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# Anne, Martin, Emmett, and Harriet: Plays About Anne Frank and Historical African American Personages

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# ANNE, MARTIN, EMMETT, AND HARRIET: PLAYS ABOUT ANNE FRANK AND HISTORICAL AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSONAGES

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## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my parents, Russell Fred Scheidegger and Elaine Carmina Menendez Scheidegger. My father, a man of acceptance, embraced me for who I was. My mother, a first-generation American citizen, was influenced by her father's progressive advice in the 1930s that "girls could do anything boys could do." This was the refrain of my childhood.

I also dedicate this work to the memory of my undergraduate advisor at Baldwin-Wallace University. Mary Ann (M.A.) Fruth, PhD also known as "Doc." She was the epitome of a strong female academic, earning a doctorate when it was unusual for women. Her guidance and wisdom have been invaluable. I also thank the entire educational community for their support and influence throughout my journey.

To my daughters, Connie and Hope, this dissertation was almost thirty years in the making; you have been with me the whole way. My grandsons, Elijah and Ezra, are new to the scene. Grandsons, the history in this document is everyone's history.

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Martin, Emmett, and Harriet's messages continue to resonate, a testament to the enduring value of your work.

## ABSTRACT

ANNE, MARTIN, EMMETT, AND HARRIET: PLAYS ABOUT ANNE FRANK AND HISTORICAL AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSONAGES

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Anne Frank is linked to her contemporaries in about 80% of 18 English-language published and produced plays. The remaining plays pair Frank and African American icons Harriet Tubman, Emmett Till, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Research on dramatic literature with Frank as a character, the writing of plays linking her with African American personages, or history, analysis, or comparison of the process of multiple plays about Frank does not exist. A few articles extant compare the Goodrich and Hackett play with the Kesselman rewrite, a dissertation on five plays about Frank (those five plays are in the 80% mentioned earlier). The central question of this dissertation is why the playwrights of *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*, and *Letters from Anne and Martin* unite Anne Frank and African American historical figures. What were the playwrights' intentions with this linkage, and how were they fulfilled? This dissertation intends to fill this research gap in theatre history. The playwrights were interviewed using a prepared questionnaire completed by mail, email, telephone, or Zoom to discover the reason(s) for writing the three works. The writers answered using their preferred methods, and results were compiled within the work's question/answer format. Articles and the playwrights' websites were mined for additional historical data about the works and writers. The research found the plays to be works of remembrance/cultural trauma written by playwrights who shared seminal experiences regarding Anne Frank and the African American

icons. The writers were driven by intense feelings of social justice, inspiring their creative works. These playwrights used Anne Frank, Harriet Tubman, Emmett Till, and Martin Luther King Jr. to communicate their thematic messages of social justice. They urged their audiences to keep these icons' history from repeating itself and honor those entities. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA (https://aura.antioch.edu/) and OhioLINK ETD Center (https://etd.ohiolink.edu).

*Keywords*: African Americans, fine arts, holocaust studies, literature, minority and ethnic groups, performing arts, theater, theater history, theater studies.

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# CHAPTER I: OVERVIEW

## Introduction and Background

My interest in this study originated from nearly 50 years of continuing encounters with *The Diary of Anne Frank* on bookshelves, screen, stage, and the Doubleday published version as a seven-year-old. I continued to encounter Anne Frank in film and television. In high school, I discovered Anne Frank on the stage in the pages of the Goodrich and Hackett play in Drama class.

From this background, as an undergraduate and graduate theatre student, my interest developed into exploring others' creation of plays using Anne Frank as a character. This interest has expanded into this study, the general purposes of which are to record, analyze, and interpret the historical development of three specific Anne Frank plays: *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*, and *Letters from Anne and Martin*. In only three of eighteen published and produced English-language plays, her character is paired with a character based on an African American historical personage. *Letters from Anne and Martin* (2013) pairs her with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* (2021), Emmett Till is the African American historical character. Finally, Harriet Tubman is the eponymous Harriet of *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* (2005). In the other fifteen plays, Anne Frank's character is written interacting with characters of her race. Eleven Anne Frank works keep Anne's character with the hidden individuals of the Secret Annex. Three Anne Frank plays place Anne using temporal travel to interact with individuals of only her race. A single play, Cynthia Mercati's *The Strength of Our Spirit: The Vision of Anne Frank*, references her as an unseen character, using her name, situation, and life experience in her own time and place with her contemporaries (1998). My research question is, why partner Anne Frank with an African American historical personage?

Anne Frank (1929–45), a young German Jew, was forced into hiding in Holland with her family under the Third Reich. She and the rest of the occupants of the hiding place were deported to concentration camps when they were found after two years of successful hiding, during which she reflected on her life in her diary. Anne Frank's diary became available in the United States in 1947. Her father, Otto Frank, the group's only survivor, had it translated into English. Doubleday published the diary in 1952. This 1952 publication is the one that many students study in junior high or high school. There are three versions of Frank's diary: an "a" version with many references to sexuality deleted and some of Anne's observations censored by her father; a "b" version, in which she uses pseudonyms for the people of the Secret Annex, and the individuals who helped those in hiding; and a "c" version containing all three "diaries," with supplementary materials about those who helped the Franks, Van Pels, and Pfeffer hide articles on the Frank family, and an examination and documentation of Anne Frank's handwriting proving the integrity of her authorship.

The three African American historical personages with whom Anne Frank is paired in the plays considered here come from historical periods with rich, selected historical events to note. American history also has African American/Jewish relations incidents, germane to the study and parallel the character duos.

The first personage paired with Frank is Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–68): Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Civil Rights activist and Baptist minister known for non-violent protests. The Civil Rights Movement is synonymous with the name of MLK, Jr.

Interestingly, during Freedom Summer 1964, half of the young people who marched were Jewish (*A Brief History of Jews and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s*). The noteworthy historical events for Martin Luther King Jr. include the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, the 1963

March on Washington, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. He was elected the first Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) president. American Jews helped to fund and found the SCLC. The organization was open to anyone, regardless of race or religion (*SCLC History*). Leaders in the Reform Movement were arrested with him in 1964. Rabbi Heschel went with Dr. King on the Selma March in 1965 (*A Brief History of Jews and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s*). The last two significant acts in Dr. King's life, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, were both worked on in a room in the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism by the Leadership Conference (*A Brief History of Jews and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s*).

The second historical individual paired with Anne Frank in *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* was Emmett Till (1941–55). He was born in Chicago during Martin Luther King's lifetime. Fourteen-year-old Till visited relatives in the South during the Jim Crow era. His visit ended in his fatal beating and mutilation when he was wrongly accused of flirting with a white woman. His mother's decision to display his body at his funeral helped ensure that his death was regarded as a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement.

Jim Crow laws were a series of state and local ordinances that enforced racial segregation put in place during the Reconstruction period after the Civil War (1861–65). Jim Crow laws were in force in the United States until 1965. A critically important court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), ruled that separate but equal treatment regarding racial segregation was legal. In 1954, *Brown v. The Board of Education, Topeka*, ruled that the racial segregation of children in public schools was illegal. The NAACP was founded in 1909 by W. E. B. DuBois, Henry Moscowitz, and others to fight the separate but equal Jim Crow laws (*NAACP*). The NAACP was aided in its foundation and funding by American Jews (*A Brief History of Jews and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s*).

From 1966 to 1975, the Vice-Chair of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Kivie Kaplan, was the NAACP president (*A Brief History of Jews and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s*).

The final historical African American personage featured in an Anne Frank play is Harriet Tubman (1822–1913). The events of significance in Tubman's life are the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the Raid on Harper's Ferry (1859), the Raid on Combahee Ferry (1863), and the Civil War (1861–65). Tubman was born into slavery in Maryland.

She escaped to Philadelphia at 27 years old. Tubman returned to free family members. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 required that escaped enslaved individuals be returned to their enslaver. Consequently, enslaved individuals who had escaped southern states for the northern states were in danger of being returned to slavery. Bounties were put on escaped enslaved individuals' heads; therefore, northern states were not a distant enough destination. Canada became the place of safety to avoid fugitive slave recapture. Tubman met John Brown in 1858. She helped him plan and recruit people for the October 16–18, 1859 Raid on Harper's Ferry. John Brown, five African Americans, including some enslaved men, sixteen white men, and John Brown's son, took over a federal armory at Harper's Ferry to create a stronghold and gateway to the South. They fought the South's Colonel Robert E. Lee and Lieutenant Jeb Stuart and lost. John Brown and the six surviving fighters were condemned to death.

Tubman was a significant player in the raid on Combahee Ferry (1863). She had been a cook, a nurse, a scout, and a spy during the Civil War (1861–65). She was active during this raid in the low country of South Carolina on June 1 and 2 of 1863. The combatants were to remove mines from the river, destroy plantations, and free enslaved people. In the raid, Tubman and others freed nearly 800 enslaved people.

During the Civil War, Jewish people were affected yet metamorphosed. Like everyone else in this country, North and South alike, everyone, including Jews, had to choose sides. One rabbi chose a side. Rabbi David Einhorn decided that slavery was wrong and decried it from his podium. Rioters targeted him, his printing press was ruined, and he was forced to leave his home forever. He still fought for equality for people in terms of race and ethnicity (Litvak).

The metamorphosis came in after choosing sides. Areas of involvement or engagement that did not exist before the war now opened. According to Dr. Jonathan Karp, executive director of the American Jewish Historical Society, quoted in a press release from the Yeshiva University Museum, the Civil War was transformative for Jews in the United States. "The Civil War was the first opportunity presented to Jews in large numbers to participate fully in American life. It was the war that let Jews demonstrate their belonging and membership," he said. "The Civil War battleground gave the same Jews the opportunity to perform numerous services – as soldiers, nurses, running patriotic fairs, being spies, also doing something very traditional – peddling" (YUMuseum).

Unfortunately, for both Jews and African Americans, they both continued to share things in common after the Civil War. Both groups shared overt discrimination and prejudice in various forms, especially in the media and popular culture. These conditions required the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to be formed by September 1913. Sigmund Livingston, the first president, formed the ADL. Leo Frank, a Jewish pencil factory manager, was dragged out of his jail cell and killed by a lynch mob. The mob believed he raped and murdered a young teenage girl who worked at the factory he managed. Crude stereotypes and objectionable and vulgar references in the media stirred up the lynch mob (*Our Mission and History*). During World War I, training manuals made slanderous references to Jews. The ADL was triumphant in prompting the disposal of the booklets

for U.S. Army use (*Our Mission and History*). The ADL battled the Ku Klux Klan and its violence in the 1920s. The Klan targeted businesses and homes owned and run by Jews (*Our Mission and History*). In the 1950s, the ADL filed the amicus brief for *Brown v. The Board of Education*, the Supreme Court case for school desegregation (*Our Mission and History*). Klan membership decreased when the ADL helped six states and fifty communities ban wearing masks while demonstrating. This way, it was more difficult for the Ku Klux Klan to persecute individuals anonymously (*Our Mission and History*). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and The Fair Housing Act of 1968 were supported by the ADL and helped their passage (*Our Mission and History*).

**Description of the Problem**

Since the 1947 publication of Anne Frank's diary in America, the writing and production of Anne Frank plays have appeared each decade. In the six decades since Anne Frank's diary was published, one or more English-language Anne Frank plays have been published and produced. There are eighteen published and produced plays in English with Anne Frank as a character. The works include Meyer Levin's *Anne Frank*, Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett's *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Grigory Frid's *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and Enid Futterman's *Yours, Anne*. Cherie Bennett's *Anne Frank and Me*, Bernard Kops' *Dreams of Anne Frank*, Sue Saunders and Cecily O'Neill's *In Holland Stands a House*, Cynthia Mercati's *The Strength of Our Spirit*, James Still's *And Then They Came for Me*, Anita Yellin Simmons', *Goodbye Memories*, Wendy Kesselman's rewrite of Goodrich and Hackett's *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Futterman's *I Am Anne Frank*, Alix Sobler's *The Secret Annex*, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*, Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler's *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*, Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner's *Letters from Anne and Martin*, Rinne Groff's *Compulsion Or the House Behind*, and Whitbourn and Challenger's choral work, *Annelies*. Of particular interest are three

works with a concept in common: Anne Frank's character is paired with an African American historical personage. These three plays are *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*, and *Letters from Anne and Martin*.

While one or more English-language Anne Frank plays have been published or produced in each of the six decades since Anne Frank's diary was published in 1947, plays featuring the three African American historical personages, Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman, and Emmett Till, have not seemed to evolve at a similar rate.

A Google search produced 14 published and produced plays, including children's theatre about Martin Luther King Jr. These plays' publication dates ranged from 1987 to 2023. An Amazon search added six more published plays about King in the same period. A consultation of WorldCat, the world's most extensive library catalog, added 36 plays to the count. One must then enlarge the period searched for by Google from 1969 to 2023. However, it is necessary to remember that Google searches only give information about selected productions rather than scripts. Many of the play scripts in WorldCat are drama scripts for classroom use and reader's theatre rather than for professional theatre production use.

A Google search produced 18 published and produced plays, including children's theatre about Harriet Tubman. These plays' publication dates ranged from 1935 to 2023. A 20-page Amazon search added eight more published plays about Tubman in the same period. Consulting WorldCat, 96 plays are added to the count. One must then enlarge the period from 1935 to 2012, but remember that Google searches only give information about selected productions rather than scripts. Many of the play scripts in WorldCat were drama scripts for classroom use and readers' theatre rather than professional theatrical use. Four plays of the search results had been seen before in the Amazon search.

A final Google search resulted in 18 published and produced plays, including living history presentations about Emmett Till. These plays' publication dates ranged from 1986 to 2022. An Amazon search resulted in 1 published play by Janet Langhart Cohen. If one consults WorldCat, one play published in 2000 will be added. Oddly, there were no play scripts for classroom use about Emmett Till, while there were comparatively more for Tubman and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The exploration of earlier studies and literature around Anne Frank plays did not yield much that deals with all the published plays or analyzes the portrayal of Anne Frank's character in any play. Melnick and Graver had authored books that dealt with the artistic and ethical struggles among Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, Otto Frank, and Meyer Levin as they adapted Anne's diary. Levin wrote of his "obsession" with Anne Frank in his 1973 book *The Obsession*, published by Simon and Schuster. Levin's self-published 1972 *Anne Frank: A Play* was rejected for commercial consumption. No organized and obtainable articles, interviews, or books dealt with Futterman's, Kops', Still's, and Mercati's plays, to name a few of the Anne Frank plays. I did find information about the Kesselman rewrite of the Goodrich and Hackett *Diary of Anne Frank*. Cynthia Ozick's "Who Owns Anne Frank?" did not deal with the eighteen published and produced Anne Frank plays. Ozick contended that it might have been better had the diary been lost because the evil world has made the diary all things to all people, "some of them true" (87). Skloot's 1998 article "A Multiplicity of Annes" in *The Nation* only discussed Kops' and Goodrich and Hackett's plays. Any theses or dissertations concerning Anne Frank dealt only with her diary and her historical persona, often the Goodrich and Hackett play or the Kesselman rewrite, usually few if any of the other works or merely superficially engaged the topic.

I proposed to chronicle, analyze, interpret, and compare the historical development of those three Anne Frank plays and the development of her character in each play. No consideration has been given to studying the eighteen published and produced plays as a group. No study has been devoted to the history, analysis, and interpretation of the writing /creation of Anne Frank plays, resulting in conclusions about their genesis and the development of the Anne Frank characters in each of the eighteen plays. No extant study compares the characters of Anne Frank in the extant eighteen published and produced plays in English. Additionally, no work chronicled, analyzed, interpreted, or compared the playwriting process of the three plays about Anne Frank in which her character is paired with African American personages to discover why the playwrights linked the character duos. Therefore, there was a definite need for this study to deal with the specific aims of point four in theatre history and literature.

**Method and Procedure**

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, it was necessary to (1) research the writing and selected production histories of the three unique Anne Frank plays pairing Anne Frank with African American personages: *Letters from Anne and Martin* conceived by Hannah Vaughn and further developed by Alexandra Gellner; *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* by Janet Langhart Cohen; and *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* by Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler; (2) analyze those interviews, articles, and historical studies which included each playwright or playwright pair's process; (3) interpret the historical material gathered to determine events and conditions that might have induced those playwrights to create Anne Frank plays; (4) analyze the character of Anne Frank and the African American figures in each of the plays; and (5) compare the three plays' portrayals of the Anne Frank character. The methods of research are described below.

Reviews, magazines, journal and newspaper articles, Internet webpages, and books about Anne Frank and Anne Frank plays were used to establish the history of the three Anne Frank plays. Due to its single-event production history, Friedman-Adler and Pittman supplied selected production materials for *Harriet and Anne*. Ample production history materials were available for *Letters from Anne and Martin* from the Internet and the Anne Frank Center USA before turning to the playwrights. *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* has an extensive website. She also has an equally considerable professional website. Her book, *Anne Frank & Emmett Till: Why I Wrote the Play Anne & Emmett*, will not be available until May 2025. I had intended to use Cohen's book instead of an interview with the playwright. I made numerous protracted attempts to contact Cohen through her personal Facebook, professional websites, and publisher (by US mail). She did not respond to any inquiries. Due to her lack of responsiveness, I used articles about Cohen and previously published interviews to construct her playwright "interview" information.

Following the chronological arrangement and analyses of the historical background and interview materials, it was necessary to read extensively about Holocaust plays and the portrayal of Jews in dramatic literature. This reading formed a backdrop for discussing the portrayal of Anne Frank as a Jew in the plays.

The interview method was a semi-structured interview in which the same set of interview questions was asked of each playwright. The appendix to this document contains the twenty questions that were used in the interview. Additional questions were asked of the playwright about whether the responses required clarification. Interviews were completed by phone, email, and Zoom; the playwrights responded using the method they desired. Laurie Friedman-Adler spoke for the playwrighting duo of *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*. She replied in the form of

an email questionnaire. Deborah Pittman deferred to her co-author, Friedman-Adler, and only spoke briefly to me on the phone as we introduced ourselves. Alexandra Gellner spoke for the playwrighting pair of *Letters from Anne and Martin*. She held a Zoom meeting interview with me and periodically emailed me. Hannah Vaughn, the other half of the playwrighting pair of *Letters from Anne and Martin*, spoke with me during a Zoom meeting about their joint venture. I did not interview Janet Langhart Cohen of *Anne & Emmett*. I was unable to contact her through any media attempts. Her website, previously published interviews, and articles about Cohen were consulted. Complete playwright interview questions appear in Appendix 2. All interviewees were asked the same questions, but some did not answer them as entirely or methodically as Friedman-Adler did.

**Definition of Terms**

Five essential terms are defined as they pertain to this work:

*Anne Frank Plays*: dramatic works in which Anne Frank appears as a character or her literature, her likeness, or her life events figure significantly.

*Holocaust Drama*: a play that references or is impacted by the Holocaust in any area, including plotline, characters, and setting.

*Holocaust*: From 1933 to 1945 in Europe, Hitler's Third Reich, under which more than six million Jews, Roma, Disabled, Gays, and other "undesirable" were systematically rounded up, incarcerated, and destroyed by governmental order.

*Cultural Trauma*: occurs when individuals in a particular group experience a terrifying and traumatic situation/event that perpetually affects the group members emotionally, psychologically, and physically and their descendants even after the termination of the initial situation/event.

*Literary Memorials*: are stories that remember a big historical crisis through their subject matter and how they are told.

**Principal Sources of Data**

The principal sources of data for this study included the three unique Anne Frank plays pairing Anne Frank with African American personages: *Letters from Anne and Martin*, conceived by Hannah Vaughn and further developed by Alexandra Gellner; *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*; and *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* by Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler. The principal data sources for examining the Anne Frank plays included published articles and reviews about the plays and the completed interviews/questionnaires from the playwrights. Sometimes, interviews were the primary sources of desired information.

Data sources for *Letters from Anne and Martin* included emails, interviews with Gellner and Vaughn, and the Anne Frank Center USA website. Primary sources for the play included Anne Frank's diary and *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (King). An internet search of the play's title yielded a partial production history. I approached these playwrights by phone and email, and they were amenable to interviews by telephone, email, and mail.

The data sources for *Anne & Emmett* included Cohen's professional website and her *Anne & Emmett* website. A partial production history was also achievable with an internet search for the play's title. I approached this playwright by email, US mail, her professional website, her X (formerly known as Twitter) account, and her publisher. She is publishing a book due out in November 2025 called *Anne Frank & Emmett Till: Why I Wrote the Play Anne & Emmett*. The original publication date was to be November 2024.

The sources of data for *Harriet and Anne* were as follows. I had begun talking and emailing with the playwrights. The play has been produced once. The playwrights released a copy of the

script to me. They were amenable to speaking to me by phone or email and being interviewed. They did not release any other production materials to me as we moved forward.

The Institutional Review Boards of Union Institute & University and Antioch University approved the study before I interviewed the playwrights. This process included consent forms and playwright sample questionnaires. Playwrights had a choice of interview methods, including Zoom meetings, phone calls, email, and U.S. mail. Except for Janet Langhart Cohen, they all responded to me via Zoom, email, and phone calls at various points while writing this dissertation.

Other sources of Anne Frank information for this study included the most recent, unexpurgated version of the Frank Diary (which consists of all three versions of the diary). Books about Anne Frank and older Anne Frank plays that were used as sources of background data included *Anne Frank: Reflections on Her Life and Legacy*, Graver's *An Obsession with Anne Frank*, *The Stolen Legacy of Anne Frank* by Ralph Melnick, Melissa Muller's biography, *Anne Frank*, and Francine Prose's *Anne Frank: The Book, the Life, the Afterlife*, which came out in 2009, discusses diary revisions, attacks on the diary, and teaching of the diary. Robert Skloot's "A Multiplicity of Annes" and Meyer Levin's *The Obsession* were also consulted.

Sources for Holocaust drama included prefaces and forewords written by Skloot and Fuchs and Isser's *Stages of Annihilation*. The areas involving the portrayal of Jewish characters were covered in Schiff's *From Stereotype to Metaphor: The Jew in Contemporary Drama* and Harley Erdman's *Staging the Jew*. The study developed to its present form through acquaintance with literature relevant to the study, investigation into pertinent historical materials, and playwright interviews.

**Organization of the Study**

The present chapter covers the introduction and background, describes the problem, states the research question, outlines the method and procedure, defines terms, discusses the principal sources of data, explains the study's organization, defines the study's limitations, and discusses earlier research. This chapter also examines the literature on critical elements of the research question: Why pair Anne Frank with African American historical figures? Additionally touched upon are the works' thematic concepts and the playwrights' intent, and was it achieved?

This second chapter covers the history of *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* by Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler. As narrated, this is a music and dance piece. A woman time-travels while touring Mystic Seaport, Connecticut. Her stops include the Discovering *Amistad* tour, where she becomes a passenger; the *Gerda II*; and the Touro Synagogue. She also sees Anne Frank and is on a stop on the Underground Railroad with Harriet Tubman. This chapter also analyzed the data from the playwrights' interviews and uncovered the historical events and conditions that prompted the writing of the work. Also discussed in Chapter Two is the playwrights' intent and achievement of that intent in their play, as well as the work's thematic concept.

Chapter III involves *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*. *Anne & Emmett* is a five-character non-musical or "straight" play. *Anne & Emmett* meet in "Memory" when people remember them. He and Anne want people to remember them forever. This chapter analyzed the playwright's interview data and discovered the historical events and conditions that prompted the writing of the work. I also comment on Cohen's intent and achievement of it in her play in addition to her work's thematic concept.

The fourth chapter discussed *Letters from Anne and Martin*, conceived by Hannah Vaughn and further developed by Alexandra Gellner. This two-character play juxtaposes Anne Frank and Martin Luther King Jr. in dialogue about peace and unity. This chapter analyzed the playwrights' interview data and uncovered the historical events and conditions that prompted their writing of the work. Additionally, Chapter Four commented on the playwrights' intent, accomplishment of their intent in the piece of dramatic literature, and the play's theme.

The fifth chapter discussed these three works as expressions of remembrance/cultural trauma combinations. Specific character portrayals, dialogue, and stage direction elements in each Anne Frank play supported this discussion. Troizier-Cheyne's definition and discussion of literary memorials in her essay, "A Nation of the Nationless: Literary Memorials and Imagining Identity in Response to the Shoah," assisted in my making my case that the works are plays of remembrance. Eyerman, Rigney, Smelser, and Menakem's articles helped to form the basis for considering cultural trauma and its impact on the plays. Cultural trauma happens when people in a particular group experience a terrifying and traumatic situation/event that continues to affect the group members emotionally, psychologically, and physically and their descendants long after the original occurrence.

Chapter VI summarized the study of the Anne Frank plays and their history. It included analyses of the events and conditions surrounding the dramatic works. This chapter also outlined the examination of the character of Anne Frank in those three plays. A summary of the playwrights' intent and achievement is also included, in addition to commenting on the works' themes. Recommendations for further research were made. These ideas included additional trope exploration, similar studies of other historical characters, and character comparisons of Anne Frank with another character.

The statement of the general purpose of the study made certain limitations inevitable. The plays forming the basis of the examination had to be those that used Anne Frank, her character, her likeness, her life experiences, or her body of literature, pairing her with an African American personage. Those personages were limited to Martin Luther King, Jr., Emmett Till, and Harriet Tubman. It was not an exhaustive study of plays using those historical individuals as characters. Neither was it a thorough study of dramatic literature in which Anne Frank is paired with a historical personage. The Anne Frank plays in the study were limited to those produced and published in English or translated into English works. This dissertation was neither a complete study of the eighteen published and produced Anne Frank plays in English nor a survey of all Holocaust plays. This work explored the portrayal of Anne Frank's character as a Jew, not necessarily the portrayal of other Jewish characters in American dramatic literature.

**Previous Research**

Current and extant dissertations concerning Anne Frank did not chronicle, analyze, or interpret all eighteen published and produced Anne Frank plays, nor did they explore the character portrayals of Anne Frank in them. Marcia Sachs Littell's 1990 dissertation, *The Anne Frank Institute of Philadelphia, the First Interfaith Holocaust Education Center: A Critique of Its Educational Philosophy and History: 1975-1988*, examined the history of the Anne Frank Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Karen Shawn's 1991 dissertation, *The End of Innocence: Anne Frank and the Holocaust*, later published in 1989 and again in 1994, discussed using diary excerpts and other non-Anne Frank material to teach adolescents about the Holocaust. Judith Olson of Texas A&M University created a whole language alternative approach for English lessons, using the Anne Frank diary, detailed in her 1991 dissertation. For his 1993 dissertation, Michael Angell wrote a symphony based on his visit to the Anne Frank Museum in Amsterdam. The 1994

dissertation of Frances Johnson detailed the role of stance in a sub-genre of non-fiction for junior high remedial readers of Frank's diary. Alex Sagan's 1998 dissertation discussed the popularity of the Goodrich and Hackett play and their movie based on Anne Frank's diary. Sagan dealt only with the 50s. He briefly mentioned only Levin's play and discussed no other Anne Frank play.

The 1998 dissertation of Marion Bishop of New York University was called *Witnessing Resistance in the Diaries of Mary Perkes, Alice James, and Anne Frank*. Bishop wrote nothing about the plays based on Anne Frank's diary but discussed the diary as a form of resistance against involuntary confinement. Barbara Molette's 1989 dissertation asked three questions about play scripts written or adapted for commercial television: *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Sticks and Bones*, and *Wedding Band*. What devices captured viewers' immediate attention? Which devices held the viewer through the program and commercials? Moreover, did the structure of the teleplay reinforce the commercial messages? Her work did not discuss any Anne Frank stage plays or their creation.

Allan Kurtz Longacre's 1961 *The Production Book of the Diary of Anne Frank* at the University of Iowa covered a single production at the university. Ruthlynn Reeves, from the University of Louisville, wrote another master's thesis about a specific production of the Goodrich and Hackett play in 1973. In 1987, Stanley Kyzer composed a master's thesis about his *The Diary of Anne Frank* production at the University of Nevada at Reno's summer theatre. He also discussed the believability of his actors' portrayals.

Gary Bossin wrote a 1980 dissertation on the life of Meyer Levin. He briefly detailed Levin's struggle with Otto Frank and others over Levin's adaptation. Katherine Bischoping mentioned Anne Frank, the person, briefly in her 1995 dissertation called *Papers in Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. In 2005, Nancy Camina's creative doctoral dissertation *Producing the Diary of Anne Frank in the 21st Century* involved directing a Goodrich and Hackett play production.

In the 2000s, we see similar research. A.K. Lehmann compared the written works of Anne Frank and Sophie Scholl. Scholl was an executed young German WWII political activist and member of the White Rose. Her brother Hans had founded the nonviolent resistance organization that handed out anti-war pamphlets at the University of Munich. Lehman called her 2003 dissertation *Only Castles Burning; Spirit Birds of Hope, Freed for Flying: The Diaries and Letters of Anne Frank and Sophie Scholl*.

In 2004, E. Eileen Kuehnle compared Frank to Kuehnle herself in Frank's continual reworkings in Kuehnle's *Diary in a White Room: Anne Frank Rewriting Herself and the Reality of Identity Construction When Private Writing Goes Public*. This document was her master's thesis from Truman State University. Kuehnle's work included a travel journal preface, a brief background of Frank's situation, Frank's impact on the private and public realm, bringing to light the literary success of the diary, and a concise history of journal writing. It explored the absence of scholarly attention to Frank's diary. Kuehnle's thesis compared how Frank changed her representation of herself in her diary.

The other thesis and dissertation research is of the type that chronicles the mounting of a single production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* (usually Kesselman's rewrite as of late) or the playing of a role in productions of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Kiah Kayser's 2017 scenic design thesis, *Discovering the Secrets of the Annex: The Scenic Design*, is analyzing, designing, and implementing an abstract set design for a production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Margaret B. Hayes' 2003 dissertation at Emerson College involved directing a production of James Still's *And Then They Came for Me* at a Providence, Rhode Island school. William Jefferson's Texas A&M 2007 directing dissertation included a theme analysis of Holocaust drama.

It was called *Holocaust Theatre: Directing the Diary of Anne Frank with a Study of Themes in Selected Plays About the Holocaust*. On the acting side, Priscilla Hummel's 2007 thesis chronicled her portrayal of a role in a production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* at Regent University: *Playing Anne Frank: An Actor's Thesis*. As did Mark J. Zillges with his dissertation of the same year at Regent, entitled, *The Diary of Anne Frank: Creating the Role of Otto Frank*. Also, at Regent in 2007, Robbin Paige Sharp's dissertation chronicled her role: *Petronella Van Daan in the Diary of Anne Frank: The Ride of a Lifetime*. All three individuals may have been in the same production. Scott D. Wright's 2016 University of Northern Colorado dissertation concerns acting. It is titled *The Diary of Anne Frank: Portraying a Historical Figure and the Process of Preparing for the Role*.

Darby Kennerly's 2006 master's thesis combined acting and teaching. It was an original living history presentation created from Anne Frank's writings that followed Holocaust scholar Skloot's objectives of Holocaust theatre to teach the Holocaust to eighth graders. Her Missouri State University thesis included her script, primary grade adaptation, a video of her performance, and a performance critique. *Anne Frank: An Educational Performance Piece for Middle School Students* was the title of her thesis.

In the twenty-first century, classrooms are still teaching WWII and the Holocaust using the dramatic version of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, as is shown by these dissertations and theses. In 2002, an ESL curriculum was designed using *The Diary of Anne Frank*. It was implemented at Eastern Washington University for Rebecca L. Adams' master's thesis. The advantages and disadvantages of using the text are discussed; in addition, Adams explored teaching theory, philosophy, and practice around the curriculum and included an ESL literature review. Adams' thesis was designated *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl: An ESL Curriculum Designed,*

*Implemented and Revisited*. An educational CD-ROM was created for Jeanne Camille V. Villegas' 2011 thesis at De La Salle College of St. Benilde, Manila. According to her thesis, the CD-ROM was developed to educate high school students, using the life of Anne Frank, about human development in a manner that would be attractive to young people and expand their knowledge of literature and history. Marie Schellenberger wrote *Teaching The Diary of Anne Frank: Play Version* at The University of Nebraska at Omaha in 2012. The year 2014 saw Lori Ann Corcoran's master's thesis, again concerned with teaching Holocaust literature in a particular method in the classroom and using *The Diary of Anne Frank* as an example. She used Frank's work, not the Goodrich and Hackett play, but her *Tales from the Secret Annex*. Additionally, she suggested the use of some poetry from the children of the Terezin Ghetto in her thesis called *Exploring the Best Approach to Teaching the Diary of Anne Frank and Other Traumatic Texts of Holocaust Literature: A Literary Contribution to the Study of Oppressive History*.

Other dissertations or theses as responses included Carol Lee Worden's 2002 doctoral dissertation, *Beyond the Diary of Anne Frank: American Holocaust Drama*, from the University of Minnesota. The work devotes the first chapter to *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The remaining three chapters are *The Grey Zone*, *The Gate of Heaven*, and "*Degenerate Art*." Also in 2002, Anna Carrington Alvarez wrote about Anne Frank's impact on two other writers' works in her English honors essay, *An Element in the Works of C. K. Williams and Philip Roth*, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Benjamin Alden Reed's novel also considered Anne Frank to be an element. He is now a senior lecturer at Texas State University, interested in surrealism, dream psychology in short fiction, and 20th-century modernism. His Texas State University-San Marcos 2013 dissertation was *The Resurrection of Anne Frank: A Novel*. Danielle van den Hove wrote a 2005 academic master's thesis called *Anne Frank as a Universal Icon of the Holocaust*, which

explored Frank. 2008 saw the master's thesis of Lorna Chisholm from Carleton University, *A Museum with More Than One Stor(e)y: A Critical Examination of the Anne Frank House*. Chisholm posited that by examining the Anne Frank Museum's official publications and the museum itself that there were stories that were told additionally by what it is that is displayed and how; and that stories can be told by analyzing the space in which the artifacts and Anne Frank's narrative were presented.

Jami Rhodes' 2009 dissertation response at Louisiana State University was a performer's guide to someone else's response to Anne Frank's diary. Oskar Morawetz, a Jewish Czech composer and friend of Otto Frank had put a part of Frank's diary to music. Rhodes created a three-part guide with biographical and historical information. The guide included information about Morawetz, Frank, and Hannah Goslar and a dramatic and musical analysis of Morawetz's work. Rhodes' dissertation was called A *Performer's Guide to Oskar Morawetz' from the Diary of Anne Frank*. Her work was a 2009 reaction to Anne Frank's life and work, compared to Ryan White's life. EveMarie Nichole Bessenbach's senior thesis detailed her choreographed dance piece. Her process was documented in *The Power of Hope: Anne Frank and Ryan White Overcoming Hatred* and included a DVD of the dance piece. A 2013 reaction to Anne Frank's diary came from Matthew Glen Childres at East Carolina University. He pulled the works of three Jewish writers together, linking them with a fundamental ethical principle of Judaism forbidding needless destruction. His English thesis was titled *The Impact of Bal Taschit in the Writings of Anne Frank, Primo Levi, and Elie Wiesel*. The Diary of Anne Frank was used as translation material, with five versions in three languages, for a master's thesis on the concept of translation in relation to interpreting. Phumzille Vella's 2016 thesis from the University of Witwatersrand found that various translations

represented the demeanor and character of Anne Frank differently. Vella acknowledged that those translation choices influenced the diary's depiction of power and agency.

Whitney Stalnaker's 2016 doctoral dissertation, *Good at Heart: The Dramatization of the Diary of Anne Frank and Its Influence on American Cultural Perceptions*, covered the detailed history of the Goodrich and Hackett *Diary of Anne Frank*, the Kesselman rewrite, the changing perception of the Jewishness of the characters in those scripts through the advancing years, and the hold of the Anne Frank Foundation on the character of Anne Frank. A brief comment was made on Sobler's *The Secret Annex*, and Stalnaker's work only mentioned *Dreams of Anne Frank* and the Dutch play *Anne*. Anna Jamie Allison Scanlon wrote a 2017 doctoral dissertation at the University of Leicester, *The Image of Anne Frank in Modern Theatre*. In her work, she explored the Goodrich and Hackett play, Kesselman's rewrite and criticism of the two plays, and case studies of the two pieces. An entire chapter detailed her viewing experience of the Dutch play *Anne*. She devoted a chapter to "other plays about Anne Frank." In that chapter, she discussed viewing Bobby Box's unpublished puppet play *Anne Frank Within and Without* and complained that she could not secure a script from the Anne Frank Foundation. *Dreams of Anne Frank* was covered and quoted in the foreword note only. *Anne Frank and Me* was covered and quoted from only the play's afterword notes. *And Then They Came for Me* was covered only by foreword notes from the script. *Compulsion* was covered only by notes from the author at the front of the script.

Scanlon noted she could not get a copy of the produced but unpublished script, *The Idealist*, by Jennifer Strome. Strome wanted to okay what would be published, so Scanlon declined to interview her. With *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett*, Scanlon quoted from the play's YouTube trailer; this was the only comment on the play. Scanlon then covered three unpublished,

original Anne Frank plays: a one-woman show by the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, an original performance by a young man, and a one-woman comedy show called "Anne Frank Superstar."

