Anne Frank House, thereby evoking the site's commitment to promoting universal human rights and linking Anne with a general message of justice and tolerance. The narration of "Give" ends in mid-essay, with the words "Everyone is born equal," as an image of the monument to the Frank sisters at Bergen-Belsen appears, rooting the notion of Anne as a humanitarian within the context of anti-Semitic violence and the Holocaust. The introduction of Anne's lesser-known work suggests that at least some of these videos are dedicated to calling attention to her authorial voice. At the same time, some of these tribute videos rely on images drawn from adaptations. For example, although Mariliacorreia's 2007 video "Anne Frank Tribute" is described as "Pictures of Anne Frank and her family since she was born in 1929," it includes stills from *Anne no Nikki*.⁴⁶ Mediations across the continuum of indexicality, from photograph to animation, come together in this picture tribute, as they do in other videos that favor incorporating stills from adaptations and miniseries.

A second type of tribute video builds on this blending of mediations by remixing clips from other films about Anne Frank. The favorite source film for these videos appears to be *Anne Frank: The Whole Story*, most

likely because it extends the diary's limited scope of witnessing the Holocaust. These videos frequently rely on the same shots from *The Whole Story* that follow Anne's life after her arrest: Anne's head being shaved, Anne cradling Margot and looking up at the sky, and Anne huddled by an electrified barbed wire fence. Pop music, both sober and upbeat, accompanies these assemblages. HallonFjun92 of Sweden, the creator of numerous popular Anne Frank tribute videos, uses the Gary Jules song "Mad World" in her video, titled "Mad World—Anne."⁴⁷ (This song is used in a number of YouTube videos that call attention to humanitarian crises, both historical and contemporary, notably the genocide in Darfur.) In the Anne Frank tribute video "My Heart Will Go On—Anne," posted in 2007, HallonFjun92 promises to present "the whole Anne Frank story in one video." As the title suggests, it is set to theme song of *Titanic*, sung by Celine Dion.⁴⁸ This video begins with glimpses of a young Anne among her classmates, followed by an overhead shot of leaflets tumbling down over her while walking in the street. Anne is heard saying, in voiceover, "I've decided something. After the war I'm going to live," which articulates the link between the *Titanic* song and HallonFjun92's commitment to endowing Anne and her diary with immortality. The video continues to follow the course of the miniseries—Anne's life in hiding, her romance with Peter, and her death in Bergen-Belsen—before concluding with these texts: "R.I.P. Anne Frank and all of them who died in the Holocaust" and "We'll never forget." HallonFjun92's heart does indeed go on, extending her private adoration of Anne, the diary, and their mediations into the public realm of YouTube. As suggested in earlier mediations of Anne's life and work, her creative capacity confers immortality and greater presence in the world not only upon Anne herself but also upon others inspired by her. It falls upon them to maintain the intended messages of remembrance, creativity, and hope delivered in Anne's name.

A third type of Anne Frank tribute video also remixes film clips but does so in order to expand or focus on particular favorite elements of her story, such as the romance with Peter or the often neglected Margot, who enjoys a small number of fans.⁴⁹ The prolific HallonFjun92 regularly edits clips of *The Whole Story* into narratives of furtive glances, kisses, and turmoil between Anne and Peter. At times, HallonFjun92 explores the

potential of an alternative point of view, such as Peter's longing for Anne, which is depicted in the 2007 video "Anne ♥ Peter: Kiss The Girl," set to the song "Kiss the Girl" recorded by *High School Musical* star Ashley Tisdale.⁵⁰ The video provides numerous images of Anne, many of her turning and smiling, whether cheerfully at a birthday party or wistfully as she stands by the attic window. These many close-ups rely, in turn, on the extensive restaging of photographic portraits of Anne in *The Whole Story*, while also presenting her as a figure worthy of adoration (or at least a kiss). Cut in between these images of Hannah Taylor-Gordon as Anne are shots of Nick Audsley as Peter looking, implicitly, at her; some of the edits are retained from the original miniseries, but others are the vidder's own invention. The repetition of Peter's gaze and its object of attention corresponds to HallonFjun92's description of the narrative: "Peter keep[s] hearing this voice in his head that he should kiss the girl, Anne. . . . That's the story lol. [sic]" Ultimately, Peter gets his wish, as the video closes with Peter and Anne kissing in the attic, freezing them in a pose of everlasting love.⁵¹ HallonFjun92 comments on the video: "Anne and Peter would probably still be in love if they survived the Holocaust . . . so sad! [sic]"

