

- Fleischman Bernays, D. (Undated, circa 1915). *Philosophy and menthol*. Essay/nonfiction. Unpublished manuscript. 1072-77-M211. Papers at Schlesinger Library, Harvard University.
- Fleischman Bernays, D. (1946). *The mother who lost her no*. Unpublished childrens book manuscript. 1072-77-M211. Papers at Schlesinger Library, Harvard University.
- Fleischman Bernays, D. (1955). *A wife is many women*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Reviewed by: Professor Robert E. Brown, Salem State College, Massachusetts

For the young feminist, discouragement was not her ruling humour ? not the first woman the U.S. State Department permitted to use her maiden name ? and not her husbands ? on her passport (the couple married in 1922). Not the ardent feminist who graduated from a cub reporter on the Tribs womans page to invest her professional life fighting for social and economic justice for women. Not the best-selling author of *A wife is many women* (1955) or the distinguished honouree of Women in Communications. But over the years, Fleischman did seem to be ruled by compromise, if not resignation.

The Jewish Encyclopedia even discredits the apparent feminist moxie of Fleischmans insisting on having her maiden name on her passport. The alternative and non-heroic explanation is that Bernays, ever the eager publicist, saw the opportunity to make headlines with his wifes apparently revolutionary feminist act, and in fact the headlines followed.

?Philosophy and menthol, among Fleischmans papers, is a profile of a gentleman from India whom Fleischman interviewed after watching him regale a crowd on a street corner in New York. In her story, she describes him as a compelling speaker who alternately instructed and scolded his rapt audience to disabuse them about the myths he believed they harboured about India, and Indian women particularly. Far from backward and retiring, the speaker insisted, women served on special grand juries and funded a medical college for women. The ?menthol in the story was what Fleischman characterises as an absurd anti-climax to the street-speakers oration. Finishing his harangue, he turned street hawker, offering tubes of menthol for sale. Fleischman seems to have bought the speakers advocacy of women, as well as a tube of his menthol.

In 1946, Edward Bernays sent his wifes manuscript of a childrens book to the Child Study Association of America, quite possibly one of his many clients. The 42-page manuscript is a charming moral fable about one Lilabelle Jones whose mother gives her a most unusual wedding gift: a golden No. She cautions Lilabelle not use it too often. But when Lilabelle loses her No, chaos rules the Jones household until she rediscovers it.

As for Fleischmans career trajectory, she herself seems to have lost her No, one surmises, almost as soon as she married the charismatic Mr. Bernays. Beginning her ascent as a blue stocking, ardent, independently-minded, fearless feminist, she appears to have lost her mojo to become the somewhat passive, ambivalent factotum of a powerful and egotistic husband who opportunistically created and orchestrated Fleischmans feminist ideology.

In *A wife is many women*, she wrestles with the personal and professional issues that surround her 60-year, daily partnership with her clearly more powerful husband. (In a special issue, *Time* named Edward Bernays as one of the 20th centurys 100 most influential people.) Fleischman writes in *AWIMW*, Continuous contiguity of twenty-four hour partnership has made me depend on his presence. Being so used to someone is good. It is also crippling.

For the historian of public relations, Doris Fleischman Bernays offers a fascinating, multi-faceted case study of a womans role in the spawning of modern public relations. Feminist historians and other interpreters will find plenty of evidence to support the ardent feminist and PR pioneer or her shadow self, the passive, conflicted surrogate employee of a powerful husband. In her later years, Fleishman at last decided to take her husbands name because, she said, she had grown weary of explanations.

What may be the most interesting dimension of the Fleischman question is seen in her own ambivalence, and the ambiguity of her career. Fleischmans private and public struggles for legitimacy reflect the same dualities inherent in public relations itself, from its dubious and shape-shifting origins in modern times (propagandist or pro-democratic counsellor), all the way back to its conflicted source in Aristotles bold promotional programme of rhetoric and Platos dismissal of most rhetoric as sophistry.

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