Non-dissertation/thesis research around Anne Frank and her diary included several television programs, books, and articles, some of which have already been mentioned. Television programs about Anne Frank airing on television and cable included Biography's 1998 "Anne Frank," Arts and Entertainment's *Investigative Reports*' 1998 "Anne Frank: The Missing Pages," and "The Diary of Anne Frank" Echoes from the Past," from the History Channel's *History vs. Hollywood* 2001 series. The following recent texts which examine Anne Frank include the Enzers' 2000 anthology, *Anne Frank: Reflections on Her Life and Legacy*; Lawrence Graver's 1995 book, *An Obsession with Anne Frank*; Melnick's 1997 work, *The Stolen Legacy of Anne Frank*; and Melissa Muller's 1998 biography, *Anne Frank*. Graver's and Melnick's works dealt with Meyer Levin's play and Goodrich and Hackett's play. The Goodrich and Hackett play was briefly mentioned in 1997's *Stages of Annihilation* by Edward Isser and Robert Skloot's 1988 book, *The Darkness We Carry*. Two significant articles discussing the diary, Anne Frank plays, or Anne Frank in the media were the 1997 *New Yorker* article by Cynthia Ozick, "Who Owns Anne Frank?" Robert Skloot's article, "A Multiplicity of Annes," in 1998 in *The Nation*. Skloot reviewed Melissa Muller's biography of Anne Frank, Ozick's article, "Who Owns Anne Frank?" the Goodrich and Hackett play, Kops' play, Bennett's play, and Donald Margulies' play *The Model Apartment*. Gene A. Plunka's 2009 article compared Goodrich and Hackett's play and the Kesselman rewrite to Sachs' *Eli* in *Transcending the Holocaust: Nelly Sachs's Eli and the Stage Version of The Diary of Anne Frank*. *Anne Frank Unbound: Media, Imagination, Memory* (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Shandler, Eds.), published in 2012, had an entire chapter, "Anne Frank from Page to Stage" by Edna Nahshon, in which the Goodrich and Hackett play is discussed. *Anne Frank Unbound* was

broken down into four sections: "Mediating," "Remembering," "Imagining," and "Contesting," and included musicography and videography concerning Anne Frank. The 2015 James Duban article, titled "The Generalization of Holocaust Denial: Meyer Levin William James and the Broadway Production of the Diary of Anne Frank" specifically discussed the downplaying of "Jewishness" in the creation of the play, which lent a "universality" to *The Diary of Anne Frank* drama. The Duban article was germane to the writing of Chapter Five of this dissertation.

One can see that most of the research had little to say about the creation or writing of stage plays using Anne Frank, her diary, or other writings, life events, characters, and likenesses. Most of the work neither recorded, analyzed, or interpreted more than half of the eighteen English language-published and produced Anne Frank plays. However, one can see that the Graver and Melnick books could facilitate discussion of Meyer Levin's and Goodrich and Hackett's contributions. The Ozick and Skloot articles contributed limited information to recording, analyzing, and interpreting the three selected Anne Frank plays. Therefore, it made sense that interviewing the playwrights about their works' creation was a fitting and proper step to gaining information about the specific processes and challenges of writing plays about Anne Frank.

From my research on three Anne Frank plays, I made discoveries. The findings comprised commonalities among the works and the playwrights. Playwright commonalities that impacted the plays' creations included seminal experiences with Anne Frank, the African American personage or both, strong senses of social justice, and cultural traumas. The plays themselves, in addition to being creative works, also served as literary memorials of the cultural traumas of the Holocaust and the Mid-Atlantic slave trade. The playwrights of *Harriet and Anne*, *Anne & Emmett*, and *Letters from Anne and Martin* teamed Anne Frank with Harriet Tubman, Emmett Till, and Martin Luther King, Jr. as literary memorials borne out of cultural traumas particular to each.

## CHAPTER II: HARRIET AND ANNE: AN ORIGINAL NARRATIVE

This second chapter covers the history of *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* by Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler. As narrated, this is a music and dance piece; a woman time-travels while touring Mystic Seaport, Connecticut. Her stops include the *Amistad* Open House, where she becomes a passenger on the double-masted schooner, the Gerda III, and the Touro Synagogue. The *Amistad* was a Spanish schooner that took 53 enslaved individuals from Sierra Leone to Cuba in 1839. On board, they revolted and killed the captain and the cook, starting a legal battle that ended with their return to their country. *Gerda III* was a Danish workboat that was used in 1943 by Henny Sinding to rescue Jews from occupied Denmark. The Touro Synagogue was built in 1763 in Newport, Rhode Island ("Maritime Museum"). This woman also sees Anne Frank and is at a stop on the Underground Railroad with Harriet Tubman. This chapter also analyzes the data from the playwrights' interviews and discovers the historical events and conditions that prompted the writing of the work.

I begin my discussion of *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* using the six elements of play composition from Aristotle's *Poetics* as the framework. The six elements are plot, character, thought, diction, song, and spectacle (Aristotle). Plot can be described as the main events of a play. Character refers to an object, animal, or person presented as a person in a narrative. Thought is theme in this case because Aristotle indicates that it "reveals moral purpose" and is "expressive of character" (Aristotle). Diction is spoken language. Song refers to the singing or music that helps to convey the text. Finally, spectacle involves sensory elements like scenery, costuming, gestures and movement, and scenic design. I use Aristotle's *Poetics* because they have stood the test of time. The elements can be equally applied to both ancient tragedy and modern works.

Character is the first element covered in the discussion because a specific character is one of the reasons I began this study initially to examine the portrayal of Anne Frank as a play character. The words and actions of the characters forward the action of a play. Diction or language is the next component of play composition to be covered. The lines and the stage directions comprise the play's element of diction/language. For Aristotle, song (the aspect I discuss after diction/language) meant the chanting of the lines, sometimes accompanied by music. Today, it includes sound effects, songs or music, live instruments, the vocal qualities of the actors' voices, and background and pre-show music. The element of spectacle is the fourth component examined regarding the selected Anne Frank plays. Costumes and makeup, stage props, scenery, lighting, stage movement, combat, and dance all inform the component of spectacle. I follow spectacle with the element of plot, which can be described as an arrangement of occurrences consisting of a beginning, middle, and end. The middle can have one or more conflicts rising to a climax or turning point. Finally, the conflict comes to a resolution, ending the story. The sixth and final element related to each play is thought, which today can be considered theme. The thought or theme is the purpose that binds the play's action and characters. A theme may not be presented overtly, but one will see that it often is more than suggested in these three Anne Frank plays, pairing her character with an African American personage. The next related to each play is thought, which today can be considered theme.

There is no cast list of characters in Pittman's and Friedman-Adler's *Harriet and Anne*. The three characters are Narrator O, Narrator A, and Narrator B. Narrator O speaks of Frank and Tubman (Pittman and Friedman-Adler 20–23). Narrator B speaks as Anne Frank, talking about Kitty (the imaginary recipient of Frank's messages), Frank's diary itself, the need for laughter more than a dose of a sleep aid, and the longing for the freedom to bike, dance, and whistle (23–25).

Speaking as Tubman is Narrator A. Narrator A talks about having a right to liberty and death (23), following the stars, and crossing into free territory (24). A fourth character who seems silent is implied by the lines of Narrator O, Narrator A, and Narrator B, who, with their lines, indicate that character's actions. This fourth character is African American, by implication. She "went looking back towards history," has a childhood heroine in Harriet Tubman (1), is reminded of a Langston Hughes poem (2), and on her tour of the *Amistad*, she experiences "vivid images. People-her people" (7) and becomes one of her ancestors. This silent character experiences near drowning when one of the enslaved men chained to her throws himself overboard (9–12). The work could be performed with a minimum of four actors.

Diction/language is of extreme importance in *Harriet and Anne*. The work's subtitle is *An Original Narrative* (Pittman and Friedman-Adler, cover page). The entire poetic work's script is narrated by three individuals whose voices indicate some stage direction of the fourth implied character. Otherwise, the only stage directions written are lighting and music/sound cues.

Sound (and music) are vital components of this work. The voices of the three Narrators constitute a sizable portion of the performance of this work. There is no dialogue between them when they talk to the audience (Pittman and Friedman-Adler). The musical elements in this work are not incidental. Entire songs often accompany the Narrators' lines. The Narrators have stage directions that indicate they are accompanied by the songs, including when to finish specific sections of monologue, pause, or wait for several beats or even measures, then speak (1, 2–3, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25–28). The musical instruments given specific script directions include cello (3, 6), tongue drum (a steel slit drum) (3, 6), bongo (7), drums (7), woodblocks (8), and M'bira (9,10), a traditional Malawian or Zimbabwean finger harp. The musical score, written by Jeff Adler, spouse of Laurie Friedman-Adler, a New York City composer and woodwind musician (*Our Story*),

consists of eight themes. They are "Lullaby at the Endless Boundary" (Pittman and Friedman-Adler 1, 28), "Mystic Seaport Theme" (2–3), "Mystic Variation" (5–6), "Eulogy" (11), "The Beginning" (13), "But the Smell of the Sea" (14), "Gerda Song" (15–16), and "A Grandfather's Prayer" (17–19). The final element of the song/music component is sound effects. The sound effects of Pittman's and Friedman-Adler's play include possible recorded effects and those made by human beings. The recorded effects are sea sounds (9). Pages blowing onto the stage (23) accompanied by a "MONTAGE of Voices" (23) would be human-generated sound effects.

The fourth element I describe with *Harriet and Anne* is that of spectacle regarding the visual aspects of the play. Neither scenery nor properties are mentioned in the script. Although photographs of rehearsals, with an unspecified date, are seen in a local CBS Sacramento affiliate news video that includes a Narrator holding a model of what presumably represents the *Gerda III*. The black-clothed musicians providing the music are onstage with the Narrators. There is no scenery (*Sacramento State Professor*). No specific stage directions for the characters are indicated in the play script. Based on the costuming of black dance leotards seen in the photos, it is reasonable to assume that dance or movement accompanies the narration (*Sacramento State Professor*).

Having described the spectacle in *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*, the next element to cover is the plot. Narrator O opens the work by speaking of "The Endless Boundary," "Where the souls of the human spirit wander," and Harriet Tubman and Anne Frank are friends (Pittman and Friedman-Adler 1). Narrator A continues the story by recounting a woman searching for answers and her roots. She began heading to Tubman's birthplace of Auburn, New York but ended up in Mystic, Connecticut (2). Drawn to the water (3), she is attracted to two boats (4), the *Amistad* slave ship and the *Gerda III*, which rescued Danish Jews during World War II (5–6). She

takes the *Amistad* guided tour, becomes a metaphysically historic enslaved person, and experiences drowning (6–12). When she recovers, she finds herself in the Touro Synagogue of Newport, Rhode Island (13), the oldest synagogue in the United States and a symbol of religious freedom (*Touro Synagogue and congregation Jeshuat Israel - Newport, RI*). The narrative indicates that she is sucked into a swirling light tunnel and "reborn on a boat called *Gerda III*" (Pittman and Friedman-Adler 15). There, she experiences being a hidden passenger, fearing discovery, on the *Gerda III* (16–20). While hiding on the boat, she witnesses a selection of the prisoners at a death camp and views Anne Frank (17–18). Next, Narrator O talks about how Frank and Tubman "shared one common purpose to find the answers to the question WHY??????" (20). Narrator O continues by describing how the traveler journeys with the spirits of Harriet and Anne. Narrator O tells how the historical figures survived and continue to survive (20–23). A "MONTAGE" of voices interrupts, along with pages blowing on the stage (23). Then, Narrator B and Narrator A, representing Anne Frank and Harriet Tubman, respectively, poetically discuss freedom, using quotes from Anne's diary and quotes from various biographies about Tubman. Using Frank's words, Narrator B speaks about wanting to go outside and how her imagination, "looking at the sky, the clouds, the moon, and the stars really makes me feel calm and hopeful." Her freedom is from her imagination. Narrator A, as Tubman, talks about her two rights, "death and liberty. One or the other, I mean to have." She will free herself or die trying (23–25). At this point, along with the momentary stoppage of music, Narrator O describes how travelers are taken to a beautiful tree by Harriet and Anne. "A tree—which blooms but once a generation—and then … dies" is "a reminder of the stories-the history-the lessons…in the Endless Boundary" (25–26). Narrators A and B then discuss how each one's pain differs, and the comparison is a disservice (26). The two Narrators discuss how a comparison of "Spirit" (27), fortitude, and resilience is a better comparison than the level of pain

(27). They imply the concept that surviving, enduring, and endearing helped to find "a way through it all- above it all" (27) and that that "indomitable spirit" lives in "The Endless Boundary" (28). Narrator O closes the play with the thoughts that human souls can be "secure," "content," and "safe" in the "Endless Boundary" where "the ultimate gift the Universe has to offer—FREEDOM!!!!!!!!!!!" (28). The narrative ends with the final thought of "Who will spread the seeds?" (28).

*Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* by Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler, concludes by asking which of us will spread the stories, the history, and the lessons so that we have freedom. This concept is the principal thought or theme of Pittman's and Friedman-Adler's work. This idea of spreading stories, history, and lessons about freedom ties the characters of Frank and Tubman together, as well as the events of the play. Each spreads stories and lessons about freedom in their lives and works in situations of extreme duress. Anne Frank's diary left us with her adolescent wisdom that was not so adolescent. Tubman's life and work supported the cause of freedom and spread the seeds for others to follow in her day and our day. The thematic purpose of *Harriet and Anne* is to spread the seeds of "FREEDOM" (Pittman and Friedman-Adler 29). Deborah Pittman commented on the theme of Harriet Tubman's life as she sees it in the play she shares with Laurie Friedman-Adler. Pittman remarks, "It's not about the pain, it's about the spirit, and the spirit to stand up when something is wrong" (*Sacramento State Professor*).

Laurie Friedman-Adler, one of the playwrights of *Harriet and Anne*, consented to communicate with me by written questionnaire. The other playwright, Deborah Pittman, said she would have Friedman-Adler speak on her behalf (Friedman-Adler, Email to author, 26 May 2023). Here are Laurie Friedman-Adler's answers to some of the questions she chose to respond to

(Friedman-Adler, Email to author. 30 Mar. 2024). Included in Appendix 1 is a complete list of the interview questions.

**What motivated you to write a play that used Anne Frank as a character?**

When I was about 7 years old, my parents were watching the newly released films that the Russians filmed whe[n they] liberated Auschwitz. I burned a memory so deeply that I became obsessed with the history of the Holocaust. Reading Anne Frank's Diary provided me with a first-person account of what went on during that time period. I read further details of what happened to her when she was in the camps. I looked very much like her, and my thoughts and character were quite similar according to many of my relatives.

**Why did you pair Anne Frank with an African American personage in your work?**

Harriet Tubman was one of my heroines, and I fantasized about saving people.

**What do you share with either of your titular characters?**

I believe I answered that in question … but if you want more I will provide.

**Which version, if any, of Anne Frank's diary did you use/consult? Why did you choose that version?**

We used the latest version because it included many details about her mom which Otto in the original published diary didn't want to include.

**Did you use any secondary sources in addition to or instead of the diary? What was the source? Why did you use these sources? If you did not use secondary sources, why not?**

I interviewed her cousin in addition to reading about Miep and others who helped them when they were in hiding. There was another person who I met that lived near Anne in Amsterdam and explained to me the fault of Otto not moving around and just staying in one hiding place. It was a

very disheartening conversation. This woman was saved by moving around in different hiding places, yet ultimately, most of her other family were murdered.

**Which was more important to you in the writing of your play, textual accuracy (to the diary and secondary sources) or dramatic effect, and why?**

The story was about two women who were weighed down by the trauma of their individual cultures. Anne and Harriet were "free to roam in the Endless Boundary" (symbolic of where one goes after your physical life is done here on earth) to help these women heal.

**Who was the intended audience for your play?**

A diverse audience.

**Talk about your play's premiere, please.**

The play went well; after it was finished, Deb and I went onstage to answer any questions from the audience. I was nervous and she told me not to worry. Well, when she started to speak about Anne Frank's "Hiding Place" she started to cry, so I had to take over most of the audience's questions. We joke about it now, but it was a little stressful at the time.

**What did you hope to carry out by your play's staging style?**

It was a very small theatre, so not much action occurred. I was slightly disappointed in the director but had no choice but to carry on her wishes. She didn't want me to critique her, so many things were not the way I wanted the play to continue.

**How did you bend the constraints of time/space in your work? What were your intentions with the manipulation?**

There was an introduction, Harriet's story, Anne's story, Our Story, and the culmination of the story. It was Our Story, not necessarily Harriet and Anne, but Deborah and Laurie's story.

**If you kept Anne's pseudonyms for the people she knew, why did you? If you used the real-life names of the individuals, why did you do so?**

N/A

**What part did any playwriting texts play while creating your work?**

N/A

**What were the challenges you met while writing your play?**

I live in Brooklyn, and Deborah lives in Sacramento. At the time, Zoom did not exist. We were on the phone every week. I also went to California to finish it.

**Discuss your writing schedule or routine you used when writing your Anne Frank play.**

We would both write our parts that were researched individually. Every week, we would talk and discuss what was written and change or edit the various parts.

**Please speak about any dramatic conflict in your play.**

Reliving the history resting on our shoulders through Harriet and Anne.

**Talk about any significant revisions to your script. When did they happen, and why?**

When it was completed, I flew to California to edit, revise, and discuss any changes in the play.

**Tell me about the greatest joy you met in writing your play.**

The heaviness weighed upon us finally dissipated. Again, reliving the historical heaviness we both carried and the joy of finish(ing) our dream of writing the play.

**What kind of preparation did you do for writing about Anne Frank/your historical personage?**

Lots and lots of research, interviews, and traveling to places and discussions.

**How does your religion or spirituality inform your Anne Frank play? You may decline to answer. Does your religious or spiritual view inform your work?**

Yes, visiting the Anne Frank house for me was a disappointment. Too crowded. But while performing in Europe, I went to Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, and it is too much for me to write for this questionnaire. It would be better if I were to speak with you about how visiting these places made me feel.

It is now time to discover the historical events and conditions that prompted the writing of the work. *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* by Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler, is a 28-page playscript with no act breaks. The work was finished and performed in 1999 at Sacramento State University (*Sacramento State Professor*). *Harriet and Anne* was performed off-Broadway as a Vita Nova production in September 2005 at the Producer's Club in New York City (*Our Story*). Pittman and Friedman-Adler copyrighted the work on October 14, 2005 (Pittman and Friedman-Adler, cover page).

Deborah Pittman describes herself as a performance artist and writer (Shoka) hailing from the Marcy Projects in Brooklyn, New York (Cusick). During the busing movement in New York City during her childhood (*Sacramento State Professor*), she was placed in a special accelerated math and science program for junior high school. In one interview, she said no one there looked like her, so she became shy and turned inward. She wanted to flee until she was handed a clarinet in music class. After she played five notes, she told herself, "This is going to be my life" (Reason, *Women in Music: Deborah Pittman*).

Young Deborah grew up wanting to play on Broadway (Reason, *Women in Music: Deborah Pittman*). She studied at the Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College and the Manhattan School of Music (Shoka). Pittman earned a Bachelor of Music degree and a master's degree in clarinet performance. She also did three years of doctoral studies in clarinet performance (Ceramic Arts Network). Her parents, especially her father, were intensively supportive of her

education even though he did not like the clarinet or the music she would play. He was there for her throughout her educational pursuits (Reason, *Women in Music: Deborah Pittman*).

Pittman fulfilled her dreams of playing in a Broadway orchestra. She had made it but "found it to be a really intense place, especially for someone who looks like me." While playing in a revival of *Oklahoma!*, she found that her fellow musicians, a group of men, treated her poorly. "I can't even say some of the words they said to me; It was unbelievably ugly." She found Broadway to be "an ugly place with a lot of older and middle-aged white guys who had no idea what I was doing there, nor how hard I'd worked to get there" (Cusick). One morning, feeling terribly ill, Pittman went to her doctor. He asked her why she had not come in earlier. She replied, "I didn't know I was sick. I thought I just hated my job." Pittman was relieved when the Sacramento Symphony called for her (Reason, *Women in Music: Deborah Pittman*).

She left New York in 1981 to play second and bass clarinet for the Sacramento Symphony. Pittman was there from 1981 to 1990 (*Deborah Pittman*). In 1986, she began teaching at UC Davis (Shoka). While at UC Davis, she was introduced to ceramics due to being the director of the California Arts Program (Cusick).

From 1991 to 2012, she taught clarinet and studied American music at California State University Sacramento (*Deborah Pittman*). Pittman retired from Sacramento State in 2013. (Shoka). Through her work at Sacramento State, she became a board member of VITA Academy. VITA stands for Vocal & Instrumental Teaching Artist Academy. VITA promotes music education and arts programming in the Sacramento area. The mission statement of VITA Academy is:

> VITA Academy seeks to sustain and grow music's relevance in our region by partnering with musicians, non-profits, and schools to create innovative concert and education programs—utilizing its program to develop emerging professional musicians to become effective teaching artists—equipped to educate as well as perform. (*Home BDoG*)

It was in 1999, while at Sacramento State University. *Harriet and Anne* became one of Pittman's projects, exploring another outlet for her artistic passions (Pittman). Her college friend, Laurie Friedman-Adler (Friedman-Adler, Personal communication), and Pittman worked on the Anne Frank narrative together. The piece was staged as a workshop at Sacramento State. The work was described in Friedman-Adler's Hofstra University Faculty Profile as supported by a Brooklyn Chamber Orchestra Grant and a grant from Bear-Stearns & Co. (*Faculty Profile*). In October 2005, *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* premiered New York City at the Producer's Club. That performance was supported by Vita-Nova Productions (*Faculty Profile*). There was no professional recording of the work (Pittman, Email to author).

Fifty-four years of Pittman's life have been devoted to the clarinet. She said, "I was fortunate to make several of my dreams come true. I played in an orchestra abroad, spent fourteen years in the Goldman Band, played on Broadway, and spent my first nine years in California as a member of the Sacramento Symphony (Ceramic Arts Network).

Not focusing entirely on the clarinet, Pittman developed her ceramics skills to the point that she shows and sells her work (Deborah Pittman). In addition, she became a filmmaker. With a National Education Association (NEA) grant, Pittman created a film called "The World According to Earl." The film is about the topics of Sunday conversations she had with her father, Earl (Cusick). Pittman continued to hone her skills in that field by creating a documentary with colleague Omari Tau. The film was a three-part series coordinated with a three-part concert series. Additionally, Pittman also maintained her movie-making skills with a short film on Chevalier de Saint-Georg (often referred to as the Black Mozart) for VITA Academy as an outreach tool to instruct students about the historical figure and his perseverance under his life circumstances (Cusick).

Pittman is a person of many talents. Deborah Pittman's composition career includes these works on her resume:

- *Small Shoulders/Big Dreams* (commissioned by the Crocker Museum in 2012).
- *The World According to Earl* (Berkeley Premiere in 2011).
- *Harriet and Anne* (NY off-Broadway showcase, 2005, in collaboration with Laurie Friedman).
- *In the Land of Pickle Snout Gouch* (premiered in 2001, commissioned by the Sacramento Youth Symphony).
- *Niam: Portrait of a Gnome* (premiered in 1999, based on Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*).
- *Peter in the Hood* (2000, based on Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf).

She reacted fondly when talking about the Wolf character in *Peter in the Hood*. Pittman named him "Leon Lobos" and described him as "really hip" (Reason).

When asked about her life, Pittman responded that she saw her career as "A laudable step out of the projects" (Ceramic Arts Network). She also said, "If I could change one thing, it would really be that every soul on the planet gets to participate in some kind of art on a daily basis" (Cusick). "The arts heal," she stated (Reason, *Women in Music: Deborah Pittman*). Although her teaching and philanthropy have been devoted to the young, Pittman had advice for the elderly, especially those turning 70: "everybody needs to do the arts. Not clarinet, not clay, whatever. There are so many things out there that you can do, and if you don't try this and try that, and try that, you're not gonna find it, it's not going to come to you" (Cusick).

The lives of Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler have some interesting parallels. These linkages include the playing of the clarinet, the need to create, and the need to write. Laurie

Friedman-Adler is a music professor at Hofstra University (*Faculty Profile*). She is also a sculptor who studies Native American music and language (Latham). Laurie Friedman-Adler states that "the inspiration for creativity comes from news stories, history (past and present), everyday living, family members who have passed on, people who comment about obscure things, and just experiencing new places in the world where we have performed" (Latham). For Friedman-Adler, her creativity is naturally essential to her life. It would take much effort to extinguish the creative flow that inhabits her mind. Her family encourages her to continue with her pursuits "as [she] delves deeper into the creativity that is life" (Latham). Laurie Friedman-Adler remarks, "I look forward to waking up and doing what I do all the time- play music, teach music, sculpt, create, think, love, speak with my children and friends, discussions with my husband, sharing conceptual insights with my colleagues and most important, to understand that sometimes you have no control over what comes next (Latham).

At age 10, Friedman-Adler's mother encouraged her to play the clarinet when it was found that she was not the most tuneful singer (Latham). As Pittman did, she also had an epiphany about the world of music as a career as a child after being given a clarinet. She says, "After blowing some notes for everyone to hear in our kitchen and probably sounding awful, I experienced a feeling of utter joy. A few months later, the passion and love for the clarinet propelled me into the universal world of music. I never ever wanted to stop" (Latham).

As Friedman-Adler's Hofstra music faculty profile indicates, she is an adjunct assistant Professor of Music. She earned her Bachelor of Music degree in 1975 from the Manhattan School of Music and her master's degree in 1977 at City University of New York (CUNY), Brooklyn College (*Faculty Profile*). Pittman also received her Bachelor of Music degree at the Manhattan School of Music and her master's degree at CUNY Brooklyn (Shoka). During college, the two

made acquaintances and became friends (Friedman-Adler, Personal communication). Laurie Friedman-Adler holds the position of music teacher at Brooklyn College Academy. She is an assistant professor of clarinet studies at Hofstra. She has also taught at Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music and the College of Staten Island (*Faculty Profile*). In February of 2003, Friedman-Adler was a visiting professor at Sacramento State University. She also served as a chamber music coach at Sacramento State (*Faculty Profile*).

Laurie Friedman-Adler has performed with a variety of diverse groups:

- 1997: Galliard Quintet and the Goldman Band
- 1988–89: Tulsa Ballet Orchestra
- 1993–present: Village Light Opera
- 1996–98: Connecticut Grand Opera
- 1999: New Jersey Pops Orchestra and the Long Island Philharmonic

She has also performed at The Austrian Embassy, the Library of Congress, Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, the Gardner Museum in Boston, and the Newport Festival. Friedman-Adler is a regular performer with the Hevreh Ensemble, which plays their original music (*Our Story*). Laurie Friedman-Adler has performed all over the world. In 2010, she toured Prague and Krakow. Berlin/Bonn/Hamburg, Germany were her 2012–13 tours. 2014 saw her tour the Netherlands and Munich. Finally, she toured Vienna and Prague in 2016 (*Faculty Profile*).

Notable occurrences in her teaching and music career included an award and a special television performance. 2009, she was honored with the Above and Beyond-Inspiring Teachers and Students Award. Friedman-Adler has also been featured on the BRIC cable television program "The World" (*Faculty Profile*).

Like Pittman, Laurie Friedman-Adler has written original narratives besides that of *Harriet and Anne*. Her other four original narratives are: "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," "Peer Gynt-A Musical Story," "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," and "The Time Machine." They contain classical music running through the narratives and "interpretive, visually expressive dance" (*Faculty Profile*).

In addition to Friedman-Adler's lifelong engagement with the clarinet, she studies Native American flutes. She has received grant funding for two projects from Hofstra University to fund research on the Cherokee Native American Indian flute. One project involved watching an artist make a flute from reclaimed barn wood. Her second grant project involved introducing audiences around the United States and Europe to the history, culture, and sound of the Native American Indian flute. This project included post-concert lectures and questions from the audience. She has started a third grant project investigating whether exposing her to the Cherokee language improves her instrument utilization (Latham).

Laurie Friedman-Adler has been as creative as Pittman. She has held an artistic pursuit concurrent with her clarinet career. Friedman-Adler is a sculptor (*Sculptures*). She has practiced the art for over 30 years (*Sculptures*). The musician/sculptor calls her sculptures "experiential and responsive" to the world's triumphs and tragedies (*Faculty Profile*). Her sculptures are all inspired by life and "make use of the world's beautiful natural materials" (*Faculty Profile*).

Although Laurie Friedman-Adler has amassed many accomplishments in a lengthy career as a musician, composer, and artist, she does not see her multi-valent career as her significant achievement. She feels that her highest achievement nourishes her art. Her proudest accomplishments are her children. She stated, "Music and art are a reflection of life, but giving birth to life feeds the art" (Latham).

Both Pittman and Friedman-Adler see the arts as a necessary contribution to their lives and the lives of others. Laurie Friedman-Adler is exhausted with defending why everyone should support the creative arts, not only the financially endowed. She cited that "science has informed us that the arts are important for the health of the brain, psychological improvements, social adjustments, cultural understanding, the creation of new neural pathways, etc." (Latham). We all need the arts and should support them.

She believes that the most important lesson she learned from her teacher, Mr. Russianoff, was not music but that of fairness and equity. She was one of only three female students to study under him. Friedman-Adler says, "Equity and social justice were words he would never utter, but I now realize this was the lesson most valued" (Latham).

Friedman-Adler and Pittman needed to create and experience the arts as part of their lives, and their long friendship brought them together to write *Harriet and Anne* from 1999 to 2005. Friedman-Adler pronounced that "the inspiration for creativity comes from news stories, history (past and present)" (Latham). Perhaps that is what drew her to the creation of the work. When asked about it, she said, "These two people (Anne and Harriet) were my heroes, and [I] wanted them to be friends in the 'Endless Boundary'" (Friedman-Adler, Email to the Author, 30 Mar. 2023). What may have drawn Pittman to the cooperative creation of the work is also rooted in her life. In a television interview, she mentioned that during her education during the busing integration movement, she was not taught about Tubman's role in history. She declared, "That's criminal. And I think of all those young women, and I think of all those young women and men before that who could have taken inspiration from this leader and didn't get a chance to" (*Sacramento State Professor*).

*Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* was not the last time the pair collaborated. In 2022–23, Friedman-Adler and Pittman collaborated as coordinators for "Four Freedoms Reimagined." The Crocker Art Gallery and VITA Academy hosted the competition. Youth, ages 12–20, were encouraged to submit two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, digital art, dance, theatre, musical compositions, and music performances under that theme. The exhibit ran from January 12, 2023, to March 26, 2023 (*Home BDoG*).

As playwrights, Pittman and Friedman-Adler collaborated to write *Harriet and Anne* with a particular intention. The pair intended to work through their personal demons regarding their life experiences due to their race, ethnicity, and religion. As an African American growing up in Jim Crow America, Pittman has experienced lifelong prejudice. Her "interview" section notes that she noticed inequity early, living in the Marcy projects, being educated in predominantly white school districts, and being a musician on Broadway. Friedman-Adler grew up Jewish. Although she does not indicate that she experienced much prejudice personally, growing up in an American Jewish family and experiencing the cultural trauma of the Holocaust, antisemitism, and its possible epigenetic effects affected her on some level. Laurie Friedman-Adler indicated in her interview that the play was about her and Pittman relieving the heaviness of their cultures' impacts on them and honoring their personal heroes of Tubman and Frank.

The playwrighting duo copyrighted their work with the Library of Congress after writing. Friedman-Adler told me that they did not allow any press information, publicity, or text of the work on the internet to protect the work from being performed again, pirated, or misused in any manner (Friedman-Adler, Personal communication, 29 May 2023). Pittman did not wish to speak with me about the work and designated Friedman-Adler as her proxy to discuss the work and their process (Pittman, Email to the author). Because the pair did not wish the work to be performed

again, one playwright spoke for both playwrights; they did not publish the play or allow publicity about the work. I conclude that the intent of writing the work to honor personal heroes and exorcise personal demons has been accomplished by Pittman and Friedman-Adler.

The collaborative work of *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* is a unique play that combines Anne Frank and Harriet Tubman. Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler teamed up to write about their heroes. Plot, character, thought, diction, song, and spectacle merged to send the message that it is the task of the reader/viewer to stand up for what is right and continue to "sow the seeds of FREEDOM" (Pittman and Friedman-Adler 29).

# CHAPTER III: JANET LANGHART COHEN'S ANNE & EMMETT: A ONE-ACT PLAY

Chapter III involves *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* by Janet Langhart Cohen. *Anne & Emmett* is a five-character non-musical play. Anne and Emmett meet in "Memory" when people remember them. In this work, Emmett and Anne want people to remember them forever. This chapter also analyzes the playwright's interview data and brings to light the historical events and conditions that prompted the writing of the work.

I begin my discussion of *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* using the six elements of play composition from Aristotle's *Poetics* as our framework. Plot, character, thought, diction, song, and spectacle comprise the six elements (Aristotle). Chapter II has already established the order in which they are dealt with and their definitions.

As previously stated, character is the first element discussed regarding *Anne & Emmett*. The written cast list of the play is made up of five characters (Cohen 8). A sixth character is not named in the cast list but exists as a "Voice-over" cast member (5, 57). The only description in the stage directions states that the voice is "deep and sonorous" (5). The cast list consists of Anne Frank, at 15 years old; Emmett Till, 14 years of age; Otto Frank, in his mid-forties; Mamie Till, described in his mid-thirties; and J.W. Milam, 36 years old (4). Frank and Till are described as Jewish and Black, respectively. Milam also has his race indicated as white (4). The parents of the two young people are only additionally described by their careers: Otto Frank as a businessman and Mamie Till as an educator. Milam's supplementary description includes "murderer" and "racist" (4). The work could be performed with a minimum of five actors. One of the cast members could double in the role of "Voice-over."

*Anne & Emmett*'s script includes extensive and detailed elements of diction/language (including stage directions). The stage direction in this play is more expansive and elaborate than that of Harriet and Anne. In her work, Cohen includes lighting cues, costume details and changes, prop usage, sound effects, and line delivery.

Lighting cues open the play as they start in darkness (5). Lights come up on characters as they enter (6), or lights reveal them on stage (9, 13, 19). There are also cues to fade the lights on one character as they appear on another (12). Characters emerge from the shadows (21, 29, 37) or just appear (39, 42, 47, 53) as well. The flickering of stage lights is the cue that the world does not remember Anne and Emmett or the life lessons their experiences should have taught (55). The play nears its end in complete darkness, and there is a slideshow of images of historic barbaric human behavior and iconic figures from those events (56–57).

Costume pieces are delineated by stage direction. The clothing is indicated for every character: Mamie (6), Emmett (6), Anne (9), Otto (10), and J. W. Milam (43). Costume changes or additions to costumes are assigned by stage direction or implied by lines spoken by characters for Emmett (8–9), Mamie (42, 53), and Otto (47, 53).

Some characters may have costume changes, but all characters, except for J. W. Milam, have script direction that requires them to use stage properties. Mamie Till carries and packs a suitcase with various named items (6–8). She also appears with a birthday cake (53). Emmett pounds his fist in a baseball glove (6) and puts on a ring (8). Additionally, he handles Anne's discarded papers (17). Anne touches her diary, writing paper, and a writing utensil (9). Her father, Otto, carries "an armful of presents" (53) for Anne.

Aside from the props in the script, there is also written stage direction for sound effects. These effects include pounding on a door (11) and a police siren (11) during scenes about Anne. Sound effects for scenes with Emmett incorporate a car horn (7,9) and a "loud" gunshot (41).

Janet Langhart Cohen is very particular about the line delivery for *Anne & Emmett*. The script instructs actors to take a "beat" 9 times (5, 16, 41, 46, 49, 52–54). The script has two descriptions of "long pauses" (37, 39). One character sings. Mamie's lines include her singing lyrics to "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" (6). She also sings the first stanza of African American poet Langston Hughes' poem, "Mississippi, 1955" (39). A second character chants in the script. Otto Frank prays a portion of the Mourner's *Kaddish*. It is written in transliterated Hebrew in the text (50).

Cohen covers line delivery with more script guidance than Pittman and Friedman-Adler. Line delivery is written into the stage directions. Some of the manners in which the playwright wishes the text to be delivered include "angry and scared" (13); "proudly" (15); "playfully" (17); "laughs sarcastically" (17); "Embarrassed" (17); "Yelling" (24); "Triumphantly" (28); "Jokingly" (35); "Shouts" (42); "Laughs" (44); "Furious" (46); and "Together" (46);

Foreign language phrases are used throughout the work for dramatic effect and emphasis. Cohen utilizes the Nazi catchphrase of "*Die Juden sind unser Unglück*" (19). This German phrase means, "The Jews are our misfortune." Otto Frank refers to the swastika as the *Hakenkreuz (*48). Two pages later, he prays the *Kaddish* in Hebrew (50). Anne's lines include the Hebrew word *emet*, or "truth" (54), and the Hebrew phrase, *tikkun olam*. *Tikkun olam* refers to the Talmudic concept of living in a way that repairs the world (55). Her character also shows her educational level when she uses the word "*Touché*" in response (55) and works in "I think therefore, I am" in Latin, "*Cogito ergo sum*" (14).

The work is written in U.S. English vernacular. The lines for the character, J. W. Milam, are written in a Southern U.S. English dialect (43–44). No stage directions indicate Anne or Otto should speak with any European accent. However, Emmett's lines have him poking fun at Anne's pronunciation of "Peter" as "Petah" (27). No stage directions are written for Emmett and Mamie to speak with any verbal affectations, except when Emmett verbally imitates an "Uncle Tom" character. He demonstrates this affectation when he tries to illustrate to Anne how African Americans are supposed to behave deferentially toward white Southerners (40) and when he first responds to Mamie's instructions on how to behave down South (7). Emmett and Anne have a derogatory verbal slang term battle. The pair verbally duel with rude colloquialisms for their respective ethnic groups (24).

The component of song/music has been briefly touched upon in this chapter. The sound and attributes of the actors' voices fall under the category of song/music. Actors' vocal qualities, of course, would vary with each production. What does not change about the script *Emmett and Anne* is that it includes songs, instruments, and other music. Mamie's lines include her vocalizing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" (6). In addition, she sings the first stanza of Langston Hughes' poem, "Mississippi, 1955" (39). Her character also starts the play humming an unspecified Christian hymn and singing a bit of it (6). Otto Frank intones a section of the Mourner's *Kaddish*, the Jewish prayer for the dead (50). Musical instruments named explicitly in the script that accompany the action are the "oboe, playing a sad melody" (5) and the "violin(ist) begins to play an evocative musical theme" (13). Unspecified instruments play "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" (43).