The video's insistence upon romance beyond the limits of what is described in the diary resembles the interventions of fan vidders and writers of fan fiction generally, in which readers rework familiar texts as expressions of their own imaginative engagement with beloved characters in these texts, exploring other potential plots and narrative directions. Like fan fiction, these videos provide Anne Frank vidders with an opportunity to express their love of Anne Frank by reanimating her and making her seem closer, as they participate in what media scholar Henry Jenkins characterizes as a like-minded community of affinity—in this case, a community of Anne Frank devotees.⁵² Vidders enact their sense of empowerment in relation to a text that is often used to encourage their own inspiration and sense of self. Occasionally, this involves departing from the canonical Anne Frank story to create a decidedly fictional version of Anne's life. For example, a 2007 video by YouTube user AnelieseMarieFrank (i.e., Anne's full name) called "What Hurts Most" re-edits *The Whole Story* to narrate a romance between Anne Frank and Fritz Pfeffer.⁵³ Comments posted in response to this video engage the

creative process of exploring the possibilities of Anne's romantic life beyond Peter. Some commenters appreciate the video's unusual imagination of Anne's romantic life, while others ask why AnnelieseMarie-Frank didn't focus on the young man named Hello, a romantic interest of Anne's prior to her life in hiding, who appears in the ABC miniseries. Other videos offer alternative endings to Anne's life in an effort to provide some measure of happiness for Anne and fan alike. HallonFjun92's 2007 video "Somebody Help Me: Anne" envisions a happier outcome for Anne by combining footage from *The Whole Story* and another film, *The Fine Art of Love: Mine Ha-Ha*. This 2005 feature, directed by John Irvin, stars Hannah Taylor-Gordon in a story of lesbian longings in a girls' school. HallonFjun92's use of *The Fine Art of Love* is likely due to the presence of the same actress in both this film and *The Whole Story*, as shots of longing and devotion centered on Taylor-Gordon provide material for the video's adoring depiction of Anne, which is described as follows: "Anne Frank survived the war. She lost her memory and moved to Italy to start a new life in a public school. Slowly she gets her memories back, all of her memories from the camps. In the end she gets her happy memories back too:)." ⁵⁴ The comments on "Somebody Help Me" are positive, most responders expressing wishes that Anne had survived. One exception, Joyann1, writes, "if she had survived[,] her diary wouldn't have been so famous"—a debatable point, given Anne's ambitions. At the same time, this comment speaks to the problematic nature of this adulation, for it is not the actual Anne but the multiple mediations of her life that foster the love and adulation.

There is precedent for the discussion engendered by this video. Philip Roth's 1979 novella *The Ghost Writer*, which was adapted for the PBS drama series *American Playhouse* in 1984, also entertains an alternate history for Anne Frank. Roth's protagonist (and literary alter ego), the budding writer Nathan Zuckerman (Mark Linn-Baker), fantasizes that Amy Bellette (Paulette Smit)—a college student he meets in the late 1950s at the New England home of an older writer, E. I. Lonoff (Sam Wanamaker)—is, in fact, Anne Frank, who has survived the war incognito. She cannot reveal her true identity, however; having read the diary and seen the stage adaptation, she has become aware of her own sanctified status: the world needs her to have suffered and died. At the same

time, Zuckerman imagines marrying Amy/Anne, believing that doing so would protect him from accusations of Jewish self-hatred, in response to unflattering portraits of American Jewish life in his own fiction. In the face of these attacks, Anne Frank would be the "ultimate trophy wife."⁵⁵

Through this fantasy, Roth considers the implications of fetishizing Anne, who in the early postwar years had already become so burdened with meanings that extended beyond the actual girl that they threatened to leave her behind. Much like the creators of Anne Frank tribute videos, Roth is drawn to earlier mediations of Anne's life (the published diary and the Broadway play), but instead of iterating and elaborating their devotion to her, he interrogates, among other issues, their reliance on her death in order to maintain the value of Anne and her testimony.

* * *

In order to manage the shift from written text to moving image, the films, television programs, and videos that mediate Anne Frank's life and work draw on a range of authorizing mechanisms to ensure the continued presence of both the witness and her testimony. While the diary is prominent among these devices, it is remarkable how many other mechanisms these media works entail. Anne's authority is derived not only from her authorship but also from her position as a witness to the Holocaust, a position expressed less through the diary than through media works that place her testimony alongside the camera as witness to the Holocaust. Moreover, as time passes and images of Anne's life proliferate, these mediations themselves supply the authorizing mechanisms, providing icons (photographs of Anne, the Anne Frank House) and conventions of representation (Anne's authorial voice through voiceover, the door to the Annex as portal to Anne's life and work) that secure their own legitimacy. To continue the work of mediating testimony, films and television programs provide instruction on the expected response of moral and creative transformation and thereby also set tacit limits regulating proper engagement with Anne Frank. Even the comic engagements with Anne, despite their attempts at edginess, rely on a recognition of Anne's iconic status. Notwithstanding the extent and variety of Anne Frank tribute videos, they share a common impulse to engage the diary as transformative testimony. Like the earlier films

and telecasts that they revisit and rework, these videos position Anne as witness and reinforce established expectations that encounters with her are inspirational. Following the lessons learned from earlier mediations, the creators of these videos have identified with Anne, idolized her, and become creative artists themselves through their engagements with her—or more precisely, with the many mediations of her life, from her diary to the latest film.