The fourth element from Aristotle's *Poetics* regarding *Emmett and Anne* that I discuss is spectacle. Spectacle includes all the visual ingredients of a play's production. Initially, the script explicitly demands no scenery requirements. Stage direction indicates Mamie entering with a

suitcase, which she packs onstage. What is specified are the props with which she packs it: "shirts, shorts, and socks," and Mamie fills a bag with a mayonnaise jar of water and sandwiches (6). However, set and setting properties come into play when Anne Frank appears. The script describes a stage right riser holding Anne, her desk with a diary, writing paper, and a wastebasket (9). The play ends with the requirement of a projection screen for a slide presentation of historical genocidal images (56–57). In addition to the already mentioned properties, *Anne & Emmett* requires Mamie's birthday cake (53), Emmett's ring (8), and ball glove (6), as well as Otto's birthday gifts for Anne (53).

Another element of spectacle is costumes. Cohen's script specifies specific costume elements. Mamie Till wears a house dress "cinched around her waist" (6) by an apron. At Mamie's reappearance, when she sings Langston Hughes's poem, she has not yet had a costume change. When she reappears while Emmett is relating his death, Mamie is wearing a small black hat and a black dress (42). It is not written into the script if Mamie changes her original costume from her mourning attire when she reenters with Emmett's birthday cake (53). Emmett's costume includes a blue shirt, tan pants, and suspenders (6). His father's ring is added to his costume on stage (8), and his hat is added to it (9). Anne wears a "pretty wool skirt, dark sweater, and white frilly blouse (9). Her father, Otto, appears in "a white shirt, vest," and "tweed pants" along with "dark-framed glasses" (10). Otto changes his costume—he appears in the prisoner's uniform of the concentration camp (47). He must change his costume to his shirt, pants, and vest when he appears with Anne's presents (53). The only remaining onstage character is J. W. Milam. The script indicates he wears a white T-shirt and jeans (43). Milam has no costume changes.

Stage movement is an additional aspect of spectacle—specific stage movement moments indicated in the script for *Anne & Emmett*'s characters. Mamie enters and packs a suitcase (6).

Emmett enters, racing and pounding a baseball glove (6). The moment of stage movement that involves the two of them occurs after Mamie finishes packing his suitcase. She hugs him and kisses his forehead. He leaves and immediately returns, asking for his hat (7). When he asks for it, she teasingly produces it from behind her back. In response, he pulls her apron string, making the garment drop. She puts his hat on him and hugs him again (9) before he leaves.

Anne's first moment of stage action is writing on her pad of paper, rejecting the content, and tossing it to the wastebasket unsuccessfully. Then, she returns to her writing (9). Otto's first entrance to encounter Anne does not specify actions until the pair freeze at the sound of pounding and a police siren (11). Later, the stage direction has Otto wrapping Anne in a "warm embrace" and stroking her hair (12). The next time the audience sees Anne, she is "deeply engaged in writing" only to throw out her draft (13).

Emmett staggers into the scene, checking his face and body with his hands (13). During their first interaction, she points to her head, "*Cogito ergo sum*," when Emmett asks why he is there (14). As they continue to converse, Anne offers to shake hands. Emmett visibly withdraws and casts his eyes down (16). When he says that he cannot due to "rules," Anne "pirouettes around the stage" and indicates that there are no rules where they now are (17). They continue conversing, and Emmett takes his wallet out to show a picture of "his girlfriend." When Anne calls his bluff about the picture, he changes the subject by picking up Anne's discarded writing (17).

During their continued discussion, Otto (19, 29) and Mamie (21, 39) are revealed by light to stand onstage, adding background information or musical enhancement to their monologues. When Emmett explains to Anne how he and other African Americans were supposed to behave with white people, he shuffles his feet in a self-deprecatory manner, lampooning the "Uncle Tom"

character (40). As Emmett's story continues and tells of his death, Mamie appears in funeral clothes (42).

Next, J. W. Milam appears onstage to discuss his part in Till's death (43). There is no direction regarding his exit. After Emmett talks about the aftermath of his death, Anne starts the story of her family's capture and time in the concentration camps. In his concentration camp prisoner uniform, Otto appears to help continue Anne's story (47). His exit is not specified in the stage direction. Anne and Emmett start to discuss the parallels of their lives and desires. During this discussion, both of their parents appear with birthday accoutrements (53). The parents' exits are not discussed in the stage direction. When Anne and Emmett come upon a consensus to secure the future of their appearances in "Memory," Anne reaches for Emmett's hand to exit together. He equivocates but then grabs her hand as they walk upstage (56). At this point, *Anne & Emmett* concludes in the dark with a slide show of historical genocide. A quote from Elie Wiesel's *Night* ends the play (56–57).

The penultimate part of *Anne & Emmett*'s structure that I discuss is the plot. Janet Langhart Cohen's 57-page one-act play opens with a voice-over that introduces Anne & Emmett in a place called "Memory" and asks what would happen if we did not remember them (5). The audience then sees Mamie Till preparing her son physically and emotionally for his visit down South (6–9). Next, the writing-obsessed teen girl, Anne Frank, and her father, Otto, are introduced in "Memory." Their discussion sets up the Dutch World War II situation and the accompanying mental and emotional struggles of the young writer navigating adolescence in hiding (11–13).

Then, Emmett enters "Memory," encountering Anne. They are startled by one another's presence. Anne explains to Emmett that "Memory" is a place of truth where one can be in the present, look back upon the past, and know everything that has occurred since one died (14). A

person appears in "Memory" when an individual thinks of him or her (15). Anne establishes that one exists there for as long as someone thinks of one (15). They introduce themselves to one another (16). Anne indicates that there are no rules in "Memory." She also embarrasses Emmett with a comment about girlfriends, so he changes the subject and looks at her discarded papers. She reacts negatively to his invasion of her privacy and space but then opens up. She tells him about her diary and her life in occupied Holland. Otto breaks in occasionally to comment (17–20). Emmett points out parallels in his life to hers as they converse (20–21). Mamie comments on and expands on some of his thoughts (21). He and Anne continue their conversation. Emmett comments on occupied Europe's parallels to his life in the segregated United States. The discussion reaches a high point when they trade denigratory epithets for Jews and African Americans (21–24). They share a shocking moment when Emmett cuts Anne off from saying "Nig-" (24). They continue their stories, with Anne affirming that "words have power" (25). Anne continues relating her struggles in the Annex, both physical and emotional (25–30). Otto comments to tell what concentration camp arrivals were like (29). Emmett starts to take over the conversation. He talks about the Middle Passage and historically segregated life in the United States, while Anne comments on parallel situations in her life (30–34). Emmett and Anne become more philosophical in their dialogue, discussing good, evil, and God's presence in the world. Mamie comments about the traditions ripped from African Americans (34–37). Anne presses Emmett to speak about his death. Instead, he discusses life in the segregated 1940s and 1950s United States (37–39).

Mamie starts singing Langston Hughes's poem, "Mississippi-1955" (39). This poem spurs Emmett to relate his murder to Anne (39–42). Mamie enters to continue Emmett's story after the murder, including his funeral (42–43). Then, J. W. Milam appears onstage to justify his part in Emmett's murder (43–44). Anne and Emmett discuss the trial (44). Then, they discuss society's

"rules" in their situations. Their parents break in to remind them about following the rules prescribed for them in their situations (45). Anne tries to convince Emmett that maybe if he had followed the "rules," he would still be alive. He retorts that silence in her hiding place did not save her. Anne recounts their capture (45-46). Otto enters the conversation, second-guessing his actions during the ordeal (47). Otto and Anne then continue to elaborate on their war experiences up until their family's end in the deaths of all but Otto. Otto ends the recounting with the *Kaddish* (47–50). Anne and Emmett continue their palaver. They talk about the current prosecution of hate crimes and reparations paid to war victims in Europe. Emmett compares how the U.S. is lacking prosecution and reparations for four hundred years of racial oppression (50–52). Anne urges him to light a single candle in his mind because the universe cannot snuff out the light of one candle. He does. Anne says his look was peaceful when he lit the candle in his mind. Emmett responds that it made him remember his birthday candles. The two reminisce about birthday wishes that involved their career goals (52–54). Mamie and Otto interject with statements about their actions to ensure their children are remembered. Their dialogue makes the youthful pair discuss the meanings of their names (54). They decide that the same light that brings them to "Memory" when people think of them is the beam that they will ride back to the people thinking of them to remind the people to act in the name of truth and stand up for what is right. The pair needs to tell people to stop hatred (54–56). They walk upstage in a dimming light. A slide show of historical genocide and victims of hate crimes ends the play visually. Auditorily, a quote from Wiesel's *Night* urges the audience not "to forget" (56–58).

The sixth and final element to be covered is thought or theme. The theme that ties these initially disparate characters together is that remembering the ever-changing hate that led to their deaths in an effort not to repeat it could repair the world (55–56). Elie Wiesel's words from *Night*

that end the play leave the audience with the idea that not remembering those killed by hate is dangerous and a second victimization for the martyrs of genocide and hate crimes (57).

I intended to use Cohen's book, *Anne Frank and Emmett Till: Why I Wrote Anne & Emmett*, instead of an interview with the playwright. The book's publication is currently delayed until 2025. I made numerous protracted attempts to contact Cohen through her personal Facebook, professional websites, and publisher (by U.S. mail). She did not respond to any inquiries. Due to her lack of responsiveness, I used articles about Janet Langhart Cohen and previously published interviews to construct her playwright "interview" information.

**What motivated you to write a play that used Anne Frank as a character?**

Cohen related that she was at a luncheon in Washington, D.C. She was drafting her book, *From Rage to Reason: My Life in Two Americas* (Martin). The friend had thought Cohen's book was about cooking or fashion (Loria). Cohen responded that her book was called *From Rage to Reason*. Her friend asked, "What do you mean rage?" Cohen answered her question, "my life in two Americas. I grew up in apartheid America, a segregated America, a Jim Crow America. When I was a little girl, we had to sit on the back of the bus in certain parts of this country, and I wanted to write about that experience"(Martin). The woman responded, "Oh, Janet, you're so successful. You're married to a prominent man. It would be unbecoming of you to play the victim" (Martin) and (Loria). This comment was what Cohen says catalyzed (Loria).

Another of Cohen's purposes for writing *Anne & Emmett* was to reduce tension between Blacks and Jews. She also hoped their reunification could occur due to her work. Cohen wished this because of the historical alliance between Jews and Blacks during the Civil Rights Movement. According to Cohen, that partnership is currently unremembered. She revealed this hope after a January 2009 performance of her play at Emerson College (Pelikhov).

In addition, Cohen hoped her play would lead to "national dialogue about race and equality in America" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). Cohen hopes that *Anne & Emmett* will create a climate of open dialogue about the American apartheid of slavery, the Holocaust, and our "current state of race and human relations" (Taylor). She saw her work as a "call to action." She wrote not only to compare the situations between Blacks and Jews. Her play attempted to stop the hate and genocide cycle or at least to manage it (Taylor).

On her professional website, Cohen indicated why she wrote the play. Cohen said, "I wrote the play as a call to action to help eradicate racism and antisemitism. Anne and Emmett, two very different teenagers, lived in societies that couldn't protect them because of hatred and the inaction of silent witnesses." (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*).

**Why did you pair Anne Frank with an African American personage in your work?**

Cohen took out her Blackberry and began writing, trying to "remember all (she) could remember about Anne Frank. She did this because Anne Frank impacted her life differently than Emmett Till had affected her life (Martin). Cohen went on to say, "The Jewish people had similar commonalities to the struggle of American racism. I wondered what Anne would say to Emmett" (Loria).

Years later, after the play's publication, Cohen spoke on a podcast called "The Takeout" (Krawchenko). She was commenting in the aftermath of an August 2017 white supremacist rally that turned violent— including injury and death. She continued talking about the links between Emmett Till and Anne Frank. "They were both the same age, and their oppressors' tactics were the same. They were segregated and lived in ghettos." "The Jewish people had to wear yellow patches to identify them from other whites. Blacks here didn't have to wear patches. Pigmentation was

enough…The Jewish people had to sit up in the balconies at cinemas. We blacks had to sit up in the balcony of theatres here in my youth called the 'crow's nest.' " (Krawchenko).

The longer Cohen researched, the more she found that Frank and Till's stories were intertwined. At the first reading of *Anne & Emmett*, Cohen remarked that she could "barely focus on the stage" because "she felt the spirits of their parents…so strongly…demanding to be heard…their sacrifices to be acknowledged and recognized" (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred").

**What do you share with either of your titular characters?**

Cohen noted similarities between herself and Emmett Till: race, age, and region. Emmett Till was seen as "our marker" and "our Anne Frank" by Cohen. His memory lives on if he is in people's thoughts (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). She also indicated that she started a diary after reading Frank's as a teen. They both wrote of comparable topics in their diaries. Frank "lived in an attic and was afraid of the Nazis finding her and her family." Cohen resided in a ghetto "and feared police patrolling even though I never did anything wrong" (Loria). She also saw a connection between Jim Crow tactics and Nazism (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). Cohen saw herself as both Anne and Emmett. She indicated that she gave Emmett her rage. Although Janet Langhart Cohen had never read anything he might have written, she put herself into his character. She was the same age and race and came from the same geographic region (Martin). Cohen indicated that she also learned racism early, at seven years old. Like Emmett Till, her life depended on it, too (Loria). They both had the same experiences with white people in the South. They were both 15-year-old girls with mother issues, a sister, and a desire to be their father's favorite while living in a scary place, "waiting for someone to get you and knowing what would happen to you" (Martin).

Cohen and her classmates were required to read *The Diary of Anne Frank* at Crispus Attucks High School, an all-Black school. Janet identified with Anne. Except for "geography and ethnicity, we could have been sisters" (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*).

Cohen has felt a life-long connection to Anne Frank and Emmett Till. It was in her teens that her connection to them began. After finishing Anne Frank's diary in high school, Cohen opened the pages of *Jet* magazine to see Emmett Till (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). For fifty years, she did not think of Anne and Emmett together. "But their two lives suddenly snapped together at the moment." A friend had insulted Cohen's history and heritage (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*).

In an interview at an Indiana production, Cohen said, "I identified with Anne Frank at 14 years old. She wanted to write. She wanted to be a playwright and a poet. She even wanted to be a movie star. She wanted to be a movie star, and so did I." Of Emmett, Cohen said, "Emmett and I were born in the same year, so not only was his ethnicity something I could identify with, but the age, because I learned racism early on. I said, Mom, if this is the kind of world, the racist, hateful world can kill us children with impunity, then I think my defense will be an education in my own environment with the people who nurture and love me. Going to Crispus Attucks High School was the best decision I ever made. They just didn't teach us Algebra and Spanish and music. They taught us self-esteem. And they told us, they said, it's going to be hard, you're gonna have to try twice as much to get half as much" (Cohen, *Hoosier Homecoming*).

**Which version, if any, of Anne Frank's diary did you use/consult? Why did you choose that version?**

It was at Crispus Attucks High School, an all-Black school, that Cohen and her classmates were required to read *The Diary of Anne Frank* (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-*

*Act Play*). Anne Frank's diary became available in the United States in 1947. Her father, Otto Frank, the group's only survivor, had it translated into English. Doubleday published the diary in 1952. This 1952 publication is the one that many students study in junior high or high school.

**Did you use any secondary sources in addition to or instead of the diary? What was the source? Why did you use these sources? If you did not use secondary sources, why not?**

For some of J. W. Milam's lines, Cohen quoted Milam from the William Bradford Huie *Look* magazine article, "The Shocking Story of Approved Killing in Mississippi" (Huie 44). In an interview at Bowdoin College, when asked about her play, she indicated, "I read Emmett's mother's book, *The Death of Innocence*" (Cohen, *A Conversation*). Cohen does not appear to have used any other secondary sources in the writing of *Anne & Emmett*.

**Which was more important to you in the writing of your play, textual accuracy (to the diary and secondary sources) or dramatic effect, and why?**

Cohen does not use any direct Anne Frank diary quotes in her work. So, textual accuracy to the diary was not as important as dramatic effect. However, Cohen used Huie's *Look* magazine article mentioned in the previous question section to write one character's lines. Cohen considered her play fictional. Writing fictional material was different for her. She said, "because even though I am a writer, I'm not a fiction writer. So, even though they are real people, this imagination is mine" (Cohen, A Conversation).

**Who was the intended audience for your play?**

Janet Langhart Cohen offered all audiences the fictitious conversation between Frank and Till. She hoped that individuals of Anne's and Emmett's age would learn of and never forget the past. "We are not doomed to repeat the past if we listen to their voices. We can repair the world" (Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play). Cohen declared, "I wrote the play as

a call to action to help eradicate racism and anti-semitism" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). She indicated that her play was "not about race, it's about hate" (Pelikhov). Her play was "a call to action to stop the hate: *tikkun olam* ('repair the world')" (Cohen, "Israel"). Cohen indicates that civilized individuals should discover hate and need to deal with it. "Then do something about it" (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). She also felt the importance of "remembering our collective histories" (Pelikhov). Cohen wrote the play for young people. She indicated that she is collaborating with the National Council for Social Studies. Cohen wanted the play taught to middle and high school students to "enlighten general audiences" (Martin). She would like people to know that although we all have different religions, different skin colors, and different histories, struggle and pain are common to all of us (Martin).

Cohen's call to action with her work extended to all races and religions. Being a bystander will no longer be an option in our society. She said there cannot be any more "silent witnesses" or deniers. The message of *Anne & Emmett* is extended to the "good people of our society, and they know who they are" (Martin).

Judge Stephanie Domitrovich interviewed Cohen at a conference of Pennsylvania trial Judges in 2015. Cohen's reasons for writing *Anne & Emmett* are in the following quote. "I wrote this play principally for the classroom to show young students the commonality between two people from different races, religions, and regions. My goal was and is not simply to point fingers or assess blame. I continue to try to cast a few shafts of illumination on areas that by design or indifference have remained in the shadow of our thought and actions" (Domitrovich 33).

"While we may never be able to eliminate our biases, by becoming aware that these biases exist, we will be better able to manage them. The entertainment world plays an important role in reinforcing implicit bias" (Domitrovich 33). "My hope is that my play will call forth the better

angels of our nature and cast of policies and practices inconsistent with our ideals so we may reach a higher level of humanity, decency, and justice" (Domitrovich 33).

Janet Langhart Cohen spoke regarding the performance of *Anne & Emmett* for training purposes in the New York City police department. She said a textbook or a lecture may not be sufficient, "but you can get it when human emotions are played live on stage and that humanity can connect" (CBS New York/AP). Cohen considered that if her play reached one person "with a badge and a gun," she would be "happy." The playwright declared that a body camera only covers so much and that her play will "revive that humanity" (CBS New York/AP). "I thought, where better than at the tip of the spear of law enforcement, where we African Americans, in particular, are having so much trouble with excessive force, with police brutality, with disproportionate stop and frisks." "They don't always see us the way we see each other" (CBS New York/AP).

**Talk about your play's premiere, please.**

Cohen wanted the play to be produced on June 12, Anne Frank's birthday (Cohen, A Conversation). However, on what would have been her play's opening night at the U.S. Holocaust Museum, a security guard was shot. Cohen responded, "This is what the play is about. It's about hate" (Stabley et al.). However, she also remembered the words in Anne Frank's diary. "Anne said, I believe in the goodness of people, that people are really good at heart. And I remembered her words when I heard the news that this man had killed the young security officer, Officer Johns. I tried to remember there is goodness in people" (Martin).

*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* was scheduled for its premiere performance on June 10, 2009, at the United States Holocaust Museum (The Reliable Source). Because of the shooting of Johns, a security guard at the museum, the performance was moved

(Martin). A June 11, 2009, interview with Cohen indicated that she had been on the way to the venue when the shooting occurred. The performance needed to be rescheduled (Martin).

A public reading was done on June 12, 2009, at George Washington University (The Reliable Source) in the Jack Horton Auditorium (Martin). Robbie McCauley directed the George Washington University (GWU) production. Morgan Freeman was the narrator's voice-over, and the original music was written by a 16-year-old composer, Joshua Coyne (Miloy). At the GWU production, when Emmett first appeared in "Memory," it was against a backdrop of a tree with a noose hanging from a limb (Miloy).

*Emmett and Anne'*s first complete production was mounted at Atlas Performing Arts Center, Washington D.C., from November 3 to 6, 2011 (Taylor). Janet Langhart Cohen's husband, William Cohen, produced the production with New York actors and a New York director. Maruti Evans (Jackson, "Anne and Emmett") designed the set and lights.

The play was produced with complete sets. Morgan Freeman again played the voice-over actor (The Reliable Source). A barn-like setting with hazy, wafting fog drifting through the slats and a massive center-hinged upstage door for entrances into "Memory" made up the scene. Diary excerpts in Frank's handwriting were projected on the set's back wall. The ending film footage of the 2009 shooting at the Holocaust Museum on the night of the initially scheduled reading was incorporated into the play's ending slide show.

**What did you hope to carry out by your play's staging style?**

The short-run Metro Stage/Race and Reconciliation in America (RARIA) production of *Anne & Emmett* in May 2015 was described as having a "reverent, respectful directorial touch of Thomas W. Jones II. *Anne & Emmett* is a forceful work of art. His style and staging also helped to give the two young main characters some teen spirit and youthful dimensions. They were not just

iconic, historic figures" (Siegel). "*Anne & Emmett* built into harrowing proportions because of the acting prowess of its four-member cast. As the show progressed there was not only a collective hush in the audience, but a leaning forward into the production's growing tension" (Siegel).

> The technical design team deserves abundant credit. The original and evocative music by Joshua Coyne and William Knowles underscored the dialogue and each of the characters' personal styles. William Knowles was the music director. Robbie Hayes produced a set and projection design that gave copious visual cues to the audience, not with shouts of "look at me" but more whispers of sorrowful events. He had gathered and projected images that floated into view, at the rear of a sparse set, onto wide roughly hewn irregular thick pine planks. (Siegel)
>
> With Veronica J. Lancaster's sound design, the snippets of the song "Strange Fruit" met up with the infamous photo of the lynching of three young black men in Marion on August 7, 1930. John D. Alexander's lighting design made the color crimson a gasp of fear and death, while Jane Fink's costume design placed the show in its time and place. One note: in King's hands, a hat became a living, breathing entity. (Siegel)

**How did you bend the constraints of time/space in your work? What were your intentions with the manipulation?**

The 57-page one-act play by Janet Langhart Cohen opens with a voice-over that introduces Anne and Emmett in a place called "Memory" and asks what would happen if we did not remember them (Cohen 5). Placing Anne & Emmett in "Memory" allowed the two to have (Cohen, A Conversation) about something that Cohen wondered about (Loria). The two were separated by physical space and by time. They lived on separate continents in different periods, Holocaust-era Europe and Jim Crow-era United States, Anne Frank (1929–45) and Emmett Till (1941–55).

**If you kept Anne's pseudonyms for the people she knew, why did you? If you used the real-life names of the individuals, why did you do so?**

Anne's immediate family was referred to by their first names or their relationship title to her: her father, Otto (Cohen 4), as Otto and Poppa (10), Edith, her mother as "Mother" (11), and her sister, Margot as Margot (11). Peter, the son of the van Daans (pseudonym), was only referred

to as "Peter: (26). The rest of the people in hiding were referred to as "our friends" (11), "eight scared people" (27), "Everyone" (47), and "the eight of us" (54).

**What part did any playwriting texts play while creating your work?**

Janet Langhart Cohen did not appear to use playwriting texts to create her work. Cohen says,

> I guess I'm sort of mystical, or I don't know metaphysical, but it feels like the play wrote itself. And they channeled me because even though I am a writer, I'm not a fiction writer. So, even though they are real people, this imagination is mine. And as I wrote it, it just poured into me. And when I wrote the monologue for Anne, her dying scene, I had laryngitis and could not speak, one of Bill's happiest moments, and Bill said we had a deadline; we've got to get this in. It just came through me and through me. I felt her. Emmett's voice was harder to write. Emmett doesn't have any diary I'm aware of, anything he's written. I only know what his mother said, and I met his cousins. So, I gave Emmett my voice because he and I, the same age, same region." (Cohen, A Conversation)

**What were the challenges you met while writing your play?**

So, Cohen took out her Blackberry and attempted to "remember all (she) could remember about Anne Frank." She did this because Anne Frank impacted her life differently than Emmett Till had affected her life (Martin). Cohen went on to say, "The Jewish people had similar commonalities to the struggle of American racism. I wondered what Anne would say to Emmett" (Loria).

Janet Langhart Cohen is a writer of autobiographical material. Writing fictional material was different for her. She said, "because even though I am a writer, I'm not a fiction writer. So, even though they are real people, this imagination is mine" (Cohen, A Conversation).

> Emmett's voice was harder to write. Emmett doesn't have any diary I'm aware of, anything he's written. I only know what his mother said, and I met his cousins. So, I gave Emmett my voice because he and I are the same age and same region, and we're probably related. (Cohen, A Conversation)

In a 2022 interview at Bowdoin College, at which she received an honorary degree, Cohen remarked about challenges in writing *Anne & Emmett*. She said,

> Stumbling blocks. It's funny to say that because a third-grade teacher said, 'Make every stumbling block a stepping stone.' So, I used them that way. And I learned. Every time there was a stumbling block, I learned. Like, for instance, I wanted to put the menorah…My not being Jewish, I had to be very careful in how I handled that, but also handling Anne. She's sacred. She's sacred to all of us 'cause she symbolizes something about mankind. The belief in the goodness of people, despite what she was going through, and the evil that destroyed her, the contrast. And then, as I was reading about her, I thought, when I put the play up, I'll put a menorah on the set. And then I did my research and discovered they weren't religious, they were secular. And I thought that's taking too many liberties. I have Jewish friends. When they learned that I was doing the play, they would say, one said, "You're not going to change our Anne, are you?' And I thought he's mine, too. No, I love her. I'm gonna be true to her. And I felt like a parent. Those of you who are parents and have more than one kid, you can imagine what it's like to treat them all equally even though they're different and have different needs. So, I had to take special care with her for so many reasons. With Emmett, I had many of my Black friends say, 'Why are you including Anne Frank? Talk about Emmett Till.' And I understand that point of view, but you can't appreciate Emmett given that if I were to ask anybody in this room, maybe not this room, but everybody in the classrooms, where the play has been middle school, and I would ask, 'How many of you have heard about Anne Frank?' Every hand goes up. If I ask, 'How many of you have heard about Emmett Till?' One or two hands go up. I could understand the Black point of view and wanting to get that story out, not to compete, not to one up, but, hey, we're still in this lingering Holocaust, small age Holocaust. That was really rough trying to reconcile that and then taking liberties with people I really didn't know and had only read about. So, I read Emmett's mother's book, *The Death of Innocence*. (Cohen, A Conversation)

**Discuss your writing schedule or routine you used when writing your Anne Frank play.**

Janet Langhart Cohen does not seem to speak of a writing schedule or routine regarding the writing of *Anne & Emmett*. I constructed a timeline for her play's evolution into a produced work. She mentioned sitting down and beginning to write on her handheld device after her husband suggested she write about her outrage when a friend insisted that bringing up her history in her book was "unbecoming" (Loria). This event occurred before her 2004 publication of *From Rage to Reason: My Life in Two Americas* (Cohen and Kopelman). The longer Cohen researched, the more she found that the stories of Frank and Till intertwined (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred").

She interviewed Emmett's cousin, Simeon Wright (Martin). Cohen also described the play text as "flowing through her" when reminded of a deadline (Cohen, A Conversation). The longer Cohen researched, the more she found that the stories of Frank and Till intertwined. At the first reading of *Anne & Emmett*, Cohen remarked that she could "barely focus on the stage" because "she felt the spirits of their parents…so strongly…demanding to be heard…their sacrifices to be acknowledged and recognized" (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). This production was in January 2009 (Pelikhov). The play was work-shopped and read with Theater J and the Theatre Lab School of Dramatic Arts and was presented at the Theatre Lab School's April 2009 Spring Gala (Langhart Communications).

At the Emerson College production, the images of Albert Einstein, Woody Allen, Elie Wiesel, Sojourner Truth, Malcolm X, and Maya Angelou were among the projections used in the play (Pelikhov).

A public reading was done on June 12, 2009, at George Washington University (The Reliable Source) in the Jack Horton Auditorium (Martin). Robbie McCauley directed the George Washington University (GWU) production. Morgan Freeman was the narrator's voice-over, and the original music was written by a 16-year-old composer, Joshua Coyne (Miloy). At the GWU production, when Emmett first appeared in "Memory," it was against a backdrop of a tree with a noose hanging from a limb (Miloy).

The first complete production of *Anne & Emmett* was mounted at Washington D.C.'s Atlas Performing Arts Center in November of 2011. William Cohen bankrolled that production as a producer. The play was cast with New York actors and a New York director. It was produced with complete sets and a voice-over by Morgan Freeman (The Reliable Source). The production ran from November 3–6, 2011 (Taylor). This production included a barn-like setting

with hazy, wafting fog drifting through the slats. A massive upstage door was hinged at the center for entrances into the light of "Memory." Anne's handwriting was projected on the back wall of the set. The ending film footage of the 2009 shooting at the Holocaust Museum on the night of the initially scheduled reading was incorporated into the play's end slide show. Maruti Evans (Jackson, "Anne and Emmett") designed the set and lights. The 57-page version of *Anne & Emmett* has copyright dates of 2006 and 2013 by Langhart Communications, LLC. The 2021 copyright is by Anne & Emmett LLC (Cohen, *Anne & Emmett* 2).

**Please speak about any dramatic conflict in your play.**

Although the Jewish and Black communities have historic links, there is some conflict between them which is reflected in *Anne & Emmett*. This conflict occurs when the two children are talking about "who is more of a victim" when comparing treatment by their oppressors. Cohen commented, "And here they're just being children, talking about that, and nobody wins but the haters" (Martin). Janet Langhart Cohen explained it by saying, "You always want to have conflict in a play. You try to avoid it in life, but it works on stage. And I had to remember that they were teenagers and were more open than adults. They're less politically correct" (Martin).

She talked about a real point of historical conflict regarding Emmett Till: the whistle. Cohen indicated that Till's cousin, Simeon Wright, has attended every performance, reading, and total production. Simeon Wright had been with Emmett at the moment that decided his fate. She commented, "What I had been denying in my life, that Emmett did whistle. He did whistle. But even so, it was a young boy showing off, trying to prove to his cousins he didn't have to do things and scrape and act like a happy Negro down there" (Martin). In fact, Cohen had his character speak about "that internal genocide. The legacy of slavery." His character remarked, "You don't know

how badly slavery messed us up. Field slave against house slave, you know. It divided us from each other and pitted us against each other. We still have that legacy now, it's sad to say" (Martin).

**Talk about any significant revisions to your script. When did they happen, and why?**

In the "Annex" section of *Love in Black and White* by William S. Cohen with Janet Langhart Cohen, there is an early version of *Anne & Emmett* (Cohen and Cohen 343). This *Anne & Emmett* was the first version of *Anne & Emmett*. It was a staged reading at William Cohen and Janet Langhart Cohen's Rage and Reconciliation in America (RARIA) Conference held July 24 and 25, 2008, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. ("About Us"). The early version of Janet Langhart Cohen's play is only 22 pages long. Unlike the 2021 version, the fifty-seven-page published version has a preface by Cohen that starts with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Cohen and Cohen 343). There is no voice-over character at the beginning or end of the script (Cohen and Cohen). The play has a projection screen located at the center stage, on which projections, similar to the 2021 play's projections, are part of the production (344–64). The cast includes four Nazis, Dutch Security Police (344, 363), young Black kids (345), Papa Mose (345), Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam (346), Carolyn Bryant Donham (346), and four Ku Klux Klansmen (363). Mamie and Otto do not appear in the cast list in the early work (Cohen and Cohen). The earlier script also has prescriptive instructions for all images displayed on the projection screen. In fact, the screen is utilized with more than 25 different images related to the play, from period images from both main characters' lives to contemporary race-related crime victims (Cohen and Cohen). The music includes "If I Were a Rich Man" from *Fiddler on the Roof*, Billie Holiday singing "Strange Fruit," and music from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* (355). Anne is literally captured twice by the Nazis onstage (344, 363). Emmett is killed onstage by hooded Klansmen (346) and dragged off a second time by them when Anne is dragged away her second time (363).

**Speak about your play's most significant production ingredient.**

Janet Langhart Cohen does not address what she may believe is her play's most significant production ingredient. Cohen noted that her background made *Anne & Emmett*'s writing possible. She said, "I am a black woman who carries the quintessential Jewish surname, Cohen. My father-in-law was Jewish, and my mother's paternal family are Jewish. As such, I have insights into and experiences involving both communities. The complexity of my identification in many ways enabled me to write the play *Anne & Emmett*, an imaginary conversation between Anne Frank and Emmett Till, two teenage martyrs who lived in societies that couldn't protect them" (Cohen, "Israel").

**Tell me about the greatest joy you met in writing your play.**

Cohen does not explicitly speak about joy or elation regarding writing this *Anne & Emmett*. Instead, she hopes to reach people with the message of combatting hate to repair the world. She said, "If the play can reach one man or woman with a badge and a gun, I'm happy. Their training can only take them so far. The body cams will only cover sometimes. At some point, I'm hoping their humanity will kick in, and hopefully, this play will rescue that humanity" (CBS New York/AP).

**What kind of preparation did you do for writing about Anne Frank/your historical personage?**

Cohen and her classmates were required to read *The Diary of Anne Frank* at Crispus Attucks High School, an all-Black school. Janet identified with Anne. Except for "geography and ethnicity, we could have been sisters" (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*).

Cohen had been excited about attending a racially integrated high school. Then she heard about Emmett Till, "murdered for whistling at a white woman. And those who did it are paid $4000

by a magazine to tell the story. I thought I better not go to an integrated school if they could get away with that and get paid for talking about doing it" (Loria).

Cohen has felt a life-long connection to Anne Frank and Emmett Till. It was in her teens that her connection to them began. After finishing Anne Frank's diary in high school, Cohen opened the pages of *Jet* magazine to see Emmett Till (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). For fifty years, she did not think of Anne and Emmett together. "But their two lives suddenly snapped together at the moment." A friend had insulted Cohen's history and heritage (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*).

The longer Cohen researched, the more she found that Frank and Till's stories were intertwined. At the first reading of *Anne & Emmett*, Cohen remarked that she could "barely focus on the stage" because "she felt the spirits of their parents…so strongly…demanding to be heard…their sacrifices to be acknowledged and recognized" (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred").

To write about Emmett, she did at least two things. "I read Emmett's mother's book, *The Death of Innocence*" (Cohen, A Conversation). She also interviewed Simeon Wright. She talked about a real point of historical conflict regarding Emmett Till: the whistle. Cohen indicated that Till's cousin, Simeon Wright, has attended every performance, reading, and total production. Simeon Wright had been with Emmett at the moment that decided his fate. She commented, "What I had been denying in my life, that Emmett did whistle. He did whistle. But even so, it was a young boy showing off, trying to prove to his cousins he didn't have to do things and scrape and act like a happy Negro down there" (Martin).

**How does your religion or spirituality inform your Anne Frank play? You may decline to answer. Does your religious or spiritual view inform your work?**

> I guess I'm sort of mystical, or I don't know metaphysical, but it feels like the play wrote itself. And they channeled me because even though I am a writer, I'm not a fiction writer.

> So, even though they are real people, this imagination is mine. And as I wrote it, it just poured into me. And when I wrote the monologue for Anne, her dying scene, I had laryngitis and could not speak, one of Bill's happiest moments, and Bill said we had a deadline; we've got to get this in. It just came through me and through me. I felt her. Emmett's voice was harder to write. Emmett doesn't have any diary I'm aware of, anything he's written. I only know what his mother said, and I met his cousins. So, I gave Emmett my voice because he and I are the same age, same region, we're probably related. His mother had worked for my cousin, I discovered in the research. So, I gave him my voice. And then when the play was stood up as a reading at Emerson College in Boston, it was although the play was going on, I was watching the play. Bill and I were holding our breath 'cause this is the first time we've seen it. And it was as though something was tapping me, like this, on my back. So afterwards, when we went home, I said to Bill, 'Mamie and Otto have to be in this play." Mamie Till-Mobley, the mother of Emmett, and Otto Frank, the father of Anne. And if it hadn't been for these two parents who lost their children, we wouldn't know about them with Otto finding Anne's diary after he was released, finding her diary, and pushing to have it published, and wanting to have a play about Anne. He wanted the world to know what had happened to her, and Emmett's mother insisting that the coffin be open so the world could see what this country does to black people. And *Jet Magazine*, a company I later worked for, Mr. Johnson had the courage to print that because he could have lost advertising. He printed that. And I go back to the summer of 1955; I'm 14 and I'm reading her diary. I just closed her diary, and the pages are tear stained. I just closed her diary. I came home 'cause I'd gone to summer school that summer. I come home to my mother's kitchen with my little brother, and she's very solemn. And I said, 'What is it?' And she showed me *Jet Magazine,* and I opened it, and I saw the grotesque corpse of Emmett Till. And I cried again and a little anger.
> (Cohen, A Conversation)

I now discuss the historical events and conditions that may have prompted the writing of *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play: A One-Act Play*. Cohen's professional website is headed by a quote regarding her life's mission. It reads, "My goal is to inspire, educate, elevate and give back" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*).

Janet Langhart Cohen was born on December 22, 1941 ("Janet Langhart Cohen's Biography"). Cohen grew up in segregated Indianapolis, Indiana, living with her mother and sister (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). Indiana has a deep Ku Klux Klan history. In 1915, the Indiana Klan was formed in Evansville, Indiana. Klan Day at the State Fair was passed in 1922 by Indiana's state senate. By 1924, the Klan influenced all politics when Governor Edward Jackson controlled Indiana's state government. Due to a murder scandal created by the Klan's Grand Dragon, D. C.

Stephenson, the ruling body of the Klan was publicly outed. Their influence continued much less openly after the 1925 outing of their leaders (Fischer). One of Cohen's first memories as a child was of being taken by the children of her mother's white employers to peer down upon a Klan meeting. She also mentions seeing some individuals wearing their Klan robes on the street or as they leave their places of business ("Janet Langhart Cohen's Biography").

Cohen says that her mother taught her the importance of education, pride in her race, and the "desire to make a difference" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). Her mother also taught her about racism, warning her that people might not like her due to her skin color (Taylor). Cohen heard family stories of her third cousin, Jimmy Gillenwaters. Gillenwaters was lynched at 17 years of age. He was murdered in 1912 near Bowling Green, Kentucky (Thomas-Lester). Her grandparents told how nightriders (nocturnal horseback mounted individuals who ride in darkness to hurt, kill, or terrorize African Americans, especially in the South) got into her family's home. After the incident, they all went to bed believing the family was intact; all survived. In the morning, Cohen's Aunt Bertha woke up. Her son was not in the house. Her aunt found her son hanging from a tree. The only record of the murder was the family's recounting. Cohen only feels anger, not hate, regarding the lynching (Thomas-Lester).

After the Supreme Court ruling that "I, as a little colored girl, was equal to anyone white and I could go to any school I wanted" (Loria), Cohen had been excited about attending a racially integrated high school. Then she heard about Emmett Till, "murdered for whistling at a white woman. And those who did it are paid $4000 by a magazine to tell the story. I thought I better not go to an integrated school if they could get away with that and get paid for talking about doing it" (Loria).

Cohen chooses to attend Crispus Attucks High School. She described the school as "functionally all black because of residential segregation" regardless of the state and federal desegregation laws ("For the Sake of Honor"). It was at Crispus Attucks High School, an all-Black school, that Cohen and her classmates were required to read *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Janet identified with Anne. Except for "geography and ethnicity, we could have been sisters" (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). Cohen graduated from Crispus Attucks High School in 1959. From 1960 to 1962, she attended Butler University ("Janet Langhart Cohen's Biography").

In the 1960s, Janet Langhart Cohen became an Ebony Fashion Fair model. Her modeling career exposed her to the world, and she began working in the communications industry. In her travels, she met individuals like Mahalia Jackson, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Her Civil Rights activism was empowered by her meeting them. Cohen worked with MLK, Jr. and a group of others attempting to get Muhammed Ali out of prison for avoiding the Vietnam War Draft (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne and Emmet: A One Act Play*). She was the first Black woman to host the nationally syndicated "Good Morning" show. Cohen worked for major broadcasting networks, including ABC, NBC, *Entertainment Tonight*, BET, and the Armed Forces Network. She also worked as a print journalist for *The Boston Herald* (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). Cohen also worked as a spokesperson for Avon Cosmetics and *U.S. News & World Report*. Cohen was featured in *Boston and Washingtonian Magazine*, *Ebony*, *W*, *Tam*, *Glamour*, *Vogue*, *Bazaar*, *Encore,* and *Jet*. She was a judge for the White House Fellows Program and judged the Miss America Pageant four times (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*).

Cohen's current husband is former Secretary of Defense William Cohen (Martin). Since marrying him, she initiated the Citizen Patriot Award, the First Military Families Forum, and

created and produced "The Pentagon Pops" (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). At a 2009 Emerson College reading of her work, Janet Langhart Cohen referred to her husband as "her muse" regarding her play *Anne & Emmett*. Her reference is partly due to his being half Jewish and "he has a history of being discriminated against" (Pelikhov). She feels that she and her husband share a history of discriminatory treatment by others.

In 2004, Cohen wrote her memoir, *From Rage to Reason: My Life in Two Americas*. 2007 is the year that she and her husband, William Cohen, co-wrote a memoir. The work was called *Love in Black and White: A Memoir about Race, Religion, and Romance*. Together they edited *Race and Reconciliation in America*. This second book was based on their national conference hosted at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). The Race and Reconciliation in America (RARIA) Conference took place July 24 and 25, 2008, in Washington, D.C. This conference was convened to discuss race and focus on education, law and criminal justice, economic inequality, media and film, religion, and the next generation. This conference included excerpts from *Anne & Emmett* (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). Janet Langhart Cohen used her creative talent to push forward a "nationwide dialogue on race and reconciliation" by working on three new plays (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*).

Cohen has felt a life-long connection to Anne Frank and Emmett Till. It was in her teens that her connection to them began. After finishing Anne Frank's diary in high school, Cohen opened the pages of *Jet* magazine to see Emmett Till (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). For fifty years from that point, she did not think of Anne & Emmett together. "But their two lives suddenly snapped together at the moment." The instance when a friend insulted Cohen's history and heritage (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*).

Cohen related that she was at a luncheon in Washington, D.C. She was drafting her book, *From Rage to Reason: My Life in Two Americas*, published in 2007 (Martin). The friend had thought Cohen's book was about cooking or fashion (Loria). Cohen responded that her book was called *From Rage to Reason*. Her friend asked, "What do you mean rage?" Cohen answered her question, "my life in two Americas. I grew up in apartheid America, a segregated America, a Jim Crow America. When I was a little girl, we had to sit on the back of the bus in certain parts of this country, and I wanted to write about that experience" (Martin). The woman responded, "Oh, Janet, you're so successful. You're married to a prominent man. It would be unbecoming of you to play the victim" (Martin; Loria). This comment was what Cohen says catalyzed *Anne & Emmett* (Loria).

Cohen was curious why the woman would accuse her of playing the victim. Cohen was writing about the reality of her history. As an African American, how could she write a biography without the discussion of racism? The comment took Cohen aback. She thought that because the woman was of European descent, she may not have studied Janet's history or slavery in school (Loria). For Cohen, it sent the message that her friend did not see Cohen's history as worth remembering. Cohen said, "She can't allow me to, or has a problem with discussing my history, which is also her history. We didn't have slaves without having enslavers" (Loria). Janet Langhart Cohen believes that everyone's history is worthy of remembrance. "Black people are told to forget it when all other history is recounted" (Loria).

Cohen wanted to respond that she was not a victim but a survivor. However, having grown up understanding the Holocaust and its atrocities, she felt that "survivor in many cases has a capital "S." Because the woman was Jewish, out of respect, Cohen said nothing, although she was enraged (Loria). She came home and told her husband that it was injurious to hear that her history was "unbecoming." Cohen's spouse suggested she write about it. So, Cohen took out her Blackberry

and began writing, trying to "remember all (she) could remember about Anne Frank. She did this because Anne Frank impacted her life differently than Emmett Till had affected her life (Martin). Cohen went on to say, "The Jewish people had similar commonalities to the struggle of American racism. I wondered what Anne would say to Emmett" (Loria).

Cohen noted similarities between herself and Emmett Till: race, age, and region. Emmett Till was seen by her as "our marker" and "our Anne Frank" by Cohen. Till's memory lives on if he is in people's thoughts (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). She also indicated that she started a diary after reading Frank's. They both wrote of comparable topics in their diaries. Frank "lived in an attic and was afraid of the Nazis finding her and her family." Cohen resided in a ghetto "and feared police patrolling even though I never did anything wrong" (Loria). She also saw a connection between Jim Crow tactics and Nazism (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). Cohen viewed herself as both Anne and Emmett. She indicated that she gave Emmett her rage. Although Janet Langhart Cohen had never read anything he might have written, she put herself into his character. She was the same age and race and came from the same geographic region (Martin). Cohen indicated that she, too, learned racism early, at seven years old, because, like Emmett Till, her life depended on it too (Loria). They both had the same experiences with white people in the South. Frank and Cohen were both 15-year-old girls with mother issues, a sister, and a desire to be their father's favorite while living in a scary place, "waiting for someone to get you and knowing what would happen to you" (Martin).

A while after the play's publication, Cohen spoke on a podcast called "The Takeout." She was commenting in the aftermath of an August 2017 white supremacist rally that turned— violent including injury and death. She continued talking about the links between Emmett Till and Anne Frank. "They were both the same age, and their oppressors' tactics were the same. They were

segregated and lived in ghettos." "The Jewish people had to wear yellow patches to identify them from other whites. Blacks here didn't have to wear patches. Pigmentation was enough…The Jewish people had to sit up in the balconies at cinemas. We blacks had to sit up in the balcony of theatres here in my youth called the 'crow's nest'" (Krawchenko). In another interview, Cohen commented on the ironic nature of still-existent racism: "it's just in a different form. We see it every day, from white police officers accidentally killing unarmed youth to the Republican campaign as it relates to an African American president" (Taylor).

The longer Cohen researched, the more she found that Frank and Till's stories intersected. At the first reading of *Anne & Emmett*, Cohen remarked that she could "barely focus on the stage" because "she felt the spirits of their parents … so strongly … demanding to be heard … their sacrifices to be acknowledged and recognized" (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred").

Janet Langhart Cohen offered all audiences the imaginary conversation between Frank and Till. However, she hoped that individuals of Anne's and Emmett's age would learn of or never forget the past. "We are not doomed to repeat the past if we listen to their voices. We can repair the world" (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). Cohen declared, "I wrote the play as a call to action to help eradicate racism and anti-semitism" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). She indicated that her play was "not about race, it's about hate" (Pelikhov). Her play was "a call to action to stop the hate: *tikkun olam* ('repair the world')" (Cohen, "Israel"). Cohen indicates that civilized individuals discover hate and how to deal with it. "Then do something about it" (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). She also felt the importance of "remembering our collective histories" (Pelikhov). Cohen wrote the play for young people. She indicated that she is collaborating with the National Council for Social Studies. Cohen would like the play taught to middle and high school students to "enlighten general audiences" (Martin). She would like people

to know that although we all have different religions, different skin colors, and different histories, struggle and pain are common to all of us (Martin).

Cohen hopes that *Anne & Emmett* will create a climate of open dialogue about the American apartheid of slavery, the Holocaust, and our "current state of race and human relations" (Taylor). She saw her work as a "call to action." She wrote not only to compare the situations between Blacks and Jews. Her play attempted to stop the hate and genocide cycle or at least to manage it (Taylor). Cohen felt that she had unique insight and experiences regarding Jews and Blacks. She said, "The complexity of my identification in many ways enabled her to write the play, *Anne & Emmett*." Janet Langhart Cohen was a Black woman with a Jewish father-in-law. She had Jewish ancestry on her mother's father's side (Cohen, "Israel"). Cohen hoped her play would lead to "national dialogue about race and equality in America" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*).

Cohen's call to action with her work extended to all races and religions. Being a bystander will no longer be an option in our society. She said there cannot be any more "silent witnesses" or deniers. The message of *Anne & Emmett* extends to the "good people of our society, and they know who they are" (Martin). On what would have been her play's opening night at the U.S. Holocaust Museum, a security guard was shot. Cohen pointed out, "This is what the play is about. It's about hate" (Stabley et al.). However, she also remembered the words from Anne Frank's diary. "Anne said, I believe in the goodness of people, that people are really good at heart. And I remembered her words when I heard the news that this man had killed the young security officer, Officer Johns. I tried to remember there is goodness in people" (Martin). This concept related to another theme Cohen saw in the play, "the question of how one should personally respond to hate." "Emmet is…somewhat bitter and angry." "Anne is a bit more optimistic" (Martin).

Another of Cohen's purposes for writing *Anne & Emmett* involved a reduction of tension between Blacks and Jews. She also hoped the reunification of the two groups could occur due to her work. Cohen wished this due to their historical alliance during the Civil Rights Movement. According to Cohen, their historical partnership during the Civil Rights era is currently unremembered. She revealed this hope after a January 2009 performance of her play at Emerson College (Pelikhov). Cohen wanted to make a difference, not money (The Reliable Source). Cohen recalled the Jewish community's powerful words of "Never Again" and used them to tell the story of *Anne & Emmett* (Loria).

Although the Jewish and Black communities have historic links, there is some conflict between them in *Anne & Emmett*. This conflict occurs when the two children are talking about "who is more of a victim" when comparing treatment by their oppressors. Cohen commented, "And here they're just being children, talking about that, and nobody wins but the haters" (Martin). Janet Langhart Cohen explained it by saying, "You always want to have conflict in a play. You try to avoid it in life, but it works on stage. And I had to remember that they were teenagers and were more open than adults. They're less politically correct" (Martin).

She talked about an actual point of historical conflict regarding Emmett Till: the whistle. Cohen indicated that Till's cousin, Simeon Wright, has attended every performance, reading, and total production. Wright had been with Emmett at the moment that decided his fate. Wright revealed the truth to Cohen. She commented, "What I had been denying in my life, that Emmett did whistle. He did whistle. But even so, it was a young boy showing off, trying to prove to his cousins he didn't have to do things and scrape and act like a happy Negro down there" (Martin). In fact, Cohen had his character speak about "that internal genocide. The legacy of slavery." His character remarked, "You don't know how badly slavery messed us up. Field slave against house

slave, you know. It divided us from each other and pitted us against each other. We still have that legacy now, it's sad to say" (Martin).

Whether it was Black Americans' internal or external struggles, Cohen hoped her work would instruct people and respond to them. She said that living as an African American woman in the United States, she had gone "from the euphoria of having an African American president to seeing more young African Americans killed by police" (Martin). Janet Langhart Cohen spoke regarding the performance of *Anne & Emmett* for training purposes, rather than a lecture or reading, in the New York City police department. "When human emotions are played live on stage, and that humanity can connect" (CBS New York/AP) and reach one person "with a badge and a gun," she "is happy." The playwright declared that a body camera only covers so much and that her play will "revive that humanity" (CBS New York/AP). "I thought, where better than at the tip of the spear of law enforcement, where we African Americans, in particular, are having so much trouble with excessive force, with police brutality, with disproportionate stop and frisks." "They don't always see us the way we see each other" (CBS New York/AP).

This work attempts to discover why Cohen paired Anne Frank and Emmett Till by examining the play and scouring publications for comments about it by Cohen. Attempts by this author to contact Cohen for an interview were unsuccessful. Possibly, Janet Langhart Cohen did not feel it necessary to talk about her work with the author because she has a book coming out in May 2025. That book is titled *Anne & Emmett: Why I Wrote the Play*. According to the publisher Rowman & Littlefield, the work examines the people and events in Cohen's life that "enabled her to link Anne and Emmett." In the work, Cohen identifies dialogue from the play and explains the events that "triggered" her thoughts. This upcoming publication is written to both explain "why I

am as I am" and how anti-semitism and racism impacted her and the creation of the play ("Anne Frank and Emmett Till").

*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* was scheduled for its premiere performance on June 10, 2009, at the United States Holocaust Museum (The Reliable Source). Because of the shooting of a security guard at the museum, the performance was moved (Martin). A June 11, 2009, interview with Cohen indicated that she had been on the way to the venue when the shooting occurred. The performance needed to be rescheduled (Martin).

There was also a record of a reading at Emerson College in January 2009 as the work's U.S. premiere reading. In that reading, Cohen suggested that good came from tragedy because the death of Emmett Till sparked Rosa Parks to stand up for her people. Cohen indicated that Parks was often quoted as saying that the thought of Till kept her from moving to the back of the bus (Pelikhov). At the Emerson College production, the images of Albert Einstein, Woody Allen, Elie Wiesel, Sojourner Truth, Malcolm X, and Maya Angelou were among the projections used in the play (Pelikhov).

A public reading was done on June 12, 2009, at George Washington University (The Reliable Source) in the Jack Horton Auditorium (Martin). Robbie McCauley directed the George Washington University (GWU) production. Morgan Freeman was the narrator's voice-over, and the original music was written by a 16-year-old composer, Joshua Coyne (Miloy). At the GWU production, when Emmett first appeared in "Memory," it was against a backdrop of a tree with a noose hanging from a limb (Miloy).

The first complete production of *Emmett and Anne* was mounted at Washington D.C.'s Atlas Performing Arts Center in November of 2011. William Cohen bankrolled that production as a producer. Cast with New York actors and a New York director, it was produced with complete

sets and a voice-over by Morgan Freeman (The Reliable Source). The production ran from November 3–6, 2011 (Taylor). This production included a barn-like setting with hazy, wafting fog drifting through the slats. A massive upstage door was hinged at the center for entrances into the light of "Memory." Anne's handwriting was projected on the back wall of the set. The ending film footage of the 2009 shooting at the Holocaust Museum on the night of the initially scheduled reading was incorporated into the play's end slide show. Maruti Evans (Jackson, "Anne & Emmett") designed the set and lights.

The New York City Police Department used the play to train police recruits in 2015. Over two performances in Queens, 1,100 recruits saw the play. The hope was that the play's message would prepare the recruits to overcome community resentment and personal bias (CBS New York/AP).

Two years later, a Metro Stage production of *Anne & Emmett* had a limited run (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). The work at the Metro Stage in Alexandria, Virginia, included a mostly bare stage with two benches and chairs and an upstage wooden slat wall. Robbie Hayes, the set designer, also designed the projections of news clippings, which included mass graves and Emmett Till's corpse. The production included original music by teen prodigy Joshua Coyne (Furchtgott-Roth) and William Knowles. Knowles was the music director for the production (Mostafavi).

The work was then done in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Following the Winston-Salem engagement, *Anne & Emmett* was done in Amsterdam in collaboration with Chicago's DuSable Museum (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). The play was also performed in Indianapolis and Chicago (CBS New York/AP).

*Anne & Emmett* was performed in educational productions and more theatrical productions. Theatrical productions of *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* included, according to Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play website:

- Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Washington D.C.
- Baltimore School for the Arts, Baltimore, Maryland
- Brown v. Board Center, Topeka, Kansas
- Brownell-Talbot Academy, Omaha, Nebraska
- Emerson College, Boston, Massachusetts
- Bethesda Middle School, Bethesda, Maryland
- Jeremiah Temple, Chicago, Illinois
- Roxbury Community College, Boston, Massachusetts
- Mofet School, Jerusalem, Israel
- National Council for Social Studies, Atlanta, Georgia, and Denver, Colorado
- National Press Club, Washington D.C.
- NYPD Police Academy, Queens, New York
- Sixth and I Synagogue, Washington, D.C.
- The Theater Lab, Washington, D.C.
- Washington Hebrew Congregation, Washington, D.C.
- United States Supreme Court, Washington, D.C.

Theatrical productions include:

- African-American Performing Arts Community Theatre, Miami, Florida
- Atlas Theater, Washington, D.C.
- Black Repertory Theater, Washington, D.C.

- Canopy Roads Theater Company, Tallahassee, Florida
- Crossroads Theater, New Brunswick, New Jersey
- George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
- Harvard Club (special performance by Anna Deavere Smith), New York City
- Haymarket Theater, Lincoln, Nebraska
- Martha's Vineyard Theater, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts
- Mist Theater, Harlem, New York City
- National Black Theater Festival, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
- Oprah Winfrey Theater, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C.
- Theater 3, Washington, D.C.
- Tribeca Theater, New York City
- U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C. (performance canceled due to shooting) (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*).

Janet Langhart Cohen saw a life beyond the stage for her work. *Anne & Emmett: the Other* is a first-person point-of-view (POV) immersive video game developed by Spark Digital Media and Learning Game Network. Executive producers of the game were Janet Langhart Cohen and her husband, William S. Cohen, and RARIA. The game takes place during World War II if one takes the POV of a European Jewish girl. The gameplay occurs during the 1950s, pre-Civil Rights era, if one takes the POV of an African American teen male. Within the game, the characters can be on multiple timelines. Players can also unlock historical artifacts ("Anne & Emmett: The Other").

Janet Langhart Cohen had a five-fold intent for creating her play. Her first facet of intent was as a response to explain her rage for growing up in Jim Crow America. The second facet was intended as an effort to reduce the tension between Blacks and Jews in America to restore the historical alliance between the two groups. Thirdly, she wanted to create a national dialogue about race and equality in the United States. Her fourth effort was to try to extinguish the antisemitism and racism in the U.S., not to assign blame. Finally, Cohen wanted people to experience her work, learn from it, and attain higher levels of justice, humanity, and decency to "repair the world."

Since Cohen's play is published and produced for public consumption and performance, in addition to the productions she mounts and tours, I conclude that Cohen's intent bears some fruit. Her work's selected production history includes 16 educational productions and 15 professional productions across the United States. The numbers do not even include all productions worldwide since its publication. Her decision to share the play with the world increases its possible impact due to her intentions.

From video game content to police training tool to onstage production, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* is one of three unique Anne Frank plays. This pairing of Anne Frank and Emmett Till exhorts the audience/reader to not only remember the doomed pair. Cohen's play charges the audience/reader with the repair of the world. The grace and truth of Anne Frank and Emmett Till are intended to induce the reader/audience to keep the historical figures in both "Memory" and memory.

## CHAPTER IV: LETTERS FROM ANNE AND MARTIN

The fourth chapter discusses *Letters from Anne and Martin*, conceived by Hannah Vaughn, and further developed by Alexandra Gellner. This two-character play juxtaposes Anne Frank and Martin Luther King, Jr., as they speak about peace and unity. This chapter also analyzes the playwrights' interview data and reveals the historical events and conditions that prompted their writing of the work.

I begin my discussion of *Letters from Anne and Martin* using the six elements of play composition from Aristotle's *Poetics* as our framework. The six elements are plot, character, thought, diction, song, and spectacle (*Aristotle*). However, I unfold them concerning the play in an order beneficial to my discussion. Character is the first element covered in my discussion. Only two characters in the play propel the action and dialogue of *Letters from Anne and Martin*: Anne Frank and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. They share the dual role of protagonist in Vaughn and Gellner's work. Their respective antagonists are placed in the pair's contemporaneous cultures.

The diction/language component of the play's MLK, Jr. and Anne Frank characters are comprised of their real persons' epistolary works. The entirety of the dialogue is taken word for word from "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," written by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (King *Letter from Birmingham Jail*), and *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition* (Vaughn, Interview with the author, 18 Dec. 2023). The only stage directions are at the very beginning of the play and four lines from the end of the play. The stage directions indicate the "locations" of two empty chairs and their "real world locations"- one at the 1944 street address of the Secret Annex in which Frank and others hid and the other, at a jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama, on April 16, 1963, the day on which King was historically incarcerated for nonviolent protest. With stage directions, the actors are instructed how to enter, sit in their respective locations, and begin writing/responding.

Anne comes in carrying her diary, and King comes in to find a newspaper under his chair (Vaughn and Gellner, *Letters*). Gellner indicates that the actor playing King opens the folded newspaper in production, and a writing implement drops to the floor (Gellner, Interview). No stage directions indicate that the two characters are to interact with or acknowledge the other. The final piece of stage direction at the end of the work is when the characters are basically "signing off" at the end of the work and stating their names. They are to close the play with their respective names; however, the characters say "yours" in unison before their names as they end *Letters from Anne and Martin* (Vaughn and Gellner). They share the dual role of protagonist in Vaughn and Gellner's work. Their antagonists are the contemporaneous cultures of their respective periods. The characters of Anne and Martin do not exhibit conflict between each other but with the social order of their day; for Frank, Nazi-occupied Holland, and for King, Jim Crow Alabama.

The third element of Vaughn and Gellner's play to discuss is song. The work, as written, does not have any song or music prescribed by the playwrights in the script. Neither are there musical instruments or sound effects (Vaughn and Gellner, *Letters*). Due to script-specified music, song, or sound effects, the vocal qualities of the actors' voices are the song component in *Letters from Anne and Martin* (Vaughn and Gellner, *Letters*). In an interview with the author, Gellner indicated that a soundscape was added to the production to help situate the characters in time and space for the audience and increase attention and interest in the production (Gellner, Interview; Vaughn and Gellner, *Letters*).

Element four is spectacle. The spectacle components in *Letters from Anne and Martin* include the actors' costumes and makeup, the newspaper and diary props, and the actors' movements. The play is performed as a portable educational road show for the Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect in New York, New York (*Performances*), so one must assume that is why there

are no unique or overt lighting and setting requirements to the script or overt lighting and setting requirements to the script.

Plot is the fifth element of *Letters from Anne and Martin* I cover. Simply put, the beginning of the plot involves the entrance of first, Martin Luther King, Jr. into his Birmingham jail cell on April 16, 1963, and then Anne Frank's entrance into the loft above Peter's room in their Dutch hiding place sometime during July 1944. The pair sit down in their chairs and start writing, Frank in her diary and King in the margins of a newspaper found under his chair. Stage directions indicate they pause briefly and then talk to the audience. The pair sit down in their chairs and start writing, Frank in her diary and King in the margins of a newspaper found under his chair. Stage directions indicate they pause briefly and then talk to the audience. King starts by addressing clergymen, and Frank addresses the "Kitty" of her diary. After the initial address, the pair begin verbally covering several topics from their respective literary works, continuing to address their audience rather than each other and covering several topics from their work), so one might assume that is why there are no unique or overt lighting and setting requirements to the script.

Thought or theme is the final element I address in *Letters from Anne and Martin*. According to one of the playwrights, Alexandra Gellner, the work is about remembrance of history so that the evil in history is not repeated. Gellner said in an interview with me, "I don't think this is a world where we get to, where we get to have that. You know, we've been, it's, it's, it was stolen from us. This opportunity to see these two (Anne Frank and Martin Luther King, Jr.). These two voices from the same room together. And that's what's so sad. And that's what we have to remember, so that something, everything that happened to them. I mean, it keeps happening. But you know, let's, let's bring our attention to it. So, it happens less and less, rather than more and more over the years" (Gellner, Interview). Indeed*, Letters from Anne and Martin* recruits the audience as "clergy" and

"Kitty." But, by the end of the play, the audience is left with the hopes of "love and brotherhood" and the return of "peace and tranquility" (10) presented to us by "our" Anne Frank and "our" Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (10) that is, if the audience heeds the voices of Dr. King and Anne Frank.

Alexandra Gellner, one of the playwrights of the script *Letters from Anne and Martin*, agreed to an interview via Zoom. The interview took place on April 2, 2024. Here are her responses to the set of questions asked of all playwrights.

**Alexandra Gellner Zoom Interview**

**What motivated you to write a play that used Anne Frank as a character?**

ES: "Do you remember the year that you were told you could take over and could re-collage?

(In her interview, Gellner likened the creation of *Letters from Anne and Martin* to collage. College is a type of art that combines different items or materials into a piece of paper. She considered her and Hannah Vaughn's work more of a collage because they chose sections of King's and Frank's works and juxtaposed them to create a script. They wrote no original dialogue).

AG: "Yeah, I mean, I came on board in 2016, and I, you know, then, I. Hannah had conceived the show in 2013, right. I feel like it started in 2013, so yeah, it was 2016. I, and I, was given the script, and I, and I started, you know, reorganizing. And then, I think, added, maybe a little bit more, as some, a few more excerpts from Anne and Dr. King somewhere in the middle. I can't remember what it-why, exactly. I feel like there was just something in Anne's diary that I just thought, there's something I read in her diary, and there's something I read in 'Birmingham.' I'm like, these things also, really, you know, complement each other. It's where, it's where he's talking about, you know, the, the, just, the dynamic of the oppressed and the oppressor puts, like, the oppressed in, and then 'I-It' relationship and, and 'I-Thou' relationship, and just the, just her experience of being, you know

a marginalized human being and the kind of emotional/mental toll that, that, would take, that takes on her."

**Why did you pair Anne Frank with an African American personage in your work?**

AG: "I have had, you know, audience members, you know, come up and been like, well, if you're paralleling Frank and Dr. King, why not also bring in this? You know, this writing as well, and you know to which, I'm just like, that's, that's a great idea. I mean, we do, and Frank and Dr. King, because they were, you know, both born in 1929. And, we just feel like there's a, a lot of, like, you know, kindred language in both of their, both of their writings."

**What do you share with either of your titular characters?**

AG: "I think, I mean every production, I do. I realize, like, you know, there's, there's a lot I share with every you know, in every person that I work with, but also the characters, I think, with Anne. She's, I mean, I really admire how you know she had such a strong sense of, sense of self, more so than I did when I was her age. I think, where I really see myself and her in her where she, the way that she would, you know, reflect and kind of get, you know, get down on herself, you know. Just kind of reflect and be like, was that the best decision? You know she would be very; she'd be very critical. I think it's in the self-criticism, for sure. And the way she's so, she's so vulnerable in her diary. And talking about that, criticizing herself and talking and talking about, you know, raising, bringing her behavior to the light, and asking yourself, could I, could I have done better? I feel like I see myself with that, and then with, you know, Dr. King, just the way he just like, I, I see, I see both sides. I understand. I understand your anger. I understand, your, you know, your frustration. I understand the temptation to just, you know, be, to be complacent. You don't, but you know I've tried the way that he's like, I've tried to stand between these two opposing forces, saying we need to emulate neither the do-nothingism of the

complacent nor the hatred and despair. I, you know, I'm, I feel like I'm, I'm constantly in that standing, you know, at, at war with those two sides of myself. Just trying to be just you, keep the peace. Do nothing, also, rage and rage. But, you know, where's the middle ground? But even when you did find the middle ground, you're gonna upset so many people like you did. But sometimes, that is the braver way to go. That's very hard."

**Which version, if any, of Anne Frank's diary did you use/consult? Why did you choose that version?**

The definitive version because it is the most comprehensive version available (Vaughn, Interview with the author).

**Did you use any secondary sources in addition to or instead of the diary? What was the source? Why did you use these sources? If you did not use secondary sources, why not?**

N/A.

AG: "It's not our, our words, you know, because it's, it's all from, you know, primary source text."

**Which was more important to you in the writing of your play, textual accuracy (to the diary and secondary sources) or dramatic effect, and why?**

Textual accuracy was more important than dramatic effect. At one performance, Vaughn, the first "collager" of the work, was asked if there had been difficulty in obtaining the rights to use the works of Anne Frank and Martin Luther King, Jr. She assured the questioner, "As advocates for education, dignity, and respect, we take seriously the concept of intellectual property and fair use." The Anne Frank Center USA worked closely with its partners to ensure they stood by the copyrights held by the Anne Frank Fonds (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits").

**Who was the intended audience for your play?**

AG: So, this is a first experience for, for some, some students with like, with theatre. And you know, anytime we hear, you know, a gasp, or you know, a sniffle, you know, I'm just like, okay, I'm, it's, I mean, I'm sorry, but also, I'm, I'm glad we're like we're reaching, you know, in, in, some way. And it's and to hear and to get feedback from students, because every once in a while, we're able to hand out an evaluation to, to, students, on like what their experience was and to have students say it felt like I was there. Is really, I mean, it means a lot. Because that's like one of the main reasons I have, like, I've went. I've gone into theaters to just try to. If there's some, if there's a way to, if we can teach empathy. I feel like it's through, it has to be through theater just by, you know, having people who are, have devoted their lives to being constantly in, you know somebody else's shoes. To do that in front of people, you know, time and time again, have someone watch you do that, you know, for an extended period of time. The hope is, maybe those mirror neurons, will you know, fire within the audience member, seeing somebody putting themselves in somebody else's shoes? And it will, you know, trigger something, trigger some kind of something of mirroring that, that empathy."

Erin Santangelo: "So the intended audience is students and young people?"

AG: "Yeah."

AG: "And with those audiences, you know, it's especially when you have a mix of students and adult audiences. Of course, the adults are like, 'Listen to this, listen to what they're saying,' and you know, and it gets to a point where I am just like, you know, I'm sure they heard us. And you know, they're gonna, this was a lot to take in, and the student will have to. The questions aren't gonna come right away. The students will go home. Let it simmer for a little bit, like, we'll get it started. And conversation to, you know, say, like you know, was there some? Is there something

that's like ringing in your head right now? Is there an image that's ringing? We won't ask for more than that. We just, you know, it's like, is there something that you're walking away with? Right now, or something that was really, it was a heightened moment for you. You don't have to explain yourself at all. Because sometimes these things, you know, will echo back to you years down the road. I had this, so one of my, my, my, parents' really good friends, like she's basically, like, you know, she's my aunt, but she would, she writes mission essays, or like, you know, letters of statements of purpose for students that are applying for university, a certain university in California. She mentioned she was like, somebody mentioned letters. They saw the show. Where in the world did they see it? And she's like, I can't tell you. She's, you know, you know, I'm like, and it's, and it's something that they wanted to mention as they pursue higher education and that has like inspired them some way, I'm just like, okay, well."

**Talk about your play's premiere, please.**

N/A. The play premiered in 2013 (*Performances*). Gellner did not join the Anne Frank Center until 2016.

**What did you hope to carry out by your play's staging style?**

**AG:** "We try to make this as accessible as possible. So, we don't, we don't travel with a lot. We travel with the costumes on our backs and, and you know, a couple of props. I mean, the actors are crucial, of course, and we're there in order to share the dialogue, so, like, you know, comes down to the dialogue, but the most, the one of the more, the most significant ingredient. I feel like, as after we added the sound element. That was like, there's a before and after during the production, from the production history. At least, you know, during my tenure, it's, you know, it was, it was there, was the time before the soundscape, and there's the time after, before, you know, it was. It was pretty dry. It was pretty dry, and we want to, like, you know, we wanted to keep it minimal.

You know, you lose some things because you're not, you do, you don't get to, just like, you know, sit in the comfortable luxury of a typical play, of like seeing conflict between two people. You do have to do some work, and if you, you know, have that within, you know, but if you're also putting on extra work of just trying to imagine, like where are these two characters in time and space, you know. That's, that's even more work. You don't want to ask your audience to do too much work. So, so I mean, we have a little bit of an expository, you know, introduction to talk about, like this is, you know, are we familiar with Anne Frank and her diary? If you're just meeting for the first time, it's okay. We got you. She was, you know a, a German Jewish girl who became, you know, who was, immigrated to Holland to escape the growing power of the Nazi party. And we have Dr. King. Are we familiar with Dr. King? Yes, Dr. Martin Luther King. Day, so this is where they are when you first meet them when they come back on to come onstage. So, there is, there is that. But then, on top of that, then you just have two people who are just, like, monologuing, basically at you. It's two monologues, side by side and that, that can be that can ask for a lot of attention. But I feel like having the soundscape element to really, also, without having, you know, a full set. It's been the best in my mind. It was like, this is the easiest way for us to really immerse our audience in the world. And it's that immersion that has just been so crucial. And, and, an immersion in a safe way, like we're not and, and, and we also, I give the option to schools and school leaders because there is one point in the Anne Frank that talks about how the Gestapo would take hostages to ransom to find, you know, discover saboteurs, and then they would talk, and then, but, then they would just shoot them in the street. There is like a gunshot sound effect element. And just to, really, you know, bring home the gravity of the situation. But that can be, you know, very triggering for students, especially in schools 'cause we live in America. And so there is the option of leaving it out. If we leave it in, we do have a trigger warning at the top of the show. But just like having,

having those, these, those sound elements have just really, brings it, make it more. I feel like not just more alive for an extended period of time. The hope is maybe those mirror neurons will, you know, fire within the audience member, seeing somebody putting themselves in someone else's shoes? And will, you know, trigger something. Trigger some kind of mirroring of that, that empathy."

**How did you bend the constraints of time/space in your work? What were your intentions with the manipulation?**

AG: "I mean, I would offer, that is, we don't; I meant at least for our production. We're, we don't aim to pluck her out of her time the way it is staged. You have, you have two, you have two chairs side by side. It's very minimalistic staging, and if, when we have the opportunity to have a playbill to offer to the audience, we, we say, we say, like you know, for the time and place" two, two times, and place. April 1963, Birmingham, Alabama, on the other side, Amsterdam 1944, we say and, and they, we do. We try to also reflect that in the soundscape, which is, the start. You hear things, you hear about the outs-, the outside world and the colors of the outside world before you even hear them speak. And you start with Dr. King. You see, you hear—Oh, my gosh! What, what's the name? Bull Connor, you know, saying, 'I hereby, do you know, just denounce the Supreme Court ruling, like, as long, as I am President of the Alabama Public Service Commission, I'm going to see that our segregation laws are upheld.' And then you hear the sound of the marches, and the protests, and the, the peaceful demonstrations. And then you hear, you see Dr. King enter with his handcuffs. He's handcuffed, you don't, you don't see the handcuffs, but you see him enter the stage, suggested by being accompanied by police officers. The jail cell opens, and he enters. He is uncuffed. It closes behind him. He's alone in his cell. He discovers the newspaper with the open letter addressed to him by the eight local clergymen, hidden under his seat. He opens it; a pencil

falls out. He picks up the pencil, and then you hear Anne's world come in on the other side of the stage, and that's flooded with a lot of announcements over the radio. First in Dutch and then in English, and then you also hear the bombs that she's hearing outside her window. So, so, she's very much still in her world, just next to his. There's like ways students have described it and it in, in. I mean, I'm, I'm so glad that they see this one in our interpretation. But there's some students that are, 'like it felt like there was a, there was a, an invisible wall between the two of them that they sometimes cross, sometimes. You see, you know, Anne crosses over at, so, at one point, they're, you know, they're talking about and is talking about the experience of people that have been taken away to the concentration camps as they from the East. Dr. King is talking about how, you know, you, they've had to be sleeping night after night, in the uncomfortable confines of their automobile, because no motel will accept, you, you know, being harried by day, haunted by night. You see him also start to march, and you know, the, the; It's open to interpretation by the audience, like, where are they? How are they walking? What depends on, you know, the, the weight of the, the, you know, how the actor is walking that particular day. What they are imagining. Sometimes, I, when I play Anne, I think of, you know, Anne, inserting herself on "what you think Westerbork looks like." There's some productions I've seen the actor playing Dr. King is walking in a way, I'm like, is he walking like he's, you know, he is doing laps with the other inmates within the prison. Is he walking like he's one of the demonstrations which, with the "I'm a Man" signs, so that's, you know, that's intentional to, like, make it open to interpretation. So, yeah.

**If you kept Anne's pseudonyms for the people she knew, why did you? If you used the real-life names of the individuals, why did you do so?**

N/A

**What part did any playwriting texts play while creating your work?**

AG: "Other playwrights, while I was working on it."

ES: "I would say books about playwriting."

AG" Oh, books about playwriting. I, I mean, No. I just, I came, I came at it, as you know, and, and actor, though just like, play, like, yeah. I mean, I had never taken like, I mean, in terms of, like, studying the study of someone's writing, of playwriting I had probably taken in undergrad. I took a solo, you know, show course where you're writing your own material. You know, I, I took a couple of playwriting classes as, as you would, like, if you're in, you know, on a, on the theater, in the theater department on any college campus. But, and then, of course, in, you know, in our classes, you know, where we're taught how to analyze, you know, analyze the scene, pull apart a scene and the, and, and recognize elements of a scene. So, I feel like that's, that's been my, that had been my, and understanding of, like, how to, you know, create a scene or play, but in terms of actual writing it. It had been a lot of exercise, just like, you know, just, just put stuff on paper, just like, see what sticks, stop trying to think. There was a lot I had, like, done some exercises that I find very useful. Now, now that I'm writing more, is just, you know, doing, trying to write as awful as possible. Just do that, do that vomit drop, just put it on, put it on paper and, and, yeah. Just like, see how, see how it sticks, how it, how it flows. If these, you know, these things make sense. Does this move like life moves? Yeah."

**What were the challenges you met while writing your play?**

AG: "I think. Well, I mean the first challenge, I, I guess, outside of just being, you know, a very new team member, for the member coming on as an actor, and then basically being asked, 'Hey, would you like to direct is as well. Yeah. I was like, sure, you, they, they looked at my resume, and they're like, 'Oh, you have a master's in theater.' I'm like, yeah, but that, I'm, I have, a master's

in acting. Doesn't mean I haven't directed, I have, and then, oh, and they were like, "Oh, and also just, you know, whatever you want to do with the script.' And I'm like, but I'm, I'm definitely, I have barely written anything before they didn't have to really write anything. I was, I came from The New School, and that is really big on collaborative, devised work. So, we definitely have had, you know, I felt like I've had my fair share of doing some, maybe more experimental stuff like picking, and you know, different things and mixing them all together. So, kind of doing, and I'm big, you know, collager. I love doing it. Have you ever done collage? I was introduced to it by a friend's, friend's mother. It's really, it's really fascinating, very therapeutic. But I've always really liked collaging scrapbooking. But you know, taking things together, like, you know, okay, I like this and this, this is speaking to me, and then putting it all together, see how they all speak to each other, and looking at the excerpts that Hannah had drawn from Anne's work and Dr. King's work.

I'm like, well, they're all there, and I can see the connections. I just want to make them more, those parallels to be a little bit more visible, you know, I want them to be almost, you know, how do we, how do we make this feel like a duet? It feels like a dance, you know, between them. Because, you know, I would see, I would see the verse. See what Anne is saying, see what, like, Dr. King is saying, hearing the rhythm of what he's saying and then how that complements hers, at least in my mind. And with every actor that comes into the scene, I'm just like, yes, there's, you know, there's, there's a different rhythm there, different cadence here. And the way that we can really, like, you know, mirror, and reflect one another the better, because that's the main reason we, we do this kind of work is just like, how do we? How do we see another in ourselves and, and, and another person? How do we see this person in ourselves? So, I guess I don't; the challenge wasn't really, I guess, I mean, it wasn't really. It wasn't really a challenge. I was just, it was just an exciting opportunity. Go in and see how these, these excerpts, and these words that Hannah had

selected and see how they, they could, they could play together a little bit more. Yeah, so that it wasn't just, and it was. I guess it was also a challenge, having never seen a production of it before. I just saw photos. And oh, also, you know, working with an actor that had worked with, with Hannah, and he would explain, like, you know, what, what the production was. And it sounded like it was like, you know, presented as a dialogue between Anne Frank and Dr. King, using their words, which is, you, I think, a lovely sentiment, but also one those things where you don't— it's well, let's, I mean, it's a wonderful thing to imagine. But you already kind of have that with *Anne & Emmett*. And I can't remember, my, ha! I don't think I had caught wind of, of that production existing. But the world that we set up, I'm like, I don't think this is a world where we get to, where we get to have that. You know, we've been, it's, it's, it was stolen from us. This opportunity to see these two. These two voices from the same room together. And that's what's so sad. And that's what we have to remember, so that something, everything that happened to them. I mean, it keeps happening. But you know, let's, let's bring our attention to it. So, it happens less and less, rather than more and more over the years. Yeah.

ES: So, did you want it to be less of a dialogue because of *Anne & Emmett*?

AG: No, I don't think, I don't think because of that. I think just because they didn't want to. Get to, you know. I, I guess it, it felt, it was felt like the more uncomfortable thing to have them be side by side, in their own worlds. That just, it just felt like more of a challenge and also more necessary just to see them, you know, separated but together, side by side so that people can see it for themselves. You know, their individual experiences; notice any parallel, also the differences. I think looking in hindsight, you know, just it, it gets us away from any possibility of like, you know, when things get, you know, really heated in their dialogue, been like, 'okay, they're not, but they're not in an argument.'"

**Discuss your writing schedule or routine you used when writing your Anne Frank play.**

AG: "Got it so long ago. Now, I think it was just, it was just a lot of sitting at a computer, and you know, letting my eyes probably just glaze over a little bit, and been, like, well this, sounds like this, so I'm gonna put those together. It was just, it was playing. I was basically looking at the excerpts Hannah had picked out and just treating it like a puzzle. I love puzzles. And then challenging myself to sort of, because, you know you. I would go through a phase of just, like, okay, well, these. I'll break it up here, you know. Let's let these do these sentences sort of go with each other there. These are two individual phrases break each other up in this section, and then one will speak first a significant part. They'll break it up again. Then the other person will speak, and then and that was there seemed to be a formula that was, that seemed to be naturally happening. And then, and then I wanted to break it up by inserting whispers from Martin's monologue that interject Anne's monologue, with when talking about, you know, when we, she, when she's talking about the concentration camps and the horrors there and then, Dr. King, talking about the horrors of sleeping night after night in cramped corners of your automobile, because no motel accepts you, ominous clouds of inferiority being formed in little mental skies. Those interjecting her monologue to really bring those parallels to the forefront."

**Please speak about any dramatic conflict in your play.**

AG: "That just, it just felt like more of a challenge and also more necessary just to see them, you know, separated but together, side by side so that people can see it for themselves. You know, their individual experiences; notice any parallel, also the differences. I think looking in hindsight, you know, just it, it gets us away from any possibility of like, you know, when things get, you know, really heated in their dialogue, been like, "okay, they're not, but they're not in an argument. 'Cause theater it, it's a very strange play. What we actors, I understand because, you know, we look at

traditional theater as conflict. This tension conflict between the two people on stage, something, you know, something that you know some person wants. The other person is keeping them, or what that person wants is in, you know conflict with what the other one wants, and that's not what we have here, what we have here. You're seeing two people where their conflict, the person that they are speaking to is outside, is out in the audience, so that, I think, asks, challenges the audience to just lean forward a little bit more. They're not lulled into, you know, just, you know, when we typically go to the theater, mainly like, okay, so we're just gonna, we're gonna be in the theater and just watch these people talk to each other, and we don't have to participate; like this asks for a little bit more participation, which is a lot to ask for some very sleepy students that, and high schoolers at like nine in the morning. Which is when we typically do this."

ES: "I, I see what you're talking about. Because one of my questions was about the dramatic conflict in the play and that the conflict is not between the characters on stage. It's conflict with their world."

AG: "Yes."

**Talk about any significant revisions to your script. When did they happen, and why?**

AG: "I think when, I mean, we, we presented to a whole, like, cafeteria of teachers, not even students, and when the, and I mean, granted, the teachers were there, you know, on a very snowy day in January, and I think there was supposed to be, it was part of, like, a diversity inclusion day. And you, and I saw, you know, some teachers on their phones. It was, like, probably one of the worst audiences we had and, yeah, that I feel like for that, it was after that audience, I was just, like, okay, we really need to get some sound and music elements in this, you know. 'Cause you know, if, if adults are tuning out, you know, kids will, too. If we don't just inject some, like, new life into this production."

**Speak about your play's most significant production ingredient.**

AG: "I wanna, say, like the, the production ingredient, it, I, I will say, I mean on all the elements. All the ingredients are crucial. I mean, you have to have, you have to have the actors. You have to have the words. You don't really need a set. We try to make this as accessible as possible."

**Tell me about the greatest joy you met in writing your play.**

AG: "I think just the greatest, greatest joy has just been in getting to, getting to travel with this, getting to develop it, bring, you know, more. More and more actors into this project are just being able to share it with students and getting to talk to them after. I know it can, it can get tiring. But you know, I mean, some actors are just like, "Oh, why are they asking us? How like you know, how do we memorize lines? And, you know, I mean, some actors are just like, oh, why do they keep asking us? How, like, do you, you know memorize lines? And like they ask because they care. And they're curious. We're it's kind of a crazy thing we're, we're doing up her. So, this is a first experience for, for some, some students with like, with theatre. And you know, anytime we hear, you know, a gasp, or you know, a sniffle, you know, I'm just like, okay, I'm it's I mean, I'm sorry, but also, I'm, I'm glad we're like we're reaching, you know, in, in, some way. And it's and to hear and to get feedback from students, because every once in a while, we're able to hand out an evaluation to, to, students on like, what their experience was and to have students say it felt like I was there. Is really, I mean, it means a lot."

**What kind of preparation did you do for writing about Anne Frank/your historical personage?**

AG: "Yeah, I mean, well, I just for both [the play and playing Anne] read the diary, and I feel, I think, in doing that, I also, you know, found these excerpts that I did want to also put in. But most of the excerpts that have been dialogue that was, you see in there was selected by Hannah. But in

preparing to play her, you know, not just read the diary, but also her short stories because I felt like that gave some massive insight into her inner world and how she, just her fantasy life, you know, you can learn a lot about a person and the kind of, you know, characters that they create for themselves. And like also, just, I mean the imaginary friend of Kitty."

**How does your religion or spirituality inform your Anne Frank play? You may decline to answer. Does your religious or spiritual view inform your work?**

AG: "Well, I was raised without religion. I feel like I am a bit of a spiritual person. I feel like that's one of the reasons that, I mean, spiritualism is all about. It's all about connecting. And I feel, and it's gonna sound like a total theater nerd. But, you know, theater is kind of, you know, my spiritualism. That's it is so, I mean it. It guides my desire to connect and better understand."

Hannah Vaughn, who first conceived the theatrical presentation, *Letters from Anne and Martin*, called the work "An imagined meeting of mind and heart, drawn entirely from the text of Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947, expanded 1995) and Dr, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (*Home*). The work was developed in January 2013 to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. That February, they started performing at college campuses. The performance piece quickly became a popular production among high schools and colleges. Performances of the work have become more frequent since then (Churnin, "Wesli Spencer").

The 45- to 60-minute performances of *Letters from Anne and Martin* are recommended for children ages ten and older (Graeber). A post-show discussion with the audience accompanies every performance. The topics can cover more about Anne Frank and ways to confront tolerance and discrimination. The post-show discussion is intended to "continue the dialogue" started by the performance (*Performances*). When the actors step away for a few moments, the facilitator asks the audience this question: "thinking about what you just heard from these two people, what

similarities did you see or hear in what they had to say? What are the similarities in their life experiences?" The audience is asked to think for a minute and then share with the person next to them. After giving the audience some thinking time, the facilitator asks 5-10 people, depending on the time available, to share what they talked about with their partners. Other sample questions include: "Let's imagine Anne lived to the 60s and was able to become involved with the Civil Rights Movement. Do you think she would be encouraging of the peaceful protest as a means of getting the message across?" and "If you could pick another pairing to convey a similar message—who would you pick?" To start an audience dialogue with the actors, the actors may be asked, "What is your favorite line?" or "What moments stand out for you as the biggest connection moments?" (Vaughn and Gellner, *Post Letters Q & A*).

An organization can email performances@annefrank.com with their essential contact information and preferred dates and times to host a performance. There are four basic requirements to host *Letters from Anne and Martin*:

- Any indoor space with good acoustics, microphones, and room for an audience.
- Room for the actors to prepare and perform.
- 2 armless chairs.
- A sound system for the "immersive soundscape." (Churnin, "Wesli Spencer")

*Letters from Anne and Martin* may be presented along with residencies (*Performances*). Residencies from The Anne Frank Center USA are intended for grades 4–12 and can run from 3 weeks to 3 months. The residencies cover Common Core visual arts, writing, and drama educational standards. The content helps students to explore how they can bring Anne Frank's legacy to their lives. Single-session introductory workshops and teacher professional development are also options (*Home*).

Hannah Vaughn, the original architect of the script, has some thoughts about the work to share. First, the purpose of the theatrical presentation of *Letters from Anne and Martin* "is to present the text(s) of these two people in a very different way." She sees it as a method "to get the audiences to see how the text will affect them, through performance (Ibrahim). Vaughn viewed King and Frank as individuals who go through emotional struggles due to their beliefs but remain "hopeful and strong, putting aside their fears to stick to their values" (Ibrahim).

Vaughn initially joined the Anne Frank Center USA as an actor, playing the role of Anne Frank in their traveling one-woman show (Vaughn, Interview with the author). After she was asked to develop the script for *Letters from Anne and Martin*, Hannah Vaughn was tasked with auditioning actors for the roles (Churnin, "Wesli Spencer") and playing Anne in *Letters from Anne and Martin* (Vaughn, Interview with the author). She also sometimes facilitated the post-performance Question-and-Answer sessions (Churnin, "Wesli Spencer").

During Hannah Vaughn's time with The Anne Frank Center, she was based in New York. Vaughn received her BA from Christopher Newport University. She also has studied acting with Gabrielle Maisela, Caymichael Pattern Studios, Lee Brock, and Seth Barrish at the Barrow Group (*Home*). Vaughn is currently based in Richmond, Virginia. Her post-*Letters from Anne and Martin* career has brought her to join the Organized Strategies Team with the Nature Conservancy of Arlington, Virginia. She took the position in September of 2022 (Vaughn, *Hannah Vaughn - Workforce program manager - tech impact*). She was also the co-creator, co-writer, and co-star of the web series *Dates Like This* (Vaughn, *Hannah Vaughn*).

*Letters from Anne and Martin* was not Vaughn's only work. Her plays' topics include the future, LGBTQ families, isolation, and "how we deal with loss and trauma." She is interested in exploring the imagined future and changes in individualism and social structures. She likes to deal

with self-isolated characters and examines their reintegration into their group (Vaughn, *Hannah Vaughn*). Hannah has written four full-length plays, one short play, and five 1-acts:

**Full-length plays**

*The Unfathomable Blue* (2017)

*We Don't Go Camping Anymore* (2016)

*Away From* (2016)

*Cincinnati by the Sea* (2024)

**Short plays and one-acts**

*Alex* (2017)

*M and the Water Man* (2017)

*Officially Unofficial* (2017)

*A House of Tiny* (2018)

*Violet Clifford's Senior Prank Extravaganza* (2019)

*Spark F***ing Joy* (2021) (Vaughn, *Hannah Vaughn*).

Her plays have been produced by The Navigators, The Players Theatre, Left Coast Theatre Company, and Actors Theatre of Santa Fe (*Hannah Vaughn*). Vaughn's works have been featured on "Theatre Nerd Podcast." She is a member of the Dramatists Guild ("Waters Rising Festival"). Vaughn performs in a monthly show at Ugly Rhino Productions. She has also performed with Full Stop Collective's *FOREPLAYS: Spring Fever* at Galapagos Art Space, *Outfoxed* at the Access Theatre, and *Decompression* at FRINGENYC and *Clear Cold Place* at The Secret Theatre. Hannah has also acted in dramatic films and industrial films (*Home*).

At a 2015 performance of *Letters from Anne and Martin*, Hannah Vaughn talked about the work she created. She discussed setting and text selection. Vaughn also speculated what might

have been for the individuals had they survived their situations. Regarding the setting, she said, "We're imagining them in kind of this nonexistent place, a nebulous sort of room" (Graeber). She commented about the characters' level of interaction, "They're aware of each other and sometimes talk to each other" (Graeber).

Hannah Vaughn also commented on reasons for text selections. King's letter was selected because he wrote "from a place of confinement" like Frank. She notes, "I knew it was the right choice" to pair the couple when she encounters the following passage in King's Birmingham jail letter, "had I lived in Germany at this time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers." Vaughn spoke about the text arrangement, saying, "I tried to match passages" from each of the works. She asked herself, "What does she (Frank) say that might spark a response from him (King)?" (Graeber).

Because the pair were both born in 1929, Vaughn wondered, due to the couple's sensibilities, "Who knows if they would have met?" "Anne has this desire to take part in the world, and I think she would have been very interested in what was happening in the Civil Rights Era" (Graeber).

At one performance, Vaughn was asked if there had been difficulty in obtaining the rights to use the works of Anne Frank and Martin Luther King, Jr. She responded affirmatively, "As advocates for education, dignity, and respect, we take seriously the concept of intellectual property and fair use." The Anne Frank Center USA collaborated closely with its partners to ensure they stood by the copyrights held by the Anne Frank Fonds. The Anne Frank Fonds is responsible for Anne Frank's diary publication and images of the Frank family. She declares, "Our exhibits, performances, and other educational workshops all seek to highlight the vision and activism of historical human rights heroes. It's an honor to creatively bring their stories to public audiences

and inspire the leaders who will fulfill their dreams for humanity" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). Vaughn believed it is vital not to take dramatic liberties with the material that might reduce it to the point of fiction. "This is meant to open the actor, spark students' curiosity, and share with them these amazing words that already exist and were written within 20 years of each other! If so, many similarities can be drawn between these figures; how many kindred spirits are there?" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits").

The second playwright to work on the performance script, Alexandra Gellner, saw the work to share the stories of King, Jr., and Frank to provoke "a lot of empathy and compassion (Loughlin). Gellner says, "Everything they are saying is still relevant today. It still echoes (Loughlin). When New York librarian Nancy Churnin inquired about the power of an onstage portrayal, Gellner responded, "I think it's magical to think that these two brilliant minds coexisted on different sides of the ocean but were so aligned in their philosophy and dream for humanity. And then it is devastating to think that they could have met and become colleagues in their fight for equality and justice, but we were robbed of that possibility because of the blind hatred of others" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits").

Furthermore, Gellner believed that the words of Anne Frank and Dr. King still echo with relevance today (Loughlin). Alexandra Gellner stated that the production of *Letters from Anne and Martin* has a goal. She declares, "Isn't it more challenging to question, to get uncomfortable, to get into uncomfortable conversation with people that seem very different from, ourselves, but if we just talk to one another and get out of our comfort zone, we can find we have a lot in common" (Loughlin).

Before 2016, the Anne Frank Center created a position to oversee and manage performances of their plays and to direct and act in them (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). Hannah

Vaughn functioned in the role. Actors memorize parts of *Letters from Anne Frank*. They share their interpretations with Vaughn. She gives notes and adjustments and questions the actors about their roles during the audition process. Later, if they receive the role, she will do the same for the performance process (Churnin, "Wesli Spencer").

Alexandra Gellner joined the team at the Anne Frank Center in February of 2016 (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"; Gellner, *Alexandra Gellner*). She had auditioned for a role in *Conversations with Anne*. Gellner got a callback and was offered the role. When she started that role, she was also asked to understudy for the role of Anne in *Letters from Anne and Martin*. By this time, the Anne Frank Center had created a position to oversee and manage performances of their plays and to direct and act in them. Gellner acts for the Anne Frank Center's acting company (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). Actors take turns playing Anne. She shares the role with two other actors (*Home*).

*Letters from Martin and Anne* had been in production for about three years, so Gellner was not a part of the initial text selection process. She indicated that the staff members who developed the script had "moved on." Gellner was permitted to develop the script further. Alexandra Gellner said the original script was still there; she moved sections around and "found some ways for their words to overlap, so it felt like they were almost finishing each other's sentences across time and space. I also added some segments from her (Anne's) diary and his (King's) letter that exemplifies (sic) how detrimental segregation is to the mental health of segregated communities" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). She also added a soundscape of appropriate auditory ambiance for each character's world, including a gunshot (Gellner, Interview with the author). Although she had continued working on the script, Gellner did not consider herself a playwright regarding the "theatrical presentation" of *Letters from Anne and Martin*. She held this

belief because the work contains entirely found text she did not write (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). In her interview with the author, Alexandra Gellner likened the script construction method to "collage" (Gellner, Interview with the author).

Alexandra "Alex" Gellner was from the northern California coast and is currently Brooklyn-based ("Meet the Team"). She discovered acting at six years of age and was involved with various theatre activities through high school. She even ran a teen theatre company. In 2007, she was accepted to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Gellner, *Alexandra Gellner*). She earned a Bachelor of Arts in dramatic arts and psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara. After graduation, she spent a year acting at home in California. She earned her Master of Fine Arts in Acting at The New School (Gellner, *Alexandra Gellner*). While at The New School, she led their Summer Stage Acting Intensive. Due to her background from The New School, Alex was dedicated to collaboration, ensemble building, and bridging differences through practicing empathy. The New School develops "civically engaged artists," according to Gellner. She decided to be an actor and a teacher in graduate school. Alexandra believed the two careers go hand in hand, a way to teach empathy. "Empathy and emotional intelligence are at the root of all our programming at Anne Frank Center" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits").

Alex Gellner enjoys cross-stitching, knitting, calligraphy, ink drawing, and watercolors ("Meet the Team"). Her theatre and film career spans 20 years. She has played multiple roles off-Broadway and on independent theatre stages in New York City (Gellner, *Alexandra Geller*). She engages in puppetry and clowning. Alexandra's resume includes over twenty-eight roles and eight films or web series. Outside of the Anne Frank Center, her work has been in Shakespeare, the Greek classics, and modern 20th-century roles (Gellner, *Alexandra Gellner*). Gellner is also a

member of OUR BAR. Monthly, this group creates a show comprised of ten scenes that could happen in a bar. The audience gets to have drinks and watch the show (Gellner, *Alexandra Gellner*).

Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner's *Letters from Anne and Martin* is performed at the Anne Frank Center USA. The work is also mounted at schools, churches, synagogues, and community centers. The theatrical presentation was created initially for a 2013 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration at The Anne Frank Center USA (*Performances*). The work was also produced in 2014 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Ibrahim). In 2015, *Letters from Anne and Martin* was performed at Filene Auditorium on the Skidmore College campus (Ibrahim). The work was performed several times in January of 2017. *Letters from Anne and Martin* has been done in Florida alone at the Museum of Science and History in Jacksonville Main Public Library, and the Ritz Theatre and Museum.

That same year, Ursuline College hosted a performance in Cleveland, Ohio. October 2017 saw the work's first performance at the Clinton Presidential Center (Gellner, *Alexandra Gellner*). The Clinton Foundation in Little Rock, Arkansas, has since had several performances. They have one of Anne Frank's chestnut tree saplings in their garden (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). In February 2023, three performances of Vaughn and Gellner's play were done. The event included 1600 local high school students and about one hundred community members (*Fedweb*). At the end of 2023, there was a December performance at the Frankel Performing Arts Center at Temple Beth Am in Miami, Florida (Allende). Other selected productions of *Letters from Anne and Martin* have been performed at Borough of Manhattan Community College, the South Carolina Society for Social Studies Annual Conference, Battery Park City School, Union Vale Middle School, Temple Beth El of Cedarhurst, Temple Beth El of Great

Neck, Southern Cayuga Central School and a special co-sponsored Martin Luther King Day celebration for Calvary Baptist Church and Congregation Tifereth Israel (*Performances*).

When the cast was asked about unique places where the production had been performed, such as Wassmuth Human Rights Center in Idaho and The Sandusky State Theatre in Ohio were mentioned. The Wassmuth Human Rights Center in Boise has an Anne Frank chestnut sapling and a memorial statue to Frank in their garden (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). Engaging the Wassmuth Human Rights Center performance was the community's response to antisemitic vandalism of their Anne Frank statute at the Wassmuth Center (Churnin, "Wesli Spencer"). The reason for the memorability of the Sandusky State Theatre performance was the stunning playing space (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits").

Performers in *Letters from Anne and Martin*, including Gellner, sometimes have witnessed surprising and memorable audience reactions. Both Gellner and a performer playing the role of Martin Luther King, Jr. agreed. They were pleased when student audiences "immediately remark" on parallels in the lives of both figures. They were equally delighted when students noted how the stories of Frank and King remain relevant today. Once, after a performance in Brooklyn, a student drew a picture of the set. The student included a dotted line between the two chairs. Gellner was gratified to note the "invisible threshold that separated but also connected Anne and Martin's worlds." Gellner found students' drawing literal and figurative connections due to the work gratifying (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). An actor, Wesli Spencer, felt that the show's lessons from King and Frank were for today's students. He commented, "It's like when two superheroes teaming up at a time when their lessons are greatly needed. Their stories remind us that even in the worst of scenarios (their experiences were under much harsher conditions), we can still be resilient" (Churnin, "Wesli Spencer").

*Letters from Anne and Martin*, conceived by Hannah Vaughn and further developed by Alexandra Gellner, is a unique piece of dramatic literature. It differs from the two other Anne Frank plays, which pair her with African American personages in several ways. First, the playwrights do not consider themselves as such regarding the work. Pittman, Friedman-Adler, and Cohen consider themselves playwrights. The next difference is that *Letters* is entirely composed of the words its real-world character doubles left behind in their writing. The work also has fewer sound effects, music, and scenic or costume elements than *Harriet and Anne* by Pittman and Friedman-Adler or *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*. The production *Letters from Anne and Martin* also differs from the other two plays. *Letters from Anne and Martin* is an educational road show. *Harriet and Anne* was produced once publicly, never to be produced again. *Anne & Emmett*, although intended to be academic, is available for production in various professional theatre venues. Finally, *Letters from Anne and Martin* contains only the two titular characters. *Anne & Emmett*, as well as *Harriet and Anne*, have more extensive cast lists. *Anne & Emmett* adds other historical characters, while *Harriet and Anne* consists of an ensemble cast in which narrators play Harriet and Anne. *Harriet and Anne* leaves the audience with an imperative to "Spread the seeds of "Freedom." Cohen's *Anne & Emmett* implies that the audience has an obligation to "Repair the World." *Letters from Anne and Martin* recruits the audience as "clergy" and "Kitty." But, by the end of the play, the audience is left with the hopes of "love and brotherhood" and the return of "peace and tranquility" (10) presented to us by "our" Anne Frank and "our" Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (10). Anne believes she will endure her trials. Eventually, her existence must become peaceful and tranquil (10). The play ends with Anne and Martin verbally gifting themselves to the audience (10).

The intent of this playwrighting team in pairing Frank with King in their work was to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 2013 for The Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect in New York City. Both Gellner and Vaughn believe that theatre is instructive. Gellner believes that it teaches empathy, connection, and understanding. The pair believed that the work was intended to point out the parallels between the lives of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Anne Frank. The playwrights aimed to present the texts of the two historical personages in a different way than usual script constructs to affect audience members so that they could discover how to bring Frank's legacy to their own lives.

I conclude that Vaughn and Gellner's play can fulfill their intentions. Although the work is not commercially published or available for theatrical productions outside The Anne Frank Center, it has been toured as an educational, highly portable roadshow. The work's available selected production history includes more than twenty productions since its inception in 2013. These productions include talk-back question and answer sessions after the performance in which cast members and audience dialogue, using conversation starters created by the playwrights and production facilitators. Students and teachers have opportunities to begin to think about how the lives and writings of Frank and King intersect with and enhance their lives.

## CHAPTER V: REMEMBRANCE AND CULTURAL TRAUMA

This sixth chapter discusses the three works as expressions of remembrance/cultural trauma. Specific character portrayals, dialogue, and stage direction elements in the three Anne Frank plays support this examination. First, I must explain what I mean by designating the plays as works of remembrance. Then, I will discuss cultural trauma for the purposes of this document. Finally, I will explain how I see the components of stage direction, dialogue, and character portrayals of *Harriet and Anne*, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*, and *Letters from Anne & Martin* come together to express remembrance and cultural trauma. I discuss first the concept of remembrance in the general sense.

*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* has six definitions of "remembrance." Definition two reads, "something serving to celebrate or honor the memory of a person or event; a memorial." Looking at definition two of "remembrance" — "something serving to celebrate or honor the memory of a person or event; a memorial" (*Remembrance*), I argue that the three Anne Frank plays are literary memorials to Anne Frank and each play's African American historical figure. Michelle Troizier-Cheyne defines literary memorials in her essay, "A Nation of the Nationless: Literary Memorials and Imagining Identity in Response to the Shoah" (141–2). Literary memorials are "stories that commemorate a moment of historical crisis through their subject matter and their narrative performance" (141). The topics of the stories memorialize crises in history in narrative performance. These literary works commemorate the "loss of a member of" an "imperiled community." The storylines often advance the idea that the imperiled community will ultimately achieve victory over their affliction. These literary memorials create a "point of origin" for an affinity group created by taking part in conveying the narrative. A typical literary memorial includes the demise of one who functions as a nexus for collective identity (142). The

narrative re-plays or re-presents this loss of the individual from the collective. The crisis is presented with "stylistic and poetic devices" intended to hold the audience's feelings and "imagination" (142).

The literary memorial is a deed of remembrance that attempts to create and convey group emotions. Literary memorials have a two-part function. The first part presents the individual's death, foundational or preservational to the collective. The second part of the function of literary memorials, in the form of "a story, play, or liturgy," is to reaffirm the collective's vision through the literal performance of the memorial work. Through this "narrative process," the individual becomes the collective's courageous "martyr," which is emblematic of their identity as a group. This fabricated shared identity is legitimized through participation in the literary memorial's performance (142).

I declare that Pittman and Friedman Adler's *Harriet and Anne*, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*, and Vaughn and Gellner's *Letters from Anne & Martin* are literary memorials. The plays commemorate "moments of historical crisis." The works also celebrate the losses of members of "imperiled communities." Their storylines push forward the thought that the "imperiled community" will someday triumph over their adversities. Their main characters are nexuses for collective identity. The storylines also re-play or re-present the losses of specific individuals from their collectives. The works have "stylistic and poetic devices" to attract their audience. These three Anne Frank plays create and convey emotions. They present the death of a foundational or preservational individual of the collective. Finally, the plays reaffirm our collective vision and present a courageous martyred saint of our cause with whom we can identify.

First, I discuss how *Harriet and Anne* functions as a literary memorial. The "moment(s) of historical crisis" in Pittman and Friedman-Adler's play are the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Holocaust. The audience pieces this information together with textual citations. First, regarding the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Narrator A reveals that a character is traveling to the final home of Harriet Tubman in Auburn, New York (2). This narrator also mentions the Sankofa bird. This artistic Ghanian symbol of a bird, whose feet point in one direction and head points in another, carries an egg in its mouth. The feet and head of the bird point in opposite directions, indicating that one must examine one's past to move forward into the future. The Sankofa bird symbol cautions one not to forget the past while making the future (Kwabena, "Sankofa"). Narrator A tells us that the female character sees ships in the port. She begins to see images of anguished human cargo and hears the humans' cries from the hold of the *Amistad*, a 19th-century slave ship (3–5). The narrator character becomes a part of the human cargo, seeing, hearing, feeling, and experiencing the captured Africans' experience (7), including shackles and chains (9), forced exercise above deck, and her drowning when the man she is shackled to jumps overboard (10–12).

Interestingly, the reference to the Touro Synagogue is connected to slavery. A legend is that a trap door leads to one of Tubman's Underground Railroad Stations under the *bimah* (13) (a raised platform in the center of the synagogue from which the *Torah* is read). The references to Harriet Tubman (1, 20, 22, 25), Harriet Tubman's final home (2), the Underground Railroad (17), and quotes attributed to Harriet Tubman (23–24) also connect the work to the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The historical crisis of the Holocaust is pointed out by these citations from *Harriet and Anne*: Narrator B relates that the female character is drawn to a small boat in port. Unlike the *Amistad*, it has "overwhelming silence" (5). The silence is a referent to the need for Jews in hiding

on the boat to remain still and quiet. With its trap door to eventual freedom, the Touro synagogue is mentioned as a symbol of religious tolerance (13). The Star of David and the six points of light (like the six-pointed Star of David) the character sees in the Touro Synagogue bring up "images that weigh heavily on her mind." Those images are of Jews escaping, Jews caught, and Jews destroyed (14). Narrator B tells us that the female character becomes one of the smuggled Jews on the *Gerda III*. She again sees, hears, and experiences what they experience (15–17). The "Jewish stars" are sewn on their clothing (16). Next, she sees the fate of the Jews, specifically Anne Frank, which is death by gas, experimentation, or disease (17–18). The character's repeated visions of Anne Frank (18, 19, 22) and the work's references to Anne Frank (1, 18, 20, 22, 25–56) and references to Frank's diary (22–25) continue to point toward the Holocaust as one of the historical crises in *Harriet and Anne*.

The next element of literary memorial to cover is the losses of members of an "imperiled community," as presented in *Harriet and Anne*. Immediately, Anne Frank comes to mind. There are also other members of "imperiled" communities in the play. There are the chained enslaved people who drown when one of them jumps off the *Amistad* (10–11). The other group of "imperiled" members are the Jews marching to the gas showers and barbaric medical experiments; others are starving to death, ravaged by disease, like Anne Frank (17–18).

The third element of literary memorial is the storyline that advances the concept that the "imperiled" group will one day triumph over their adversities. *Harriet and Anne* is bookended by the idea that security, safety, contentedness, and freedom will come to all in death:

> There is a place called the Endless Boundary
> Where the souls of the human spirit wander.
> Soaring amongst the individual spirits-
> They are free to be the continuous color of change.
> No harm comes to them in this vastness
> For it is safe here.

They are secure, content, and possess
The ultimate gift the
Universe has to offer-
FREEDOM!!!!!!!!!! (1, 28).

The main characters of literary memorials are focal points of collective identity. Anne Frank and Harriet Tubman are touchstones for their respective collectives and are considered central points of collective identity for women. Hearst Digital Media names Tubman as one of forty-one influential women on their Biography website (Hearst Digital Media). The National Women's History Museum includes Frank's biography on their webpage (K. L. Alexander, *Anne Frank*).

Literary memorials re-play or re-present the losses from their collectives. *Harriet and Anne* re-plays the deaths of both Anne Frank and six million Jews during the Holocaust:

Mothers and children being led
To their inevitable death.
Marching innocently
Towards the staged-like showers
That will produce enough gas
To annihilate.
The haggard beaten images
Of a once proud group of men-
Moving slowly in tandem.
Scientific experiments-
Used ultimately to destroy and kill the soul.
The degradation, starvation,
The huge amount of untold deaths—
Multiply before her eye.
Then…
The image of the young girl of the Diary.
There she is-Anne Frank
Cold, hungry,
Her frail, almost naked body
Riddled with lice. (17–18)

The work also re-presents the deaths of enslaved people during the Middle Passage. Pittman and Friedman-Adler write:

Noticing a glimmer of hope in the eyes of
a man in the group,
she tried to make eye contact.
What was going on?
Maybe he could give her some idea.
She watched as the glint changed from
self-awareness…to defiance…
and finally, pride,
as the man jumped overboard.
Struggling to comprehend this range of emotions,
it took but a moment
to realize that she was now
being propelled over the edge as well.
As if in slow motion,
she was jerked up into the air,
momentarily aloft,
and then sank like a stone.
The jumper,
suddenly becoming aware of his last and only
opportunity to take control of his life,
did so-
by taking control of his death.
He had been at one end of the chain…
she at the other. (10)

The woman's character hits the water.

Just then,
the chain connecting her to the next woman,
jerked.
Her kicking had started her rising towards the top,
but the weight of 8-10 bodies–
8 or 10 panicking bodies–
was too much.
And what was pulling at her feet?
She knew she had to
breathe
soon– (11)
She has a change of mind:
"So that's it?" she thought—
"it happens that quickly—
you're alive and then you're not?"
Her mind made a 360° turn,
"So, what if I give up,
no one can say that I didn't give a good effort."
Just like that,

she'd given up. (11)

As a literary memorial, to keep the audience's attention, *Harriet and Anne* contains "stylistic and poetic devices." The stylistic devices include dance, movement, sound, and music as vital components of this work. The musical elements in this work are not incidental. Entire songs often accompany the Narrators' lines. The Narrators have stage directions that indicate their words are accompanied by the songs, including when to finish specific sections of monologue, pause, or wait for several beats or even measures, then speak (1, 2–3, 1, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25–28). The musical instruments given specific script directions include cello (3, 6), tongue drum (a steel slit drum) (3, 6), bongo (7), woodblocks (8), drums (7), and M'bira (9–10), a traditional Malawian or Zimbabwean finger harp. The sound effects of Pittman and Friedman-Adler's play include possible recorded effects and those made by human beings. The recorded effects are sea sounds (9). Pages blowing onto the stage (23) accompanied by a "MONTAGE of Voices" (23) would be human-generated sound effects.

The voices of the three narrators comprise a sizable portion of the performance of this work. The work is written in verse. There is no dialogue between the narrators when they address the audience (Pittman and Friedman-Adler). Poetic devices in the text include the Star of David and the six beams of light (like the six-pointed Star of David) the character sees in the Touro Synagogue bring up "images that weigh heavily on her mind" (14) related to the Jews imperiled state. The two "six-pointed items" are metaphors for the Jewish people. Alliteration is another poetic device used by the playwrights: phrases like "Sights, sound, smells" (6), "It was the silence-shameful silence, The silence of being silent" (18), and "Saw six searching lights" (17, 19). They use consonance repetition of consonant sounds in the phrase "of being- of living- of flying—" (21) and the sentence "It needn't be measured, weighed, tallied up and certainly not compared" (26).

Pittman and Friedman-Adler use repetition in *Harriet and Anne.* The work is bookended by the idea that security, safety, contentedness, and freedom will eventually come to all in death:

> There is a place called the Endless Boundary
> Where the souls of the human spirit wander.
> Soaring amongst the individual spirits—
> They are free to be the continuous color of change.
> No harm comes to them in this vastness
> For it is safe here.
> They are secure, content, and possess
> The ultimate gift the
> Universe has to offer-
> FREEDOM!!!!!!!!!! (1, 28).
> Another example of repetition in the work is these lines from Narrator B:
> It's not that my pain
> Is worse than yours,
> It's not that my pain
> Is better than yours—
> Pain is pain.
> It needn't be measured,
> Weighed, tallied up
> And certainly not compared.

Narrator A responds:

> Your pain and mine is far too vast,
> Too dense,
> Too different
> Too painful. (26)

Anaphora, beginning sequential phrases or sentences with the same phrase, is used in the last three lines of the above section and the following selection preceding it in the work:

> To receive these seeds,
> To return with these seeds,
> To plant these seeds,
> To cultivate them. (26)

Additionally, anaphora occurs in this cutting of the play. It describes the vacationing woman who, on her journey, encounters Anne Frank and Harriet Tubman:

A woman who preferred long walks
in the park and contained water.
A woman who preferred solitude at home—
and company on the road.
A woman afraid to travel alone—
Afraid of what she might find…
Of what might find her! (2)

Subtle personification occurs in the last three lines of the above cutting. The unknown is personified as something that will find the woman (2). It can also be seen in "she just understood the magnetic lure of the water. So, she had avoided large seductive bodies of water" (3). The phrase "This building witnessed the power of history" (13) personifies the Touro Synagogue with the ability to testify to the strength of history. Another phrase with subtle personification is: "Her hand-begging for assistance, help, warmth, solace" (19–20).

Imagery with strong appeals to the senses is included in this selection describing the experience of those hidden on the *Gerda III*:

Total darkness
Total silence in the darkness—
Only the intense odor
Of rotting fish—
And the feeling of fear—
Permeated the dark hold of the boat.
Lurking in the shadows
Was a huddled group
Of frightened, desperate people
Anxiously waiting
For the security of Freedom. (15–16)

The following selection continues with images that also appeal to the senses. It speaks of the feelings and sounds experienced by those on a boat pointed toward freedom:

The Boat—
This *Gerda III*—
Rocking-swaying-gently pushing
Towards the open sea.
Sounds of the sea crashing the sides of the boat-
Rhythmic sounds of the engine

Driving in syncopation.
Wind pushing through the smallest of cracks
Sound a chorus of whistles.
These were the sounds—
That will renew their lives. (16)

*Harriet and Anne* presents the death of a foundational or preservational individual of the collective. The playwrights come out and say:

Physically, Anne did not survive.
But kept alive
The stories,
Hopes,
Dreams
Of thousands-millions
Through her diary. (22)

We also are presented with Harriet Tubman's death in the second stanza of the poetic work. Established in the opening stanza of the play, the reader/audience is told we are in the "Endless Boundary" "where the souls of the human spirit wander" (1). The second stanza tells us that both Tubman and Frank are there:

Harriet and Anne-friends
Dancing to the joyful feeling of being free,
Playing their music to the exhilaration of other spirits.
They wander, they shout,
They sprint across the universe—
Spreading the infectious,
timeless glee
of what could have been–
on earth. (1)

Nearing the end of the play, the playwrights indicate that:

Harriet and Anne live on
Their memories live
Deep within the souls
Of the very people
Who continue
To be affected
By their actions. (23)

The final idea marking a literary memorial is that it reaffirms our collective vision and presents a courageous martyred saint of our cause with whom we can identify. This idea is shown in *Harriet and Anne* in the excerpt I just shared. These deceased individuals can continue to live in our souls if we are people who do the right thing. The selection above also implies that Harriet and Anne live on in the souls of "those who are affected by their actions" (23). I do not think it unreasonable to assume that the pair also live on because of what they did for the section of the collective from which they originate; Harriet's legacy lives on in African Americans, and Anne Frank's legacy lives on in descendent Jews and their antecedents who survived the Holocaust. The play's final line encourages us to be like Harriet and Anne in their lives and their afterlives in the "Endless Boundary." The playwrights ask, "'Who will spread the seeds?'" (28). They can live on in all of us, even if we do not belong to their groups if we "spread the seeds" of "FREEDOM" (1, 28).

*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* is the next literary memorial to be discussed. *Anne & Emmett* is a five-character non-musical or "straight" play. The "moments of crisis" that the two main characters represent are the Holocaust for Anne Frank (which I discussed previously with *Harriet and Anne*) and the Civil Rights era for Emmett Till.

First, I talk about how Cohen points toward the Holocaust as a crisis moment with Anne Frank. Then, I discuss how Cohen identifies the Civil Rights era as the moment of crisis for Emmett Till. In the cast list, Anne Frank is recognized as a "Young Jewish girl" (Cohen 4). The Voice-over character at the beginning of the play tells us, "Almost everybody knows the story of Anne Frank, the young Jewish girl who perished during Hitler's Holocaust. She left a diary that's inspired millions the world over" (5).

The first time the audience or reader encounters Anne, she and her father are presented as in hiding. They flinch and hold their breath at noises like pounding on a door and police sirens (11). They talk about their friends who may be arrested or taken to concentration camps (11). She and her father discuss how Nazi rule means they must hide for their safety (12). Anne talks of her fear of the Dutch police when she first encounters Emmett, startling her (13). She tells Emmett of her life before the Nazis and how Jews were viewed as "the misfortune of the German people" (19). She tells him how Jews (and she) have different religions, cultures, traditions, and histories (19). Anne tells Emmett about the treatment of Jews in Europe and the world, like the MS *St. Louis* passenger ship was turned back from Cuba and shunned by the United States. She says that many turned away and ended up dead in concentration camps. "The Nazis said that the only way out was…through the smokestacks" (22). Anne relates the Nuremberg Laws and their impact on her and other Jews, including having to wear a Star of David to identify them as Jewish (23). She also shares the disparaging names Jews are called (24). Anne tells him of their hiding, the experiences she missed (25), and the terror they experienced in hiding (27). Her father, Otto, breaks into their conversation to share with the audience about the treatment of Jews in concentration camps, being stripped of all possessions, and being tattooed. (29). Anne describes the stripping of peoples' bodies of their hair and gold teeth (29). The pair's conversation turns to the 1936 Olympics. Jews, like Gretel Bergmann, the high jumper, could not compete. Hitler left the stadium when Jesse Owens, a Black runner, won a medal. He did not want to congratulate him (30).

Later, in conversation with Emmett, Anne aligns herself with the great Jewish minds of Einstein, Chagall, Lazarus, the Gershwins, Horowitz, Brandeis, and Salk (33). She also indicates that she is a Zionist dedicated to the idea of a Jewish homeland in Israel (34). Later in the play, Otto relates the final days of Anne and her sister, Margot, in Bergen-Belsen. He berates himself

for not attempting to leave Holland sooner (47–48). He mourns his family and the "millions of others," saying Kaddish in Hebrew, the prayer for the dead (49–50). Anne uses Hebrew in her conversation (54–55).

A slide show at the end of the play includes images of "the Nazi genocidal persecution of Jews" (56). The final slide is of Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. The play ends with a quote from Wiesel that says forgetting the dead is the same as killing them a second time (57).

Emmett Till is placed in the crisis moment of the Civil Rights era by playwright Cohen with various textual clues. The cast list described him as a "Young Black boy" (4). The first words said about him are: "Fewer people know about Emmett Till, a young Black boy- just about the same age as Anne- who was tortured and lynched in Money, Mississippi, for whistling at a white woman. His brutal murder helped change the course of American history" (5). Cohen has his mother, Mamie, impart rules for Emmett's behavior during his family visit in the Jim Crow era South. The rules include not looking white people in the eye, staying quiet, and even leaving the sidewalk for a white person (6–7). She tells him to take his lunch as "they won't be giving Negroes anything to eat on the train" (8). Her verbal worrying about his visit down South that "If anything were to happen to him, I'd never forgive myself" (9) foreshadows his death. He accuses Anne of fearing him at their first meeting because he is Black and she is white (13). Mamie breaks into Emmett's and Anne's conversation to talk about her fear of Emmett's trip and how he had never seen night riders, lynched Black people, or experienced the threat of having his house set on fire (21). Emmett shares with Anne disparaging names for Black people. He ends with "Nigger" but stops Anne from repeating it and discusses the hurt it causes (24–25). They continued to talk. Emmett indicates that he thinks the pair have a lot in common. He talks about the Middle Passage, the Transatlantic Slave Trade practices, and the Three-fifths Compromise of 1787 that allowed

states to count enslaved persons as three-fifths of a person and freedmen in their population for representation purposes. He also details lynching and the United States' governmentally sanctioned Tuskegee syphilis experiment (1932–72) using Black men (32–33). As Anne aligned herself with great Jewish minds, Emmett aligns himself with great Black minds: Douglass, Carver, Drew, DuBois, Marshall, Ellington, Wells, and Robeson (34). His mother sings a Langston Hughes poem in her mourning for Emmett (39). Finally, Anne convinces Emmett to talk about his torture and murder after being abducted from his Uncle Mose's place (40–42). Mamie breaks in to describe her son's mutilated body and her quest for an open casket to bear witness (42–43). J. W. Milam, one of the murderers, jumps in to justify his actions (43–44). Emmett talks about reparations that should be paid to the descendants of enslaved people (51). Mamie breaks in to say, "You changed the course of American history, Emmett" (54). The play draws to a close with "slides of America's barbaric treatment of African Americans" (56), as well as images of Trayvon Martin, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Jacob Blake, Merci Mack, and Philandro Castile. "The last photograph is of a burning cross that morphs into a swastika" (57).

The commemoration of the "loss of a member" of an "imperiled" community is contained in *Anne & Emmett.* The play commemorates the losses of Anne Frank and Emmett Till. Anne's "imperiled" community is the Jewish people during the Holocaust (4–5). Emmett's "imperiled community" is African Americans on the cusp of the Civil Rights era (4–5). Otto commemorates his daughter, Anne. He says, "And I did the same for you, Anne. Of the eight of us who were sent off to the concentration camps, I was the only one to survive. And when I discovered the pages to your diary hadn't been destroyed or lost, I had them published so the world would know what life was like for you, for us. I wanted everyone to see the truth" (54).

Emmett's mother Mamie does something similar for him: "I will spend the rest of my life making sure no one will ever forget Emmett Till. And *Jet* magazine made sure of it. Put the photograph of how Bo looked in that casket in the magazine" (44). She also says, "But that's why I devoted the rest of my life to keeping the memory of you alive. To give meaning to your death…to inspire people to change things. You changed the course of American history, Emmett" (54). Both Emmett and Anne are memorialized in "Memory." Anne says, "But something happened to cause someone to think about you, to remember you, and therefore you are! You exist. Well, that is, as long as they keep thinking about you, remembering you" (15).

The literary memorial of *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*'s storyline pushes forward the thought that the "imperiled community" will one day triumph over their adversities. *Anne & Emmett*'s "imperiled" communities will have victory over oppression. Of the Jews, Anne says, "That's why we vowed to never allow anyone to try to destroy us. Why we say, 'Remember! Never Again' " (50).

Regarding Emmett's community, she says, "They're wrong Emmett. Time can't erase a crime against humanity. It's never too late for justice. It seems to me if scientists can figure out how long ago the Earth was created, they can figure out just how much is owed" (51) (to African Americans as reparations). When Emmett talks about his rage, she responds, "'The universe isn't dark enough to snuff out the light of a single candle."

"Have hope. Believe that everything I've been through hasn't been a waste. You should try it, Emmett. Light a candle. Just one. Close your eyes and light it" (52). Emmett has an idea: "If people can remember us together, like you said, pull us from the darkness into the light, why can't we ride that same beam of light right back to them? Why can't we tell them while they're thinking of us that they have to do something? To act! They have to stop being silent witnesses to crimes

they know are going on, thinking they're safe!" Anne responds to him, "That's brilliant, Emmett. Yes, we can tell the world the truth- that the haters are still out there and that good people in the world aren't standing up, aren't doing enough to stop them" (55).

The main characters of the literary memorial, *Anne & Emmett*, are central points of collective identity. As previously stated, Anne Frank is included in The National Women's History Museum. The organization includes Frank's biography on their webpage (K. L. Alexander, *Anne Frank*). Her collectives are women and Jewish women. Emmett's death and how his mother handled it is considered by some to be the catalyst for the Civil Rights era. At a reading at Emerson College in January 2009, the play's US premiere reading, Cohen suggested that good came from tragedy because the death of Emmett Till sparked Rosa Parks to stand up for her people. Cohen indicates that Parks was often quoted as saying that the thought of Till kept her from moving to the back of the bus (Pelikhov). The National Museum of African American History and Culture concurs. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was quoted as saying that one hundred days after the murder of Emmett Till, Rosa Parks was told to move to the back of a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus. Parks thought about moving but then thought of Till and stood her ground (*Emmett Till's Death Inspired a Movement*).

Literary memorials re-play or re-present the losses from their collectives. Anne Frank's and Emmett Till's deaths are re-played or re-presented in Cohen's work. *Harriet and Anne* re-plays the deaths of both Anne Frank and six million Jews during the Holocaust: Anne's character says, "Somehow Margot and I were herded into the same group. Mother into another one, and Poppa…where did they take him? Auschwitz, I think, but I never saw him again" (47). Anne persists in talking about her road to death, "I became the older sister and gave her my food. I was determined to keep her alive. She was my only link to all that had been beautiful in the past. She

kept growing weaker, but the guards just kept giving us more work" (48). Otto continues the story, "We could see the Nazi soldiers smoking, laughing, joking, treating us like vermin, not human. They performed all kinds of cruel experiments … torture, executions, gassings, and … I'll never forget the smell of smoke, of burning souls" (48). "Everyone had typhus … nausea, the scratching, the pain" (49). Anne dies, "I kept thinking of Poppa, how much I loved him, of how I used to write in my diary. I grew delirious, knew that I was dying, slipping away. Then I heard a soft tapping sound that soon became loud thumping. Was it the sound of the Dutch police coming for me again, or just the last beats of my heart? Then the thumping turned to a flapping noise … The lights turned white, and suddenly, I could see it was that sweet little bird I used to dream about. I wanted to set it free, to fly away with it into the blue skies…Be Poppa's little girl again" (49).

Conversely, Emmett's death is portrayed more violently:

> Took an ax to me…gouged out one of my eyes, blinded me in the
> Other…Momma!
> My eye sockets feel like red-hot coals have been poured into them. I fall to my
> Knees screaming…Everything is spinning around in my head. I cannot breathe…
> The pain is so great, I think my whole body is on fire. I can't see them, can't tell where they are going to hit me again. Even though I'm scared and hurtin.' I don't
> Back down. I keep swinging my arms trying to fight back. Just makes them madder.
> All the time, I know I'm dying. Things flashing through my mind. No more pranks, playing baseball, jumping in swimming holes, no more doo-woppin' and Singing with my cousins. No more sweet hugs from my momma…Finally, they
> Tie a big cotton-gin fan around me, shoot me in the… (*The sound of a loud gunshot rings out*) …and throw me in the Tallahatchie River. Everything starts
> Going blank…The last thing I can hear is them laughing and my body splashing
> In the water…
> Funny, all the time they were beatin' and cuttin' me up, scared as I was, I kept
> Hoping that no one would find my body. All I could think of was what would happen to my momma if she ever saw what they had done to me. I could bear the
> Dying easier than the thought of her crying. (41–2)

Emmett's death scene ends with his mother describing that he was found floating on the river a few days later. He was going to be buried surreptitiously in Mississippi. Mamie obtained a court order to have his body shipped to Chicago. She violated the state seal of Mississippi on the casket.

Mamie Till displayed to the world the wrong done to her son. He was beaten so severely that only his father's ring on his finger identified him (42–3).

As a literary memorial, to keep the audience's attention, *Anne & Emmett* contains "stylistic and poetic devices." The stylistic devices are of a wide variety. The play begins and ends with the speech of a voice-over character. It introduces the two main characters, Emmett and Anne (5). The play also closes with a voice-over, imparting the final thought that forgetting the dead is dangerous and offensive. It murders them all over again (57). Accompanied by the musical score, before the closing voice-over, is a "series of slides depicting the horrors of the Nazi genocidal persecution of European Jews and America's barbaric treatment of African Americans (56). Then, photographs are projected. The photos are of African Americans who were lost to racial violence as well as victims of violence against LGBTQ individuals. The final visual is a burning cross morphing into a swastika. The quote from Elie Wiesel is read in voice-over. The play ends (57).

Another stylistic device that accompanies the entire play is music in various forms. An oboe opens the top of the show (5). The violin takes up the musical theme (13). The musical score comes up after Anne & Emmett exit. Music accompanies the ending slide show (56). Mamie Till's character sings a "Christian hymn" (6) as well as a Langston Hughes poem (39). In the script, near the reporting of Emmett's death, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* is played (43). It is an African American Spiritual. The song refers to the chariot that brings God's people to heaven. Otto and Anne have moments when Hebrew is used in their lines, underscoring their Jewishness. Otto says the *Kaddish* for his dead family (50). Anne tells Emmett the Hebrew words for their names and what they both mean. Anne's name means "favored grace" and Emmett's means "truth" (54). Anne also discusses the concept of *tikkun olam*, or "repair of the world" (55). There are also sound effects. Pounding and police sirens invade scenes of Anne's (11). Emmett's world has an automobile horn,

signaling his ride to the train he will take to Money, Mississippi (7, 9). A gunshot occurs during Emmett's death (41). The parents of the pair come in and out of scenes to help tell Anne's and Emmett's story (10, 12, 19, 21, 29, 37, 39, 42, 45, 47, 53), as does one of Emmett's killers (42–3).

Poetic devices also keep the audience's attention. Sensory solid imagery is used to describe Emmett's death:

> "Took an ax to me…gouged out one of my eyes, blinded me in the Other…Momma!
>
> My eye sockets feel like red-hot coals have been poured into them. I fall to my Knees screaming … Everything is spinning around in my head. I cannot breathe … The pain is so great, I think my whole body is on fire. I can't see them, can't tell where they are going to hit me again. Even though I'm scared and hurtin,' I don't Back down. I keep swinging my arms trying to fight back. Just makes them madder." (41)

Anne's character's lines use sensory imagery also when she recounts the long-forgotten dream of hers:

> It's that dream I was trying to remember when you came here … I dreamed that a beautiful bird somehow had slipped into our Annex and had become trapped there. It kept crashing against the walls, falling to the floor, breaking its wings, but it wouldn't give up trying to be free. There were other times when I … just … closed my eyes and imagined dark, murderous clouds all around us. But just above my head was a patch of blue sky. It was the only thing that gave me hope.
>
> Hope that the war would end and that we'd be safe … free of the fear that filled every minute of our lives. (46)

Anne is the bird in her dreams.

Metaphors are used when Emmett says, "You're a white girl, and in Money, Mississippi, that means you can hurt me without saying a word. All you have to do is point a finger at me" (14). A white person does not even need to touch Emmett to hurt him. All they need to do is wordlessly place blame. It is also an allusion to the literal and figurative finger of Carolyn Bryant, whose accusation led to his torture and death. Anne tells Emmett, "All I know is that we probably don't have much time together. Memory fades. It doesn't last long."

Emmett responds, "You said it was timeless here." Anne returns, "I said that the truth was timeless, not Memory" (16). The pair will fade from memory, but the truth about what they endured will last forever; when Anne asks Emmett if he knows what cat urine smells like, he responds negatively. Anne retorts, "It smells like fear. The smell of fear was in our clothes, our hair, our hands. It was everywhere. In everything. We couldn't wash it away" (29). Fear permeated their lives like the smell of feline waste. When Anne says that gold teeth were taken from prisoners in the camps, Emmett responds with, "You talked about gold! My people were the gold-black gold! And just like the Nazis did to your people, white folks did to us!" (31). A few pages later, Emmett goes on, "It's really sick. American was built on our backs. But once we started to resist … demand equal rights, they said, 'If you Negroes don't like the way we do things around her, go back to Africa!' " (34). The labor of Emmett's collective built the United States through slavery. He tells Anne later, "You'd have it made in the shade in America. All you'd have to do is change your name, change your hair and you could pass" (39). Anne would be able to pass for a Christian in America. It would be easy for her due to her skin color. He goes on to say later, "that in America, color is a prison. We can never escape it. But if you're white, you're alright, and if you're Black, get back" (39). Emmett's skin color keeps him from living the life he should have. His skin color marks him and binds his life choices. The device of simile is used when Mamie Till's character describes the smell of Emmett's corpse, "The stink was like, well, like the devil's own breath" (42). She turns to metaphor when she goes on, "But I didn't care … I wasn't going to pour perfume to cover the stench of their hate" (42).

Emmett's line uses a metaphor when discussing pictures of him in his casket, "Word was that the photograph went worldwide. Even made news in a German newspaper. Headline read, "In American, A Negro's Life Isn't Worth a Whistle!" (44). In other words, Emmett's life was worth

nothing to his killers. Anne tells Emmett that he should have followed the "rules" of his life. He retorts, "Licking their boots along the way?" (45). Emmett did not want to demean himself with the "rules." He wanted to be free of the "rules" of dealing with white people. His lines continue to use metaphors. He describes the Ku Klux Klan and skinheads can walk down the street secure. "They can wrap themselves in the American flag while saluting Hitler's and burn crosses knowing it's the symbol of white terrorism" (51). He turns to metaphor and simile later, when he recounts what is said to African Americans about harboring the past, "'Stop playing the victim. Stop dragging the past around like some dead body in the cemetery. Bury it! It's history!'" Black history, I guess. Not American history. We're always told to get over it! Just what's the *it* they want us to get over?" (51).

Emmett's lines contain alliteration when he responds to Anne's comment about hate dividing people. He says, "Divide … Dehumanize … Dominate … Destroy" (56). He uses alliteration again when he tells how God did not hear him. Emmett says, "There's something I never understood. I mean, I always praised God. I prayed to him, I promised to be good. And I was … mostly … But when I needed Him most, He didn't hear me" (35). His lines use alliteration and repetition for emphasis.

Anne's lines have epistrophe for emphasis. Epistrophes are successive sentences or sentence fragments that end in the same phrase. Anne describes how the Annex was breached, "The tapping turned to thumping, the thumping to pounding" (47). She describes the people she eventually sees in Bergen-Belsen: "Old faces, scared faces, puzzled faces" (47).

Otto's lines use a chiasmus. It is a stylized device that deals with the reversal of words. When he cries out to God upon the death of his family, he says, "God this is your answer? Silence? I know that you will not forgive my blasphemy, but I will not forget your silence" (50). This

exchange with a silent God suggests the old aphorism of forgiving and forgetting. We see this use of chiasmus again when Anne responds to Emmett about his race's struggles. She makes the point that the Jews had one, too: "Emmett, you're angry. I understand that … But anger only eats away inside. It doesn't change anything. Just remember, while you were trying to get into the officer clubs, we were trying to stay out of the ovens!" (38).

Recurring motifs include a bird, the concept of "Memory"/memory, and rules. The bird inhabits Anne's dream (46–7). The bird is trapped in the annex, yearning to be free, as Anne is yearning. Anne's rising soul is the same "sweet bird" as she dies in Bergen-Belsen (49). The other motif is Memory/memory. Anne and Emmett meet in Memory (5). It is "A magical place where you can look into the past, be in the present, and know everything that has happened since" (14). They are there because "someone must have thought about" them (14). "Memory fades. It doesn't last very long" (16). Anne wants people to remember her forever (16). Emmett does not want to leave because he will be forgotten (17). He says later, "Here in Memory, everything seems to be okay" (34). Mamie says she will spend the rest of her life making sure people remember Emmett (44, 54). Otto agrees with Mamie and says he did the same for Anne by publishing her diary (54). Anne finally remembers her dream of the trapped bird (46). Otto will not forget God's silence (50). Emmett's death does not leave him in Memory. Emmett cannot "forget that night … everything going dark" (52). Emmett wants more than people to remember what happened to them. He is "stuck here between remembering history and repeating it (55). Anne says that they will remain in memory until people change. "Until the memory of the horrors of the past becomes so strong, so deeply embedded in their souls, that they say, 'Enough. No more!' But memories fade quickly" (55). Although the lights dimmer in Memory, Anne & Emmett want to remain there (56). The play

ends with a voice-over that says, "To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time" (57).

The motif of rules, laws, and legal policies is repeated in *Anne & Emmett.* Mamie says, "Bo, listen to me. Rules are different for colored people down south" (6). Mamie wants to make sure Emmett understands them. Emmett assures her, "I know all the rules, Momma" (7). Otto, too, makes sure Anne knows the rules. Anne responds, "Yes, the rules. Always the rules. No laughing, no joking, no talking, no fighting … no joy whatsoever. This is not living" (12). Emmett will not shake hands with Anne because of the rules (17). She tells him, "There are no rules here. You are totally free" (17). Anne cites rules when she divulges that the *St. Louis* was not allowed to port in the United States "Because there was a law- a strict policy on admitting immigrants" (22). Anne cites the Nuremberg Laws, which sent Jews to the ghettos, had them step off sidewalks, wear a yellow star, and sit segregated at the movie theatres (23). Emmett responds in kind about the movies and mentions the "sundowner" rules, "'Don't be caught in town after sundown, boy.'" (24). Emmett cites the "rules" of the Three-fifths Compromise of 1787 (31). Legislation allowed states to count freedmen and enslaved people in their population for legislative reasons. Enslaved people were counted as three-fifths of a person. Emmett goes on to say that rules protected animals better than his people. There were limits on the number of animals a person could hunt (31). Emmett points out later that German prisoners of war were treated better than Black officers by the US Government. The German P.O.W.s could eat in American Officers' clubs.

Conversely, Black officers could be court-martialed for trying to do the same (38). When Emmett starts to recount his experience in Mississippi, He says his mother did not want him to go because he was not used to all the rules "down there" (40). Otto reminds Anne, "You have to know the rules" (40). Emmett likens the Nazis' rules for Jews to the rules of the Jim Crow South (40).

Mamie defies the rules and opens Emmett's casket with the state of Mississippi seal on it (42). When one of Emmett's killers comes onstage, he details some of the rules of the South for African Americans. They need to stay in their place. They cannot vote, go to school with his kids, or have sex with a white woman (43).

Emmett refers to the justice system. His killers were given what Emmett terms a "phony trial" (44). Otto and Mamie remind the children of the rules again (45). The children discuss how "haters are prosecuted in Europe, but in the US, they flout their hate." Anne points out that reparations are paid to survivors and families of those who perished in Europe. Emmett points out that the US cannot resolve that legal issue (50–1). When Anne points out that he should give up his anger, he asks which president should receive the blame (52). The children calm down and talk about their last birthdays. Anne points out the "rule" that you cannot reveal your birthday wish, or it will not come true (53). They continue to talk. Their discussion leads Anne to point out that they need to act. They have a moral obligation (*tikkun olam*) to "repair the world" (55).

The literary memorial is a deed of remembrance that attempts to create and convey group emotions. Literary memorials, like *Anne & Emmett*, have a two-part function. The first part presents the individual's death, which is either foundational or preservational to the collective. Anne's death is given as preservational. Without her death, Otto would not have published her diary:

> And I did the same for you, Anne … I was the only one to survive. And when I discovered that the pages to your diary hadn't been destroyed or lost, I had them published so the world would know what life was like for you, for us … I wanted everyone to see the truth. (54)

Emmett's death was foundational. It was viewed as a catalyst for the Civil Rights movement. Mamie's character says that she spent the rest of her life "making sure no one will ever forget Emmett Till" (44). As previously stated in this work, it is said that the thought of him kept Rosa

Parks at the front of the bus. Emmett says, "Looking back, if I'd lived, I know I would have done something big. I would have been somebody important … Maybe like Dr. King, marched for justice. That's what I would have wanted. Justice for Black people. Something we never had" (54).

The second part of the function of literary memorials as "a story, play, or liturgy" is to reaffirm the collective's vision through the literal performance of the memorial work. Through this "narrative process," the individual becomes the collective's courageous "martyr," which is emblematic of their identity as a group. This fabricated shared identity is legitimized through participation in the literary memorial's performance (Troizier-Cheyne 142). In the performance of this *Anne & Emmett*, Anne Frank and Emmett Till are kept alive in Memory (15). They are reaching back to the world from "Memory" (55) to repair the world (55). Because they are now alive only in "Memory"/memory, people can have "grace" and "truth" when the audience remembers them and "stop being silent witnesses to crimes they know are going on, thinking they're safe" (55). The audience will work together to "repair the world" with Anne and Emmett if the reader/audience lets them "touch our conscience" (56).

The final play, *Letters from Anne and Martin* by Vaughn and Gellner, is the third literary memorial. First, I discuss how *Letters from Anne and Martin* functions as a literary memorial. The "moment(s) of historical crisis" in Vaughn and Gellner's play are the Holocaust and the Civil Rights era. Anne Frank's character is placed in the Holocaust initially with the soundscape. Sounds of a Hitler rally in German are heard as we see her alone. Her lines on page two of the work discuss war. She asks, "What's the point of the war?" (2). She discusses people being sent to concentration camps. Anne also mentions that everyone is above the Jews. "Unless you are a Nazi, you don't know what's going to happen to you from one day to the next" (2). Later, on that page, she identifies herself as a Jew: "Would Christians act any differently if they were in our place?" (3). She hopes

for the antisemitism in Holland to be a "passing thing" (4). She says that if the threat were carried out, "the meager handful of Jews still left in Holland will have to go. We too will have to shoulder our bundles and move away from this beautiful country" (4). She says of her group, "We've been strongly reminded of the fact that we're Jews in chains" (4). She also talks of "fatal accidents" of people who are shot by the Gestapo when a saboteur cannot be caught (6). Anne also details the transport of cattle cars to Westerbork and the poor conditions at the camp in Drenthe (7). She also says, "It's impossible to escape their clutches unless you go in hiding" (8). She also describes a roundup of Jews (8).

> Somewhere out there my dearest friends are dropping from exhaustion or being knocked to the ground. I get frightened myself when I think of close friends who are now at the mercy of the cruelest monsters ever to stalk the earth. And all Because they're Jews (8).

She longs for a new reality: "The time will come when we'll be people again and not just Jews" (9). Anne indicates that God has never deserted her people, the Jews. She says, "Through the ages, Jews have had to suffer…but through the ages, they've gone on living…and the centuries of suffering have only made them stronger" (9).

Martin Luther King, Jr. is situated in the Civil Rights era. The soundscape plays the voice of Bull Connor. Connor is the Montgomery, Alabama, Public Commissioner opposing the Civil Rights movement. After King enters his imaginary jail cell, he alludes to his protest activities: While confined here in the Birmingham City Jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities' unwise and untimely'" (1). He has begun to write his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" in the margins of the newspaper in which he read the comment. King details the current conditions, including the bombing of churches and homes in Birmingham (2). He indicates, "We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves, 'Are you able to accept blows without retaliating'" (2). Martin Luther King, Jr. cites Jewish philosopher Martin

Buber and Lutheran theologian Paul Tillich to support segregation as wrong (4–5). He says, "We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given right. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jet-like speed toward gaining political independence, but we stiff creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter" (6). He talks about being barred from motels, day-in and day-out humiliation, lynch mobs, and stifling poverty (7). King also talks about how civil disobedience is not a new topic (8). He indicates that if their "forebearers could make it through slavery, they can surely win their freedom today" (9). He signs his letter, "Yours—for the cause of peace and brotherhood" (10).

The commemoration of the "loss of a member" of an "imperiled" community is contained in *Letters from Anne and Martin.* The work was written as a commemorative piece for the Anne Frank Center USA in honor of Martin Luther King Day. The work was developed in January 2013 to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. That February, they started performing at college campuses. The performance piece quickly became a popular production among high schools and colleges. Performances of the work have become more frequent since then (Churnin, "Wesli Spencer"). The imperiled communities, as previously mentioned, are Jews during the Holocaust, Anne Frank's community. Martin Luther King, Jr. belongs to the imperiled community of the Civil Rights era's African Americans.

The literary memorial of *Letters from Anne and Martin*'s storyline pushes forward the thought that the "imperiled community" will one day triumph over their adversities. Anne's character says:

> We're all alive, but we don't know why or what for; we're all searching for happiness, we're all leading lives that are different and yet the same. We have been raised in good families; we have the opportunity to get an education and make something of ourselves; we have many reasons to hope for great happiness, but we have to earn it. And that's something you can't achieve by taking the easy way out. Earning happiness means doing good and working, not speculating

and being lazy. Laziness may look inviting, but only work gives you true satisfaction (6). Anne continues to say, "Be Brave! Let's remember our duty and perform it without complaint. There will be a way out. One day, this terrible war will be over. The time will come when we'll be people again and not just Jews" (9).

Anne goes on, "God has never deserted our people … but through the ages, Jews have had to suffer … but through the ages, they've gone on living … and the centuries of suffering have only made them stronger … The weak shall fall, and the strong shall survive and not be defeated" (9). She says, "It's difficult in times like these: hopes rise within us only to be crushed by grim reality. And yet, when I look up at the sky … I somehow feel that everything will change for the better … peace and tranquility will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold onto my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I'll be able to realize them" (10).

*Letters from Anne and Martin* advances the idea that Martin's "imperiled community" of the African American Civil Rights era will one day triumph against their adversity. Those African Americans fighting for their civil rights will prevail. Martin writes:

> We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we
> would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the
> Conscience of the local and national community. We began a series of workshops
> On nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without
> retaliating?" (2)

He goes on to say:

> We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given
> By the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet
> To engage in a direct-action campaign that was "well-time" in the view of those
> Who have suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. (3)

He continues:

> For years now, I have heard the word, "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro
> With piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We
> Must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long

> Delayed is Justice denied." (3)

Martin advocates direct action:

> Why sit-ins, marches, and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are Quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct Action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks to so dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. (3)

He indicates that no gain was made for Civil Rights without "determined legal and nonviolent pressure" (5). He continues, "Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation" (6). Martin wants the pace of "political independence" to move faster. He says that those who haven't experienced segregation, lynch mobs, poverty, and had to explain to their children why they can't do the things white children get to do can say "Wait" easily (7–8). "There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience" (8). Martin believes they can fight for their civil rights and win: "If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail" (9). "We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands. If I have said anything that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me" (9). He sees his community securing their civil rights: "and in some

not-too-distant tomorrow, the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty" (10).

The main characters of the literary memorial *Letters from Anne and Martin* are central points of collective identity. As previously stated, Anne Frank is included in The National

Women's History Museum. The organization includes Frank's biography on their webpage (K. L. Alexander, *Anne Frank*). Her collective is that of women and Jewish women. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a crucial point of collective identity in the Civil Rights era. His collective includes African Americans and all those fighting for civil rights for African Americans during the Civil Rights era. *Time* magazine puts Martin Luther King, Jr. In the top twenty influential people of all time (*The 20 Most Influential Americans of All Time*).

Literary memorials re-play or re-present the losses from their collectives. Anne Frank's and Martin Luther King, Jr. The losses of Frank and King from their respective collectives. One is reminded of the violence of their deaths when the pair alternates these lines;

> MARTIN: WE are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, —
> ANNE: There is a destructive urge in people, —
> MARTIN: —tied in a single garment of destiny.
> ANNE: —the urge to rage, murder, and kill. (2)

Anne continues with the idea:

> [And] until all of humanity, without exception, undergoes a metamorphosis, wars will continue to be waged, and everything that has been carefully built up, cultivated, and grown will be cut down and destroyed only to start all over again. (2)

Both Anne and Martin are part of that which "will be cut down and destroyed" (2).

Anne's lines continue to point toward death for both. Their words in duet apply to the pair. She talks about men who "bully and beat them—" Martin interjects: "Curse and kick!" (8). Anne goes on: "—until they nearly drop. No one is spared. The sick, the elderly, children, babies, and pregnant women- all are marched to their death" (8).

When Martin talks about civil disobedience, he cites the biblical Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The trio face death and survive the fiery furnace when they challenge King

Nebuchadnezzar. He also cites early Christians who were glad to face execution by sword and by "hungry lions" (8). He raises the possibility that he will be a martyr by bringing up these examples.

As a literary memorial, to keep the audience's attention, *Anne & Emmett* contains "stylistic and poetic devices." First, I speak about stylistic devices in Vaughn and Gellner's *Letters from Anne and Martin*. Hannah Vaughn, who first conceived the theatrical presentation *Letters from Anne and Martin*, called the work "An imagined meeting of mind and heart, drawn entirely from the text of Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947, expanded 1995) and Dr, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (*Home*). The 45-to-60-minute performances of *Letters from Anne and Martin* are recommended for children ages ten and older (Graeber). A post-show discussion with the audience accompanies every performance. The topics can cover more about Anne Frank and ways to confront tolerance and discrimination. The post-show discussion intends to "continue the dialogue" started by the performance (*Performances*). When the actors step away momentarily, the facilitator asks the audience: "thinking about what you just heard from these two people, what similarities did you see or hear in what they had to say? What are the similarities in their life experiences?" The audience is asked to think for a minute and then share with the person next to them. After giving the audience some thinking time, the facilitator asks 5–10 people, depending on the time available, to share what they talked about with their partners. Other sample questions include: "Let's imagine Anne lived to the 60s and was able to become involved with the Civil Rights Movement. Do you think she would be encouraging of the peaceful protest as a means of getting the message across?" and "If you could pick another pairing to convey a similar message- who would you pick?" The actors may be asked to start an audience dialogue with the actors, "What is your favorite line?" or "What moments stand out for you as the biggest connection moments?" (Vaughn and Gellner, *Post Letters Q & A*).

Hannah Vaughn, the original architect of the script, had some thoughts about the work to share. First, the purpose of the theatrical presentation of *Letters from Anne and Martin* "is to present the text(s) of these two people in a very different way." She viewed it as a method "to get the audiences to see how the text will affect them, through performance (Ibrahim). Vaughn saw King and Frank as individuals who go through emotional struggles due to their beliefs but remain "hopeful and strong, putting aside their fears to stick to their values" (Ibrahim).

At a 2015 performance of *Letters from Anne and Martin*, Hannah Vaughn talked about the work she created. She discussed setting and text selection. Vaughn also speculated about what might have been for the individuals had they survived their situations. Regarding the setting, she said, "We're imagining them in kind of this nonexistent place, a nebulous sort of room" (Graeber). She commented about the characters' level of interaction, "They're aware of each other and sometimes talk to each other" (Graeber).

Hannah Vaughn also commented on reasons for text selections. King's letter was selected because he wrote "from a place of confinement" like Frank. She said, "I knew it was the right choice" to pair the couple when she encountered the following passage in King's Birmingham jail letter, "had I lived in Germany at this time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers." Vaughn spoke about the text arrangement, saying, "I tried to match passages" from each work. She asks herself, "What does she (Frank) say that might spark a response from him (King)" (Graeber).

Because the pair were both born in 1929, Vaughn wondered, due to the couple's sensibilities, "Who knows if they would have met?" "Anne has this desire to take part in the world, and I think she would have been very interested in what was happening in the Civil Rights Era" (Graeber).

The play also has a soundscape to retain the audience's attention. It aurally places Anne in The Third Reich with the recording of the German political rally cheers and Hitler's voice. Martin is placed within the Civil Rights era. Bull Connor's voice is heard, as are protestors. The sounds of his jail cell door are also included. There are gunshots when Anne speaks of saboteurs being shot (6). (Gellner, Interview with the author).

Now, I discuss the poetic devices intended to keep the audience's attention with the literary memorial of *Letters from Anne and Martin*. As previously mentioned, this piece of dramatic literature was put together wholly from the real-life writings of Anne Frank and Martin Luther King, Jr. The sources were Anne Frank's diary and King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (Ibrahim). All lines for the characters come from their epistolary works. Their literary voices are set in juxtaposition with one another. Vaughn and Gellner arranged or collaged their works to create a cohesive script in which their thoughts appear to play off and support one another's ideas.

The first literary device found in *Letters from Anne and Martin* is chiasmus. This literary device uses reversals to play with words: Martin says: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (2). He uses the same device when he says, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed" (3). King uses chiasmus for a third time when he says, "It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority" (4). A fourth time, he uses chiasmus. He says, "Shallow understanding from people of goodwill is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will" (4). For the fifth time in the script, his words use chiasmus. He describes being "harried by day and haunted by night" (8).

King's writing uses metaphor when he says, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality—tied in a single garment of destiny" (2). He must do something because the same

injustice threatens them all. His lines include consonance and repetition of consonant sounds in the sentence, "Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound" (5). King's writing uses simile and metonymy when he compares the "jet-like speed" of Africa and Asia to the United States' "horse-and-buggy" speed in securing Civil Rights for African Americans (6). He also alludes to the civil disobedience of the Boston Tea Party. He alludes to "what Adolf Hitler did in Germany," an allusion to the Holocaust, that he compared to his current situation (8). King uses alliteration with the hard "c" sound at the beginning of the words in this phrase 'when you have seen policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters" (6). He uses metonymy when he refers to his daughter's mind as "her little mental sky" (7). King uses it again, saying, "Living constantly at tiptoe stance" (8). He continues using metonymy when he says, "There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair" (8).

In one section, King makes several allusions. He alludes to the Biblical story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He alludes to early Christians being thrown to the lions or executed. He also alludes to the civil disobedience of the Boston Tea Party. When King says, "everything Hitler did in Germany," he is alluding to the Holocaust" (8).

King uses visceral sensory imagery when he writes:

> But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will And drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you see to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white. (7)

Similar to a metaphor, Anne uses metonymy when she hopes for the current antisemitism to end. She hopes the Dutch will "show their true colors" (4). She uses metaphors and metonymy when she says, "I've often imagined how nice it would be if someone were to confide everything to me. But now that it's reached that point, I realize how difficult it is to put yourself in someone else's shoes and find the right answer…It's hard enough standing on your own two feet, but when you also have to remain true to your character and soul, it's harder still" (6).

Anne uses epistrophe, a literary device in which successive sentences or fragments end with the same phrase. She writes, talking of her shortcomings, "I also know that I want to change, will change, and already have changed greatly!" (5). The use of epistrophe adds emphasis, urgency, and focus, which catches the hearer's attention.

Anne uses anaphora, the act of beginning a series of successive sentences or clauses (sentence fragments) with the same phrase. She asks, "Who has inflicted this on us? Who has set us apart from all the rest? Who has put us through such suffering?" (9). Anaphora, in this section, makes an impact on her words. Hearing "who" repeatedly makes the hearer hold on to the words, making the phrases more intense and memorable.

The entire script is written as if the audience or reader corresponds with the characters addressed by the pair. Anne addresses them at the beginning as "My dearest Kitty." Martin addresses the audience/reader as "My dear fellow clergymen" (1). The entire script is written as if we are correspondents with the characters. Anne addresses us at the beginning as "My dearest Kitty." Martin addresses us as "My dear fellow clergymen" (1). The script closes with

> ANNE: Yours, (*unison*) MARTIN: Yours, (*unison*)
> MARTIN: —for the cause of peace and brotherhood.
> ANNE: —Anne M. Frank
> MARTIN: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (10)

The audience has simultaneously become the "Kitty" of Anne's diary and the clergymen of Birmingham, Alabama.

The literary memorial is a deed of remembrance that attempts to create and convey group emotions. Literary memorials, like *Anne & Emmett*, have a two-part function. The first part presents the individual's death, which is either foundational or preservational to the collective. The audience encounters *Anne & Emmett* after a brief pre-performance talk that introduces the real-life versions of the characters and establishes their deaths (Anne Frank Center USA). The reader/audience has already been told that they are deceased. Just as Till's death was considered a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement, King's death increased activism and decreased nonviolent protest. King's death was foundational to the collective's reality. Frank's death was preservational to the collective as we come into the performance after being told that she "wanted to go on living even after her death" (Anne Frank Center USA). If her words are witnessed, she goes on living after her death.

The second part of the function of literary memorials, "a story, play, or liturgy," is to reaffirm the collective's vision by the literal performance of the memorial work. Through this "narrative process," the individual becomes the collective's courageous "martyr," which is emblematic of their identity as a group. This fabricated shared identity is legitimized through participation in the literary memorial's performance (Troizier-Cheyne 142). Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner's *Letters from Anne and Martin* was performed at the Anne Frank Center USA. The work was also mounted at schools, churches, synagogues, and community centers. The theatrical presentation was created initially for a 2013 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration at The Anne Frank Center USA (*Performances*). The work was also produced in 2014 to celebrate

the 50th anniversary of signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Ibrahim). The audience becomes part of Anne's and Martin's collective when they sign off at the end of the play:

> ANNE: Yours, (*unison*) MARTIN: Yours, (*unison*)
> MARTIN: —for the cause of peace and brotherhood.
> ANNE: —Anne M. Frank
> MARTIN: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (10).

Anne Frank and Martin Luther King, Jr. have declared themselves "ours" in the closing; the audience/reader is now part of their respective collectives.

Rigney indicates that writing history is a way to deal with the past. She also suggested that historiography is not the only way people deal with the past. Methods of interacting with the past can encompass creating family trees, historical reenactments, museum visits, apologies to heads of state, viewing historical movies and reading historical fiction, and commemorative ceremonies (Rigney 363). Commemorative ceremonies could include the viewing or creation of a literary memorial. Rigney also said that our society's current vigorous concentration on bygone days with the earlier activities mentioned above was explicated as a proceeding influence of 20th-century wounds or traumas. Many of those pursuits and occupations were linked to depictions or portrayals of the Second World War (Rigney 363). Not only are the three Anne Frank plays, *Harriet and Anne*, *Anne & Emmett*, and *Letters from Anne and Martin*, associated with WWII, but they are also linked with another period of cultural trauma. This begins with the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its aftermath, including the pre-and post-Civil War and the Jim Crow eras in the United States, as well as the Civil Rights era.

Simply defined, cultural trauma occurs when individuals in a particular group experience a terrifying and traumatic situation/event that perpetually affects the group members emotionally, psychologically, and physically and their descendants even after the termination of the initial situation/event. Social theorist Jeffrey C. Alexander and colleagues advance this view (1). There

are four crucial aspects germane to the "master narrative" that support the concept of cultural trauma. Those crucial aspects are interwoven and not necessarily sequential (2). They are "The nature of the pain," "The nature of the victim," "Relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience," and "Attribution of responsibility" (J. C. Alexander et al. 12–15). The first facet, "the nature of the pain," asks what occurred to the specific group of individuals and the collective from which that group is constituent (13). The next aspect asks who was impacted by the trauma. Was it certain people, specific groups, or everyone as a whole? Who suffered the chief impact of the pain, one group or more? (13). The third facet, "relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience" (14), queries how the victim(s) relate to the group as a collective; how much does the collective identify with the victim(s)? If the part of the collective not experiencing the trauma sees the traumatized victims as possessing esteemed or appreciated characteristics, they become tropologically able to take part in the original trauma experience (14). Greater social perception and affinity occur when the whole collective participates in the pain of the traumatized group (24). The collective will be able to set forth moral obligations and turn social and governmental action (27). The fourth and final aspect of the cultural trauma framework, "Attribution of responsibility" (15), assigns a perpetrator to the wounding. Who hurt or traumatized the victim(s)? The cultural trauma narrative must pick an "antagonist." Identifying the antagonist "is always a matter of symbolic and social construction (15).

Neil J. Smelser, writing in the field of sociology, along with Alexander, calls for four defining aspects of "cultural trauma." First, a pertinent member group must know or make the event known. The event was unable to be eradicated from memory (44). Next, the incident must be a culturally relevant memory that harms, destroys, or troubles a sacrosanct societal value.

Ultimately, the remembered event/incident must link "with a strong negative affect, usually disgust, shame, or guilt" (Smelser 36). The event threatens or violates bedrock societal assumptions (44).

As mentioned earlier, *Harriet and Anne*, *Anne & Emmett*, and *Letters from Anne and Martin*, associated with WW II, are attendant with another period of cultural trauma. That period comprises the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its centuries-long aftermath in the United States. The specific incident of cultural trauma related to the Second World War is the Holocaust. The period from 1933 to 1945 in Europe, Hitler's Third Reich, under which more than six million Jews, Roma, Disabled, Gays, and other "undesirables" were systematically rounded up, incarcerated, and destroyed by governmental order is how the Holocaust was defined for this paper.

The first cultural trauma episode dealt with in the Anne Frank plays is that of the Holocaust. All three works discussed in this paper revolve around the cultural trauma of the Holocaust. According to Bernard Giesen, currently, the Holocaust is representative "of horror and inhumanity, on par with the witch hunts of Salem, Massachusetts, the rule of Genghis Kahn, and the Transatlantic trafficking of enslaved persons. Globally, human beings can "refer to" grasp the concept; "It is not a particularly German problem anymore" (142). The concept of the Holocaust had reached mythic proportions. It had become "a master narrative" (143). Immediate post-war examination of the event seemed beyond people's comprehension. The "sanctified hell," that was "inconceivable," "unbearable and absurd" has become "well-known background knowledge." The Holocaust is referred to in political arenas, presented in various media forms, used as fundraising, and debates action in "moral terms." Ultimately, it engenders battles about who may retain its agency (143). Confronted with the Holocaust, human beings must consider that the understanding of human nature is illusory. If the cultural trauma of the Holocaust occurred in 20th-century Europe, a holocaust could happen anywhere; no place is safe from murderous savagery. The Holocaust

becomes a world cultural trauma, not just a German cultural trauma. The migration of this particular cultural trauma reaches out to us all (145).

Memorialization of the Holocaust is created because we are so detached from the "original scene." The cataclysm of the Holocaust is then personalized and dramatized so that we can identify with it. Jeffrey Alexander points out that in Holocaust museums, the destiny of the Jews during the Holocaust becomes a symbolic connection to "other ethnic, religious, and racial minorities." This bridging is done to add to ethnic inclusivity and egalitarianism, not to advance the idea of the Holocaust as a significant world occurrence (Alexander, *Social Construction of Moral Universals* 257).

The other cultural trauma event in the Anne Frank plays is that of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, spanning the 16th to the 19th centuries, the pre- and post-Civil War era (1861–65), including Jim Crow apartheid America, leading up to the Civil Rights era (1954–68). "The trauma in question is slavery, not as an institution or even experience, but as a collective memory, a form of remembrance that grounded the identity- formation of a people" (Eyerman, "Cultural Trauma" 60). Tubman's life spans the pre-Civil War, Civil War, and Jim Crow America. Till lived his entire life in apartheid America, and his death is said to have sparked the Civil Rights Movement. Furthermore, King's life began during Jim Crow and moved through the beginning of the Civil Rights era.

After the Civil War ended, the idea of a distinctive African American identity materialized. Today, the trauma of slavery is traumatic due to the consideration of the past events of the Transatlantic trafficking of enslaved persons. No one is actively experiencing slavery, whether it is Americans as a collective or African Americans as the traumatized entity of the collective. This consideration of past events as a "primal scene" amalgamates the United States's African

Americans as a "collective" group with a "collective" identity through remembrance. This collective is "a race, a people, or a community" contingent on viewpoint and level of consideration (Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery* 1). Indeed, the term African American is not merely an adjective to describe a group of human beings residing in the United States. The term has worked out of the many paths that failed to integrate formerly enslaved people within the fabric of the nation they lived in (4).

The cultural trauma of the Reconstruction period (1863–77) after the Civil War is a significant trauma event of the aftermath of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The relationship of formerly enslaved people with the dominant culture was not successfully arranged. African Americans lived in a "separate but equal" world, which was definitely separate but certainly not equal. However, by the 1920s, Black public social activism appeared. During the Civil Rights era, leadership in social activism shifted. This social activism stays in force but with changes in leadership and dominance during the Civil Rights era. Slavery's portrayal is first essential in creating the collective identity of African Americans (221). Continual utilization of facts, information, and skills grasped and understood by a non-dominant group, the part played by the portrayal of the non-dominant group, by itself, and the dominant group continuously strengthen the shaping of the collective identity of African Americans to the present (222).

The first cultural trauma episode dealt with in the Anne Frank plays is that of the Holocaust. All three works, *Harriet and Anne*, *Anne & Emmett*, and *Letters from Anne and Martin*, concentrate on the cultural trauma of the Holocaust. The other cultural trauma event in the Anne Frank plays is that of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, which includes the pre- and post-Civil War era (1861–65), Jim Crow apartheid America, and Civil Rights era (1954–68). *Harriet and Anne*'s second cultural trauma events are the pre-Civil War and Civil War eras, the legacy of the

Transatlantic Slave Trade. The Transatlantic Slave Trade is the second cultural trauma event for *Letters from Anne and Martin*, explicitly focusing on Jim Crow and the Civil Rights eras. *Anne & Emmett*'s second cultural trauma event is also focused on the fallout of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the end of Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights eras. Not only do the works fulfill Smelser's four defining aspects of cultural trauma:

1. Member groups, African Americans, and Holocaust victims, both first and second generation, have made known the ineradicable events of the Holocaust and the Civil War and Civil Rights eras.
2. Both the Holocaust and the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its centuries-long reverberations have violated sacrosanct values, especially that of the sacredness of human life and human rights.
3. "Disgust, shame, and guilt" (36) are very definitely linked to the Holocaust and the Civil War and Civil Rights eras, grown out of the Transatlantic Slave Trade; and
4. The Holocaust and the Transatlantic Slave Trade legacy violated the bedrock of societal assumptions. The systematic murder of 6,000 Jews and other individuals in the Holocaust and the creation of a system that subjugated an entire race of human beings to grinding servitude, abuse, and hundreds of years of second-class citizenship (that is nowhere near being erased) indeed count as a violation of the sanctity of human life and decency.

These three plays, *Harriet and Anne*, *Anne & Emmett*, and *Letters from Anne and Martin*, are certainly plays of cultural trauma and remembrance. The three plays revolve around remembering their two main characters; they are literary memorials. I also contend that two of the plays are written at a higher level of cultural trauma, having been written by playwrights dealing

with their personal cultural trauma. Those two plays are *Harriet and Anne* and *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play. Letters from Anne and Martin*'s playwrights, Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner, do not have the personal level of cultural trauma that Cohen, Pittman, and Friedman-Adler admit to having. They say that writing *Letters from Martin and Anne* was a job. The play was written to commemorate Anne Frank and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Vaughn, Interview with the author; Gellner, Interview with the author).

Cohen wrote her play *Anne & Emmett* to deal with her cultural trauma. As an African woman who grew up in segregated America, it was damaging to hear from a friend that her history was "unbecoming." (Martin). One of Cohen's first memories as a child was of being taken by the children of her mother's white employers to peer down upon a Klan meeting. She also mentions seeing some individuals wearing their Klan robes on the street or as they leave their places of business ("Janet Langhart Cohen's Biography"). She grew up knowing her third cousin had been lynched by nightriders (Thomas-Lester). After the Supreme Court ruling that "I, as a little colored girl, was equal to anyone white and I could go to any school I wanted" (Loria). Cohen had been excited about attending a racially integrated high school. Then she heard about Emmett Till, "murdered for whistling at a white woman. And those who did it are paid $4000 by a magazine to tell the story. I thought I better not go to an integrated school if they could get away with that and get paid for talking about doing it" (Loria). Cohen's spouse suggested she write about it. So Cohen took out her Blackberry and began writing, trying to "remember all (she) could remember about Anne Frank (Martin). Janet Langhart Cohen offered audiences the imaginary conversation between Frank and Till. However, she hoped that individuals of Anne's and Emmett's age would learn of or never forget the past. "We are not doomed to repeat the past if we listen to their voices. We can repair the world" (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). Cohen

declared, "I wrote the play as a call to action to help eradicate racism and antisemitism" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). She indicated that her play was "not about race, it's about hate" (Pelikhov). Her play was "a call to action to stop the hate: *tikkun olam* ('repair the world')" (Cohen, "Israel"). Cohen says that civilized individuals discover hate and how to deal with it. "Then do something about it" (Jackson, "When Will the Hatred"). She also felt the importance of "remembering our collective histories" (Pelikhov).

Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman wrote Harriet and Anne to deal with their personal cultural trauma. "It was Our Story, not necessarily Harriet and Anne, but Deborah and Laurie's story" (Friedman-Adler, Email to the author, 30 Mar. 2024). "The story was about two women who were weighed down by the trauma of their individual cultures" (Friedman-Adler, Email to the author, 30 Mar. 2024). They were "Reliving the history resting on our shoulders through Harriet and Anne." As a Jewish woman, Friedman-Adler had relatives who died in the Holocaust. As an African American woman, Pittman grew up in the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Friedman-Adler said, "The heaviness weighed upon us finally dissipated. Again…reliving the historical heaviness we both carried and the joy of finish(ing) our dream of writing the play" (Friedman-Adler, Email to the author, 30 Mar. 2024). Pittman spent her career battling people who did not seem to realize how long and hard she worked to make it (as an African American woman (Cusick). Pittman viewed the creation of artwork as healing (Cusick). Friedman-Adler and Pittman needed to create and experience the arts as part of their lives, and their long friendship brought them together to write *Harriet and Anne* from 1999 to 2005. Friedman-Adler pronounced that "the inspiration for creativity comes from news stories, history (past and present)" (Latham). Perhaps that is what drew her to the creation of the work. When asked about it, she said, "These two people (Anne and Harriet) were my heroes, and (I) wanted them to be friends in the 'Endless Boundary'"

(Friedman-Adler, Email to the author, 30 Mar. 2024). What may have drawn Pittman to the cooperative creation of the work is also rooted in her life. In a television interview, she mentioned that during her education during the busing integration movement, she was not taught about Tubman's role in history. Pittman declared, "That's criminal. And I think of all those young women, and I think of all those young women and men before that who could have taken inspiration from this leader and didn't get a chance to" (*Sacramento State Professor*).

These three Anne Frank plays have brought together playwrights who worked through their cultural trauma. Janet Langhart Cohen, Deborah Pittman, and Laurie Friedman-Adler created their plays decisively and critically as cultural trauma and literary memorial works. The third set of playwrights, Vaughn and Gellner, did not seem to realize that they, too, were writing out of cultural trauma.

The remaining playwrights, Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner, believed they were doing their job by writing their memorial work. They created a play of cultural trauma circumstantially. In fact, their work is as much a work of cultural trauma as *Anne & Emmett* and *Letters from Anne and Martin*, although it came from two non-Jewish white women. I posit that they are affected by a concept called *white body supremacy* (Menakem 21).

Resmaa Menakem discusses this concept of white body supremacy in his 2017 work, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*. Menakem is a healer and trauma therapist who focuses on "mending psyches, souls, bodies, and relationships" as well as "families, neighborhoods, and communities" (21). A therapist licensed in social work, he specializes in couples' trauma work, relationship conflict, and domestic violence prevention (25). Resmaa Menakem established the field of Cultural Somatics as it "applies to the

knowledge of trauma and resilience to history, intergenerational relationships, institutions, and the communal body" (25).

Menakem contends that almost everyone in America holds trauma or a "soul wound." This soul wounding is passed from generation to generation in three ways: through the abuse or maltreatment of their family; cultural norms, societal institutions, and abusive, unsafe traditions and customs; and through epigenetic transmission (20). He notes that individuals can experience secondary trauma or vicarious trauma by seeing someone else being traumatized but can even experience secondary trauma by being the harmer (41). Menakem goes on to say that African Americans are "intimately" acquainted with trauma from their nervous systems and traumas visited on their families. However, "a different but equally real form of racialized trauma lives within the bodies of most white Americans. Moreover, a third often deeply toxic type of racialized trauma lives and breathers in the bodies of many of America's law enforcement officers" (20). This significant, tenacious white body trauma also lives in the bodies of public safety professionals of all races. Menakem says that public safety professionals may also experience the "fight, flee, or freeze" reflexive reaction when they encounter a Black body, a remark about race, "or the term *white body supremacy*" (22–3).

Menakem goes on to say that practically everyone in America, regardless of their race, holds trauma related to the construct of race (22). The concept of white body supremacy injures those of all races. Menakem states that white Americans have inherited a distinct heritage of trauma. This trauma legacy, like the trauma legacy of Black Americans, can cause "fight, flee, or freeze responses." The legacy of trauma for white Americans can go as far back as the Middle Ages, transmitted repeatedly from white body to white body for "dozens of generations" (21). Those who settled in the New World from England had centuries of abuse and trauma within them. From the

Plague, the history of governmentally sanctioned torture that perpetuated the English government (until 1640) to individuals burned at the stake for "heresy" from the 1100s to 1612. From the Middle Ages on in England, torture was a "spectator sport." The Pilgrims and the Puritans were not explorers of the New World; they were religious refugees. They experienced religious persecution that included imprisonment, torture, and mutilation for their beliefs. In the New World, they did the same to dissenters (43–4).

Resmaa Menakem states that European white bodies traumatized each other for centuries. Then, they visited the trauma on the Black and red bodies they encountered. The traumatized white bodies were touched deeply by their trauma and passed it on epigenetically. This historically transmitted trauma is "linked to the development of white body supremacy in the New World" (21), possibly a thousand years before the formation of the United States. He notes that white body trauma may be historically older than Black body trauma, although Black body trauma is more severe (24). Those who colonized brought ten centuries of their trauma and cruelty with them as intergenerational trauma. Menakem asks if those hundreds of years of white bodies on white bodies trauma "began to look like culture?" (44). Black body trauma was an adaptation of the white-on-white culture of brutalization tradition (45).

Vaughn and Gellner's literary memorial, *Letters from Anne and Martin*, is a play of cultural trauma. As discussed above, Menakem's concept of white body supremacy has, in all probability, affected Vaugh and Gellner as white individuals who have grown up in America. *Letters from Anne and Martin* is not Vaughn's only work. Her plays' topics include the future, LGBTQ families, isolation, and "how we deal with loss and trauma." She is interested in exploring the imagined future and changes in individualism and social structures. She likes to deal with self-isolated characters and examines their reintegration into their group (Vaughn, *Hannah Vaughn*). Hannah

Vaughn also commented on reasons for text selections. King's letter was selected because he wrote "from a place of confinement" like Frank. She noted, "I knew it was the right choice" to pair the couple when she encountered the following passage in King's Birmingham jail letter, "had I lived in Germany at this time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers." Vaughn spoke about the text arrangement, saying, "I tried to match passages" from each work. She asked herself, "What does she (Frank) say that might spark a response from him (King)?" (Graeber). She declared, "Our exhibits, performances, and other educational workshops all seek to highlight the vision and activism of historical human rights heroes. It's an honor to creatively bring their stories to public audiences and inspire the leaders who will fulfill their dreams for humanity" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits").

The second playwright to work on the performance script, Alexandra Gellner, saw the work as a way to share the stories of King, Jr., and Frank to provoke "a lot of empathy" and compassion (Loughlin). Gellner says, "Everything they are saying is still relevant today. It still echoes" (Loughlin). When New York librarian Nancy Churnin inquired about the power of an onstage portrayal, Gellner responded, "I think it's magical to think that these two brilliant minds coexisted on different sides of the ocean but were so aligned in their philosophy and dream for humanity. And then it is devastating to think that they could have met and become colleagues in their fight for equality and justice, but we were robbed of that possibility because of the blind hatred of others" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits").

Furthermore, Gellner believed that the words of Anne Frank and Dr. King still echo with relevance today (Loughlin). Alexandra Gellner states that the production of *Letters from Anne and Martin* has a goal. She declared, "Isn't it more challenging to question, to get uncomfortable, to get into uncomfortable conversation with people that seem very different from ourselves, but if we

just talk to one another and get out of our comfort zone, we can find we have a lot in common" (Loughlin). Gellner was permitted to develop the script further. Alex said the original script was still there; she moved sections around and "found some ways for their words to overlap, so it felt like they were almost finishing each other's sentences across time and space. I also added some segments from her (Anne's) diary and his (King's) letter that exemplifies (sic) how detrimental segregation is to the mental health of segregated communities" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). While at The New School, she led their Summer Stage Acting Intensive. Due to her background from The New School, Alex was dedicated to collaboration, ensemble building, and bridging differences through practicing empathy. The New School develops "civically engaged artists," according to Gellner. She decided to be an actor and a teacher in graduate school.

Gellner believed the two careers go hand in hand, a way to teach empathy. "Empathy and emotional intelligence are at the root of all our programming at Anne Frank Center" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). Performers in *Letters from Anne and Martin*, including Gellner, sometimes have seen surprising and memorable audience reactions. Both Gellner and a performer playing the role of Martin Luther King, Jr. agreed. They were pleased when student audiences "immediately remark" on parallels in the lives of both figures. They were equally delighted when students noted how the stories of Frank and King remain relevant today. Once, after a performance in Brooklyn, a student drew a picture of the set. The student included a dotted line between the two chairs. Gellner was gratified to note the "invisible threshold that separated but also connected Anne and Martin's worlds." Gellner found students' drawing literal and figurative connections due to the work gratifying (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits").

Obviously, Vaugh and Gellner did not construct *Letters from Anne and Martin* in a vacuum. One can see from their comments that the concept of white body supremacy has impacted them.

Vaughn's need to write about loss and trauma, her juxtaposition of Frank and King to dialogue about civil rights issues to spark civil rights activism in new generations, points to a wound she sees needs to be heard and healed. Gellner's view of the relevance of the content and lives of King and Frank and her idea of the need to have uncomfortable conversations, especially with those who look different from her, show attendance to cultural trauma. The cultural trauma for the pair of playwrights, in all probability, is rooted in the legacy of white body supremacy.

*Letters from Anne and Martin*, too, comes from a place of cultural trauma, the inheritance of white body supremacy for playwrights Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner. *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* proceeds from the cultural trauma of playwright Janet Langhart Cohen, her family, and her ancestors in the eras of Enslavement (1619–1865), Jim Crow (1877–1965), and Neo-Crow (1966–present). Furthermore, finally, *Harriet and Anne* was set in motion by the cultural trauma of Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler. Pittman's cultural trauma, like Cohen's, from the periods of Enslavement (1619–1865), Jim Crow (1877–1965), and Neo-Crow (1966–present). Friedman-Adler's cultural trauma was influenced by both the trauma of growing up with the trauma of white body supremacy and the cultural wound of the Holocaust and its impact on her, her family, and her forbearers. These five playwrights' three plays are literary memorials of cultural trauma.

## CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, ANALYSIS, AND RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

Chapter VI summarizes this study of the Anne Frank plays, their history, and the analysis of the events and conditions surrounding them. This chapter also summarizes the analysis of the character of Anne Frank in those three plays. Suggestions for further research are also made.

*Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*, and *Letters from Anne and Martin* share several similarities. All three works were written by female playwrights who dealt with various cultural traumas. Three playwrights wrote their work as mature women; they were in their later adulthood: Janet Langhart Cohen, Deborah Pittman, and Laurie Friedman-Adler. Two of the playwrights have not yet reached middle age; they were young adults when they wrote their plays: Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner. The three plays are all one-acts with no intermissions built into them. The three works are presentational, with small casts ranging from two to five actors. All three Anne Frank plays in this study were written, produced, and published in the 21st century. *Harriet and Anne* has a 2005 copyright. *Letters from Anne and Martin* was written and performed for the first time in 2013. And *Anne & Emmett* has three publication copyright dates: 2006, 2013, and 2021.

The three plays all feature Anne Frank and an African American personage, such as Harriett Tubman, Emmett Till, or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although the three dramatic works contain both Anne Frank and an African American historical individual, they possess disparate plots that unite the two characters in some manner. Pittman and Freedman Adler's *Harriet and Anne* is a music and dance piece: a woman time-travels while touring Mystic Seaport, Connecticut. Her stops include the *Amistad* Experience tour, where she becomes a passenger, the *Gerda III*, and the Touro Synagogue. She also sees Anne Frank and is at a stop on the Underground Railroad with

Harriet Tubman. *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* is a nonmusical five-character play. Anne and Emmett meet in "Memory" when people remember them. Their surviving parents, Otto and Mamie, comment on the story and facilitate action. In this work, Emmett and Anne want people to remember them forever. *Letters from Anne and Martin* is a two-character play juxtaposing Anne Frank and Martin Luther King Jr. speaking about peace and unity. Anne speaks from her secret annex in World War II occupied Holland. MLK, Jr. speaks from his Birmingham, Alabama jail cell in 1963. Depending on the production, it may seem that Frank and King communicate across time and place, although not verbally.

The words and actions of the characters forward the action of a play. In looking at the play component of character, we see that the only characters in common among the three works are Anne Frank and an African American historical individual. There is no cast list of characters in Pittman and Friedman-Adler's *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*. The three characters are Narrator O, Narrator A, and Narrator B. Narrator O speaks of Frank and Tubman (Pittman and Friedman-Adler 20–23). Narrator B speaks as Anne Frank, talking about Kitty, the imaginary recipient of Frank's messages and Frank's diary itself, needing a laugh more than a sleeping remedy and the longing for the freedom to bike, dance, and whistle (23–25). Speaking as Tubman is Narrator A. Narrator A talks about having a right to liberty and death (23), following the stars, and crossing into free territory (24). A fourth character who seems silent is implied by the lines of Narrator O, Narrator A, and Narrator B, who, with their lines, indicate that character's actions. This fourth character is African American, by implication, as suggested by the play text. The element of character in *Anne & Emmett* regards a written cast list of the play, made up of five characters (Cohen 8). A sixth character is not named in the cast list but exists as a "Voice-over" cast member (5, 57). The only description in the stage directions states that the voice is "deep and sonorous" (5).

The cast is comprised of Anne Frank, at 15 years old; Emmett Till, 14 years of age; Otto Frank, in his mid-forties; Mamie Till, described in his mid-thirties; and J.W. Milam, 36 years old (4). Frank and Till are described as Jewish and Black, respectively. Milam also has his race indicated as white (4). The parents of the two young people are only additionally described by their careers: Otto Frank as a businessman and Mamie Till as an educator. Milam's supplementary description includes "murderer" and "racist" (4). The work could be performed with a minimum of five actors. One of the cast members could double in the "Voice-over" role, or the actor playing Otto could double as J.W. Milam. Only two characters in the play propel the action and dialogue of *Letters from Anne and Martin*: Anne Frank and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. They share the dual role of protagonist in Vaughn and Gellner's work. Their respective antagonists are placed in the contemporaneous cultures.

The play component of the theme of these three plays holds some similarities among works. *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* by Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler, concludes by asking which of us will spread the stories, the history, and the lessons so that we have freedom. This concept is the principal thought or theme of Pittman's and Friedman-Adler's work. This idea of spreading stories, history, and lessons about freedom ties the characters of Frank and Tubman together, as well as the events of the play. Each spreads stories and lessons about freedom in their lives and works in situations of extreme duress. Anne Frank's diary left us with her adolescent wisdom that was not so adolescent. Tubman's life and work supported the cause of freedom and spread the seeds for others to follow in her day and our day. The thematic purpose of Harriet and Anne is to spread the seeds of "FREEDOM" (29). Deborah Pittman commented on the theme of Harriet Tubman's life as she saw it in the play she shared with Laurie Friedman-Adler. Pittman remarked, in a television interview, "It's not about the pain, it's about the spirit, and the

spirit to stand up when something is wrong" (*Sacramento State Professor*). *Harriet and Anne* leaves the audience with an imperative to "Spread the seeds of "Freedom" (29). *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* also points out the need for the concept of remembrance. The theme that ties these initially disparate characters of Anne Frank and Emmett Till together in Cohen's play is that remembering the ever-changing hate that led to their deaths in an effort not to repeat it could repair the world (55–6). Elie Wiesel's words from *Night* that end the play. They leave the audience with the idea that not remembering those killed by hate is dangerous and a second victimization for the martyrs of genocide and hate crimes (57). Cohen's *Anne & Emmett* implies the audience has an obligation to "Repair the World."

The theme of *Letters from Anne and Martin* by Vaughn and Gellner is not dissimilar. According to one of the playwrights, Alexandra Gellner, the work was about remembrance of history so that the evil in history is not repeated. Gellner said in an interview with me, "I don't think this is a world where we get to, where we get to have that. You know, we've been, it's, it's, it was stolen from us. This opportunity to see these two (Anne Frank and Martin Luther King, Jr.). These two voices from the same room together. And that's what's so sad. And that's what we have to remember, so that something, everything that happened to them. I mean, it keeps happening. But you know, let's, let's bring our attention to it. So, it happens less and less, rather than more and more over the years" (Gellner, Interview with the author). Indeed*, Letters from Anne and Martin* recruits the audience as "clergy" and "Kitty." But, by the end of the play, the audience is left with the hopes of "love and brotherhood" and the return of "peace and tranquility" (10) presented to us by "our" Anne Frank and "our" Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (10) that is if the audience heeds the voices of Dr. King and Anne Frank. Thematically, all three works call for the audience to act for the betterment of themselves and the world.

Diction/language in these plays differs. Anne Frank's original texts are used for all dialogue in only one play: *Letters from Anne and Martin*. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s writings are his character's only dialogue. Textual accuracy was more important than dramatic effect. At one performance, Vaughn, the first "collager" of the work, was asked if there had been difficulty in obtaining the rights to use the works of Anne Frank and Martin Luther King, Jr. The playwright responded, "As advocates for education, dignity, and respect, we take seriously the concept of intellectual property and fair use." The Anne Frank Center USA collaborated closely with its partners to ensure respected the copyrights held by the Anne Frank Fonds (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). The entirety of the dialogue is taken word for word from "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," written by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (*Letter from Birmingham Jail*), and *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition* (Vaughn, Interview with the author). The only stage directions are at the very beginning of the play and four lines from the end of the play. The stage directions indicate the "locations" of two empty chairs and their "real world locations"— one at the 1944 street address of the Secret Annex in which Frank and others hid and the other, at a jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama, on April 16, 1963, the day on which King was historically incarcerated for nonviolent protest. The actors are instructed on how to enter, to sit in their respective locations, and to begin writing/responding. Anne comes in carrying her diary, and King comes in to find a newspaper under his chair (Vaughn and Gellner, *Letters*). Gellner indicated that the actor playing King opens the folded newspaper in production, and a pencil falls out (Gellner, Interview with the author). No stage directions indicate that the two characters are to interact with or acknowledge the other. The final piece of stage direction at the end of the work is when the characters "sign off" at the conclusion of the play and state their names. They are to close the play with their respective

names; however, the characters say, together, "yours" before their names as they end *Letters from Anne and Martin* (Vaughn and Gellner, *Letters*).

The dramatic work *Harriett and Anne* contains partial dialogue taken from the works of both Tubman and Frank (Pittman and Friedman Adler 23–5). Diction/language is of extreme importance in *Harriet and Anne*. The work's subtitle is "*An Original Narrative"* (Pittman and Friedman-Adler, cover page). The entire poetic work's script is narrated by three individuals whose voices indicate some stage direction of the fourth implied character. Otherwise, the only stage directions written are lighting and music/sound cues. Other dialogue in the narrative work is poetic fabrication.

Janet Langhart Cohen's play's dialogue in *Anne & Emmett* is mostly fiction, based on ideas and concepts from Frank's diary and Mamie Till-Mobley's book, *Death of Innocence*. However, J. W. Milam's lines are quoted from Huie's *Look* magazine article of Emmett's killers' interview. Cohen considered her play fictional. Writing fictional material was different for her. She said, "because even though I am a writer, I'm not a fiction writer. So, even though they are real people, this imagination is mine" (Cohen, A Conversation). The stage direction in this play is more extensive and detailed than that of *Harriet and Anne*. In her work, Cohen includes lighting cues, costume details and changes, prop usage, sound effects, and line delivery.

The diction/language of the three Anne Frank plays ranges from complete quotes used as the entirety of a play to fiction that paraphrases the ideals of the writings of Anne Frank and some other characters. Stage directions, lighting, and sound cues range from just a few in *Harriett* and *Anne and Letters from Anne and Martin* to the other extreme in Cohen's *Anne & Emmett*.

Sound (and music) are vital components of the three plays. The voices of the three Narrators constitute a sizable portion of the performance of *Harriet and Anne*. There is no dialogue

between them when they talk to the audience (Pittman and Friedman-Adler). The musical elements in this work are not incidental. Entire songs often accompany the Narrators' lines. The Narrators have stage directions that indicate they are accompanied by the songs, including when to finish specific sections of monologue, pause, or wait for several beats or even measures, then speak (1, 2–3, 1, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25–8). The musical instruments including cello (3, 6), tongue drum (a steel slit drum) (3, 6), bongo (7), woodblocks (8), drums (7), and M'bira (9–10), a traditional Malawian or Zimbabwean finger harp are given specific script directions. Jeff Adler's (a New York City composer and woodwind musician) musical score (*Our Story*) consists of eight themes. The musical themes are "Lullaby at the Endless Boundary" (Pittman and Friedman-Adler 1, 28), "Mystic Seaport Theme" (2–3), "Mystic Variation" (5–6), "Eulogy" (11), "The Beginning" (13), "But the Smell of the Sea" (14), "Gerda Song" (15–16), and "A Grandfather's Prayer" (17–19). The final element of the song/music component is sound effects. The sound effects of Pittman and Friedman-Adler's play include possible recorded effects and those made by human beings. The recorded effects are sea sounds (9). Pages blowing onto the stage (23) accompanied by a "'MONTAGE' of Voices" (23) would be human-generated sound effects. Still photos seen in a video interview with Deborah Pittman indicate that all participants were costumed simply in black dancewear (*Sacramento State Professor*).

Spectacle includes all the visual ingredients of a play's production. The script of *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* initially demands no scenery requirements. Stage direction indicates Mamie entering with a suitcase, which she packs onstage. What is specified is the props with which she packs it: "shirts, shorts, and socks" and that she fills a bag with a mayonnaise jar of water and sandwiches (6). However, set and setting properties come into play when Anne Frank appears. The script describes a stage right riser holding Anne, her desk

with a diary, writing paper, and a wastebasket (9). The play ends with the requirement of a projection screen for a slide presentation of historical genocidal images (56–7). In addition to the already mentioned properties, *Anne & Emmett* requires Mamie's birthday cake (53), Emmett's ring (8) and ball glove (6), and Otto's birthday gifts (53).

Another element of spectacle is costumes. Cohen's script specifies specific costume elements. Mamie Till wears a house dress "cinched around her waist" (6) by an apron. At Mamie's reappearance, when she sings Langston Hughes's poem, she has not yet had a costume change. When she reappears while Emmett is relating his death, Mamie is wearing a small black hat and a black dress (42). It is not written into the script if Mamie changes her original costume from her mourning wear when she reenters with Emmett's birthday cake (53). Emmett's costume includes a blue shirt, tan pants, and suspenders (6). His father's ring is added to his costume on stage (8), and his hat is added to it (9). Anne wears a "pretty wool skirt, dark sweater, and white frilly blouse (9). Her father, Otto, appears in "a white shirt, vest," and "tweed pants" along with "dark-framed glasses" (10). Otto changes his costume—he appears in the prisoner's uniform of the concentration camp (47). He must later change his costume to his original shirt, pants, and vest when he appears with Anne's presents (53). The only remaining onstage character is J. W. Milam, who is costumed in a white T-shirt and jeans (43).

As written, *Letters from Anne and Martin* has no song or music prescribed by the playwrights in the script. Neither are there musical instruments or sound effects (Vaughn and Gellner, *Letters*). Due to script-specified music, song, or sound effects, the vocal qualities of the actors' voices are the song component in *Letters from Anne and Martin* (Vaughn and Gellner, *Letters*). In an interview with the author, Gellner indicated that a soundscape was added to the

production to help situate the characters in time and space for the audience and increase attention and interest in the production (Gellner, Interview with the author; Vaughn and Gellner, *Letters*).

The remaining spectacle components in *Letters from Anne and Martin* include the actors' costumes and makeup, the newspaper and diary props, and the actors' movements. The play is a portable educational road show for the Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect in New York, New York (*Performances*). The four basic requirements to host *Letters from Anne and Martin* include:

- any indoor space with good acoustics, microphones, and room for an audience.
- room for the actors to prepare and perform.
- 2 armless chairs.
- A sound system for the "immersive soundscape" (Churnin "Wesli Spencer").

Spectacle, including the elements of sound, song, and costuming, is seen in a broad spectrum for the three plays; they range from the minimal costume elements of dance leotards for *Harriet and Anne* and simple shirt/pants, skirt/blouse with no costume changes for the characters of *Letters from Anne and Martin*. The cast of *Anne & Emmett* has a variety of prescribed costumes and includes a variety of costume changes for most of the characters. Song ranges from the ambient soundscape and a single sound effect of *Letters from Anne and Martin* to a poetic work, with a live soundtrack provided by onstage musicians in *Harriet and Anne*. Cohen's *Anne & Emmett* falls somewhere between with thematic music, a few sound effects, and characters who occasionally break into the work with songs or prayer. Movement ranges from expressive movement throughout the entire work in *Harriet and Anne* to only occasional purposeful movement, which keeps the actors metaphorically trapped in the case of Anne and MLK, Jr. in *Letters from Martin and Anne*. *Anne & Emmett*'s movement is more natural and helps progress the action from scene to scene along with the lighting and sound.

The histories of the creation of the three Anne Frank plays share some similarities. These similarities include the playwrights' youths, seminal experiences with the works' main characters,

career choices, playwrights' worldviews, and the collaborative nature of their creativity. I examine these commonalities in the order in which I outlined above.

Known similarities in the youths of the playwrights that affected them include the eras in which they grew up. The formative years of at least three of the playwrights helped create a worldview for them that enabled the writing of *Harriet and Anne* and *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett*. Not as much is known about the youths of the creators *of Letters from Anne and Martin*. Both Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler, playwrights of *Harriet and Anne* grew up in segregated America (Cusick), as did Janet Langhart Cohen, who authored *Anne & Emmett* (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). Their young adulthood was spent in the Civil Rights Era. Friedman-Adler, coming from a Jewish family, grew up personally impacted by the Holocaust. She had an image burned into her mind in elementary school. She watched her parents viewing a film of the Russian liberation of Auschwitz at seven years of age (Friedman-Adler, Email to the author, 30 Mar. 2024). Conversely, the playwrights of *Letters from Anne and Martin*, Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner, were born in the last quarter of the 20th century in the post-Civil Rights era, Neo-Crow United States. Neither of them is African American nor Jewish.

The playwrights tended to have seminal moments in their lives involving either Anne Frank, the historical African American personage, or both individuals. Vaughn and Gellner were eager adolescent readers of the Diary of Anne Frank and identified with her (Vaughn, Interview with the author; Gellner. Interview with the author). Janet Langhart Cohen came home from high school, having finished Anne Frank's diary, and was confronted with the *Look* magazine pictures of Emmett Till's disfigured corpse (*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). Laurie Friedman-Adler considered both figures, Frank and Tubman, childhood heroes. Friedman-Adler

identified with Anne Frank. She read Frank's diary to get a first-person view of the Holocaust after viewing news footage of the liberation of Auschwitz (Friedman-Adler, Email the author, 30 Mar. 2024). She also identified with Harriet Tubman because she fantasized about saving people (Friedman-Adler, Email to the author. 26 May 2023). Deborah Pittman remarked as an adult that it was shameful that during her education, amid desegregation, Harriet Tubman was not covered in her education (*Sacramento State Professor*).

The playwrights' career choices all involve expression in some manner. Their careers range from the artistic to the activistic. The playwrights Vaughn and Gellner lean more toward the artistic, with a touch of activism. Both Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner, at the time of the writing and reworking of the play, were actors/directors of *Letters from Anne and Martin*. They wrote and acted in the work due to their employment at Anne Frank Center USA (Gellner, Interview with the Author). Vaughn is also the playwright of many plays that deal with loss, trauma, isolation, and LGBTQ families (*Hannah Vaughn*). She currently works in Virginia with The Nature Conservancy, a global environmental nonprofit organization, as an operations program specialist (*Hannah Vaughn - Workforce program manager - tech impact*). Gellner continues to work for the Anne Frank Center USA as Associate Director of Education-Performances (*Alexandra Gellner-Associate Director of Education-Performances*). Both Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler are or were musicians and college professors. Pittman and Friedman-Adler play the clarinet (Deborah Pittman, *Deborah Pittman*; *Faculty Profile*). Friedman-Adler teaches music at Hofstra University and Brooklyn College (*Faculty Profile*). She also sculpts professionally (Friedman-Adler). Laurie Friedman-Adler is a regular performer with the Hevreh Ensemble, which plays its own original music (*Our Story*). Deborah Pittman retired from Sacramento State University in 2013 (Shoka). Through her work at Sacramento State, she became a board member of VITA

Academy. VITA stands for Vocal & Instrumental Teaching Artist Academy. VITA promotes music education and arts programming in Sacramento (*Home BDoG*).

Pittman also practices ceramics in her studio (Ceramic Arts Network). At the writing of her play and now, Janet Langhart Cohen described herself as a journalist, anchor, author, and social justice advocate (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). Janet Langhart Cohen continues using her creative talent to push forward a "nationwide dialogue on race and reconciliation" by working on three new plays (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). She says, "My goal is to inspire, educate, elevate, and give back" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). As of 2019, Cohen began working on a "*Shades*, —based on the racism that African Americans use against each other. The premise of the work is that of the 'plantation mentality'— that slave owners used to control their slaves by creating divisions based on the degree of pigment of their skin — light-skinned blacks versus dark-skinned blacks" (Williams). Janet Langhart Cohen, Deborah Pittman, Laurie Friedman-Adler, Hannah Vaugh, and Alexandra Gellner were and are all working to spread messages that are important to them and are socially, politically, and creatively conscious.

The genesis of the three Anne Frank plays containing African American historical figures had roots in the feelings of their playwrights. All individuals have feelings, but these playwrights acted on their feelings. The playwrights' feelings ranged from outrage to the desire to honor to artistic passion. Janet Langhart Cohen's impetus for starting *Anne & Emmett* was outrage when a friend told her it was "unbecoming" to dwell on her history. This comment, Cohen said, catalyzed the play (Loria). Honoring a critical Civil Rights icon fueled Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner. *Letters from Anne and Martin*, which honors both Anne Frank and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., grew out of the theatrical presentation, which was created initially for a 2013 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration at The Anne Frank Center USA (*Performances*; Vaughn,

Interview with the author; Gellner, Interview with the author). Letters was also produced in 2014 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Ibrahim).

Finally, *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative* grew from the artistic passion for creation. Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler are passionate about creating music and art (Ceramic Arts Network; Latham). One only needs to look at their personal websites to see documentation of their work (Friedman-Adler, Laurie. *Laurie Friedman-Adler Sculptures*; Pittman, *Deborah Pittman*). Friedman-Adler wrote to the author, "The story was about two women who were weighed down by the trauma of their individual cultures. Anne and Harriet were "free to roam in the Endless Boundary" (symbolic of where one goes after your physical life is done here on earth) to help these women heal" (Friedman-Adler, Email to the author, 30 Mar. 2024). The Pittman and Friedman-Adler playwrighting duo might have used their natural urge to create to exorcise their demons. "It was Our Story, not necessarily Harriet and Anne, but Deborah and Laurie's story," wrote Adler to me (Friedman-Adler, Email to the author, 30 Mar. 2024). Three different but intense feelings sparked the creation of the three Anne Frank plays.

The playwrights of the three Anne Frank plays share prosocial worldviews or philosophies. The themes in their lives of fairness, equity, and social justice underlined their work and were felt strongly by these women. Each commented on social justice, fairness, or equity that stands out. Pittman said she saw her career as "A laudable step out of the projects" (Ceramic Arts Network). Although she fulfilled her dream of playing clarinet on Broadway, she found Broadway "an ugly place with a lot of older and middle-aged white guys who had no idea what I was doing there, nor how hard I'd worked to get there" (Cusick). She also said, "If I could change one thing, it would really be that every soul on the planet gets to participate in some kind of art on a daily basis" (Cusick). "The arts heal," she stated (Reason, *Women in Music: Deborah Pittman*). In fact, Pittman

became a board member of VITA Academy to work on their concert and educational program. VITA promotes music education and arts programming in Sacramento (*Home BDoG*).

The other musician who co-wrote *Harriet and Anne*, Laurie Friedman-Adler, finds music and creation integral to her life (Latham). She believed that the most important lesson she learned from her clarinet teacher, Mr. Russianoff, was not music but that of fairness and equity. Friedman-Adler, one of only three female students to study under him, says, "Equity and social justice were words he would never utter, but I now realize this was the most valued lesson" (Latham). Friedman-Adler declared, "Science has informed us that the arts are important for the health of the brain, psychological improvements, social adjustments, cultural understanding, the creation of new neural pathways, etc." (Latham).

Janet Langhart Cohen, writer of *Anne & Emmett*, describes herself as a "journalist, anchor, author, and social justice advocate" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). During her career as a model, early in her life, she encountered and interacted with many Civil Rights-era icons, like Mahalia Jackson, Dick Gregory, and Martin Luther King, Jr. (Cohen and Cohen 158, 159, 163). In fact, she desperately wanted to march with King, but he would not allow it. Her attitude, with its "eye for an eye philosophy" toward race reform, was not nonviolent, as was King's (165). The Race and Reconciliation in America (RARIA) Conference took place July 24–25, 2008, in Washington, D.C. Cohen, with her husband, William Cohen, former United States Secretary of Defense, helped sponsor the first RARIA. This conference was convened to discuss race and focus on education, law and criminal justice, economic inequality, media and film, religion, and the next generation. This conference included excerpts from *Anne & Emmett* (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). A second RARIA conference in 2009 focused on health and wellness as new civil rights issues in America (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). Janet Langhart Cohen plans to use her creative talent to push

forward a "nationwide dialogue on race and reconciliation" by working on three new plays (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). She continually tours productions of her play, *Anne & Emmett*. Cohen hopes to get it to schoolchildren and Broadway to convey that racial hatred will not "consume our ideals or humanity" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). She also had Spark Media turn her play into an educational video game. Spark Media bills itself as a group "igniting social justice" ("Anne & Emmett: The Other").

The worldview of Alexandra Gellner is also that of social consciousness. Due to her background from The New School, Alex was dedicated to collaboration, ensemble building, and bridging differences through practicing empathy before arriving at the Anne Frank Center, USA. The New School develops "civically engaged artists," according to Gellner. She decided to be an actor and a teacher in graduate school. Alexandra believed the two careers go hand in hand, a way to teach empathy. "Empathy and emotional intelligence are at the root of all our programming at Anne Frank Center" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits").

Hannah Vaughn's thoughts echo those of Gellner. She described those who worked at the Anne Frank Center, herself included, as "advocates for education, dignity, and respect." "Our exhibits, performances, and other educational workshops all seek to highlight the vision and activism of historical human rights heroes. It's an honor to creatively bring their stories to public audiences and inspire the leaders who will fulfill their dreams for humanity" (Churnin, "Kindred Spirits"). Alexandra Gellner stated that the production of *Letters from Anne and Martin* had a goal. She declared, "Isn't it more challenging to question, to get uncomfortable, to get into uncomfortable conversation with people that seem very different from ourselves, but if we just talk to one another and get out of our comfort zone, we can find we have a lot in common" (Loughlin). Though no longer employed by the Center, Vaughn continues to work for a nonprofit

environmental organization dedicated to "protect and care for nature" (*Hannah Vaughn-Workforce program manager - tech impact*). She writes plays that deal with loss, trauma, isolation, climate change, women, and LGBTQ families ("Hannah Vaughn," *New Play Exchange*). As can be assessed by the words and the works of these playwrights, fairness, equity, and social justice are concepts essential to this group.

In their collaborative natures, the Anne Frank playwrights demonstrate the power of unity and shared purpose. Two of the three plays were written by duos, and even the third play, written by a single playwright, was collaboratively produced. This spirit of collaboration extended beyond the creation of the plays, as the playwrights continued to work together or with other individuals after the plays were completed.

The musician pair of Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler wrote *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*. They were friends who made each other's acquaintance in college (Friedman-Adler, Personal communication, 29 May 2023). *Harriet and Anne* was not the last time the pair collaborated. In 2022–23, Friedman-Adler and Pittman collaborated as coordinators for "Four Freedoms Reimagined." The Crocker Art Gallery and VITA Academy hosted the competition. Students, ages 12–20, were encouraged to submit two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, digital art, dance, theatre, musical compositions, and music performances under that theme. The exhibit ran from January 12, 2023, to March 26, 2023 (*Home BDoG*). This collaboration to communicate and educate continues in their lives with others outside of the experience of the Anne Frank play. Pittman is a board member of VITA Academy, working on their concert and educational program promoting music education and arts programming in the Sacramento area (*Home BDoG*). She also works in film. Pittman continued to hone her skills in that field by creating a documentary with colleague Omari Tau. The film was a three-part series

coordinated with a three-part concert series. Pittman also maintained her movie-making skills with a short film on Chevalier de Saint-Georg (a French violinist and conductor often referred to as the Black Mozart) for VITA Academy as an outreach tool to instruct students about the historical figure and his perseverance under his life circumstances (Cusick). She also participates in writing workshops and puts together concerts where she plays the clarinet and performs pieces with others. When the COVID-19 pandemic closures occurred, she was in the midst of reforming a musical trio (Pittman, *Deborah Pittman*).

Pittman's playwrighting partner, Laurie Friedman-Adler, not only partnered with her on *Harriet and Anne* and "Four Freedoms: Reimagined," Friedman-Adler partners with others. She is a member of the Hevreh Ensemble, where she plays clarinet and Native American flute (*Our Story*). Over her lifetime, she has played music with at least five other groups. She has created four other original narratives besides *Harriet and Anne*. The narratives have all included dancers (*Faculty Profile*). One of Friedman-Adler's three grant projects involved introducing audiences around the United States and Europe to the history, culture, and sound of the Native American Indian flute. This project included post-concert lectures and questions from the audience (Latham).

The playwrights of *Letters from Martin and Anne* are also a duo who continued to work together. Not only did they collaborate on the script, but Hannah Vaughn, while no longer playing Anne Frank in The Anne Frank Center, USA's other Anne Frank play, was often the facilitator for the traveling work. Alexandra Gellner would act in the work as Anne, and Hannah Vaughn would function as the audience facilitator, initiating and encouraging questions. Traveling with the production, she would oversee and manage it. Gellner gave notes and adjustments and questioned the actors about their roles during the audition process. Later, if they received the role, she would do the same for the performance process (Churnin, "Wesli Spencer"). Gellner co-creates, co-writes,

and co-stars in a web series called *Dates Like This* with Leigh Poulos (Vaughn, *Hannah Vaughn*). Overall, she has acted in six films and series, produced two movies, and directed one of the series in which she acted (IMDb, *Hannah Vaughn*). These creative, cooperative endeavors are in addition to working for a nonprofit environmental organization dedicated to "protect and care for nature," The Nature Conservancy (*Hannah Vaughn - Workforce program manager - tech impact*).

On Alexandra Gellner's personal website, she bills herself as "actor, puppeteer, *collaborator* (emphasis mine), teaching artist" (Gellner, *Alexandra Gellner*). Internet Movie Database indicated that she has acted in three short films (IMDb, *Alexandra Gellner*). Monthly, she acts with a group of theatre artists who enact scenes that could happen in a bar to amuse bar patrons. They perform at the Failte Irish Whiskey Bar (531 2nd Ave) in New York. They call themselves OUR BAR (Vaughn, Hannah Vaughn). She has appeared in over twenty-eight plays and eight films not mentioned on IMDb (Gellner, *Alexandra Gellner*). Gellner does this while working as associate director of education at the Anne Frank Center, USA. While in college at The New School, she was a mentor coordinator, mentor, and graduate assistant. She has also worked in retail sales for over three years. Gellner also ushered for theatrical productions at The New School for almost three years (*Alexandra Gellner-Associate Director of Education-Performances*). It is clear that, outside of her collaboration with Vaughn, Alexandra "Alex" Gellner possesses a collaborative spirit.

Janet Langhart Cohen did not collaborate with another playwright in writing *Anne & Emmett*. However, she collaborated with her husband, Bill Cohen, the former US Secretary of Defense, to produce the work in several venues, including its first (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). He was the one who suggested she turn her outrage into something tangible; this play, when told her history, was "unbecoming" (Cohen and Cohen 134). She often refers to him as "her muse"

(Pelikhov). Cohen collaborated with "her muse" in writing their book, *Love in Black and White* (Cohen and Cohen 2007). She and her husband also collaborated with both the first and second Race and Reconciliation in America conferences in 2008 and 2009 (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen*). Janet Langhart Cohen also works well with others. She wrote her 2004 memoir, *From Rage to Reason: My Life in Two Americas*, with Alexander Kopelman. Cohen assisted in bringing her play to the New York City police department as part of recruit training (CBS New York/AP). She and her husband, Bill Cohen, took her play to Spark Media. The group turned it into an educational video game ("Anne & Emmett: The Other"). These Anne Frank playwrights, Cohen, Vaugh and Gellner, and Pittman and Friedman-Adler, all show collaborative natures that were not confined to the plays discussed in this study.

In the final analysis, three events or occurrences in the playwrights' lives created the births of these Anne Frank plays that combine her with an historical African American personage. I determined that three events precipitated the writings of the Anne Frank plays. These experiences of cultural trauma, intense feelings of social justice, and seminal experiences involving Frank and the African American personage all worked together to prime these playwrights to write these three plays. These occurrences need not have happened in any particular order, especially since cultural traumas permeate people's milieux.

Cultural trauma was experienced by all the playwrights, as mentioned earlier. Three of them grew up in segregated America and experienced the Civil Rights era: Janet Langhart Cohen, Deborah Pittman, and Laurie Friedman-Adler. Friedman-Adler experienced the cultural trauma of the Holocaust. The remaining two playwrights, Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner grew up in Neo-Crow America, experiencing the cultural trauma of white supremacy. Moreover, finally,

Friedman-Adler experienced the cultural trauma of the Holocaust and the trauma of white supremacy.

The group of playwrights also bear strong feelings about social justice. Each has made at least one statement regarding social justice issues. As previously mentioned, Friedman-Adler felt she took away more than musical knowledge from her clarinet teacher; he helped grow the seeds of social justice in her through his teaching methods. Deborah Pittman struggled to achieve her musical dream on Broadway, but those who had arrived did not understand how hard it was to get there and maltreated her. Janet Langhart Cohen, like Pittman, grew up in the projects. Cohen saw from day one of her life how her life was not separate but equal. She continued to feel it through her teen years, exemplified by her seminal event, which eventually culminated in *Anne & Emmett*. As Cohen struggled to make her way in the world, her youth's hard-won careers put her in touch with greats in the Civil Rights movement. She was so incensed by the life struggles of African American people that she could not be nonviolent. Finally, both playwrights of *Letters from Anne and Martin*, playwrights grew up with white skin in America. In Neo-Crow America, they grew up with the over 400-year-old culture of white supremacy, which the Civil Rights movement could not eradicate. They both chose to work for the Anne Frank Center, USA, whose mission is "empowering emerging adults to build the informed and compassionate world Anne imagined in her diary" (*Home*).

The final event, I believe, is the third that the three playwrights hold in common: their seminal experience(s) with Anne Frank or one of the three African American personages. These life-changing moments helped germinate *Harriet and Anne*, *Anne & Emmett*, and *Letters from Martin and Anne*. *Harriet and Anne*'s playwrights' experiences are different from one another's. Deborah Pittman had an epiphany about the shame of the American educational system. It bused

her to a magnet school for gifted children but did not teach its students about Harriet Tubman. Laurie Friedman-Adler, after watching footage of the Russians liberating Auschwitz, turned to the diary of Anne Frank to get a first-person account of the Holocaust and found herself, a Jew, identifying with the young girl. She also indicated that Harriet Tubman was a childhood hero, in addition to Anne Frank. Janet Langhart Cohen also had a dual seminal experience. She finished Anne Frank's diary at her segregated high school and came home to see pictures of Emmett Till on the pages of *Look* magazine. The two figures then came to the forefront of mind as a pair when she was verbally upbraided for wanting to share her life experiences in pre-Civil Rights era America. The playwrights of *Letters from Anne and Martin* had personal Anne Frank experiences. Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner identified with her after reading her diary as young girls. Alexandra Gellner admired Frank's sense of self. As an adult, she admires Martin Luther King Jr.'s ability to see all sides of a situation. Hannah Vaughn's adult epiphany about the pair was that they shared a birth year.

The three Anne Frank plays also share commonalities in their portrayals of Anne Frank. These include Anne's character, material from her diary, and research to write the character and the employment of costume. First, Anne Frank's character in *Harriet and Anne*, *Anne & Emmett*, and *Letters from Martin and Anne* is Jewish, tragic, and universal, as depicted in all three dramatic works.

In some manner, material from the diary was used to write all three plays. *Harriet and Anne* used verbatim sections from Anne Frank's diary. *Anne & Emmett* used ideas paraphrased from the diary. Finally, *Letters from Anne and Martin* utilized the diary of Anne Frank cuttings (as well as cuttings from "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"). No additional dialogue was created; everything was taken from primary sources and was not paraphrased, just rearranged. Next, Anne

Frank's costume elements were either suggestive of the period or not attempted. *Harriet and Anne* used no period costume elements, just black dancewear. In *Anne & Emmett*, page 9 of the work indicates she is in a "pretty wool skirt, dark sweater, and frilly blouse" (Cohen, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*). For *Letters from Anne and Martin*, still pictures and video of the play show Anne in a white long-sleeved, collared blouse with a Star of David on it, a dark skirt, and stockinged feet (*Home*; Anne Frank Center USA, "Letters from Anne and Martin–Buffalo City Honors 2022 January").

The three playwrights made costume choices that did not pull focus from their character portrayals of Anne Frank. Their life experiences, attitudes, careers, and exposure to Anne Frank come together to answer my research question. Why partner Anne Frank with an African American historical personage? Why did these playwrights link these duos? The specific types of cultural traumas (often with an inciting moment for writing the play), their intense feelings of social justice, and their seminal experiences with Anne Frank and Harriet Tubman, Emmett Till or Martin Luther King, Jr. all coalesced to create the perfect recipe for a play which pairs Anne Frank with an African American historical icon.

While writing this dissertation, I was asked whether the pairing of the historical icons in the three works improves the chances of helping an audience/reader be moved toward action and work for social justice for Jews, African Americans, or anyone marginalized, oppressed, or in danger of murder as part of ongoing cultural trauma. The playwrights of two of the plays have strongly communicated that they believe their works, *Anne & Emmett* and *Letters from Martin and Anne*, do just that: work toward social justice. It is naive to assume that a single viewing or a reading of these play scripts will do that. If one is already inclined to activism for social justice, attending a performance of one of these works might actuate a person. However, it is more likely

that viewing or reading one of these Anne Frank plays is a step toward social justice activism. Two works were explicitly written to educate and spur young people on social change.

Drama-based pedagogics (DBP) is a teaching and learning approach that utilizes theatrical activities to engage students with curriculum in all content areas (*Drama-Based Pedagogy*). Scholars in the field indicate that students often need as many as six exposures to content delivered with DBP to see conceptual changes (Lee and Enciso 183–91). It will take audiences/readers more than one experience with one of these plays to activate change. Snyder-Young borrows and expands on Lee and Enciso's pedagogical change concept. Snyder-Young holds that audience members must experience moderate stress and anxiety levels to provoke them to change. She continues to say that if the change causes stress and anxiety, then privileged audience members interpret the theatrical performance in a way that continues to bolster their current worldview (Snyder-Young 295–301). Pittman, Freedman-Adler, and Janet Langhart Cohen, who were motivated to write the plays examined in this dissertation, had to experience lifetimes of cultural trauma visited upon them before creating their works.

The playwrights of the three works had varied intents in pairing Frank with King, Till, or Tubman. These ranged from using *Harriet and Anne* to exorcise personal demons and honor personal heroes to using *Anne & Emmett* as a response, a racial tension reducer, a national racial and equality dialogue, a weapon against antisemitism and racism, and a prescription for the "repair of the world." *Letters from Anne and Martin* was meant to be a celebration of Dr. King and a discovery tool for its audiences.

All three plays fulfilled or are continuing to fulfill their playwrights' intentions behind their creations. Never to be produced again publicly, Pittman and Friedman-Adler's *Harriet and Anne* memorialized the two heroes and relieved the emotional and spiritual heaviness of its playwrights.

*Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play* continues to be produced, viewed, and read by audiences. This dissertation proves that the work continues a dialogue about antisemitism, race, and equality. Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner's *Letters from Anne and Martin* celebrated King at least twice and continues to tour and engage audiences in discovering how the legacy of Anne Frank can live on in them.

All three of these works are thematically positive, pro-social, and proactive. The playwrights paired Anne Frank with Martin Luther King, Jr., Emmett Till, and Harriet Tubman to advance and bolster their social justice-oriented themes. *Harriet and Anne* deals thematically with how Harriet Tubman and Anne Frank sowed "seeds of FREEDOM" (with their lives and work). The "FREEDOM" is a release from both bondage, mental and physical, and religious persecution. *Anne & Emmett*'s theme is humankind's duty to remember Anne Frank's and Emmett Till's lives. Humanity is charged with using Anne's "grace" and Emmett's "truth" to "repair the world." The work is a call to *tikkun olam*. *Letters from Anne and Martin* thematic concept involving historical remembrance with the "hope of love" and "brotherhood" so that "peace and tranquility" return. Those ideals are recovered with the remembrance and activation of Anne Frank's and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s principles.

After my summarization of the Anne Frank plays and their history, I analyzed events surrounding them, commented on the speed and efficacy of social change due to these works, and discussed the playwrights' intent. I move on to suggestions for further research as this work was neither an exhaustive study of all eighteen published and produced plays about Anne Frank. It was also not an exhaustive study of plays in which Anne Frank is paired with a historical character. Four areas of further research include examinations of tropes, including the "belle Juive," in studies concerning plays that contain Emmett Till, Harriet Tubman, or Martin Luther King, Jr., a

comparison of the dramatic characters of Anne Frank and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Nathan of *Nathan the Wise*, and a study that examines if audience members/readers of the works increase in pro-social justice behaviors or attitudes.

The first area I propose as a place of continued research would be examining the three works for other tropes, such as the "magical Negro" and the "white savior." I see the possibility for explorations of the character stereotypes of the "white savior" and the "magical Negro" due to the juxtaposition of the characters of Anne Frank and the African American historical icons depicted in *Harriet and Anne*, *Anne & Emmett*, and *Letters from Martin and Anne*. Matthew W. Hughey, in the Department of Sociology at the University of Mississippi, has written three articles about the two tropes in cinema. His most recent article was published in 2012 (Hughey 766). Additionally, looking at the "belle Juive" trope readily presents itself. Are those cinematic tropes borne out in the stage plays with Anne Frank and African American historical personages? Or do they rise above those two tropes?

My second area for further research would be a similar study to mine of dramatic literature that portrays Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman, or Emmett Till. Selected works containing a particular historical individual could be explored in the areas of history, their playwrights' writing of the work, examining notable events in the playwrights' process, and examining important historical events during the writing of the plays. My research found similar numbers of African American personage-containing plays (written in English and publicly produced) to those of published and produced English language Anne Frank plays. Fourteen published and produced plays about Martin Luther King, Jr. Eighteen plays have been published and produced about Harriett Tubman. Emmett Till has had eighteen works written about him, including an opera and

a living history presentation. The abundance of data available for these studies is a testament to the richness and feasibility of this area of research.

The third area of subsequent suggested research would be comparing the characters of Anne Frank, from an Anne Frank play of one's choice, to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's character Nathan the Wise, from the eponymous play. Forty translations of Nathan the Wise are available on Archive.org (Lessing). There are eighteen English-language published and produced Anne Frank plays available for comparison. The character of Nathan the Wise is a wealthy, religiously tolerant Jew living in the time of the Knights Templar. In the play, he tells the "Ring Tale," a parable of religious tolerance (Lessing). Nathan the Wise and Anne Frank have many parallels.

The final area of research holds the potential to significantly impact our understanding of audience/reader attitudes and behaviors. This research would involve studying if experiencing these plays increased the audience/reader's pro-social justice attitudes or behaviors. One study could examine, using pre- and post-show questionnaires, what attitudes and views the group has before viewing or reading the work(s) in areas involving attitudes toward social issues surrounding racial, religious, prejudice, and justice issues. Does viewing one or more of the works positively impact an individual's attitude? Pre- and post-pro-social justice behaviors could be evaluated by another study. The question would be whether viewing one or more of these Anne Frank plays, pairing her character with an African American historical figure, impacts the audience member(s)'s pro-social justice behaviors.

As one can see from this study, three literary memorial Anne Frank plays were written and produced in the 21st century in the United States due to exceptional circumstances. These three unique works, *Harriet and Anne: An Original Narrative*, *Janet Langhart Cohen's Anne & Emmett: A One-Act Play*, and *Letters from Martin and Anne*, share commonalities in their creation,

treatments of Anne Frank, playwrights' outlooks, and impact of history on those playwrights. Those playwrights, Deborah Pittman and Laurie Friedman-Adler, Janet Langhart Cohen, and Hannah Vaughn and Alexandra Gellner, helped Anne Frank, as well as Harriet Tubman, Emmett Till, and Martin Luther King, Jr., to "go on living, even after their death(s)" (Frank et al., *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition* 569).

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## Appendix 1: Playwright Consent Form

Playwright Consent Form

1. The study *Anne, Martin, Emmett, And Harriet: Plays About Anne Frank and African American Historical Personages* involves interview research. The purpose of the study is to gather information for an academic dissertation. The subject participation duration is about six months from mailing the original questionnaire. The interview procedure involves the playwright(s) answering questions about the writing/creation of their plays, character choices, and available informational resources. The experimental design is a written questionnaire by U.S. mail, a Zoom questionnaire interview, an email questionnaire interview, or a cell phone call interview questionnaire with the playwrights.

2. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subjects. Participation in this research is voluntary. Refusal to take part will not lead to any penalty. The playwrights may withdraw from the project at any time without penalty.

3. The two benefits of this research include one for the academic theatre world and one for the playwrights. The first benefit is the dissemination of information to the academic world about some of these lesser-known plays. The second benefit is that playwrights may have greater exposure of their works due to this research.

4. There will not be confidentiality of records in this study. Playwrights and their comments will be named and credited with their information. Notes will be written during interviews.

5. Erin Santangelo may be reached at [redacted] and [redacted]

Her dissertation advisor Dr. Carol Barrett may be contacted for answers to pertinent questions. Her contact information is [redacted].

6. I understand that this project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Studies Involving Human Subjects at Antioch University. For questions about research problems or questions, the contact person at Antioch University is Dr. Lisa Kreeger:

7. I agree to take part in this study of my own volition. I have read and understood this consent form.

8. I have been supplied a signed copy of this consent form.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____ _____

My Printed Name Signature of the Researcher

## Appendix 2: Anne Frank Play Questionnaire

Anne Frank Play Questionnaire

Play Title:

Playwright:

1. What motivated you to write a play that used Anne Frank as a character?
2. Why did you pair Anne Frank with an African American personage in your work?
3. What do you share with either of your titular characters?
4. Which version, if any, of Anne Frank's diary did you use/consult? Why did you choose that version?
5. Did you use any secondary sources in addition to or instead of the diary? What was the source? Why did you use these sources? If you did not use secondary sources, why not?
6. Which was more important to you in the writing of your play, textual accuracy (to the diary and secondary sources) or dramatic effect and why?
7. Who was the intended audience for your play? Why?
8. Talk about your play's premiere, please.
9. What did you hope to carry out by your play's staging style?
10. How did you bend the constraints of time/space in your work? What were your intentions with the manipulation?
11. If you kept Anne's pseudonyms for the people she knew, why did you? If you used the real-life names of the individuals, why did you do so?
12. What part did any playwriting texts play while creating your work?
13. What were the challenges you met while writing your play?
14. Discuss your writing schedule or routine you used when writing your Anne Frank play.
15. Please speak about any dramatic conflict in your play.

16. Talk about any significant revisions to your script. When did they happen, and why?
17. Speak about your play's most significant production ingredient.
18. Tell me about the greatest joy you met in writing your play.
19. What kind of preparation did you do for writing about Anne Frank/your historical personage?
20. How does your religion or spirituality inform your Anne Frank play? You may decline to answer. Does your religious or spiritual view inform your work?

Supplementary/Alternate Questions

1. What social issues are brought up by your play?
2. How does cultural trauma fit into your work?
3. What did your playwrighting process look like?
4. If you had to cut or add a scene, what would it be?
5. How much does the audience influence the writing of your play?
6. How much did you consider where the play would be performed when you began writing?
7. Where did the idea for your play come from?